ON DECEMBER 9, 1989, THE intifada—the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—entered its third year. But well before that date, Israel's military, economic, and policy-making systems had effectively adjusted themselves to the idea that the revolt in the occupied territories was going to be a fixture of the Israeli reality for the foreseeable future, and that, in any case, the status quo ante was irretrievable. In particular, the authorities in the field—the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), in conjunction with the Shin Bet (General Security Service) and the Civil Administration—proved far more efficacious in dealing with both the uprising’s violent overt aspect and its less visible, but probably more significant, internal civil-resistance dimension. The result was that in 1989 there was a big decline in large-scale riots, reflecting the sheer weariness of the Palestinians as they saw Israel standing its ground and no political progress being made. At the same time, Palestinian frustration found outlets in increased attacks on Israeli-driven vehicles in the territories, in terrorist outrages committed inside Israel, and in mounting internecine Palestinian violence.

A peace proposal initiated by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir generated considerable diplomatic activity during the second half of the year but accomplished virtually nothing. By year's end, too, the national unity government was wracked by internal dissension and in danger of coming apart at the seams.

The Intifada and Responses to It

The intensity of the violence in the early part of 1989, particularly in the West Bank, recalled the situation in the initial stage of the uprising a year earlier. In the first three months of 1989, 60 Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops and hundreds wounded, the security forces demolished 44 houses in the territories, arrests and curfews continued on a wide scale, and educational institutions that had been opened—except for universities—in December 1988, were closed down again in the following month.

The harsh measures taken by the military were largely ineffectual in the field; they also helped to dim Israel's already lackluster international standing. The year began with the deportation (January 1) to Lebanon of 13 Palestinians—seven from the West Bank and six from the Gaza Strip, for helping to "lead and direct the uprising." The fact that the original deportation orders had been issued the previous
August and that in the intervening period the uprising had continued without interrup-
tion. The case of those who argued that deportations were an ineffective punish-
ment (besides being prohibited under the Fourth Geneva Convention). The military re-
torted that the real problem was the loss of the element of immediacy: "candidates for expulsion," as the army called them, could set in motion protracted legal pro-
ceedings by appealing first to a military advisory committee and then to the High Court of Justice. Intermittent calls by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin to facilitate punitive measures were generally resisted by the Justice Ministry. In January Rabin did an about-face on the deportation issue, telling the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee that this "weapon" had been found ineffective. In fact, 13 more Palestinians were deported in 1989, eight in June and five in August, but in every case but one, the original order had been issued in August 1988. The United States and the international community continued to object to the expulsions.

Also unhappy with the situation were the Jewish settlers in the territories, who along with the security forces were the primary targets of the violence unleashed by the uprising. The major problem was the stoning, usually by children or teens-
agers, of Israeli vehicles traveling in the territories. But attacks with firebombs and other lethal implements were also frequent. In early January, settlers retaliated by raiding Arab villages, blocking roads, and attacking cars bearing license plates from the territories. Nor did they balk at clashing with soldiers. On one occasion, scuffling broke out with troops sent in at the personal order of Defense Minister Rabin to disperse ceremonies held by settlers at improvised memorials for Jews killed in the territories (the body of a Petah Tikva taxi driver, Shimon Edri, was found near the Samaria village of Haris at the beginning of January). Leaders of the settlers held a two-month vigil in front of the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem to protest the government's inability to stamp out the uprising and to demand the removal of Defense Minister Rabin, whom they held responsible for the situation.

In late January, Deputy Chief of Staff Ehud Barak told a meeting of the Foreign Press Association that the IDF had "not run out of ideas" on how to put down the intifada. Barak may have been referring to recently introduced orders under which parents of children caught throwing stones at Israelis could be fined or have their homes sealed; and enabling some NCOs (in addition to officers) to fire plastic bullets at demonstrators. Barak denied reports that troops were now allowed to open fire at fleeing demonstrators, although conceding that soldiers who had undergone "special training" could shoot plastic bullets at the legs of those "whom [they] believe are leaders of a riot [and] are running to and fro." The trend within the military was to leave standing orders and regulations intact—in order to avoid hassles with army and civilian legal authorities—but to broaden definitions within those orders. Thus, in January, Ma'ariv quoted the chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Shomron, as saying, "Fire may be opened at whoever brings about a concrete danger, and one such danger, for example, is the erection of [road] barriers."

In the same period, Defense Minister Rabin, who was under severe pressure from both Right and Left for his handling of the intifada, presented a plan for giving the
residents of the territories increased autonomy in exchange for the cessation of violence (see below, "Diplomatic and Political Developments"). Rabin’s next step was to order the release from prison of a leading Palestinian activist, Faisal al-Husseini. The 48-year-old Husseini had been incarcerated without trial under a series of administrative detention orders almost consecutively since April 1987. (In August 1989 a new directive allowed the military to hold persons in administrative detention for up to 12 months at a time, instead of the previous 6, renewable indefinitely. At any given time in 1989, some 1,500 Palestinians were held under this form of arrest. All told, more than 10,000 were in prison, at least half of them awaiting trial for offenses ranging from stone throwing to murder. In the first two years of the uprising, some 50,000 Palestinians were arrested.) When Husseini launched a series of meetings with dovish Knesset members, including some from Labor, the Prime Minister’s Office decried these contacts as “pointless and unauthorized” and warned that such encounters “abet PLO terrorism.”

In the territories, the violence continued to take its toll on both sides. On February 24, Sgt. Binyamin Meisner, 25, became the fifth Israeli soldier killed there since the start of the uprising, when an IDF patrol walked into a well-executed ambush in Nablus’s labyrinthine old city. A ten-day curfew was imposed on the city’s 100,000 inhabitants as security forces hunted the perpetrators of the ambush. In early March, two suspected perpetrators, aged 19 and 22, were arrested—they were reportedly members of the "shock squads" of the outlawed Fatah-affiliated Shabiba youth movement (see AJYB 1990, pp. 414–15, 425)—and their homes were demolished. (In July they were sentenced to life imprisonment; four other youths, who lured the patrol into the ambush, each received 15 years in prison.)

Demolition of suspects’ homes, permitted under Article 119 of the Defense (Emergency) Regulations promulgated in 1945 by the British Mandate authorities and never repealed by Jordan (regarding the West Bank), Egypt (regarding the Gaza Strip), or Israel, was one of the issues addressed in the section on Israel in the U.S. State Department’s annual report on the status of human rights, issued in February. The report cited a figure of 101 houses “totally demolished” and seven “partially demolished,” and 46 houses sealed in 1988. In 1989, according to B’Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories—established in March by a group of activists and partly financed by the New Israel Fund—this form of punishment was expanded: 138 houses were demolished, 84 sealed, and more than 60 were partially demolished or partially sealed. Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Richard Schifter stated that “house demolition as punishment of families . . . contravenes the Fourth Geneva Convention in the view of the U.S.” The Israeli Supreme Court consistently upheld the legality of house demolitions, rejecting the argument that such actions constituted collective punishment—prohibited under the Geneva Convention—because they harmed innocent people living in the same house as the suspect. (On July 30, 1989, the High Court for the first time partially curtailed the army’s power to demolish houses as a punitive measure, ruling—in response to a petition submitted by the Association
for Civil Rights in Israel—that unless “operational military needs” existed, persons whose homes were targeted for destruction must be allowed to appeal first to the military commander and then to the High Court of Justice.)

The Schifter report “[did] not improve the health of Israel’s image,” Prime Minister Shamir told Army Radio on February 9, maintaining that the document was one-sided and unbalanced. The Foreign Ministry said that the report “did not, unfortunately, give full consideration to the actions of local extremist elements and the major dilemmas which these cause for Israel. . . .”

In the meantime, the military was starting to take more aggressive steps to break the leadership of the uprising. In mid-March the security forces completed a month-long operation in which some 800 “field commanders” in the territories were arrested. Around the same time, tough paramilitary Border Police units were deployed on a semipermanent basis in the Gaza Strip. The uncovering of an 11-member Fatah-affiliated underground cell in the Gaza Strip highlighted what was to become one of the ugliest aspects of the intifada: the murder, often in the most brutal and barbarous manner, by Palestinians of fellow Palestinians who were suspected of “collaborating” with the Israelis. The Gaza group was said to have liquidated a cleaning woman in a local hospital for this reason. However, according to B’Tselem, some were murdered for committing “moral offenses,” such as prostitution and drug dealing, and there were also killings stemming from “political rivalries and family feuds.” Sporadic attempts by members of the PLO leadership in Tunis to put an end to this phenomenon were unavailing, and none of those considered moderates in the territories were willing to speak out against the killings—indeed, some of them condoned the murders implicitly or explicitly.

Violence escalated sharply in April. One of the year’s most serious incidents took place on the 13th, in the West Bank village of Nahalin (pop. 2,800), near Bethlehem. A Border Police unit that entered the village in what was meant to be a surprise search-and-arrest operation encountered forcible resistance. In the ensuing clash, 5 villagers were killed and 13 wounded; 4 border policemen were hurt. An investigative committee appointed by the regional commander, Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna—its report was released on May 4—found that the unit’s operational planning had been “deficient,” that it had “failed to exhaust all non-lethal means before resorting to live fire,” and that most of the unit’s personnel engaged in “excessive” live fire which “violated standard operating procedures.” As a result, the military commander of the Bethlehem District and two Border Police officers were transferred from their posts, the commander of the Judea-Samaria Brigade was reprimanded, and a number of border policemen were suspended from duty.

Intercommunal violence reached a scale which not only played into the hands of demagogues but threatened to plunge the country into political chaos. In the south, after the battered body of a kidnapped soldier was found on May 7 (see “Terrorism, Antiterrorism, Extremism,” below), Jews attacked passing Arab cars bearing license plates from the nearby Gaza Strip. A day earlier, three Gazans were shot dead and some 70 wounded by Israeli troops in fierce clashes. In the West Bank, after a
prospective settler was stabbed by an Arab near the town of Ariel, in Samaria, hundreds of settlers raided Arab villages, doing large property damage. Militant settlers in Hebron and adjacent Kiryat Arba stepped up their vigilante patrols, aimed at least in part against the government's new peace proposal, as convoys of vehicles carrying gun-toting settlers terrorized local villages.

In one incident at the end of May, two weeks after the peace initiative was adopted, some 30 armed settlers, including students from the extremist “Joseph's Tomb” yeshivah in Nablus, carried out what a civilian judge would later describe as a “pogrom” in the village of Kifl Harith. In the course of the action, a 13-year-old village girl was shot to death, two villagers were seriously wounded, and extensive property damage was done, including the shattering of dozens of solar heaters and windows with gunfire and the torching of crops.

The attitudes underlying such behavior were given expression by two militant West Bank rabbis and by a very secular settlement. At a court hearing involving eight of his students who were suspected of involvement in the Kifl Harith incident, Rabbi Yitzhak Ginzburg, head of the Joseph's Tomb yeshivah, stated that Jews and Arabs should not be treated equally because Jewish blood was worth more than non-Jewish blood. (The students were subsequently released and no charges were laid.) Around the same time, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, the head of the Jewish community in Hebron, who was on trial for killing a Hebron man during an incident in September 1988, pleaded not guilty to a manslaughter charge but said he regretted “not having the privilege of killing the Arab.” The secular Samaria town of Ariel came up with a plan to make Arabs working there wear identification tags stating that they were “foreign workers.” Adverse public reaction, which included the evocation of what Jews underwent in 1930s Germany, forced the town to drop the plan.

More Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces in May—a total of 33, 18 of them in the Gaza Strip—than in any other month of 1989. In the Gaza Strip, the night curfew (9 P.M.–4 A.M.) in force since the start of the intifada was retained even after the blanket curfew imposed on the territories on May 9–10, in conjunction with Israel’s Independence Day, was lifted. As the scale and intensity of the violence surged dramatically, at 7:30 P.M. on May 16, the Israeli military authorities abruptly declared a total curfew throughout the Gaza Strip; in an unprecedented step, all Gazans inside Israel were given 24 hours to return home. (Standing regulations forbidding residents of the territories to remain in Israel overnight were rarely enforced. Thousands of Palestinians, primarily from the Gaza Strip, slept over in Israel during the week, usually in abominable conditions, returning home at the weekend.)

The curfew remained in force for four days, and the military announced that criteria were being worked out for allowing residents of the territories to enter Israel on an “individual” basis. A measure of the decline of Israeli deterrence in the territories—one reason for the sudden curfew was to help restore that deterrence—was evident in the events that took place in Rafah, at the southern tip of Gaza Strip.
On May 19, hundreds of residents defied the curfew—which in their case had been in force for 14 days following previous incidents—and took to the streets. Five local residents were shot dead in the ensuing clash with Israeli troops, including a 50-year-old mother of ten. Inhabitants said the disturbance was caused by a serious shortage of flour and sugar due to the prolonged curfew, and by mass arrests of activists in Rafah the previous night. On May 20, Leaflet No. 40 of the United National Command of the Uprising, issued in East Jerusalem, called on the Palestinians' "shock squads" "to liquidate one soldier or one settler for every martyr of our people." The leaflet also rejected the Israeli peace initiative: "Shamir's plot has become the enemy's official plot, but our people will throw it onto the trash heap of history, as it did with the Camp David plan and other conspiracies."

A different kind of conspiracy was cited by Labor and Social Affairs Minister Moshe Katsav (Likud) in a letter to all cabinet ministers urging that the territories be completely sealed off for three months. In this period the army would be deployed there "massively" and operate to end the unrest once and for all. Katsav charged that workers from the territories were perpetrating acts of sabotage in their places of employment. Examples of such alleged acts were: textile workers slashing suits prior to their export; Arabs employed in construction stuffing drainage and water pipes and deliberately using less steel and cement than required, causing hidden long-term damage; and hotel and restaurant kitchen workers spitting and even urinating into food or seasoning some items with bits of broken glass. The feasibility of Katsav's plan seemed dubious, however, as even the brief mid-May curfew caused severe slowdowns in various sectors, particularly in the construction, agriculture, and textile industries. More important than Katsav's shoot-from-the-hip ideas, though, was the atmosphere that produced them; the mounting hysteria among the public, it seemed, was engulfing the government as well. Both Chief of Staff Shomron and Defense Minister Rabin were under constant fire from the Right for failing to "eradicate" the uprising—on May 16, a leading columnist for Ha'aretz, Yoel Marcus, wrote that "this chief of staff has to go ... because the army as a professional arm under his leadership has failed in its dealing with the intifada."

Many settlers and right-wing politicians felt a sense of satisfaction, therefore, when it was announced, in early June, that the head of Central Command, which included the West Bank, Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna, frequently targeted by these groups for being too "soft" in dealing with the uprising, would, at his request, be leaving his post to go on a year's study leave. Named to replace Mitzna was the tough-talking head of Southern Command, Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai. (Mordechai took over on August 4, and in October he became the first regional commander to participate in the settlers' annual Sukkot hike in Samaria. Mordechai was replaced at Southern Command by Maj. Gen. Matan Vilnai, until then chief of the Manpower Branch. One of the final large-scale operations carried out under Mordechai's aegis in the Gaza Strip resulted in the arrest, in late May, of more than 200 members of Hamas, the Gaza-based Islamic Resistance Movement, including the organization's founder and leader, the wheelchair-bound Sheikh Ahmed Yassin,
aged 52. Yassin was subsequently charged on 15 counts, including ordering the killing of three suspected "collaborators" with the Israeli authorities. Hamas, which was formed in the Gaza Strip after the eruption of the intifada and whose "Covenant" called for the liberation of all of Palestine through a jihad, or holy war, and the establishment of an Islamic state on Israel's ruins, was outlawed in the territories on September 28.

The entire Gaza Strip was put under curfew for a week at the beginning of June, and when the curfew was lifted on June 11, Gazans wishing to enter Israel to work or for other purposes had to show a special entry permit. The idea was to furnish every resident of Gaza with a magnetic card as part of the effort to keep "undesirable elements" out of Israel, to prevent unauthorized labor, and generally to tighten Israeli control over the population.

Shamir got a personal taste of the atmosphere in the territories on June 20, while delivering a eulogy at Ariel for Frederick Rosenfeld, a resident of the West Bank town who had been murdered by Arab shepherds while hiking in the area. The prime minister was called "traitor" by some in the crowd and his car was jostled as he left. That the militants would not always be content with verbal protests was demonstrated later that day when two Arabs were shot and wounded as they waited at a bus stop near Tel Aviv. (In November a 23-year-old West Bank yeshivah student was convicted on an aggravated assault charge in the case, after a manslaughter charge was dropped in plea bargaining.) Rabin, seeking to mollify right-wingers and ease the pressure on Shamir, once more asked the Justice Ministry to broaden the military's punitive powers in the territories. Justice Minister Dan Meridor (Likud), while disinclined to accede to Rabin's request, told the Knesset that the use of undemocratic means by a democracy "fighting for its right to exist" was no vice.

On June 29, eight Palestinians, four each from the West Bank and Gaza, were deported to Lebanon. On July 4, the IDF announced that the previous night a "widespread operation" had been carried out in the West Bank during which some 200 activists of the outlawed "popular committees" and "shock squads" were arrested. The army communiqué stressed that this was a pe'ulah yezumah—an "initiated action" by the army. This phrase, borrowed from the Lebanese theater of operations and increasingly used during 1989, signaled a change of emphasis and of tactics in the military's handling of the uprising. The aim was to strike at the organizers behind the attempts to forge an autonomous socioeconomic infrastructure which would enable the Palestinians to disengage from the Israeli authorities. At the same time, the chief of staff informed the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee that the "rules of engagement" in the territories had been further relaxed to enable troops to open fire more readily at "masked individuals."

Around the same time, U.S. assistant secretary of state John Kelly, in Israel for an "orientation" visit, was told by Shamir that his country's dialogue with the PLO was hindering progress on the peace plan because it inhibited Palestinians in the territories from taking part in talks. Foreign Minister Moshe Arens told the Ameri-
can official that local Palestinians were inhibited by radicals' threats against their lives. Yet, in the territories themselves, growing numbers of Palestinians were ignoring calls regarding general strikes and other instructions contained in leaflets issued by the United National Command of the Uprising. This new attitude, reflecting what the Jerusalem Post described as "the erosion of the discipline and unanimity" that had characterized the intifada, was most strikingly displayed in two realms: commerce, where growing economic hardship was leading some merchants to evade the strictures of the uprising leadership concerning hours of business for shops and full observance of general strikes, and education. Beginning July 22, the Israeli military authorities permitted elementary schools (grades 1–6) and 12th-grade classes in the West Bank to reopen, followed by junior-high schools and—a month later—the rest of the high-school system. With the education system finally restored, after the loss of nearly two full school years, many parents were unwilling to heed the activists' calls to include the schools in the frequent general-strike days. (The schools were closed down again on November 13, just before the first anniversary of the PLO's declaration of the "State of Palestine," and had not reopened by year's end.)

JERUSALEM

Jerusalem remained a divided city in 1989, with few Jews venturing into the eastern section. Curfew, which generated shock waves when first imposed in a Jerusalem neighborhood in 1988—for the first time since 1967—was more frequent in 1989 and, as in the West Bank and Gaza, was sometimes declared largely to facilitate the collection of various levies: income tax, value-added tax, national insurance fees, and Broadcasting Authority fees.

No fewer than 220 cars were set ablaze in Jerusalem in 1989 by Palestinians for "nationalist" reasons, double the 1988 figure. The majority of the incidents took place in East Jerusalem, and two-thirds of the torched cars belonged to Jews. In addition, 118 firebombs were thrown in the city at civilian, police, and army vehicles, some 1,700 cases of stone throwing were recorded, and 2,100 Palestinians, the majority minors, were detained for "hostile activity." Charges were eventually brought against only 950 of those arrested.

In July the Arab areas of the mixed Jewish-Arab neighborhood of Abu Tor on the "seam" dividing East and West Jerusalem were placed under a three-day curfew after Molotov cocktails were thrown at police vans. Nearly 30 people were arrested for security offenses (many of the car torchings occurred in Abu Tor) in a house-to-house operation, and at the same time the tax authorities sent in their personnel to collect unpaid debts from the captive audience, while the Broadcasting Authority impounded television sets from households which had not paid the yearly license fee. Mayor Teddy Kollek complained about this utilization of the curfew.

Kollek was also a moderating influence in one of the year's most serious incidents,
which occurred in late August in Beit Safafa, once a village whose main street constituted the border between Israel and Jordan, but since 1967 wholly incorporated into Jerusalem. According to the official account, police in an unmarked car were attacked as they drove along Unification of the Village Street by tens of masked villagers wielding knives and other implements. Fearing for their lives, the security men opened fire, killing one villager; the village was placed under curfew. A memorial ceremony for the slain man held a few days later also turned violent, and police fired tear gas and then rubber bullets to break up the crowd. Kollek afterward went to the village to pay his condolences to the bereaved family and to speak with community leaders, urging them to work to prevent hotheaded youths from stoning Israeli vehicles that drove through the village.

Kollek, however, continued to be outflanked by militant Palestinians on the one side and by the tactics of the Israeli military on the other. On October 2, the new head of Central Command, Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai, ordered the cordonning off of a section of East Jerusalem to prevent journalists from attending a press conference called by Palestinian activists at the National Palace Hotel. Kollek told the Jerusalem Post that this was the first time since 1967 that a “central area” in Jerusalem (as opposed to peripheral neighborhoods) had been subjected to a military closure. The move had been taken without notifying the mayor’s office and worse, “What the authorities did was to ensure that the issue got greater publicity than it deserved.”

BEIT SAHOUR

Indeed, the army’s move backfired by focusing strong international media attention on the “issue.” The press conference, at which prominent Palestinian nationalist Faisal al-Husseini was scheduled to speak—he did afterward speak informally with journalists on the street—had been intended to publicize a major battle which was being fought between the Israeli military authorities and the 9,000 Christian Arabs in the affluent town of Beit Sahour, near Bethlehem. No arms were involved in this campaign, which was to last some six weeks, but it was one of the landmark confrontations in the first two years of the intifada. Beginning on September 20, the Israeli authorities launched an operation in Beit Sahour with the aim of breaking a spreading tax revolt in the town. In the course of the operation, the town was declared a “closed military area”—thus barred to nonresidents—and had its phone links and finally even its water supply cut off by the military. When Defense Minister Rabin told the Knesset’s Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee in mid-October that he intended “to teach [Beit Sahour] a lesson,” he meant that “lesson” to be absorbed by the entire West Bank. Since the start of the uprising, tax collection—the source of the salaries of the hundreds of Israeli civilians employed by the Civil Administration and of the hundreds of soldiers serving within its framework—had declined by some 30 percent. (At one point, the residents of Beit Sahour seized on
the anomaly of their tax money being used to pay their occupiers and floated a slogan calculated to appeal to the American press: "No taxation without representation.") But beyond the budgetary shortfall, the Military Government was determined to break the tax revolt because it symbolized the nonviolent civil disobedience which was considered more insidious, and ultimately more dangerous to continued Israeli rule, than the violent aspects of the uprising. In 1988 Beit Sahour had already been targeted by the army in its efforts to combat manifestations of "alternative government" and in its bureaucratic war to prevent the creation of a power vacuum that would eventuate in the establishment of a Palestinian state. (See AJYB 1990, pp. 414-16, 421-25.) A year later, the situation had become more complex and more pressing.

The growing frustration in the territories, aggravated by the tortuous course of the talks on a peace initiative, the intensifying internal terror within the Palestinian community, and a sharp IDF crackdown on what military sources described as the uprising's "hard-core activists," led the United National Leadership of the Uprising to issue a special leaflet in early October declaring a five-day general strike in which a "new state of rebellion" would be fomented by various nonviolent means. It was in this context that the Israeli authorities viewed the Beit Sahour events and apparently decided to make it a test case, especially after the Palestinians themselves cast a powerful spotlight on the town. In the Gaza Strip, the battle revolved around the recent introduction of magnetic ID cards which any Gazans wishing to enter Israel had to apply for. Even though the special leaflet asserted that "[v]ictory in this battle is inevitable," efforts by uprising agitators to convince residents who worked in Israel to forgo the cards were only partially successful; sheer economic necessity won the day.

Beit Sahour was a harder nut to crack. It took repeated "tax raids" in the course of 40 days on homes and businesses in the town, in which many of the premises were left a shambles by the troops and virtually everything of value, from furniture to fruit juice, was confiscated and taken to the unclaimed goods section of the Customs Authority warehouses at Ben-Gurion Airport, eventually to be sold in public auction, to induce residents to pay their assessments—which they claimed were completely arbitrary. On October 31, Brig. Gen. Shaike Erez, the head of the Civil Administration in Judea-Samaria, declared victory. "The tax revolt in Beit Sahour has been liquidated," he told reporters after the army lifted its closure of the town, and "all the objectives" of the Israeli authorities had been attained. A communiqué issued by the Government Press Office in the name of "official military sources" quoted Erez as saying he was aware of the "negative media effect of the campaign," but explained: "It is not pleasant to seize [goods] in homes, but when people insist on rebellion and refuse to pay taxes, but nevertheless continue to demand all the vital services such as education, health, telephones and social welfare, we have no choice but to do what we did." Pointedly, Erez concluded: "I hope that other places will not try to follow suit, because we will not permit tax evasion."

In a second communiqué, the "official military sources" stated that 398 persons
owing taxes "were dealt with" during the operation, property worth NIS 3 million ($1.5 million) was seized along with cash and money in bank accounts, and 33 vehicles were confiscated (townspeople said the number was actually 150). Forty people were arrested and 35 were formally charged. Four had already been tried, and sentenced to a fine of NIS 6,000 or six months in jail; all four opted for the latter. The communique noted drily that "in the course of the operation, there was an increase in the number of people paying taxes elsewhere in Judea and Samaria." In a communique of their own, issued on October 27, "the people of Beit Sahour" declared: "The tax resistance movement is but one response to the occupation. Palestinians want to pay taxes to their own state, not to an occupation authority. We, the people of Beit Sahour are prepared, if necessary, to lose all our property, but we will never pay taxes to the occupation. We will continue using nonviolent resistance as a means of awakening the Israeli people to their need, as well as ours, to live together in a just peace, two peoples in two free and secure states."

IDF GAINS CONTROL

Nineteen Palestinians died in the first two weeks of October, while five Israeli soldiers were wounded in Nablus by Molotov cocktails and an attack using a bottle of acid. Gangs of Palestinian youths ran wild in Nablus and elsewhere, brutalizing and murdering suspected "collaborators" and carrying out a "moral crusade" as well. In one incident, a 35-year-old Nablus woman was stabbed to death for "promiscuity." Nevertheless, by October the Israeli military had gained the upper hand. As the respected defense analyst Ze'ev Schiff noted in Ha'aretz (October 2), the turnabout came when the IDF, after long months, grasped that the intifada was not a passing phenomenon and was in fact a form of war with rules of its own. Having reached this conclusion, the army deployed elite units in the territories in order to apprehend violent hard-core activists, stationed regular units in specific areas on an extended basis so they could get to know the turf, and upgraded the quality of the command level. In addition, better hardware, such as night-vision equipment, was brought in, small outposts were set up along the roads and on rooftops in the West Bank, and coordination between the military and the Shin Bet was enhanced. The army's purpose, as the chief of staff stated on numerous occasions, was to reduce the level of violence so that the political process could be implemented in a relatively conducive atmosphere.

As the second anniversary of the uprising approached, the security forces intensified their operations, notably in Nablus, a hotbed of radical militancy. On November 9, the "Red Eagle" gang, affiliated with George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was captured, followed at the beginning of December by the elimination by elite forces of the "Black Panther" gang during the biggest crackdown in Nablus since the start of the uprising. With the city under curfew, the military called in helicopters and ventured deep into the maze of the casbah where
the street activists hid out. The Israeli authorities decided to act following a CBS-TV report showing masked youths holding a military parade in the casbah in broad daylight, carrying handguns and IDF M-16 rifles, along with members of the Black Panthers standing over one of the 15 suspected “collaborators” and “promiscuous women” they had murdered. In the best gangland style, the six Black Panthers were trapped by a seven-man special unit—disguised as Arabs and in one case as a woman, according to local eyewitnesses—in a barber shop; three were killed and three wounded in the shootout. Troops arrested dozens of other wanted persons and impounded weapons such as clubs, hatchets, and knives and paraphernalia including Palestinian flags and uniforms.

There were also setbacks. One of the most serious incidents occurred on November 13—two days before the first anniversary of the PLO’s declaration of the Palestinian “state”—when two reserve soldiers, in their early 40s, became the first IDF fatalities in the Gaza Strip since the start of the intifada. In a rare case of the use of firearms in the uprising, they were gunned down with a Kalachnikov assault rifle by three terrorists in an ambush. To facilitate the hunt for the attackers, the entire Gaza Strip was put under curfew and navy boats blockaded the coast. (In a development that many Israelis found gratifying but which outraged others, the heart of one of the two soldiers, who died of head wounds two days after the attack, was transplanted into the body of an East Jerusalem Arab.) Overall, though, the military was in a buoyant mood at the end of the year, backed up by statistics: military sources quoted in the Israeli press stated that hundreds of “wanted Palestinians” had been flushed out and caught since August, among them 100 of the “hard-core” activists, of whom 30–40 more were still being sought.

More tellingly, some 60 percent of the violence in the territories was, by year’s end, being directed against other Palestinians. Some 130 Palestinians died at the hands of other Palestinians in 1989, about six times as many as in 1988. This “internal terrorism,” Defense Minister Rabin told Israel TV on December 6, was the only way the activists were able to get the populace to take part in strikes and other mass activities of a nonviolent nature.

In addition, nearly 300 Palestinians were killed by the security forces—the same as in 1988—and another 14 by Israeli civilians (settlers). In both years, nearly 60 percent of the fatalities were in the 17–24 age group, but the proportion of children aged 16 and below who were killed rose sharply from about 17 percent in 1988 to 27 percent in 1989; nearly 10 percent of those killed in 1989 were under 12 years old. The number of wounded ran into the thousands. These casualty statistics seemed to accord with a report by Defense Minister Rabin that stone throwing constituted 85 percent of all violent activity in the territories—and that 60 percent of such incidents were perpetrated by children aged 13 or below.

In an address at a Tel Aviv University symposium summing up two years of the intifada, Rabin spoke of a “comprehensive” Israeli policy, combining the political level, in the form of the peace initiative, and the military-Civil Administration level, which consisted of a three-tiered approach: military action as such, punitive measures, and economic pressure.
Statistics, however, and neat military structures did not tell the whole story. On the first anniversary of the uprising, the then-head of Central Command, Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna, had spoken of the intifada as a "state of mind." A year later, the Palestinians' national consciousness had undoubtedly deepened. The idea of peace, insofar as it involved some form of Israeli-Palestinian coexistence, and certainly if it entailed contacts with the PLO, seemed as remote as ever.

**Military Trials**

This year saw a number of trials of soldiers charged with committing abuses in the course of putting down the intifada, particularly in 1988, soon after the uprising began, when chaos reigned and the initiative seemed to be with the Palestinians. Apart from the charges faced by the defendants, the trials also focused attention on the degree of blame to be assigned to high officials. Both the prime minister and the defense minister, in particular, had been accused of trying to evade responsibility for orders issued in the uprising's early phase. The primary focus of these criticisms was the headline-making court-martial of four soldiers from the Givati infantry brigade, a trial which in the eyes of many symbolically encapsulated the dilemmas the IDF faced in being made to act as a police force against unarmed civilians. The four, a staff sergeant and three privates, were charged with manslaughter for beating to death a 42-year-old Gaza man; in addition, a reservist physician with the rank of captain was charged with negligence in the case.

The incident occurred in Gaza's Jabalya refugee camp on August 22, 1988. Following unrest in the camp, the four were ordered by their commanding officer, a lieutenant, to enter the home of Hani al-Shami and to "blow away" stone-throwers thought to be hiding there. Al-Shami, who was inside with his children, tried to block the soldiers, but they overcame him and then beat him mercilessly for 15 minutes with rifle butts and a broomstick, kicked him and jumped on him from a bed. The court subsequently found that al-Shami was still on his feet and not in "respiratory distress" when he was finally taken to the army base in the camp. There, like many other bound-and-blindfolded detainees, he endured further savage beatings by an unknown number of soldiers, including a vicious "karate kick" in the chest which hurled him with brutal force against a wall. He died soon afterward.

The four soldiers did not deny the basic facts in the case (they did deny some of the details) but pleaded, in their defense, that they were obeying orders issued by senior command levels-reaching all the way to the chief of staff and the defense minister, and certainly to the brigade commander—to "break the bones" of rioters and stone-throwers in order to punish them and deter others. On March 1, in a rare occurrence, Lt. Gen. Shomron himself took the stand—he was called by the defense—and testified for nearly three hours on the IDF's policy regarding beatings. It was not his finest hour in an otherwise distinguished military career.

He quoted from his message of February 23, 1988, to IDF commanders in the territories (see AJYB 1990, p. 406) sanctioning the use of "reasonable force"—
referring to riot batons—to disperse a riot, to overcome resistance to arrest, or during “hot pursuit,” but barring the use of force as a punitive measure or after a mission ended. But Shomron also spoke of a vague, momentary “gray area” at the very end of an incident during which a soldier’s “subjective” discretion came into play, when beating could still be considered legitimate “deterrence” and before the use of force metamorphosed, imperceptibly, into prohibited “punishment.” Shomron was no less equivocal on the crucial question of an officer’s responsibility. If it turned out that an officer had issued a “manifestly illegal order,” the case could be examined in court, “and possibly responsibility lies with the officers and not with the soldiers.” Pressed to apply this doctrine to the specific case at hand, the chief of staff said: “I cannot say that I know exactly what the situation was. If one says that blows are intended to deter solely within the context of a disturbance, that is alright. . . . If the order was to beat as deterrence, it was illegal, but at the same time I say that the responsibility of commanders must be weighed.”

The military court’s 93-page verdict, delivered on May 25, was unsparing in its condemnation of the defendants’ actions—but not only theirs. The brutal violence perpetrated against Hani al-Shami, the tribunal wrote, “must shock every civilized person in whom beats a sense of morality and justice, and who holds human life, as such, precious.” The judges added:

We were appalled to hear some of the witnesses express hatred and contempt for the value of the life of the population which is ruled by the [IDF]. We shuddered when witnesses who are soldiers in the army [related how they] watched the humiliating spectacle of the beating of bound and helpless prisoners in an army camp, indifferent to what they saw and shutting their ears to the ghastly outcries of those being beaten. . . . [H]ow did it happen that combat soldiers from an elite unit, who in our assessment received a good education . . . cast off all the principles that their parents instilled in them and underwent a mental metamorphosis which left them ready and willing to deliver what the pathologist called “murderous blows” to a person old enough to be their father. . . .

The court also found that the Military Police investigation had been incomplete and unprofessional. The judges determined that the commanding officer of the military base in the refugee camp, a captain, and his superior, a lieutenant colonel, were responsible for not putting a stop to the beating of detainees on the base, and also singled out the colonel who commanded the Givati Brigade for intimating to his troops that the use of violence against Palestinians was permissible “irrespective of whether resistance was shown.” The specific order in question was “manifestly illegal,” and hence should not have been obeyed: “Beating a disturber of the peace who does not act up after being caught and no longer displays resistance, merely to deter him from repeating such behavior in the future, is not a military need and is a purely punitive action.”

Yet, the defendants were acquitted of the two main charges—manslaughter and causing bodily harm with aggravated intent, each of which carried a maximum 20-year prison term—and convicted of the far lesser offense of physical abuse, for
which the maximum punishment was three years in prison. (The manslaughter charge was dismissed because it was impossible to determine who, precisely, had caused al-Shami's death, and the judges ruled that "intent" had not been proved in the case of causing bodily harm.) The physician was cleared of all charges. Three of the soldiers were sentenced to nine months in prison, the fourth to six months; the staff sergeant was demoted to the rank of private. Outraged at what they considered the harsh sentences, the soldiers' families and supporters went on the rampage in the courtroom, attacking journalists.

Just before the outburst, the presiding judge noted that the case "perhaps symbolizes a breakdown in values, which must be addressed before it continues and deepens, and endangers basic values that have been—and, hopefully, will continue to be—pillars of our cultural heritage." The court explained that, if judged by their behavior alone, the defendants deserved far lengthier prison terms. However, there was a major mitigating circumstance: "We must not forget that the ground for their failure was prepared by their commanders, who repeatedly gave them an order that they were to use violence as long as they were [in the process of] arresting a disturber of the peace, irrespective of whether he resisted. That order is manifestly illegal." The Judge-Advocate General's Office announced that the investigation of Hani al-Shami's death would be reopened, to try to determine who was actually responsible, and that legal steps would be taken against officers who issued "manifestly illegal" orders.

There was reason to believe, however, that the policy-setters in the defense establishment were reluctant to have high-ranking officers face trial on charges relating to orders they may have issued during the intifada's early stages. On September 29, the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the head of Southern Command, Maj. Gen. Matan Vilnai, reduced the sentences of the three soldiers who had received nine-month terms by a third. With time off for good behavior also taken into account, they were released the same day, having served four months in prison. (The fourth soldier had been released a month earlier after his sentence was reduced by 20 days.) None of the four would be allowed to return to the Givati Brigade. Ze'ev Schiff, the defense analyst of the daily Ha'aretz, noted that the whole affair left a "bad taste" and that its point had been to preclude further legal proceedings in the case.

On October 3, four more Givati soldiers, this time including two officers, a major and a lieutenant, went on trial for severely beating two handcuffed Gaza men following a riot. Ayad Mahmud Akal died in hospital the following day, while the second man sustained serious injuries, including a broken elbow. On October 4, the trial opened of yet another Givati officer, 2nd Lt. Yuval Wilf, who was accused of causing the death by negligence of a Rafah man in December 1988. His was the first trial involving a death caused by the use of plastic bullets. Later that month, a sergeant in the reserves was sentenced to two years in prison for the unwarranted shooting to death of two Palestinians during a violent incident near Hebron in May 1988.
The most sensational case involved the then-commander of the Nablus District, Lt. Col. Yehuda Meir, aged 37. On January 21, 1988, according to an account in the daily Yediot Aharonot, Meir ordered troops under his command to round up 12 men from the West Bank village of Hawara, take them to an isolated spot, and beat them until their arms and legs were broken. (The "rationale": they would no longer be able to throw stones or run from soldiers.) They were duly arrested that night and taken in a military bus to an outlying field. After being divided into groups of three, the 12, all of them bound and some gagged and blindfolded as well, were hurled to the ground and set upon by club-wielding soldiers. An officer supervised each group to ensure that the order was carried out in full. The bus driver ran the engine to muffle screams. Some of the soldiers' riot batons broke under the force of the repeated blows. One of the 12 was left in a physical state enabling him to go for help after the troops left.

It took a complaint by the International Red Cross in May 1988 to set in motion what turned out to be a lengthy IDF investigation. In May 1989, Meir, by now promoted to full colonel and serving in a Civil Defense unit in the Tel Aviv area, was given a "severe reprimand" by the chief of staff in a disciplinary hearing for the orders he had given 16 months earlier. Under an agreement reached with the army—evidently to forestall a trial of so high-ranking an officer and one, moreover, who threatened to open a "can of worms" which would implicate the highest levels of the defense establishment in the anarchic events of the intifada's initial stage—Meir was to conclude his military service and join the Shin Bet, the General Security Service. However, that deal fell through and other state agencies approached by the military also balked at the idea of employing Meir. Finally, in October 1989 the IDF allowed Meir to take leave without pay until November 1992, when he would turn 40 and be able to retire with a full pension.

The Israeli public was kept in the dark about the Meir case until MK Yossi Sarid (Citizens' Rights Movement) published an article in Ha'aretz on May 4 disclosing the details of the Hawara incident and the cover-up efforts under way in the IDF. This prompted the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), along with a group called "Parents Against Erosion" (referring to the erosion—physical, mental, and spiritual—suffered by their sons in fighting the intifada) and four of the Hawara residents who had been brutalized to ask the High Court of Justice to intervene and order the IDF to court-martial Meir. (He had already been court-martialed as the commanding officer when eight Israeli soldiers were kidnapped in Lebanon in September 1982, and it was in his sector as commander of Nablus that two of the most publicized outrages by Israeli soldiers in the intifada occurred: the burial alive of four West Bankers and the savage beating of two others that was screened by CBS-TV. See AJYB 1990, p. 405.) Meir's defense—and the IDF's and the state's (the formal respondent to the ACRI petition was the State Attorney's Office)—rested on the "unique circumstances" and the shifting policy that characterized the IDF's response to the mass demonstrations and provocations of the uprising's early days. True, Meir's order had been "manifestly illegal," the defense conceded in an
affidavit submitted to the court in July, but Meir was being sufficiently punished by being forced to leave the army. This argument was undercut when the State Attorney's Office itself submitted a revised affidavit, in October, stating that Meir would in fact remain in the IDF for three more years.

On December 24, a tribunal of three justices ordered the Military Advocate General to court-martial Col. Yehuda Meir on the charge of “causing grievous bodily harm with intent.” Brig. Gen. Amnon Strashnow announced that an indictment would be drawn up; if convicted, Meir would face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. High Court Justice Moshe Beiski wrote in the verdict: “Actions of this kind are an affront to every civilized person. No vagueness or unclarity can be a cover for them, and certainly not when such an order is given by a senior officer, who is duty-bound to be aware that the IDF’s moral level unequivocally forbids such behavior.”

One week after the High Court’s ruling in the Meir case, an indictment was submitted against Col. Yaakov Sadeh, the deputy commander of the Gaza Strip, for causing the death by negligence of a 15-year-old boy, Mahmud Frej, in an incident in the Bureij refugee camp on July 31, 1989. Meir’s, though, was the first case in which the commanding officer who gave an illegal order would face trial—rather than the junior officers and soldiers who carried it out. Five majors and three captains had been tried by year’s end, but officers with higher ranks were given disciplinary hearings. Strashnow held a press conference (in October) to rebut public criticism that the big fish were being let off the hook. All told, by the end of 1989 more than 50 indictments had been submitted against nearly 90 soldiers in the territories for offenses committed since the start of the intifada, ranging from manslaughter to looting. More than 500 others faced disciplinary hearings.

Diplomatic and Political Developments

The Israeli peace initiative of 1989 was born when the most senior figures in the political establishment came to the realization that action had to be taken to counter growing domestic discontent at the persistence of the intifada and—no less—to halt the erosion of support for Israel in the international community in general and in the United States in particular, due to Israel’s handling of the uprising. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin were especially perturbed at Washington’s decision in December 1988 to enter into a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Moreover, that decision, together with the declaration by the Palestine National Council, a month earlier, of the establishment of the “State of Palestine,” seemed to re-inspirit the insurrection in the territories.

On January 18, Defense Minister Rabin, replying in the Knesset to no-confidence motions based on the government’s handling of the intifada, was heckled and taunted so vociferously by MKs from the Left—for excessive brutality in putting down the uprising—and from the Right—for not being tough enough against the
Palestinians—that he stalked out of the chamber in the middle of his statement. The next day, though, at a previously scheduled briefing with reporters, Rabin unveiled a plan envisaging a period of "expanded autonomy" in the territories, with elections to be held in which delegates would be chosen to hold talks with Israel on steps toward a settlement; in return, the Palestinians would cease their violence for up to six months. Should the Palestinians reject the plan and persist in the uprising, the defense minister noted, Israel would at least have obtained moral justification for suppressing the intifada with force.

The Palestinians in fact rejected the proposal, citing its obvious attempt to drive a wedge between the PLO and the inhabitants of the territories by creating an "alternative Palestinian leadership." A more positive response came from the Prime Minister’s Office, where similar ideas were being broached in back rooms.

Meanwhile, the PLO endeavored to change its image in the eyes of Israelis. On February 22, Yasir Arafat held his first-ever press conference for Israeli journalists, in Cairo. (Israel TV permitted its viewers to see only selected excerpts two days later, and then only after a fierce row within the Israel Broadcasting Authority.) “We are cousins,” Arafat declared. “You have to treat me as an equal and a human being.” A day earlier, Arafat’s second-in-command in Fatah, Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf), addressed, via a videocassette smuggled into Israel, a symposium sponsored by the International Center for Peace in the Middle East. Calling for Israeli-PLO talks, Abu Iyad asserted that after 40 years of war, the Palestinians had concluded that “we cannot destroy the Israelis.” Shamir, however, was having none of it. Such PLO statements, he told reporters, were “pure [propaganda] tactics,” part of an ongoing campaign to delude the Israeli public.

Following a familiar pattern, Shamir’s case was bolstered by acts of terrorism in Israel, the territories, and from Lebanon, which government spokesmen attributed to the PLO (few Israelis distinguished between the PLO’s different wings, and to most the organization was synonymous with terror). Thus, following attempted infiltrations by two PLO groups across the Lebanese border around the beginning of March, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said that it was “hard to understand how the PLO expects public opinion in Israel and the West to take statements about changes in policy seriously, while the [organization’s December 1988] commitment to stop terror is being mocked by continuous acts of terror.”

Shamir also took heart from a sweeping Likud victory in the countrywide municipal elections held on February 28. In his campaign appearances, Shamir had declared that the local vote would be of crucial significance at the national level: Likud gains would be interpreted both at home and abroad as an endorsement of the party’s foreign and security policy. Labor leaders poured scorn on this approach, but the tremendous inroads made by the Likud—capturing many of the cities Labor had held since the establishment of the state and gaining control of the Union of Local Authorities for the first time—seemed to vindicate the confident prediction of Foreign Minister Arens that the elections would result in “the second political turnabout in Israel’s history,” the first having been the Likud’s victory in the 1977
Knesset elections. The results were a personal setback for Labor leader Shimon Peres and thus upped the stock of his archrival Yitzhak Rabin, both within the party and nationally, and heightened support for Rabin’s initiative on the territories. (Later in the year, Labor partially redeemed itself with a creditable showing in the elections for the leadership of the Histadrut Federation of Labor—the party’s last bastion of power. In the November 13 vote, Labor retained its near-total dominance of local workers’ councils and outpolled the Likud by 55 percent to 27 percent at the national level, returning MK Israel Kessar as Histadrut general secretary. Three left-wing groups split the remaining 18 percent: Mapam, 9 percent of the vote; the Civil Rights Movement and a Jewish-Arab list, 4 percent each. In 1985 a united Labor-Mapam list won 66 percent of the vote to the Likud’s 22 percent.)

In March, Foreign Minister Arens, the first high Israeli official to meet with ranking members of the newly installed Bush administration, was told by Secretary of State James Baker that he and President George Bush were expecting Shamir to come to Washington in April with concrete proposals to start the peace process moving. Pointedly, in the course of Arens’s stay, Baker told a congressional committee that if “meaningful negotiations” could not be held with a body other than the PLO, “we would then have to see negotiations between Israelis and representatives of the PLO.” Nothing was more calculated to goad Shamir into coming up with new ideas.

Shamir’s peace initiative was designed to counter the incalculable damage that Palestinian casualty statistics were visiting on Israel’s international standing, particularly in the United States. Shamir was also well aware that without Washington’s prior endorsement of the plan, there was little point in presenting it in Israel. The plan itself, as Shamir told reporters following his meeting with President Bush at the White House on April 6, involved “free democratic elections [in the territories], free from an atmosphere of PLO violence, terror and intimidation.” Speaking on the same occasion, Bush stated: “The United States believes that elections in the territories can be designed to contribute to a political process of dialogue and negotiation.”

Shamir returned home in a buoyant mood on April 14, announcing that the elections he had in mind could not be held until “total order and calm” had returned to the territories, suggesting that as long as the intifada continued, the Israeli initiative could not begin.

April, in fact, was one of the year’s most violent months in the territories. Thirty-one Palestinians were killed by the security forces, Palestinian nationalists set forest fires, intra-Palestinian liquidations intensified, and settlers retaliated against stone-throwing incidents by raiding Arab villages and, in some cases, by opening fire: two Palestinians, aged 16 and 24, were shot dead in Hebron by Jewish civilians in April. Against this background, it came as no surprise to most observers when 80 leading Palestinians in the territories in late April signed a statement rejecting the mooted elections plan by making it conditional on a prior Israeli military withdrawal. Foreign Minister Arens attributed this development to a PLO-
instigated "reign of terror" in the territories; anyone who did not toe the organiza-
tion's line, he said, was liquidated. Support for the plan, however, came from Labor
leader Peres, who described it as a "serious plan capable of producing results."

Undaunted by Palestinian rejection and by a wave of anti-Jewish violence in both
the territories and Israel—for the second time in three months, a soldier was
kidnapped near Ashkelon, and in downtown Jerusalem a Ramallah man went on
a knifing rampage (see "Terrorism, Antiterrorism, Extremism," below)—Shamir
and Rabin, joined by Arens and Peres, put the finishing touches on the elections
initiative for the territories. With the broad principles already endorsed by Wash-
ington, it remained to find specific formulations that both Likud and Labor could live
with. Fundamentally, this meant avoiding the issues likely to arise at the stage of
a final settlement, particularly the "territories for peace" formula which was anath-
ema to the Israeli Right. On May 6, Industry Minister Ariel Sharon termed the
evolving plan a "calamity" and a "colossal national blunder" which, if implemented,
would inevitably result in a Palestinian state. Sharon's broadside was the opening
salvo in the organized resistance within the Likud to the Shamir-Rabin plan.

PEACE INITIATIVE APPROVED

On May 14, the cabinet approved the "Peace Initiative of the Government of
Israel" by a wide margin, 20-6, following a seven-hour meeting. Voting against it
were Labor's Ezer Weizman—who thought the plan was outdated and irrelevant—
and Rafael Edri; the National Religious party's Avner Shaki (the party split, as
Religious Affairs Minister Zevulun Hammer voted in favor); and three ranking
Likud ministers—Ariel Sharon, David Levy, and Yitzhak Modai—who would soon
lead a revolt against Shamir, motivated by a combination of ideology and personal
ambition. A senior State Department official, Dennis Ross, in Israel at the head of
a U.S. delegation, waited outside the cabinet room to get a copy of the plan and to
express his—and Washington's—satisfaction to Shamir that the plan was now
official government policy.

Ironically, Shamir and Arens, who as Knesset members had been less than
thrilled with the Camp David accords in 1977—Shamir abstained and Arens voted
against—had now helped resuscitate that agreement. Of the four "basic premises"
underlying the peace initiative, the first stated that "Israel yearns for peace and the
continuation of the political process by means of direct negotiations based on the
principles of the Camp David accords." The other three premises were negative: no
"additional Palestinian state" (the first, presumably, was Jordan); no negotiations
with the PLO; and "no change in the status of Judea, Samaria and Gaza other than
in accordance with the government's Basic Guidelines." The proposed elections in
the territories—another step long opposed by the Likud and many in Labor, ever
since the sweeping triumph of PLO-affiliated Palestinian nationalists in municipal
elections held in the West Bank in the mid-1970s—were, it turned out, part of a far
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broader process involving four "steps," all of which were to be "dealt with simulta-
neously":

1. Israel views as important that the peace between Israel and Egypt, based on
the Camp David accords, will serve as a cornerstone for enlarging the circle of
peace in the region, and calls for a common endeavor for the strengthening of the
peace and its extension, through continued consultation.

2. Israel calls for the establishment of peace relations between it and those Arab
states which still maintain a state of war with it, for the purpose of promoting
a comprehensive settlement for the Arab-Israel conflict, including recognition,
direct negotiations, ending the boycott, diplomatic relations, cessation of hostile
activity in international institutions or forums, and regional and bilateral coopera-
tion.

3. Israel calls for an international endeavor to resolve the problem of the
residents of the Arab refugee camps in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District in
order to improve their living conditions and to rehabilitate them. Israel is pre-
pared to be a partner in this endeavor.

4. In order to advance the political negotiation process leading to peace, Israel
proposes free and democratic elections among the Palestinian Arab inhabitants
of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District in an atmosphere devoid of violence,
threats and terror. In these elections a representation will be chosen to conduct
negotiations for a transitional period of self-rule. This period will constitute a test
for coexistence and cooperation. At a later stage, negotiations will be conducted
for a permanent solution, during which all the proposed options for an agreed
settlement will be examined, and peace between Israel and Jordan will be
achieved.

The document went on to set forth technical stages and conditions for the achieve-
ment of peace, consisting of two "interlocking" stages, a five-year "transitional
period for an interim agreement," to be followed by a "permanent solution." Negotiations for achieving the permanent solution would get under way "[a]s soon
as possible, but not later than the third year after the beginning of the transitional
period." During that period, the Palestinians in the territories "will be accorded
self-rule, by means of which they will, themselves, conduct their affairs of daily life." However, Israel would retain responsibility for security, foreign policy "and all
matters [pertaining to] Israeli citizens" in the territories. The negotiating partners
"for the first [transitional] stage" would be, as Israel envisaged it, "the elected
representation of the Palestinian Arab inhabitants" of the territories, with Jordan
and Egypt invited to take part "if they so desire." Participating in the negotiations
on the permanent solution would be Israel, the Palestinians' "elected representa-
tion," and Jordan, with Egypt an optional partner. The purpose of these talks would
be to conclude the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, including the "arrange-
ments for . . . borders." (Pointedly, the Palestinians were not mentioned explicitly
in connection with the contours of the permanent solution; the plan did state,
though, that the permanent solution should be "acceptable to the negotiating par-
ties," one of which was to be the Palestinian "representation.")

Most of the problems, technical and substantive, arose in connection with the
section of the plan headed "Details of the Process for the Implementation of the
Initiative.” “First and foremost,” the first clause under this rubric said, were to come “dialogue and basic agreement by the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of [the territories], as well as Egypt and Jordan if they wish to take part, as above-mentioned, in the negotiations on the principles constituting the initiative.” Left unanswered were the questions of whom the “dialogue” was to be held with and who was to state the Palestinians’ “basic agreement” to the process before the elections were held. At all events, “[i]mmediately afterwards” would come the preparations for “free, democratic and secret elections” in which the “representation” would be chosen. This group of people—its makeup and size, the proportion of delegates from the West Bank and from Gaza were all left unspecified—would play a crucial role in the years ahead. They would negotiate the details of the transitional period, “constitute the self-governing authority” during that period, and “be the central Palestinian component, subject to agreement after three years, in the negotiations for the permanent solution.” In short, this “representation” from the territories would effectively supplant the PLO as the Palestinian people’s official spokesman.

A key stipulation for holding the elections was a “calming of the violence” in the territories. Less clear-cut was the form the elections were to take—“it is recommended that a proposal of regional elections be adopted, the details [to be determined in further discussions]”—and, most vexatious of all, was the question of who would be eligible to stand for election and to vote. According to the plan: “Every Palestinian Arab residing in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District, who shall be elected by the inhabitants to represent them—after having submitted his candidacy in accordance with the detailed document which shall be agreed upon regarding the issue of the elections—may be a legitimate partner in the conduct of negotiations with Israel.”

In an Independence Day interview with the Jerusalem Post, Prime Minister Shamir offered his interpretation of the initiative. A key element was the interlock between the Palestinian issue and the broader Arab-Israeli conflict: “[W]e are insisting that the conflict with the Palestinians cannot be ended without ending the conflict with the Arab states.” The two problems must be resolved “in conjunction.” As for who could take part in the elections, Shamir said that while it was premature to discuss the question, he was “absolutely” opposed to the participation of East Jerusalem residents. The prime minister’s stand, based on Israel’s formal annexation of East Jerusalem shortly after the Six Day War in 1967, effectively excluded the many leading Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, such as Faisal al-Husseini, from the peace process.

Indeed, that Shamir had not changed his stance was well demonstrated when he told a meeting of the Likud’s Knesset representatives: “We will not give the Arabs one inch of our land, even if we have to negotiate for ten years. We will give them nothing. . . . The veto is in our hands.” However, such rhetoric left many in the party unconvinced. The three Likud ministers who had voted against the plan—Sharon, Levy, and Modai—launched an organized campaign within the party to ditch the initiative, and by implication, Shamir as well; Modai, the leader of the
Likud's Liberal party component, openly called on Shamir to resign. The Knesset endorsed the plan on May 17, by a vote of 43–15, with 11 abstentions. However, a large number of coalition MKs, particularly from the Likud, absented themselves from the chamber, or simply did not raise their hands when the vote was taken.

As it turned out, only 17 of the Likud's 40 MKs voted for the peace initiative, along with the majority of Labor and the ultra-Orthodox Degel Hatorah; the far Left (Communists) and the far Right, including part of Agudat Israel, banded together to vote against; while the abstainees were the three dovish parties—Shinui, Citizens' Rights, and Mapam—along with two Shas MKs and one from Agudat Israel. In Labor, the initiative got a mixed reception. The party's Leadership Bureau endorsed it without a vote at the behest of Shimon Peres and, particularly, of Yitzhak Rabin, its coauthor. The defense minister explained that Shamir's hard-line statements were irrelevant, since he was referring to the stage of the permanent settlement, which the plan did not address.

The government lost no time in launching a diplomatic blitz to win support for the plan. Shamir visited England and Spain, Rabin and Arens were off to America, and Arens addressed a gathering of European Community foreign ministers. Following his meeting with Secretary of State Baker, Arens asserted that Washington's backing for the plan was "unreserved" and "wholehearted." A few days later (May 22), while Defense Minister Rabin was in the United States, Baker delivered a speech which signaled to Jerusalem that, peace plan or not, Washington's basic stance about a final settlement remained unchanged. Israel, he said, "must lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel." (See below, "International Relations—United States.")

It was unclear whether Shamir and Arens were engaged in some sort of Machiavellian ploy—as some, Baker perhaps among them, were suggesting: putting forward a plan they knew was unacceptable to the PLO, with the aim of driving a wedge between the organization and local Palestinians, but which would relieve international pressure on Israel and allow it time to break the intifada and consolidate the status quo. Evidence in support of this notion came from Shamir himself. In his counteroffensive against the recalcitrant Likud ministers, the prime minister would declare that the plan had "improved our international standing" without Israel having "to pay any price," while Arens termed the plan a "tactical" move intended to undercut PLO diplomatic gains and regain international support for Israel. Both denied that the initiative conflicted with Likud principles.

REBELLION IN LIKUD

Throughout the turbulent period following the government's adoption of the Shamir-Rabin initiative in mid-May, unrest in the Likud rose to a fever pitch. The three senior Likud ministers who led the revolt against the peace plan—Sharon, Levy, and Modai—cited ideological outrage as their motive, but each also harbored
far-reaching and mutually contradictory political ambitions. For the moment, though, the "rejection front," as they were dubbed, was united in its immediate goal: to discredit the peace plan—which Sharon, in an article in Yediot Aharanot (June 30) blasted as "a surrender to the so-called intifada and acceptance of the PLO's program"—and posit themselves as the true power brokers in the Likud. This accomplished, they believed, the 74-year-old Shamir would either step down, be forced to call a new election—thus sparking a contest for the party leadership—or find himself ousted from power in the wake of the unity government's collapse, followed by the formation of a new coalition led by Labor. The result was six weeks of fierce infighting within the Likud, climaxed by the convening of its Central Committee on July 5.

In the event, the 2,400 members of that body (a near-unanimous turnout), who came for what had been billed as a dramatic showdown, functioned as little more than extras in a distinctly nondramatic production. Following some frantic discussions and hard bargaining, involving close aides and ministerial go-betweens, the four principals closeted themselves before the crucial vote and emerged with the announcement that they had reached agreement on a draft resolution. This endorsed the Camp David accords and the government's peace initiative of May 14, but also obligated Likud representatives to act in the government and the Knesset in accordance with the principles of the Likud's platform: East Jerusalem Arabs could not participate in the elections in the territories; the terrorism and violence of the Palestinians had to be eliminated before the start of negotiations with the Arabs; Jewish settlement in Judea, Samaria and Gaza would continue; there could be no foreign sovereignty in any part of Eretz-Israel; no Palestinian state would be established in Eretz-Israel; no negotiations would be held with the PLO. The Central Committee ratified the resolutions unanimously.

To many, these constraints seemed to be the death knell of the peace initiative. The three "constraints ministers," as they were now called, proclaimed that they had achieved an enormous victory "for the sake of Greater Israel." "It is not my personal victory," gloated Sharon. "It is the victory of the Likud and of the Jews." "Now," David Levy exulted, "everything is shut tight, binding." Shamir, though, told Israel TV that there was "nothing new" in the resolution: "We did not alter one iota of the peace initiative that we proposed to the U.S., to the Arabs of [the territories] and to the Arab countries." As for the key issue of the nonparticipation of the Arabs of East Jerusalem—formally annexed to Israel but the Palestinians' intellectual center and the mooted capital of any future Palestinian state—Shamir explained that this was grounded in a 1982 cabinet resolution, passed by the Begin government during the autonomy negotiations, stipulating that East Jerusalem Arabs would not vote in the elections for the autonomy regime's administrative council.

Labor said it wasn't buying Shamir's version of events. "The resolution of the Likud's Central Committee, which surrendered to Sharon's dictate, constitutes a substantive change that harms the prospects of the government's peace initiative and
[affects] the Labor Alignment’s ability to remain in the government,” thundered a communique issued by Labor’s ministers within hours of the Likud move. At Peres’s behest, Labor’s Leadership Bureau decided to recommend to the party’s Central Committee that Labor leave the government. However, Defense Minister Rabin, although telling Israel Radio on July 6 that the Likud’s decisions “severely harm the chance of implementing the peace initiative,” urged a go-slow approach. Time was needed to see whether Palestinian partners could in fact be found, and in the meantime there was no point in leaving the government. Like all the other actors involved, Rabin was not guided strictly by ideology: he had no wish to see the government collapse and his archrival Peres put together a new coalition with the religious parties. (In a knee-jerk action, Peres’s aides put out feelers to the religious parties immediately after the Likud resolution.) The result was that no specific date was set for Labor’s Central Committee to convene.

At the cabinet meeting on July 16, Shamir, in reply to a question by Interior Minister Arye Deri, of Shas, who was known to hold dovish views, stated that the government’s May 14 peace initiative was “firm and abiding, and no changes have been made in it.” One week later, any pretext Peres might have had for leading Labor out of the government disappeared when the cabinet, “at the suggestion of the prime minister and the vice premier” (Peres), reaffirmed the May 14 initiative by a vote of 21-4 and one abstention. Voting against were the Likud’s “gang of three” and, as he had in the original vote, Labor’s dovish Ezer Weizman.

On the day after the Likud Central Committee episode, a Jerusalem Post editorial summed up the conventional wisdom about what had happened. Shamir, it said, had “effectively capitulated” to the conditions set by his party adversaries and had thereby “opted for keeping his position and party intact as his highest priority.” It was “more than puzzling” why Shamir had engaged his challengers in a protracted controversy, “only to submit to them so ignominiously.” Actually, Shamir was doing what he did best: nothing at all. He had raised the tactic of bending with the wind to a high strategic art. The “gang of three” huffed and puffed—on July 27 they met, railed at reports that Shamir and his aides were meeting with known PLO supporters from the territories (reportedly to sound them out on the peace plan)—and decided to launch an “information drive” within the Likud against Shamir, lest the prime minister divest himself of the “constraints” imposed upon him. Reinforcing their allegations were a leading West Bank lawyer, Jamal Tarifi, known to have close ties with the PLO, who admitted having met with Shamir in the latter’s office, and Deputy Finance Minister Yossi Beilin (Labor), who stated that Israel had been holding indirect talks with the PLO. But Shamir told Israel TV that talks with the PLO were “out of the question,” said Beilin was “twisting the truth,” and told a group of rabbis that he would not give up so much as a “sliver” of land.

Shamir was also aware that Labor had no real option to leave the national unity government. The party’s Central Committee finally met in early August—after the mini-crisis had been resolved—and decided that Labor would remain in the government on condition that the peace initiative continue to move forward. The meeting
adopted several principles of its own to counterbalance the "constraints" of its partner in the government, notably that East Jerusalem Arabs be allowed to vote outside Jerusalem, that Jewish settlement activity be halted during the elections, and that Palestinians from outside the territories (i.e., persons deported by Israel) be allowed to take part in talks. Also affirmed was the notion of "territory in exchange for peace." Yet, the true measure of Labor's vitality lay in the fact that only about a quarter of the Central Committee members bothered to turn up for the gathering.

Although the government's initiative may not have advanced the peace process much, it played a role in weakening the intifada by sowing the seeds of a possible rift between the Palestinians in the "homeland" and those in the "diaspora," and by generating a procedural debate involving not only the Palestinians and Israel but also the United States and Egypt, diverting attention from substantive issues. The agendas of the Palestinians in the territories and of PLO leaders in Tunis were perceived to be not wholly compatible: the former, who were on the front line of the conflict with Israel, perhaps wanted to cash in on their gains during the uprising by agreeing to elections for a delegation to negotiate with Israel; whereas the latter, concerned to maintain their leadership, effectively spurned the Israeli initiative by making elections in the territories conditional on the IDF's prior withdrawal. This was one of the issues addressed in a ten-point Egyptian plan for holding elections in the territories.

CAIRO PLAN

In effect, Cairo's plan, which was designed as a compromise between the Israeli and PLO positions, and incidentally to display Egypt's diplomatic clout, sought to fill in the lacunae in the Israeli initiative with concrete proposals and to ensure that the elections would indeed be only the first stage in a process toward peace. Thus, the Egyptian proposal stipulated that the IDF would not have to withdraw but on election day it would move away from polling stations; that the elections would take place under international supervision; that Jewish settlement operations would cease during the election period; and that the Israeli government would undertake to accept the results of the elections and to consider them part of the process leading to a permanent solution on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, entailing the "land-for-peace" principle and recognition of the Palestinians' political rights.

In addition, the Palestinians would be able to state at the outset of the talks that they were negotiating on the basis of the Egyptians' ten points and not the Israelis' four points (a concept accepted by Washington). Above all, though, President Hosni Mubarak's concept of a preliminary Israeli-Palestinian meeting in Cairo under Egyptian and American auspices seemed intended to circumvent the built-in logical flaw in the Israeli plan, the "Catch-22 of the process by which Palestinian representatives will be chosen," as the Jerusalem Post described it: "One needs representatives
to talk about the elections, which in turn, are needed in order to select representa-
tives.” Reportedly, the Egyptian plan had been conveyed to Jerusalem as early as 
July, but it was not formally presented to the government until September 15 by 
Egyptian ambassador to Israel Mohammed Bassiouny. President Mubarak was also 
prepared to host a round of preliminary talks between Israelis and Palestinians 
under U.S., Egyptian, and possibly Soviet aegis, Bassiouny said. The following day 
the “forum of four” met to discuss the Egyptian ideas. Composed of Shamir and 
Arens for the Likud and Rabin and Peres for Labor, this body had in many ways 
superseded the cabinet as the country’s top policy-making body on national-security 
matters since the May 14 initiative. Although the Labor duo advocated acceptance 
of the Mubarak plan, if only to prevent a serious rift with Washington, which 
supported it, and the Likud’s team favored rejection, claiming the plan would 
confront Israel with the need to talk to the PLO, a government crisis was averted 
by the expedient of a decision to clarify the matter further. But the lines were drawn 
more firmly following the cabinet meeting on September 17, when the Likud minis-
ters met and decided to reject the Egyptian plan, while Labor’s ministers accepted 
it.

On September 18, Defense Minister Rabin paid a one-day visit to Cairo, where 
he met for three hours with President Mubarak, and emerged to tell reporters that 
the two had reached broad agreement. Israel and a Palestinian delegation would 
meet in Cairo, at Egypt’s invitation, with the participants from the Palestinian side 
 to be announced by Egypt “following coordination with elements whose identity I 
do not wish to elaborate on”—clearly a reference to the PLO. The Palestinian 
delegation would include a number of Palestinians in exile. Reportedly, Mubarak 
had agreed to a summit meeting with Shamir after the Israeli-Palestinian talks, 
something Jerusalem had long been seeking. In an oral message conveyed to Shamir 
via Rabin, Mubarak said he was working in full coordination with Arafat—who had 
been in Cairo just before the Rabin visit—and stated that after the PLO had made 
“major concessions” in the form of accepting Resolutions 242 and 338, renouncing 
terrorism and accepting Israel’s right to exist within secure boundaries, “it is now 
Israel’s turn. Both sides must make concessions.”

Rabin briefed Shamir on his talks the next morning (September 19) in what was 
described as a tense meeting. Later that day, in an address to the Israel Bar Associa-
tion, Shamir left no doubt about where he stood. Since the elections were “part of 
a plan” geared to bringing about “peace and coexistence” between Israel and the 
Arabs in the territories, he said, it followed that there was “no room or justification” 
to allow Palestinians living abroad to take part in the process: “not only because 
the [Arabs’] demand is a cover for PLO representation, but especially because our 
initiative is totally irrelevant to residents abroad, and it is inconceivable that Israel 
will agree to their so-called ‘right of return.’ ” Having thus ruled out the participa-
tion of persons deported by Israel and Palestinians voluntarily living abroad—both 
of them groups containing leading Palestinian activists and nationalists—Shamir 
again vetoed “the involvement of Jerusalem and its Arab inhabitants” in the plan.
"Jerusalem was not and will not be included in the initiative because it is Israel's capital, and any breach . . . will diminish its status." Finally, the prime minister rejected the idea of "land for peace," not only because it related to the permanent solution and hence was not acceptable in the initial stage, but primarily "because the practical significance of the 'land for peace' formula is the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. We shall never agree to this."

UNITY GOVERNMENT UNDER STRESS

Aides of Prime Minister Shamir asserted that by supporting President Mubarak's ten points, Labor ministers were "undermining Israel's own peace initiative." Rabin, however, told a meeting of the Labor party's Central Committee that the Egyptian ideas in no way countered Israeli stands, as they said nothing about the PLO or a future Palestinian state. Nor was it of significance that "one or two" deported Palestinians would take part in the talks.

As the rift between the parties widened, there was growing talk of an early election. In Labor, Rabin was seen as the "great white hope" who could lead the party to an electoral victory for the first time since 1973, instead of the four-time loser Peres. Rabin's standing in the party rose to unprecedented heights as even the party's most dovish MKs, including Ezer Weizman and former general secretary Uzi Baram, who had been sharp critics of his policies in the intifada and had supported the "Peres camp," fell into line behind the defense minister in his efforts to advance the peace process. Nationwide, too, Rabin was by far the most popular member of the cabinet, as a Smith Institute poll showed in late September. The poll also found that the government as a whole had only a 24-percent competency rating from the public, and the prevailing perception that the national unity government had come to the end of its tether spurred mounting calls for its dissolution from all shades of the political spectrum.

Rabin, though, had other ideas. As the coauthor of the peace initiative, and perhaps apprehensive that in a showdown in Labor he would not have the backing to wrest the leadership from his 15-year archrival Peres, he behaved as though he were the glue capable of holding the government together. That plenty of glue was needed was apparent to the entire international community during September, when Foreign Minister Arens and Finance Minister Peres paid simultaneous visits to the United States. As the Jerusalem Post observed in the aftermath, the two presented a "spectacle of a two-headed government" in Israel by contradicting each other at every turn. Both ministers met (separately) with President Bush and Secretary of State Baker, and with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, who were also in the United States. Although Baker stated that Egypt's ten points were not intended to supersede the Israeli plan but "simply a method of trying to get implementation of the Shamir proposal" and to enable Palestinians and Israelis to sit together, and although Mubarak declared that
the Palestinians in question would not be a "PLO delegation," Shamir termed Mubarak's proposed Cairo meeting "talks of capitulation" for Israel at which the perpetrators of the intifada would claim victory. Shamir said the idea was to get Israel to "talk with the PLO about the quickest way to establish a Palestinian state," whereas the "entire purpose" of the Israeli initiative had been "to liberate the Arab population [in the territories] from the rule of the PLO."

Finally, the inner cabinet, the ranking formal policy-making body, comprising six Likud and six Labor ministers, met for five hours on October 5 to consider the Egyptian proposal. Unable to complete the discussion, the 12 convened again the following day—as it happened, the 16th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War—and to no one's surprise emerged after a further three hours of debate with a 6-6 stalemate on the ten points, following Labor's insistence that a vote be taken on its motion to accept Mubarak's invitation for a meeting in Cairo with Palestinians. Under cabinet rules, a tie vote meant rejection of the motion. Peres and Rabin said the result virtually consigned the peace initiative to oblivion, but Shamir said nothing had changed and intimated he was expecting James Baker to play the part of the deus ex machina by adducing a compromise U.S. plan that would enable the government to hang together. In the meantime, Faisal al-Husseini also rejected the Egyptian points because they did not address Palestinian political aspirations.

BAKER PLAN

Secretary of State Baker came up with a five-point formula in October that was intended to find a way to reconcile what had become, in the wake of Cairo's ten-point proposal to facilitate the implementation of Israel's four-point plan, the major stumbling block to progress: Israel's refusal to sit with the PLO or with any Palestinian it deemed was affiliated or associated with or sympathetic to that organization. In effect, Israel was saying that it wanted veto power over the members of the delegation it would negotiate with. The third of Baker's five points in the document's mid-October final version addressed this issue:

1. The U.S. understands that Egypt and Israel have been working hard and that there is now agreement that an Israeli delegation will conduct a dialogue with a Palestinian delegation in Cairo.
2. The U.S. understands that Egypt cannot substitute for the Palestinians in that dialogue and that Egypt will consult with the Palestinians on all aspects of that dialogue. Egypt will also consult with Israel and the U.S.
3. The U.S. understands that Israel will attend the dialogue [in Cairo] after a satisfactory list of Palestinians has been worked out. Israel will also consult with Egypt and the U.S. on the matter.
4. The U.S. understands that the government of Israel will come to the dialogue on the basis of the Israeli government's May 14 initiative.

The U.S. further understands that elections and negotiations will be in accordance with the Israeli initiative. The U.S. understands, therefore, that the Palestini-
2. The notes will be free to raise issues that relate to their opinion on how to make elections and negotiations succeed.

3. In order to facilitate the process, the U.S. proposes that the foreign ministers of Israel, Egypt and the U.S. meet in Washington within two weeks.

The PLO once again played into Shamir's hands by immediately rejecting the Baker "understandings," since they seemed to deprive the organization of the power to name the Palestinian delegation. But Shamir, too, was not satisfied. He wanted "guarantees" from Washington that Israel would not have to negotiate with the PLO and that the issue of a Palestinian state, or anything other than the details of the elections in the territories, would not be raised at the talks. (The Israeli plan carefully differentiated between the first, interim, stage of a peace process and a later stage when the "permanent solution" would be addressed—with the latter phase being absolutely dependent on the prior implementation of the former.) Transoceanic telephone conversations between Shamir and Bush, Shamir and Baker, and Baker and Arens, in which the Israeli side tried to induce the Americans to toughen the language of the five points in the direction sought by Israel, produced little more than growing tensions between the two governments.

Tension also continued within the national unity government. But Labor seemed to be in a state of leaderless paralysis. Its leadership, well aware that Labor did not have the necessary support in the Knesset to topple the government and form a new one, fearful of taking a severe drubbing in a general election, and under pressure by the party's Histadrut leaders not to trigger a government crisis on the eve of the elections for the labor federation (November 13), decided to vote with the government on October 24 in no-confidence motions submitted by the opposition regarding the failure to move forward on the peace issue. In the event, though, only seven of Labor's 39 MKs voted with the government as Peres and Rabin had requested, while others abstained, did not take part, or simply absented themselves from the Knesset. Ronni Milo, the minister of environmental affairs, replying on behalf of the government, declared that "all the blame" for the stymied peace process rested with the PLO, "which is preventing the residents of the territories who are interested in a political solution from sitting with us at the [negotiating] table."

On October 23, Arens sent a letter to Baker couched in what were described as "positive" tones but asking that the five points be formally amended—Shamir was unwilling to accept oral assurances from the Americans—to state that the Palestinian delegation be composed only of inhabitants of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza (thus ruling out residents of East Jerusalem and Palestinians residing abroad); that the Cairo venue be changed; that the makeup of the Palestinian delegation be determined by Egypt, Israel, and the United States; and that the Palestinians not be permitted to raise any topic other than the election modalities. Baker, who was also under pressure from the Egyptian-PLO side, flatly rejected the first two requests but agreed to omit one sentence from the five points—the second sentence in Point 3: "Israel will also consult with Egypt and the U.S. on the matter" of the Palestinian delegation—and to add one word to Point 5, which would then read: "In order to
facilitate the negotiating process...,” this to enable Israel to claim that the talks were on election procedures and not on substance, and the Arabs to claim that “negotiating process” was tantamount to “peace process,” so that subjects not directly related to election modalities could also be put forward. In letters to Cairo and Jerusalem on November 1, on the eve of a visit to Australia, Baker asked for a reply to his ideas—which would also include various guarantees to both sides in letters accompanying the five points—by the time of his return on November 8.

Shamir was under additional pressure. Despite strong hints put out by Israeli officials that the prime minister would like to meet with President Bush while he was in the United States to deliver a speech to a Jewish gathering in mid-November, the White House had not been forthcoming. Closer to home, on October 25, the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Israel party had given the Likud two weeks to implement all its pledges or it would leave the coalition. (Its deputy labor and social affairs minister, Rabbi Moshe Zeev Feldman, had resigned six weeks earlier for the same reason.)

The Shamir-Arens camp now feared that a decision by the government to reject the Baker proposals would be too much for even the dispirited Labor party to accept; Peres, this time probably with Rabin’s support, would break up the national unity government and turn to the religious parties in an effort to form a “narrow” government. The main candidates: the Aguda, which was furious with the Likud; and Shas, whose spiritual mentor, former Sephardi chief rabbi Ovadia Yosef, and “strong man,” Interior Minister Arye Deri, had in the past both professed distinctly dovish views. (In a July meeting in Cairo with President Mubarak, Rabbi Yosef—accompanied by Deri—had stated that in his view, if returning the territories could guarantee a true peace, while retaining them posed the danger of war, then, according to the halakhic precept of pikuah nefesh, the saving of lives, they should be returned.)

On top of this, Ha’aretz reported (November 7) that Tom Dine and Bob Asher, the two ranking officials in AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the foremost Israeli lobby in Washington, had paid an unpublicized lightning visit to Jerusalem where they had warned Shamir that rejection of the Baker proposals would have the most serious consequences for Israeli-U.S. relations and within the American Jewish community. Similar messages were reportedly received from Seymour Reich, the chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, and others. On the other side, the three “constraints” ministers—Sharon, Levy, and Modai—were again accusing Shamir of holding indirect talks with the PLO, violating the July 5 resolutions of the Likud Central Committee and demanding that that body be convened again if the Baker plan, even in its amended form, were accepted. The three, indeed, cast the only negative votes when Shamir put the matter to a vote in the 12-member inner cabinet on November 5.

However, although the results of the vote enabled Shamir to achieve his immediate purpose—get an invitation to meet with Bush on November 15—rough waters still lay ahead. The Israeli acceptance was not unconditional, but was given on the
assumption that, following this assent and in accordance with the secretary of state’s accompanying letter to the five points, the United States, for its part, would see to it that the entire process was compatible with Israel’s peace initiative of May 14, including the following points: (a) The dialogue would begin after a list had been drawn up of Palestinian Arabs residing in Judea-Samaria and Gaza which was acceptable to Israel. (b) Israel would not negotiate with the PLO. (c) The substantive topic for discussion would be the procedures for the elections in Judea-Samaria and Gaza, in a manner compatible with the peace initiative. (d) The United States would publicly support the above Israeli positions and would back it in the event that one party to the dialogue deviated from what was agreed. (e) The United States and Egypt would declare their support for the principles of Camp David which underlay Israel’s peace initiative, including the stages and substance of the negotiations. (f) One meeting, the first, would be held in Cairo, and the continuation would be considered in the light of its outcome.

Although Egypt on December 6 declared its “willingness to proceed” on the basis of Baker’s amended proposals—as usual subject to “consultations” with the Palestinians, meaning the PLO—the Israeli “forum of four” decided, two days later, to accede to Baker’s request to hold “contacts” preparatory to the trilateral foreign ministers’ meeting. The secretary of state had proposed, in a phone conversation with Arens two days earlier, that Israel send a joint Likud-Labor delegation of officials to Washington for the preliminary talks, but Peres and Rabin accepted Shamir’s suggestion that cabinet secretary Elyakim Rubinstein go alone. Although Rubinstein reportedly made a bit of headway in Washington, at year’s end the peace process was effectively tangled up in a labyrinthine complex of “points” and “assumptions” about those points. In any event, within days the problems of the Middle East were abruptly shunted to a low place on the administration’s agenda as upheaval shook Romania and Eastern Europe.

The governing coalition in Israel also suffered a series of jolts as the year drew to a close. Despite Shamir’s promises to the ultra-Orthodox parties that the Likud would not support a human-rights bill that had been drafted by the party’s own justice minister, Dan Meridor, and approved (April 9) by the cabinet, when the identical bill came up for a preliminary vote in the Knesset in mid-November—while Shamir was abroad—after being presented by Shinui’s Amnon Rubinstein, it passed by a margin of 53–9 and was sent to committee, with the backing of most of the Likud MKs. Agudat Israel had pulled out of the coalition for a two-month period on November 8, in order to give the Likud a chance to fulfill some of its promises, and Shas was enraged by the Likud’s support for the human-rights bill. At this juncture, Shimon Peres, further encouraged by Labor’s big win in the Histadrut election, began maneuvering behind the scenes to try and swing the ultra-Orthodox parties behind Labor and topple the government in order to create what he called a “coalition for peace.” The human-rights legislation was in fact soon killed in the Likud-chaired Constitution, Law and Justice Committee by a one-vote margin, and the Likud declared that it was abandoning its previous advocacy of
electoral reform as well. But pressures continued to mount in Labor for a break with the Likud over the peace issue, while in the Likud the “constraints” trio demanded a harder line and said they were setting up their own Knesset bloc.

**Peace Movement**

Advocacy for peace was increasingly identified with people like Abie Nathan, the perennial “peacenik,” perceived as a well-meaning eccentric, who in October began serving a six-month prison term under the 1986 amendment to the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance for having met abroad with PLO leaders, including Yasir Arafat. (Typically, he was cheered into prison by about a thousand supporters, including Labor doves and left-wing MKs who promised to work for the law’s repeal but did nothing.) There were, as well, radical-left Israelis like Michael Warshawsky, head of the Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem, who in November was sentenced to 20 months in prison for providing printing services to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (see AJYB 1989, p. 376), and the Derekh Hanitzotz group (see AJYB 1990, pp. 413–14), whose four Israeli members were sentenced to relatively light sentences in a plea-bargaining deal which they regarded as an “achievement” as it put an end to the “witch hunt,” in the words of Ya’akov Ben-Efrat, who received the longest prison term, 30 months. There were also groups such as “The 21st Year,” “Stop the Occupation,” “Women in Black” and “Yesh Gvul” (There’s a Border/Limit)—tiny organizations, often consisting largely of academics.

Only Yesh Gvul, which called on reservists not to serve in the territories and provided support for those sent to jail for refusing to serve, seemed to bother the authorities. For a time the organization was investigated by the Shin Bet, as a result of which several of its activists were summoned for interrogation by the police, prompting MK Shulamit Aloni, leader of the Citizens’ Rights and Peace Movement, to write to Police Minister Haim Bar-Lev that Yesh Gvul was an open and legitimate protest movement, and that the actions of the security authorities seemed to signal “the end of the era of democracy in Israel.”

But the most significant point was that of 300,000 Israeli soldiers who had been sent to do service in the territories, fewer than 100 had refused. Indeed, most of the dovish MKs strenuously opposed refusal to serve, as did the largest of the peace organizations, Peace Now. Peace Now had organized a few demonstrations, carried out sporadic forays of support into the territories (these convoys were often turned back by soldiers), and staged a few symbolic happenings, such as an event in the West Bank in October at which the speakers included Yael Dayan, the daughter of Moshe Dayan, and Faisal al-Husseini (son of Palestinian leader Abd al-Kadr al-Husseini, who was killed in the fighting near Jerusalem in 1948). However, as long as its own activists implicitly supported the occupation by continuing to accept reserve duty in the territories, and as long as they failed to convince other Israelis of the necessity and viability of their cause, the movement was destined to remain
ineffectual. At the very end of the year, though, Peace Now committed the biggest sin of all in the eyes of most Israelis: it linked hands with the *goyim*, figuratively and literally, in an “initiative” that was inspired by the dramatic events in Eastern Europe.

“1990: Time for Peace” consisted of three days of meetings, discussions, and visits to the territories sponsored by dozens of international peace groups—about 1,000 activists from Europe came—and Peace Now. What caught the public’s attention, though, was a “human chain” in which these visitors, together with thousands of Israeli Jews and Palestinians, were to link hands and encircle the wall of the Old City of Jerusalem. In fact, nearly 30,000 Arabs and Jews showed up for the event on a balmy December 30, and a festive atmosphere was maintained until the very end. At that point, police charged into one section of the “human chain,” outside the Damascus Gate, where, according to a police communiqué, “extremist Palestinian elements” violated the terms of the permit for the demonstration by chanting PLO slogans and waving Palestinian flags. About 60 persons, half of them visitors from abroad, were injured by police tear gas, plastic bullets, and riot batons (one Italian woman lost an eye due to broken glass).

Peace Now and its supporters alleged that the police action had been unwarranted and certainly brutal to an extreme, while right-wing spokesmen deplored the fact that the demonstration had been allowed to take place at all. Even before the events got under way, the Prime Minister’s Office linked the gathering with the PLO, and Ehud Olmert, the minister responsible for Arab affairs, told the cabinet the following day, December 31, that he had actual “evidence” that the PLO was behind “Time for Peace.” It was at that same cabinet meeting that the year’s most dramatic attempt was made to discredit those perceived as “doves” and “leftists” by identifying them with the PLO—and, indeed, to discredit the entire Labor party. Out of the blue, Prime Minister Shamir informed the cabinet that he had decided to dismiss Minister of Science and Development Ezer Weizman—a former Air Force commander and, as defense minister in the first Begin government, a major architect of the peace with Egypt—because he had “maintained contacts with the PLO, directly and indirectly, over a period of time.” Reading from a prepared text, Shamir said Weizman had met with “an official PLO representative” in Europe, “and recently he sent messages to the head of the PLO, Arafat, and received messages from him via a courier.” Shamir said Weizman had violated both the law—the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance—and the government’s Basic Guidelines. The cabinet was further taken aback to hear that Shamir had informed Vice Premier Peres of his intention to fire Weizmann three days earlier, and had asked Peres to induce Weizman to resign voluntarily. Shamir gave Defense Minister Rabin the same information just before the December 31 cabinet meeting. Neither Peres nor Rabin had passed the information on to Weizman or asked him to resign; Peres had told Shamir he would oppose any move to dismiss Weizman. Under the coalition agreement, Shamir needed Peres’s consent in order to fire a Labor minister—as Peres pointed out in a letter to Shamir later that day, in which he also objected to
“judgment being passed” on anyone without giving that person the opportunity to explain himself.

Shamir preempted Israel TV’s children’s hour that evening to take his case directly to the public. “There is one great rule in the government’s peace initiative,” Shamir asserted: “There will be no negotiations with the PLO.” But Weizman, he said, a member of the inner cabinet and hence privy to the country’s deepest secrets, not only rejected the peace initiative, “he speaks against the government’s policy behind the prime minister’s back, in agreement with our most dangerous enemies. He maintains contacts with PLO members, instructs them how to deal with our arguments, how to conduct their relationship with the U.S. and how to foil our moves, the moves of his own government... Will there be a crisis, the government’s dissolution? I say this is not necessary. I still hope that most Labor party cabinet members dissociate themselves from minister Weizman’s opinions and actions...”

Weizman himself expressed no regrets over his moves, which he said were all made in the pursuit of peace, and indeed told Ha’aretz that he welcomed Shamir’s action as it would at last force both Likud and Labor to decide where they stood on the peace process and on the question of contacts with the PLO. Shamir, too, in meeting with Jamil Tarifi, Weizman said, had in effect been in contact with the PLO. Despite Shamir’s admonitions, Labor spokesmen threatened to leave the government if Shamir did not retract his dismissal of Weizman; once more Peres’s aides began feeling out the ultra-Orthodox parties to see whether a Labor-led government was feasible. A few days before dropping the Weizman bombshell, Shamir had told a Likud meeting that the possibility of an early election would not deter him. “There will be no talks with Arafat’s gang of murderers, and there will be no Palestinian state.” The May 14 peace initiative, he added, was not meant as a springboard for “far-reaching concessions.” Anyone who thought that was deluding himself, the prime minister asserted. That initiative “is the limit of our concessions.”

Terrorism, Antiterrorism, Extremism

The spillover of the intifada across the Green Line into Israel proper continued and intensified in 1989. The effect was to unleash new depths of anti-Arab violence among Jews—and violence by extremists against fellow Jews who were considered “leftists” or, synonymously, “PLO-supporters.” On more than one occasion the country’s leaders found themselves having to call on the public to exercise restraint.

Yet, the messages of the leadership, too, were not always unequivocal. In May, following an incident in downtown Jerusalem in which a Ramallah man went on a knifing frenzy, killing two and wounding three others, and then was almost lynched by passersby, Prime Minister Shamir stated that such murderers “should not be allowed to escape in one piece.” The following month, when anti-Arab feelings were running high following a number of incidents, it was announced that President Herzog had reduced the terms of the last three members of the Jewish
underground still in prison. The three, Menachem Livni, Uzi Sharabaf, and Shaul Nir, were serving life terms for the murder of three students at the Islamic College in Hebron and other offenses. Intense and relentless behind-the-scenes political pressure was brought to bear on Herzog (he had commuted the sentences of 14 of the other 28 members of the underground), and although he occasionally condemned their deeds, in 1987 he reduced their terms to 24 years, in 1988 to 15, and finally, in 1989, to 10 years. The three were then moved to a Prisons Service yeshivah which functioned as a halfway house for “special” prisoners who had 18 months or less still to serve. Jailed in 1984, with Herzog’s commutations and time off for good behavior, the three would be eligible for parole in 1990, after spending seven years in prison.

Less subtle messages condoning anti-Arab violence after terror attacks came from ultranationalist parties in the Knesset and extremist extraparliamentary groups such as Meir Kahane’s Kach movement; the Temple Mount Faithful (who during Sukkot—October 16—laid the “cornerstone for the Third Temple” near the Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem); and the Kach-affiliated “State of Judea” group, established as “a possible alternative to Israeli rule if and when Israel vacates the territories.” (In July it was the subject of a police crackdown; no charges were pressed, although two months earlier the group’s leadership had resolved “to create an infrastructure for an army.”)

One far-right group that did more than talk in 1989 was the self-styled “Sicarii,” named after the Jewish zealots who assassinated suspected collaborators during the Romans’ siege of Jerusalem, 67–70 C.E. The modern-day Sicarii specialized in setting fire to the front doors of apartments of persons they believed had “crossed the line” into the enemy camp. Their targets included Mapam MK Yair Tsaban, who had met with PLO officials; journalist Dan Margalit, for a planned interview on his TV show with Faisal al-Husseini; and pollster Mina Zemach. Her Dahaf Agency found, in a widely quoted February poll whose results appeared in the mass-circulation Yediot Aharonot, that 53 percent of the Israeli public supported negotiations with the PLO, provided the organization fulfilled its various pledges of moderation, including recognition of Israel and cessation of terrorism.

This finding was perhaps related to PLO chief Yasir Arafat’s statements toward the end of 1988; at all events, polls conducted later in 1989 revealed a distinctly hard-line approach among the Jewish public, evidently reflecting the grim atmosphere engendered by the surging nationalist violence. In July Ha’aretz reported that, according to a poll conducted by a Tel Aviv University policy-planning institute, nearly half the population (46 percent) thought Israel was “too democratic”—up a full 10 percent since the last poll on the subject in 1987. In November a poll of 1,200 Israeli Jews by the Smith Research Institute, also reported in Ha’aretz, found that a majority (52 percent) was “ready to consider the expulsion of Palestinians if a way to peace is not found.” This was the largest proportion of supporters for the “transfer” idea (the euphemism preferred instead of “expulsion” by its proponents) ever recorded by the institute. Moreover, the rise in the number favor-
ing this mode of dealing with the problem had risen by a dramatic 14 percent since the beginning of the year—the cumulative effect of the intifada-related violence and of the growing incidence of terror inside the Green Line, according to the polling institute's director.

Police statistics bore this out. Inside Israel, 839 terrorist attacks were perpetrated in 1989, double the 1988 figure; stone throwing jumped by 54 percent, to 2,267 cases, and there was a minor rise in the number of Molotov cocktails thrown at Jewish targets. Terrorist outrages were sufficiently frequent, arbitrary, and widespread geographically to inject a sense of fear into a large part of the country's Jewish population.

Fear kept Jerusalem off-limits to many, although the western (Jewish) part of the city was relatively safe in 1989. (Jerusalemites themselves felt unprotected, if the fact that gun purchases in the city were up by 350 percent since the start of the intifada is any indication.) Still, the city had more than its share of terrorist killings. On February 18, Sgt. Shlomo Cohen, aged 21, was attacked and stabbed to death by a group of young Arabs outside the Old City's Zion Gate while walking with a friend—who was wounded—to the Western Wall for Sabbath prayers. On May 3, two people, aged 91 and 76, were stabbed to death, and three others, one a woman aged 80, were wounded by a 25-year-old Ramallah man at a bus station opposite the city's main post office; in the aftermath, police forcibly prevented followers of Meir Kahane from storming the Old City and protected Arabs from attacks by Jews on the city's streets. Prof. Menahem Stern, 64, a world-renowned expert on the Second Temple period and an Israel Prize laureate, was stabbed to death on June 22 while walking from his home across the Valley of the Cross to the National Library at the Hebrew University (at year's end no one had been arrested in the case).

Yet it was outside Jerusalem that Arab terrorism left its greatest impact in 1989. On March 21, a 29-year-old resident of the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza stabbed to death Dr. Kurt Moshe Shellinger, aged 73, as he was walking on a Tel Aviv street. He also wounded two other passersby before being shot in the leg by a policeman and captured. Following the attack, Tel Aviv mayor Shlomo Lahat, a Likud member who espoused dovish political views, called for the introduction of the death penalty for terrorists who murdered civilians. Lahat estimated that as many as 20,000 Arabs from the territories who worked in Tel Aviv slept over in the city, despite the regulation prohibiting this.

Residents in Israel's southern coastal area, just north of the Gaza Strip, were shocked by two "nationalist" kidnappings within three months. Sgt. Avi Sasportas, 21, was last seen on February 16 while hitchhiking near Ashkelon on his way home to Ashdod for a weekend leave. Thousands of troops and civilians took part in searches for him over a wide area; on May 7 his body was discovered not far from where he was last seen. He had been shot and his body buried under half a meter of earth.

Hundreds of Ashdod residents ran wild after the news was received, chanting
“Death to the Arabs!” and savagely beating at least eight Arabs. All the Arabs in Ashdod fled the city, some under the protection of the police, who used smoke bombs and tear gas to disperse the rioters. The situation was aggravated by the disappearance of another soldier, 18-year-old Private Ilan Sa’adon, from Ashkelon, who was last seen hitchhiking on May 3 (the day of the downtown Jerusalem knifings), not far from where Sasportas was abducted. For days afterward cars bearing license plates from the territories were stoned by Jews along the roads leading from the Gaza Strip into Israel. Many Arabs were wounded and vehicles sustained extensive damage in the “counter-intifada.”

On May 22, a 42-year-old resident of a village near Hebron, Abd al-Aziz Zabdi, was killed when a stone hit his car near Kiryat Gat. President Herzog warned of a deterioration into “chaos” if Jews continued “to take the law into their own hands” in reprisal for Arab terror. (Despite large-scale searches, Sa’adon’s body was not found, and finally the army declared him officially dead. Accomplices of the soldiers’ murderers went on trial in December, although the actual killers of the two had evidently managed to flee to Libya.)

By far the worst single terrorist outrage of the year—indeed, since the “coastal road” massacre in 1977—occurred on July 6. At about 11 A.M. that day, a resident of the Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza, Abd el-Mahdi Ghanem, aged 23, took his seat with the other 39 passengers on the No. 405 bus from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Some 45 minutes later, shortly after the bus completed the steep climb from the coastal plain, and just before the passengers were able to get their first glimpse of Jerusalem across the Judean Hills, Ghanem charged to the front of the vehicle shouting *Allahu akbar!* (God is great), seized the steering wheel and pulled with all his strength to the right. The bus crashed through a low stone fence and hurtled down a precipice of more than 100 meters into the ravine below, landing on its roof and bursting into flames. Fourteen of the passengers died in the crash and inferno and 27 (including the driver) were injured. Two more passengers died later of their wounds. Among those killed were two Canadians and an American.

The terrorist, tall and bearded, who sustained moderate wounds but survived—he was eventually brought to court in a wheelchair—told his interrogators that he had acted alone and did not belong to any organization, although he supported the Islamic religious movements in the Gaza Strip. He had planned the operation meticulously, making the trip from Tel Aviv, where he worked in the Carmel open-air market, to Jerusalem a number of times in the month before the attack. His motive was reportedly at least in part revenge for the shooting of a friend in Nuseirat early in the *intifada*, who was since confined to a wheelchair with a spinal injury. He himself, in common with most of the camp’s 28,000 residents, had frequently taken part in clashes with Israeli security forces—11 of the camp’s inhabitants had been killed in such confrontations—once even taking a plastic bullet in the hand. His family had arrived in Nuseirat in 1948, after abandoning its village near Ashdod.

Ashdod residents were among those who went on an anti-Arab spree in the days
following the bus incident. The worst incident occurred on the day of the incident itself, near Netivot, in the Negev, when Kamal Samih Nasser, aged 31, from Gaza, was struck on the head and killed instantly by a large stone that was thrown through the windshield of the car he was driving from a passing Israeli vehicle; the four passengers in the car were injured. Kach supporters ran wild through the streets of Jerusalem, calling for "death to the Arabs" and attacking passing Arab vehicles and workers. Kach activists were dispersed with tear gas and riot batons, and six of them arrested, when they attacked members of the "Women in Black" group who were holding a weekly silent Friday-noon vigil in the city's Paris Square, just around the corner from the prime minister's residence. Fifteen persons were arrested when a mob gathered in front of the Jerusalem home of MK Dedi Zucker (Citizens' Rights), chanted slogans and threw stones. When the car of Labor leader Shimon Peres arrived at the funeral of one of the bus victims, a Jerusalem woman, Miriam Zarafi, aged 40, on the day after the attack—Peres was to deliver the eulogy on behalf of the government—it was stoned, and hotheads tried to get at Peres. He was forced to turn tail without even leaving the car.

These and other incidents and the seething atmosphere of outrage and frustration in the country led the cabinet to condemn the "harmful" and "irresponsible actions" of some Jews, while also acknowledging that the cumulative effect of "provocations" was "leaving its mark" on the Jewish population. President Herzog seemed to imply that the reaction of the political leadership had not been sharp enough when he stated that it was "the duty of every leader to come forth and speak out firmly and clearly in an attempt to restore sanity and put a stop to the hatred and lunacy of cowards who attack innocent Arabs, political rivals and even our leaders." On July 9, the home of the bus terrorist in the Nuseirat camp, which had been under curfew since the incident, was blown up by the army. (On October 30, Abd el-Mahdi Ghanem was sentenced to 16 life terms in prison and 24 additional terms of 20 years each.)

On July 14, with the country just beginning to recover from the shock of the bus attack, Zalman Shlein, a 64-year-old Holocaust survivor from the village of Gan Yavneh, near Ashdod, was stabbed to death by two Gaza teenagers who were members of an outlawed "popular committee." The entire village turned out for a demonstration after the murder, carrying signs deploring government inaction ("Enough of the ostrich policy") and calling for the parents of the killers to be deported. The Arabs from the territories who were employed in menial tasks in the village did not turn up for work on the day of the funeral and demonstration, but within days all was back to "normal." The homes of the two suspects were demolished.

The police learned about what turned out to be the year's final terrorist slaying in Israel—"one of the goriest" in the country's history, the Jerusalem Post called it—by chance. On the night of September 9, a young Ramallah man tried to repeat the July bus attack, stabbing the driver and wrenching the steering wheel to the right, above the same gully. This, time, however, the driver brought the bus to a
halt; enraged passengers pummeled the would-be murderer until a passing police car took him away (and took the driver to hospital). During his interrogation the man disclosed that two nights earlier he had murdered a Jewish guard at the Tel Aviv construction site where they both worked. No one had been reported missing, but a search turned up the mutilated body of Michael Astamkar, 38. Later in the month, a West Bank Arab who was detained after he had aroused the suspicion of a bus inspector in Tel Aviv's main bus station as he was waiting to board a bus for Jerusalem, was found to be carrying a large commando knife. He told the police that he, too, had intended to plunge the bus over the cliff on the same stretch of road in order to “avenge my brothers who are being killed every day.”

The country's attention was riveted on September 19 and 20 by the fire that broke out in one of Israel's most treasured nature sites, the heart of the forest atop Mount Carmel outside Haifa, known as “Little Switzerland.” At 11:30 A.M. flames were spotted simultaneously at five different locations in the woodland—an unmistakable sign of arson. Before it was brought under control, after a full 48 hours, the conflagration consumed 2,000 acres, or 10 percent, of the national park, killed about 20 of the 160 rare animals that were housed in a special sanctuary there, came close to spreading to a Haifa neighborhood and a kibbutz, and forced the evacuation of Haifa University. Although thanks to better coordination and heightened vigilance, far less damage was caused by fires in 1989 than in 1988—the number of fires decreased by some 7 percent, but the acreage of forests and pasture land destroyed was halved—the Carmel fire stood out in its ferocity. It sent a shudder through both the Jewish and Arab communities in the land, seeming to afford a vision of the scorched earth that would remain if the conflict were not soon checked. Nearly 30 percent of forest fires were thought to have been caused by Palestinians' “nationalist arson,” but there were hardly any more such torchings after the Carmel was ravaged.

A development that caused consternation in 1989 was the rise in the number of Israeli Arabs who turned to anti-Jewish terrorism—whether in solidarity with their brethren in the territories or in frustration at their second-class status in the country, or a combination of the two. They, however, tended to operate in more traditional ways, organizing in underground cells and utilizing weapons and means other than knives. A number of these cells were uncovered by the security forces during the year: in February it was announced that a resident of Umm el-Fahm who had been recruited by Fatah while on the hajj to Mecca had confessed to committing, along with others, acts of arson and sabotage including the torching of a kibbutz plastics factory; in July a four-member Fatah cell was uncovered in Jaffa even before it had acted; and in November, 27 Israeli Arabs—10 from Nazareth and 17 from the “Jatt National Front,” named after the Triangle village where they resided—were arrested for stoning buses, torching cars of suspected “collaborators,” and raising Palestinian flags.

To combat acts of terror, the security forces—the IDF and the police working in close coordination with the Shin Bet—invested tremendous efforts. Dozens of
organized hostile groups were arrested in the territories, many of which had carried out attacks inside Israel. Others had attacked suspected "collaborators" and Israeli soldiers; frequently the homes of those detained were demolished or sealed.

Two of the many trials held during the year evoked bitter memories. In March the 17-year-old murderer of Ofra Moses and her son, Tal, from the Samaria settlement of Alfei Menashe, who died of burns when a Molotov cocktail hit the car they were traveling in in April 1987, was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Nablus military court (two of those three judges asked for the death penalty, which must be a unanimous decision). In December the three perpetrators of the firebomb attack on a bus near Jericho on October 30, 1988, which killed a woman, her three small sons, and a soldier, were sentenced to life imprisonment.

**National Security**

The cost of the intifada, in terms of its short- and long-range effects on the IDF's combat ability, as well as in the expenditure of monetary and human resources, continued to concern national-security policymakers. Commenting on a *Newsweek* report (May 1) that the uprising had seriously reduced the army's combat effectiveness, Defense Minister Rabin told the *Jerusalem Post* that he was certain the IDF's deterrent capability was not only "very effective," it "might even be more effective than before." His rationale was that the air force, a key element in achieving deterrence, "has not been affected in any way by the uprising." More broadly, Rabin pointed out that the Arab states did not "measure Israel's strength by the way we operate in the territories." Rabin conceded, though, that there was "no doubt" the deployment of regular and reserve forces in the territories "might, for a while, hurt their training for war." Finally, he noted, in a refrain heard throughout the year from the defense establishment, that the army had not received budgetary compensation "for our expenses in dealing with the uprising," and the funds that the military had been compelled to divert to suppressing the insurrection could have been used for weapons research and development.

An elaboration of the defense minister's assessment was offered in July by Brig. Gen. Michael Navon, the economic adviser to the chief of staff. A few days before the cabinet was to consider Rabin's request for an extra NIS 400 million ($200 million) for expenses incurred in the territories, Navon told the IDF weekly *Bamahane* that by the end of the 1989–90 fiscal year (March 31, 1990), the direct cost of dealing with the uprising would stand at NIS 1 billion, which averaged out to more than a million shekels a day. Navon spoke of "long-term implications" and said "damage" had already been done in areas such as force-building and procurement and stockpiling of matériel. In the event, the cabinet on July 23 authorized a supplementary defense budget of only NIS 150 million.

A month later, the IDF submitted its multiyear plan to the cabinet for discussion and endorsement. Although drawn up a full year earlier, the plan had not been presented due to the protracted aftermath of the Knesset elections, arguments about
budget cuts, and the ongoing (and still unresolved) debate about whether to imple-
ment the navy's hugely expensive plan to modernize its submarine fleet. Overall, the
plan was designed to implement the conceptual motto enunciated by Chief of Staff
Dan Shomron when he took over in 1987: a "smaller and smarter" army. This
entailed the broad restructuring of the IDF and the procurement of "over-the-
horizon" and "high-kill ratio" weapons that would enable the IDF to retain its
 technological edge over the huge manpower advantage of the Arab armed forces.

But the plan's implementation was threatened, according to a "senior military
source" quoted in the press at year's end, by the fact that by the end of the fiscal
year in March 1990, the IDF would face a budgetary shortfall of NIS 900 million.
That sum, instead of being used for genuine defense enhancement, had gone into
the territories for purchasing ammunition and equipment to quell the uprising (such
as the "gravel-thrower" invented by Israeli ingenuity to fight Palestinian stone-
throwers in the period of the mass demonstrations) and for the construction of new
prisons to accommodate the tens of thousands of Palestinians arrested, and for the
upkeep of the prisoners. If the intifada costs were not covered by the Treasury, and
if reserve duty in the territories continued on the same scale (a total of 2.5 million
days in 1989), the IDF's preparations for a possible future full-scale war would be
adversely affected.

On October 11, a Syrian pilot, flying low to avoid radar detection, landed his
MIG-23 at a small airfield near Megiddo in northern Israel. Delight at acquiring
what was described as the "most advanced Soviet aircraft to have fallen into West-
ern hands" was tempered by awareness that the plane had not been intercepted
during the seven minutes it overflew the country. Speculation that this apparent
failure of the anti-aircraft defenses was in fact a deliberate omission, the result of
prearrangement, was denied by the pilot, Maj. Mohammed Bassem Adel, 33, at a
press conference. He said he had acted on his own, without prior coordination, in
order "to live in a democratic country in which I could express my opinions freely."
At the recommendation of two senior air force officers appointed by the chief of staff
to investigate the incident, a colonel and a lieutenant colonel were reprimanded for
an "error of judgment" and "faulty reporting." Chief of Staff Shomron told a press
conference that "100 percent security" did not exist and that Israel's situation forced
it to take constant "calculated risks."

As for the risks relating to Iraq, Maj. Gen. Barak said in his April briefing to
reporters that that country's battered economy in the aftermath of the eight-year
war against Iran would preclude its taking part in a war against Israel before 1991
at the earliest. Asked about a Washington Post story quoting "well-placed Israeli
sources" to the effect that Iraq was proceeding with its nuclear program and was
developing a delivery capability jointly with Egypt and Argentina in the form of a
surface-to-surface missile, Barak said there was "at least a grain of truth" in the
reports. More immediately, Israel, in messages to Jordan via the United States,
during the summer, expressed its concern about intensifying Jordanian-Iraqi mili-
tary cooperation. Press reports said that Jordan had allowed Iraqi aircraft to fly
reconnaissance missions along the Israeli border, and that Iraq was supplying the Christian forces in Lebanon with arms—to fight Baghdad's bitter foe, the Syrians—via the southern Jordanian port of Aqaba.

Near the end of the year, official Israeli sources confirmed reports that Iraq had launched a rocket able to carry satellites into space. In late December, Defense Minister Rabin stated in the Knesset that Israel was monitoring the "technological developments" currently under way in Iraq, particularly in the realms of missiles, both intermediate and long-range, the entry into space, and nonconventional weapons. Rabin said Baghdad, spurred by the war with Iran, was devoting "tremendous" resources to these spheres, making it the Arab world's most "technologically sophisticated" state. Rabin added that Israeli efforts to induce friendly countries to scale down their military and technological aid to Iraq had been largely futile.

One of those countries was Germany. In January Finance Minister Shimon Peres, visiting West Germany, told Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Israel's "deep concern" at the fact that German firms were helping the Libyans build a chemical factory. Foreign Minister Arens requested Germany to look into reports that German companies were also aiding Iraq and Syria in their nonconventional weapons programs. At the same time, Defense Minister Rabin warned that any Arab country that attacked Israel with chemical weapons "will be smashed a hundred times harder in return." Given these alarming assessments, it was perhaps surprising that a report made in June to the Knesset's Audit Committee about the country's bomb shelters aroused hardly any public outcry. The state of private and especially public bomb shelters was reprehensible, the committee was informed, and the budgets available to ameliorate the situation were totally inadequate.

While such threats were still in the future, the situation on Israel's borders continued to be volatile, although overall, according to the Government Press Office, the number of infiltration attempts across the Lebanese, Jordanian, and Egyptian borders decreased in 1989 to 33 from 50 the previous year. The majority of the raids (20) originated in Lebanon, but there were 11 from Jordan, as compared to just one in 1988.

LEBANON, JORDAN, EGYPT

On the Lebanese front, the IDF was again active on land, at sea, and in the air. The air force was sent in sporadically throughout the year to bomb terrorist targets, particularly staging bases for raids into Israel. On June 21, Israeli warplanes attacked a base of Ahmed Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command in the Syrian-controlled Beka'a Valley. It was the first Israeli air strike in that sector in two years, and apparently was meant as a warning to Damascus to desist from supporting terrorist operations against Israel. Navy missile boats upheld their impressive record of protecting Israel's shores from seaborne terrorism. On April 4, two Lebanese boats bound for Cyprus were stopped, and 14
passengers thought to be terrorists were removed and taken to Israel for interrogation. Four days later, a Super Dvora fast patrol boat, the newest addition to the navy's fleet, sank a rubber dinghy carrying terrorists en route to Israel from Lebanon.

As in past years, however, it was the infantry that did most of the work in Lebanon. Not a single terrorist squad was able to cross the border into Israel, thanks to the combined efforts of the IDF and the South Lebanon Army in the Israeli-declared security zone in southern Lebanon. Israeli forces also ventured north of the security zone on several occasions in search-and-destroy operations, sometimes combining infantry, armor, and artillery, and usually targeting the Iranian-backed radical Hezballah militia. Two Israeli soldiers were killed during the year in Lebanon. Although Yasir Arafat's Fatah branch of the PLO was apparently not involved in any of the attempted raids in 1989, Israel constantly pointed out that despite Arafat's renunciation of terrorism in 1988—one of Washington's conditions for the start of a U.S.–PLO dialogue—other PLO groups were very active indeed. A Foreign Ministry booklet listed 14 attacks in or from Lebanon—the latter via Katyusha rockets, one of which wounded an infant in Metullah on May 28—carried out by PLO groups in 1989. Washington, however, largely disregarded these Israeli reminders.

The United States did not disregard Israel's abduction of Sheikh Abdel Karim Obeid from his home in southern Lebanon on July 28—although President George Bush confined himself to what the Jerusalem Post called a "mild rebuke." Before the affair faded from the headlines, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens was able to tell Israel Radio that "complete coordination" with Washington existed on the matter. Israel kidnapped the 36-year-old ranking Hezballah operative with the aim of trading him for three Israeli soldiers Hezballah had been holding since 1986. (Four other Israeli soldiers had been missing since the initial phase of the Lebanon War in 1982.) Israeli spokesmen, notably Prime Minister Shamir's media adviser, Avi Pazner, rebuffed international criticism of the action's "illegality," asserting that it was an "anti-terror action" and as such "absolutely legitimate"; those now condemning it, he added, had been silent when Obeid "sent people to murder and kill." According to the IDF, Obeid was active in organizing and supporting sabotage, subversion, and terrorism, and had a hand in the 1988 kidnapping of an American colonel, William Higgins, serving with UN forces in Lebanon. (Hezballah threatened to "execute" Higgins in retaliation for the Obeid kidnapping, and then released a videotape purporting to show Higgins's body after he had been hanged, but it was generally accepted that Higgins had in fact been killed months before.)

On July 31, the Defense Ministry issued a communiqué stating that "Israel calls for the immediate release of the Israeli POWs and the Western hostages held by the various Shi'ite groups in Lebanon." In exchange, Israel would release all the Lebanese Shi'ites it was holding, including Sheikh Obeid. The exchange would be carried out through the International Red Cross. Rabin, though, told reporters that Israel would not enter into talks about a prisoner exchange until "definite signs of life"
were received from the missing Israeli soldiers. But a sign of a different kind came: five Israeli soldiers were wounded, one seriously, when a man said to be a friend of Sheikh Obeid's blew up the car he was driving, and himself with it, as he passed next to an Israeli military vehicle in southern Lebanon. At year's end, no prisoner exchange had taken place and Sheikh Obeid remained in an Israeli prison.

The heating up of the Jordanian border gave cause for concern, although Israeli military and political spokesmen noted that King Hussein's regime was making every effort to prevent such incidents. On March 17, an Israeli soldier was killed when a patrol was ambushed in the Arava desert by terrorists purportedly from the Syrian-backed Abu Musa faction; and on September 2, two reservists were killed in a firefight with a lone terrorist who ambushed a foot patrol after crossing the Jordan River near Kfar Ruppin. Following a Katyusha rocket attack from Jordan on September 7—the missiles landed harmlessly in the Jordan Valley—Prime Minister Shamir stated, in an interview with Israel TV's Arabic language service, that it was the "responsibility of the Jordanian authorities" to prevent such incidents.

The infiltrations from Egypt were more successfully dealt with. On March 15, two gunmen attacked an IDF base at Rafah, just across the Egyptian border, throwing grenades. Both were captured. On December 5, five terrorists who crossed from Sinai into the Negev were killed after a pursuit by Israeli forces across forbidding terrain. This time, the five gunmen were from Arafat's Fatah organization.

OTHER SECURITY MATTERS

On May 3, the Supreme Court began hearing the appeal of Mordechai Vanunu, the former technician at the Dimona nuclear facility who was sentenced in 1988 to 18 years in prison for treason and espionage after he divulged information about the plant to a London paper. (See AJYB 1990, p. 482.)

In March Nahum Admoni, 60, head of the Mossad intelligence agency for the past six years, retired after a 35-year career. Admoni's name was made public only on his retirement, and the name of his successor, too, would not be revealed during his term of service. In January, in a historic ruling, the Supreme Court restricted the power of the military censor and allowed the Tel Aviv weekly Ha'ir to publish an article about the outgoing Mossad chief (without revealing his identity) which claimed he was being dismissed for incompetence. The court held that freedom of speech overrode security considerations unless there was a "near certainty" that such freedom would threaten national security.
International Relations

UNITED STATES

Relations between the newly installed Bush administration and the Israeli government went somewhat askew this year. President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker entered office determined to advance the Middle East peace process and committed to the pursuit of human rights. In their perception, Israel was wanting on both counts: recalcitrant on the peace issue and guilty of ongoing human-rights violations in the occupied territories, particularly since the start of the intifada.

The release in February of the State Department's annual report on the observance of human rights worldwide, with a hefty, and largely damning, chapter devoted to the situation in the West Bank and Gaza during 1988, the first year of the uprising, drew a barrage of strong official responses (see above, "The Intifada and Responses to It"). During the year, the two countries continued to play out the ritual in which Israeli actions such as deportations of Palestinians and house demolitions in the territories were followed by U.S. condemnation of such measures as violating the Fourth Geneva Convention, in turn eliciting a reaction from Jerusalem to the effect that Washington's stand was known, but Israel had to defend itself and was acting within the law as interpreted by its Supreme Court.

A more serious issue in 1989 related to the decision by the outgoing Reagan administration, at the end of 1988, to open a dialogue with the PLO, following declarations by its chairman, Yasir Arafat, recognizing Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and renouncing the use of terrorism. That decision, which was actively implemented by the Bush government, was anathema to the Likud, which effectively held the reins of power in the national unity government. Jerusalem missed no opportunity, especially following attempted terrorist infiltrations from Lebanon, to apprise Washington that it was being deceived by Yasir Arafat. The State Department skirted the issue by questioning Arafat's ability to control the more radical PLO groups. Going even further, an unnamed "senior official" on the plane carrying Secretary Baker home from a Vienna meeting with his Soviet counterpart, intimated that PLO operations in southern Lebanon did not constitute terrorism.

The disagreement became even more acute following Israel's adoption of its peace initiative on May 14, a plan which was deliberately designed to exclude the PLO from any part in the peace process. (See also "Diplomatic and Political Developments," above.) A month earlier, when Shamir had made a visit to Washington for talks with Bush, Baker, and others, he had presented the plan in outline form and had been encouraged to proceed by the administration. Yet, days after Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, having met with Baker in Washington for the second time in two months, stated that Washington "wholeheartedly" accepted the plan, the
secretary of state delivered a speech that jolted the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem and played into the hands of Shamir's adversaries within his own Likud party.

Most of the speech, delivered on May 22 to the annual conference of AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee—the main Israeli lobby in Washington—dealt with generalities concerning the advancement of the peace process, such as the need for a "comprehensive settlement" based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which entailed the principle of exchanging "territory for peace, security and recognition for Israel and all of the states of the region, and Palestinian political rights." The "more detailed version" of the Shamir proposals adopted by the Israeli government on May 14, said Baker, was "an important and a very positive start down the road toward constructing workable negotiations," even if the plan did not address "all of the issues which are involved."

Baker then went on to outline, in near-perfect symmetry, what each side should do in order to push the process ahead. "For Israel," he asserted, "now is the time to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel. Israeli interests in the West Bank and Gaza, security and otherwise, can be accommodated in a settlement based on Resolution 242. Forswear annexation; stop settlement activity; allow schools to reopen; reach out to the Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights." Baker also had some tough advice for the Palestinians (identical, in fact, with Israel's demands): "Renounce the 'policy of phases'. . . . Practice constructive diplomacy. . . . Amend the [Palestinian] Covenant. Translate the dialogue of violence in the intifada into a dialogue of politics and diplomacy."

His words went virtually unheeded in Jerusalem, which seemed to hear only the phrase about the "unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel." Shamir sidestepped the entire issue by pretending that by "Greater Israel" Baker meant something other than Eretz Yisrael hashlemah, the "Whole Land of Israel." With feigned puzzlement, the prime minister asked, in an Israel Radio interview (May 23), how it was possible to speak about a "Greater Israel" when "Israel is a very small country. . . . It sounds quite ironic to speak of a 'Greater Israel.' " He then went on to recite the well-known litany: "We obviously differ on the matter of settlements. This is not new. I do not see any connection between settlements and the peace process. I . . . made this completely clear during my visit to the U.S., and, as they say, we agreed to disagree."

Disagreement intensified, however, as Washington upgraded its talks with the PLO. In June, U.S. ambassador to Tunis Robert Pelletreau met with Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf), Arafat's deputy in the PLO. In the Israeli view, such moves were "putting the peace process in reverse," as Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu put it, by encouraging those who opposed peace and frightening off "the Arabs anxious to work for peace." By July, in the aftermath of the "constraints" placed on the peace initiative accepted by Shamir at the demand of three Likud ministers—a development that led the United States to have "some genuine concern," as Baker told a Paris press conference, "that perhaps as a result of the actions
by the Likud party, [the Israelis] were in a sense re-evaluating their own initiative”—Shamir’s top aide, Yossi Ben-Aharon, said in an Army Radio interview that relations with the United States “have reached the level of actual tension.” This was followed by a report in the press quoting “security sources” as saying that at least 10 of the terrorist attacks inside Israel since Arafat’s “renunciation of terrorism” in December 1988 had been perpetrated by cells affiliated with Arafat’s Fatah wing of the PLO. Yet, Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly, when asked about this and other similar Israeli claims, said that the State Department had no information on such PLO involvement.

In October, Israeli leaders charged that the contents of a two-part NBC-TV series on Israeli-South African nuclear cooperation were deliberately leaked by administration officials, seeking to embarrass Israel and pressure it into accepting James Baker’s five points to advance the peace process (see “Diplomatic and Political Developments”). Prime Minister Shamir, for one, took the conspiratorial view, telling Israel TV that the NBC report could be part of an effort by certain U.S. officials to “sabotage” Israel-U.S. relations, adding: “It would not be the first time.”

The report itself spoke of a “full-blown partnership” between the two countries “to produce a nuclear-tipped missile for South Africa.” A “CIA document” was quoted to the effect that “the first missile flight of the Jerusalem-Pretoria alliance was on July 5th,” in the form of a rocket launched toward Antarctica. Israel, it was said, supplied the technology and received in return the use of test sites and “a continuous supply of enriched uranium for its nuclear warheads.” Jerusalem vehemently denied the allegations. A communique issued following the weekly cabinet meeting on October 29 reiterated the time-hallowed formula that “the policy of the Israel government was and remains that Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East,” stated that there was “no basis” to the report on “alleged links between Israel and South Africa in the nuclear realm,” affirmed that the defense establishment “adheres scrupulously to the Inner Cabinet decision of March 18, 1987 that no new contracts will be signed between Israel and South Africa in the realm of security,” and concluded: “The defense establishment did not transfer American technologies or systems containing American components from Israel to other countries without receiving permission from U.S. authorities. This applies to all foreign countries, including South Africa. The claims made in the NBC report . . . are groundless.”

A few days later the Jerusalem Post reported that, according to a CIA closed-doors briefing to congressmen and senators, there had indeed been extensive Israeli-South African cooperation in the area of ballistic missiles, but there was no evidence of nuclear cooperation or of Israeli technology transfers to Pretoria in violation of U.S. regulations. The lid was put on this particular fracas when Secretary of State Baker stated that reports of Israeli-South African military cooperation had been “overblown.” Baker added that this episode would not affect Israeli-U.S. relations.

It was difficult to know how to interpret Baker’s assurance in the light of what followed. As the Israeli four-point peace initiative of May became mired in almost
incomprehensible trilateral dithering about arcane procedural points, with Jerusalem insisting on getting Baker's written assurances about various "guarantees" concerning the secretary's five points (which followed Egypt's ten points and preceded Israel's six conditional points in its acceptance of Baker's five points), President Bush expressed his extreme displeasure at Shamir's posturing by refraining from inviting him to visit the White House during the prime minister's scheduled visit to the United States in mid-November to address a Jewish gathering. Not even some very unsubtle hints by Israeli officials, who all but begged for the meeting, were helpful. Only after Israel accepted Baker's five points (and despite the six conditions) did Bush extend an invitation, virtually on the eve of Shamir's departure.

Although once again Shamir succeeded in averting an open confrontation with the administration, and was able to declare on his return home (November 24) that Bush had reaffirmed the continuation and strengthening of the "special relationship" between the two countries, behind the scenes the picture was less rosy. According to the well-informed columnist Yoel Marcus of *Ha'aretz* (November 28), the Shamir visit was "embarrassing" and "humiliating" from start to finish, with the "insult" of Bush's last-minute invitation being compounded by what Bush told Shamir when the two did meet privately on November 15. In their "unpleasant" meeting, Bush "harangued" Shamir for an hour and 20 minutes: a half-hour on the settlements and human-rights violations in the territories, then on Israeli-South African military cooperation, and finally on the Sheikh Obeid affair (see "National Security"), with the president stating he would not negotiate on an exchange involving hostages.

But worse was yet to come. According to Marcus, Bush "surprised" Shamir by reciting the whole litany of charges once more at the working session between delegations from the two sides. Shamir also learned that Washington had no intention of providing Israel with secret guarantees or with any sort of veto power regarding the peace talks, and that the United States still wanted Palestinians deported by Israel and the residents of East Jerusalem to take part in the elections to be held in the territories. Marcus's conclusion: "Often in recent years [Israeli] prime ministers have gone to the United States trailing predictions of a crisis but have always returned in triumph, having proved all the doom-sayers wrong. This is the first time the predictions have come true. Shamir returned [home] with his relations with the administration in a crisis. . . . The situation will only worsen if Shamir entrenches himself behind a wall of immobility. No president likes to be duped, and certainly not a president who's not so hot on Israel to begin with."

Yet, as in past years, in the strategic domain, relations between the two countries continued to flourish. In February Chief of Staff Dan Shomron paid a three-day visit to the United States for talks on military-related regional and bilateral issues and a tour of military bases. A visit in May by Defense Minister Rabin was somewhat overshadowed by Secretary Baker's AIPAC speech, but Rabin said he had a "very good" meeting with President Bush. In a speech to senior U.S. military personnel and experts, at a meeting in Washington sponsored by the Jewish Institute for
National Security Affairs, Rabin disclosed that in April, "the first U.S. Marine battalion completed its exercise in Israel"—previous maneuvers had been limited to the company level—with the use of attack helicopters and artillery. Israeli and U.S. forces had conducted "at least 27 or 28 combined exercises" in the past few years, Rabin said. The defense minister, who also met with his American counterpart, Richard Cheney, said that Israel was "more than glad—happy and satisfied—[to accede] whenever there is a request by the [U.S.] Air Force, the Navy [or] the Army."

The year ended on an upbeat note. On December 26, the Government Press Office reported a phone call from Shamir to Bush that day, in which the prime minister congratulated the president "on his country's recent success in bringing democracy back to Panama." The two also discussed the changes under way in Eastern Europe. "In the course of the very friendly conversation," the communiqué concluded, "the prime minister wished the president a happy new year, and the president thanked the prime minister for calling."

WESTERN EUROPE

As with the United States, relations with Western Europe were affected by the Europeans' opposition to Israeli policies in the occupied territories and by their displeasure with Israel's perceived unforthcoming attitude on the peace process. Talk in January of a European Community (EC) peace initiative, which would almost certainly entail an international conference and PLO involvement—two Israeli bugaboos—led Foreign Minister Moshe Arens to blast the Europeans for supporting the PLO, which he implicitly associated with the Nazis by saying that it was "responsible for some of the worst atrocities that have been committed since World War II." In the event, no formal EC initiative materialized, but a series of ranking European visitors to Israel kept harping on the identical themes and getting the identical responses from their hosts in Jerusalem. European Parliament president Lord Plumb, heading an EP delegation to Israel for the annual dialogue with the Knesset (January 4–11), was told by Prime Minister Shamir that Europe's "consistent pro-Palestinian policies" impeded its efforts to play a useful Middle East role. Another problem, Shamir noted, was that "the Arabs have a completely different scale of values from us." The Europeans possibly had some thoughts of their own about divergent cultural values when Defense Minister Rabin told them bluntly, "Stop preaching to us," and went on, in what Ma'ariv called "undiplomatic language," to tell his guests that the Israeli Military Government had never behaved like "you Europeans" did toward other nations during the colonial period.

In his address to the Knesset, Lord Plumb said that the Arab-Israeli conflict could be resolved only within the framework of an international solution and that no durable peace could be achieved without a solution of the Palestinian problem, including recognition of the Palestinians' "legitimate rights." Later in the month,
current EC chairman (and Spanish foreign minister) Francisco Fernandez Ordonez paid a visit, followed a few days later by French foreign minister Roland Dumas, a member of the EC’s ruling troika. Both diplomats came to sound out Israeli leaders on ways to revive the peace process. (In July Deputy Finance Minister Yossi Beilin visited EC headquarters in Brussels for talks on the impact on Israel of a united EC market in 1992. Beilin castigated as “national negligence” Israel’s failure to prepare its economy for 1992.)

In marked contrast to 1988, high-level diplomatic contacts took place with all the major Western European countries. In mid-February Foreign Minister Arens held what were described as “constructive and fruitful” talks in London, and in an Army Radio interview praised Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s “profound understanding of the complexity of the problems in the Middle East” and of “the dangers facing Israel.” When Prime Minister Shamir paid a two-day visit to England, in May—his first as prime minister—one week after the government adopted its peace initiative on the occupied territories, he met with Thatcher for three hours, following which she told reporters that their talk had been “full and friendly” and that she had “great understanding” for Shamir’s ideas. The following day (May 23), however, Shamir heard Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe say that the Israeli plan was still at a skeletal stage and was “fundamentally flawed” because it omitted the crucial territory-for-peace component.

A meeting between Arens and newly appointed British foreign secretary John Major, held at the UN on September 25, produced similar results. The issue in dispute was again the situation in the territories, and the atmosphere at the meeting was described as “cold and tense.” In October, the British consul-general in East Jerusalem, Ivan Callan, infuriated the Israeli authorities when he ignored military curfews to enter the city of Nablus and the town of Beit Sahour, near Bethlehem, where the army was trying to break a tax revolt by the residents.

It was much the same story with France. Shamir, who was well acquainted with the country from his days as a Mossad agent in Paris, held talks with President François Mitterrand in February which were described as “very friendly and useful,” but did little to bring the sides closer together on the crucial issues. In response to France’s decision to upgrade the status of the PLO’s mission in Paris, Shamir said France “should encourage moderates, not extremists.” A meeting between Mitterrand and PLO chief Arafat in May drew sharp criticism of Arafat in Jerusalem. He was spouting the “same old lies,” said Shamir’s media adviser, Avi Pazner, in reaction to Arafat’s apparent rejection of the Palestinian Covenant following the meeting. Shamir held another meeting, described as “very warm,” with Mitterrand in November, on the way home from his U.S. visit, at which the French leader reiterated his skepticism about the Israeli peace plan because it disregarded Palestinian political aspirations. French Prime Minister Michel Rocard, in a 24-hour visit to Jerusalem (December 17-18), reassured his Israeli hosts that the soon-to-begin Paris-initiated European-Arab dialogue would not harm Israel. Shamir noted that Israel was not worried about such a dialogue, as long as it was not at Israel’s expense.
Jerusalem was more concerned that West German firms' sales of nonconventional weapons and missile technology to Arab states such as Libya and Iraq would ultimately be at Israel's expense. This was one of the main themes in talks between Israeli and German leaders during the year. (See also "National Security.") Speaking to reporters at the end of a three-day visit to Israel (April 9-11), West German defense minister Rupert Scholz stated that if reports of such transactions were true ("and I emphasize the 'if'")), Bonn would "impose the necessary sanctions" on such companies. Germany did not change its mind about the need for an international conference on the Middle East even after the Israeli peace initiative was adopted, as Foreign Minister Arens was informed in Bonn by his counterpart, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, during a June visit.

Italy continued its active interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In a three-day visit to Israel (April 23-25), a high-powered Italian delegation headed by Prime Minister Ciriaco De Mita and Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti sounded out the Israeli leadership about the peace plan, then in its final stages of discussion. De Mita endorsed the initiative, but qualified this (from the Israeli viewpoint) by noting that he had done so because the PLO had not rejected it. In November, Andreotti (now prime minister) told Shamir, who was in Rome on his way home from his U.S. visit, that although Italy was not against the idea of elections in the territories, autonomy could not be the "definitive status" of the Palestinians.

Relations with Spain were deepened during the year via a series of mutual ministerial visits. In March a five-day visit to Israel by Spain's minister of culture resulted in an announcement that the two countries had decided to set up cultural centers in their respective capitals. On May 23, Yitzhak Shamir became the first Israeli prime minister to visit Spain since the two countries established relations in 1986. Shamir's efforts to sell the just-adopted Israeli peace initiative encountered a cool reception from his counterpart and host, Philipe Gonzalez, who urged Israel to talk to the PLO within the framework of an international conference. Bilateral relations proceeded on a smoother keel, with a reciprocal treaty signed during a visit to Israel by Spain's justice minister in late May and a scientific cooperation agreement signed in October during a visit by the Spanish minister of science and technology. This was followed by the holding of an international conference in Madrid and Barcelona, sponsored by Tel Aviv University and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Spain's Higher Council for Scientific Research. On December 10, President Chaim Herzog and Mrs. Aura Herzog lunched with King Carlos and Queen Sofia during a one-day stopover in Madrid en route to a South American visit.

Other contacts with Western Europe included the first visit to Austria by an Israeli minister—Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz, in March—since relations were virtually frozen following the election of Kurt Waldheim as president in 1986; a visit to Israel in April by Norwegian foreign minister Thorvald Stoltenberg who, although expressing his country's "enduring friendship" for Israel, criticized its "repressive" policies in the occupied territories and raised the issue of what had
become of some 20 tons of heavy water which Norway sold to Israel in 1959, and which some reports said was utilized to manufacture nuclear weapons; and a memorandum of understanding on energy resources signed during the visit to Israel of Portugal's minister of energy and industry in July.

EASTERN EUROPE

Although formal relations with the Soviet Union were not restored in 1989, informal ties continued at high levels. Following a January meeting, held in Paris, between Foreign Ministers Moshe Arens and Eduard Shevardnadze, the latter announced that the status of the Israeli consular delegation in Moscow would be upgraded and its physical working conditions improved—welcome news to delegation head Arie Levin. (In June the delegation was permitted to reoccupy the former Israeli embassy building.) Arens and Shevardnadze met again on February 22, this time in Cairo, at the Soviet official's invitation, in an effort to move the stalled peace process. Arens described their meeting as "frank, very frank"—diplomatese for problematic—noting drily: "We achieved as much progress as we had a right to expect." They did, though, decide to set up joint working committees on the peace process and on bilateral relations.

Relations in other spheres looked more promising. In the same week that the foreign ministers spoke in Paris, Israel's basketball champions, Maccabi Tel Aviv, beat the top Soviet team, CSKA Moscow, in the Soviet capital, within the framework of the European Basketball Champions' Cup tournament. It was the first time an Israeli team had played in Moscow since 1967 and the first-ever Israeli sporting victory in the USSR. Mid-February saw another first: the first Soviet ship in 22 years to dock at an Israeli port (Ashdod), in order to take aboard food and clothing collected by peace activist Abie Nathan for Armenian earthquake victims.

In other humanitarian gestures, an Israeli army medical team went to the USSR for nine days in June in order to treat burn victims from a train disaster in the Ural Mountains. The head of the Israeli delegation met with the Soviet deputy health minister, who recalled that just six months earlier, two IDF teams had gone to Armenia to aid in earthquake relief efforts. Indeed, later in the month, in the first-ever El Al flight from the Soviet Union, 61 of the earthquake victims arrived in Israel for six weeks of treatment within the framework of the American Joint Distribution Committee's "Operation Healing" program. At year's end, 50 children who were in Chernobyl during the nuclear disaster there in 1986 arrived in Israel via Aeroflot as guests of the United Kibbutz Movement, in order to undergo medical tests.

Yet, despite these events and some commercial-industrial testing of the waters between the two countries, Prime Minister Shamir told the Jerusalem Post in September that at the "basic level, the substantive level," the USSR's negative attitude toward Israel remained unchanged. True, there had been some "positive
developments," but these were "incidental." In talks with the Soviet Foreign Ministry, "you cannot sense any change." Moreover, Shamir observed, "The Soviet Union maintains its intimate relations with the terrorist organizations"—along with "[a]ll the communist countries, to this day." Later in the month the highest-ranking Soviet official to visit Israel since 1967, Supreme Soviet member and writer Chingiz Aitmatov, met with Shamir and other Israeli leaders. The prime minister, interviewed by a reporter from the Soviet New Times, who was in Israel to cover the Aitmatov visit, called on Moscow to renew full diplomatic relations with Israel.

However, despite a third Arens–Shevardnadze meeting, in late September at the UN in New York, and despite Shamir’s statement in a November meeting with congressmen in Washington that Israel had dropped its objections to the granting of most-favored-nation trade status to the USSR by the United States, Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev in November turned down an Israeli request for the restoration of full relations. The request was conveyed by Italian prime minister Giulio Andreotti following Shamir’s visit to Rome (see above). Explaining, Soviet spokesman Gennady Gerasimov told a press conference: "We are ready for this step on condition that the Israeli government takes steps forward in the dialogue with the [PLO]." To which Shamir’s media adviser, Avi Pazner, retorted, in the Jerusalem Post, that Israel "cannot accept conditions for diplomatic ties." In the meantime, Agriculture Minister Avraham Katz-Oz in December became the first Israeli minister to visit Moscow since 1967, having been invited on a semi-official basis by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Back in Israel, Katz-Oz said that he had reached an agreement for Israel to supply $30-million worth of agricultural produce to the Soviet Union.

The signing of an agricultural cooperation agreement with Hungary in January—climaxing a visit by Agriculture Minister Jenoe Vancsa, the first official visit to Israel by a Hungarian minister—signaled the start of a fruitful year in relations with that country. In February Religious Affairs Minister Zevulun Hammer became the first Israeli minister to visit Hungary. His four-day visit focused on intensifying relations with Hungary’s 80,000-strong Jewish community. March and April saw visits to Israel by Hungary’s transport minister and its deputy foreign minister, with the latter, Laszlo Kovacs, noting that the restoration of diplomatic ties was conditional on improved trade and economic relations.

On April 18, Israelis were stunned to learn that Prime Minister Shamir, accompanied by Justice Minister Dan Meridor, was in Hungary. Their one-day stay, in which they met with Prime Minister Miklos Nemeth and other top officials, remained largely shrouded in mystery, although Meridor was quoted as saying that the visit’s aim was to acquaint "the Soviet bloc" with Israel’s peace proposals. Rumors of Hungarian displeasure that Israel had reneged on pledges to organize Israeli and Jewish investment in Hungary were denied. Exactly five months later (September 18), Hungary became the first East European country (with the exception of Romania) to renew diplomatic relations with Israel since the 1967 Six Day War. In Budapest for the signing ceremony, Foreign Minister Arens said the Hungarians’
decision was "courageous," while his counterpart, Gyula Horn, observed that the formal restoration of relations with Israel "means that Hungary is getting rid of its past mistakes." The Foreign Ministry's representative in Budapest, Shlomo Marom, was named Israel's ambassador-designate.

Following Hungary's example in 1988, Poland sent its religious affairs minister, Wladyslaw Loranc, to make the first official ministerial visit from that country to Israel since 1967. During his weeklong April visit, Loranc met with Israeli officials, visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, and toured religious sites. Loranc's Israeli counterpart, Zevulun Hammer, in August became the first minister to visit Poland officially since 1967. One of the issues dealt with by Hammer was the Polish Catholic Church's delay in removing a Carmelite convent from the grounds of the Auschwitz death camp, despite a 1987 agreement obligating the convent's transfer. Polish religious and government officials told Hammer that the intervention of Jewish American activists had had a boomerang effect. Hammer complained to his hosts about manifestations of anti-Semitism connected with the convent issue.

A month later Prime Minister Shamir helped fuel the controversy when he said in a Jerusalem Post interview that Poles "suck in [anti-Semitism] with their mother's milk! This is something that is deeply imbued in their tradition, their mentality." Polish president Wojciech Jaruzelski's spokesman declared that Shamir's comment "contradict[ed] the long tradition of Polish-Jewish coexistence in Poland" and "added a political, social and economic aspect" to the convent dispute. Shamir's bureau chief, Yossi Ahimeir, responded that Shamir drew a clear distinction "between events of the past and what is relevant for relations with the Polish people in the present and future." Israel, he added, sought "warm ties and full diplomatic contacts" with Poland. But that such ties would unavoidably be tinged with past memories was indicated when Ahimeir added: "In the final analysis, you cannot expect someone who narrowly escaped being a victim and whose father escaped from the Nazis only to be murdered by his fellow Poles, to forget about Polish anti-Semitism." But the year ended on an upbeat note in the form of a four-day visit at the end of November by Finance Minister Peres, who declared—notwithstanding Tourism Minister Gideon Patt's statement, while Peres was in Poland, that Israel should not be in a hurry to help Poland—that he had come "to open a new chapter" in relations between the two countries.

The long-standing cooperation in various spheres between Israel and the Ceausescu dictatorship in Romania was evidently one of the reasons for Israel's delay in encouraging those who were behind the uprising in that country at year's end. The Knesset presidium on December 20 refused to recognize the urgency of three motions deploring the massacres perpetrated by the Ceausescu regime, while the Foreign Ministry, although expressing "deep regret" at the loss of life in Romania, also did not condemn the regime. On December 23, a spokesman for Prime Minister Shamir said blandly that Israel was closely following the situation in Romania. This silence was explained as deriving from concern for Romania's 20,000-strong Jewish community and from a desire to have Bucharest continue to serve as a transit point
for Jews en route to Israel from the Soviet Union. On December 24, the Israeli government finally acknowledged the new government in Romania, sending a message of cordial greetings and best wishes to the government and people of Romania.

EGYPT

On February 26, exactly one month before the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty, representatives of the two countries signed an agreement bringing to an end the dispute over Taba. The tiny, nonstrategic strip of coastline just south of Eilat, on which stood an Israeli luxury hotel—built after the signing of the Camp David accords—and a holiday village, was the last unresolved territorial element in the implementation of the March 26, 1979, peace treaty. It had soured relations between the two countries throughout the 1980s. In September 1988 an international panel of arbitrators awarded Taba to Egypt, but a number of issues still required discussion: Israeli access to Taba, the price the Egyptians would pay for the tourist sites, and the exact angle of the line running from Pillar 91, one of the disputed border points—the arbitrators had accepted the Egyptian position regarding its location—down to the seashore. In conjunction with the final settlement, Israel also wanted Cairo to pay the compensation it had promised for the killing of seven Israelis by an Egyptian policeman at Ras Burka in Sinai in 1985.

Talks aimed at implementing the arbitrators' decision began on January 19 at Taba’s Aviya Sonesta Hotel, but the two-day round ended acrimoniously when Egypt’s negotiator, Nabil el-Arabi, revealing the depth of his country’s mistrust of Israel on the Taba question, demanded that Israel submit a timetable for withdrawing from Taba even before agreement was reached on Israeli access to the area. Egyptian sovereignty was supposed to have been restored in Taba by January 29, but when this date passed with the situation stalemated, President Hosni Mubarak branded Israel’s behavior “repulsive,” although he subsequently conveyed a mollifying message to Foreign Minister Arens. In the event, the U.S. mediator, State Department legal adviser Abraham Sofaer, who had played a key role in the Taba affair, got the sides to sign an agreement extending the deadline to February 28. Arens’s visit to Cairo a week before that date for talks with Mubarak and Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel Meguid (and with his Soviet counterpart) helped clear up the final obstacles.

On February 26, the agreement was signed by al-Arabi for Egypt, Foreign Ministry director-general Reuven Merhav for Israel, and Sofaer as witness. Egypt waived its demand about the line from Pillar 91, giving Israel an additional 300 meters of shoreline. The luxury hotel went for $40 million and the holiday village—amounting, as the Jerusalem Post noted, to “a few huts on a beach which harbors what are now only memories of heady, bohemian days”—for $1.15 million. The Egyptian authorities and the hotel’s owners agreed on the facility’s future management. Arrangements were worked out to ease procedures for Israelis wishing to cross into
Taba (where Egyptian law would prevail) and southern Sinai, a favorite Israeli holiday area since 1967. Speaking at the signing ceremony, the Israeli delegation head, Reuven Merhav, said that Taba, "despite its small size, has become a symbol of complex negotiations, but it must . . . be turned into a cornerstone for cooperation in the best spirit of our peace treaty, and a springboard for the strengthening of mutual confidence between us." On March 15, the Egyptian flag was raised at Taba.

Although the Arens visit to Cairo marked the end of Egypt's undeclared boycott of the Likud, Prime Minister Shamir's hope of a summit meeting with Mubarak was not fulfilled in 1989. (Mubarak did phone him in September, following a meeting with Arens in New York, stating that he was ready in principle to meet, provided concrete results could be assured in advance.) In a statement to the cabinet on March 26 marking the tenth anniversary of the signing of the peace treaty, Shamir observed "with satisfaction" that peace with Egypt was by now "an integral part of our international relations." He added, however, that the "quality of the peace is not precisely as we would wish it," pointing to areas such as tourism from Egypt, more trade, cultural ties and a "more positive attitude toward Israel" in the Egyptian media.

The disparity between the two countries in tourism was glaring enough: figures released on March 27 by the Central Bureau of Statistics showed that since 1980 only 40,000 Egyptians had visited Israel, whereas in the same period 343,000 visits by Israelis to Egypt (including stays of up to a week in Sinai) took place, two-thirds of them since 1986. And in mid-April, Israel's ambassador to Cairo, Prof. Shimon Shamir, protested, at Jerusalem's request, a new spate of attacks on the Israeli prime minister in the Egyptian press, including one reference to him as "Hitler number two" and a description of him by Mubarak as "an obstacle to peace."

In early June, Arens sent a congratulatory message to his Egyptian counterpart following an Arab summit conference at Casablanca in which Egypt regained full membership in the Arab League (from which it had been suspended for signing the peace treaty with Israel). At the same time, Arens noted that some of the Casablanca resolutions, such as recognition of the Palestinians' "right of return," which Egypt also supported, ran counter to the spirit of the Israeli-Egyptian peace. President Mubarak, in a letter to Prime Minister Shamir sent via a U.S. senator visiting in the region, stated that Israel need have no cause for concern about a shift in Egyptian policy. This was followed (June 11–12) by a visit to Israel by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butros Ghali, the highest-ranking Egyptian official to visit in two years. Ghali, too, brought a letter from Mubarak to Shamir, this one containing an offer to have Cairo help advance the peace process—the Ghali visit took place less than a month after Israel adopted its initiative on the territories. In his talks in Israel, however, Ghali made it clear that in Egypt's view, no progress was possible without the PLO. (See "Diplomatic and Political Developments."

On the ground, the consolidation of the Israeli-Egyptian peace continued to inch forward. On June 28, the first two of nearly 500 expected families crossed from the so-called Canada refugee camp in the Egyptian part of the town of Rafah, which
was split in two in 1982 when Israel vacated Sinai under the peace treaty, into Gaza, to be reunited with their families. Their return had been held up for seven years due to "political and budget" problems, according to an Israeli army spokesman, but the Palestinians charged that pressure by Jewish settlers in Gaza against their return was responsible for the delay. In the months that followed, another 17 families crossed into Gaza, having given up their right, under the treaty, to build new homes. But in December, when five families crossed into Gaza with the intention of building new homes, hundreds of angry settlers demonstrated, alleging that over the years the PLO had "systematically" trained the returning refugees, with the result that "6,000 more terrorists are going to join the intifada."

AFRICA, ASIA, LATIN AMERICA, CANADA

Relations with black Africa were advanced on November 3, when Ethiopia announced that it had decided to restore diplomatic relations with Israel, severed since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The move gave hope that the approximately 16,000 Ethiopian Jews who had been stranded in the country when "Operation Moses" became public in 1985 would soon be able to rejoin their families in Israel. Speculation about the reasons for Ethiopia's decision, which followed two years of behind-the-scenes talks, ranged from the Mengistu regime's desire for Israeli military aid in its fight against the Eritrean and Tigrean rebels, to a need for Israeli agricultural know-how, to the hope for better access to Washington via the Israeli lobby.

In August, Foreign Minister Arens visited Kenya, which had renewed ties with Israel in 1988, signing what a Kenyan official described as an "all-embracing" agreement, "more or less what we used to have before we broke relations in 1973." The accord focused on economic and technological cooperation. An aviation agreement was signed the following month when Kenya's transport and communications minister, Josef K. Mwosa, visited Israel. July saw a four-day visit to Israel by Central African Republic president Gen. Andre Kolingba. A visitor who was greeted with mixed feelings was South Africa's Anglican archbishop and Nobel Peace Laureate Desmond Tutu, who spent the Christmas season in Israel and the occupied territories. Tutu caused anger when he equated South Africa's apartheid policy and Israeli policy in the territories. He told the Palestinians he supported their "struggle for justice, for peace, for statehood and independence," and the Israelis that "Israel has the right to exist, to territorial integrity and to the security due to an independent state."

The Israeli presence in Asia got a boost when Foreign Minister Arens and his Chinese counterpart, Qian Qi Chen, meeting at the UN in October, agreed on the establishment of an Israeli academic center in China, following the opening of a Chinese tourism mission in Israel. Relations with Japan, long kept on a low burner by Tokyo, gathered momentum. In a gesture that drew considerable appreciation
in Japan, President Chaim Herzog attended the funeral of Emperor Hirohito in February, paying a condolence visit to his successor, Akihito. In September Japan for the first time invited an Israeli Industry and Trade Ministry representative to pay an official visit. (Israeli-Japanese trade passed the $1-billion mark in 1989, some two-thirds of it accounted for by Israeli diamond exports, making Japan Israel's third largest individual trading partner after the United States and Britain.) The year was capped by the first-ever visit by an Israeli foreign minister to Japan. In November, Moshe Arens reached agreement with Japanese foreign minister Taro Nakayama on the creation of a joint commission to improve and regularize relations between the two countries. In his meeting with Arens (November 9), Japanese prime minister Toshiki Kaifu called on Israel to negotiate with the PLO (whose head, Yasir Arafat, had visited Tokyo a month earlier, causing the Foreign Ministry to express its “regret and disappointment”).

The Middle East policy of Canada also caused consternation in Jerusalem. In March Israel protested Ottawa's decision to upgrade its relations with the PLO, and although President Herzog paid a ten-day state visit to Canada in late June, the first there by an Israeli head of state, eliciting a statement of “unswerving support” for Israel by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, in November a visiting senior official from the Canadian Ministry of External Affairs heard concern about “a negative trend in relations” between the countries from his interlocutors in Jerusalem.

Relations with South America were boosted by a visit to Argentina and Uruguay by President Herzog in December. In Buenos Aires he was given what the Jerusalem Post described as “the warmest of receptions” by President Carlos Menem. Argentine defense minister Dr. Jose Horacio Juanarenas visited Israel in April at the head of a ranking military delegation and was reported to have expressed an interest in the Israeli-made Kfir jet fighter.

Despite its good relations with Panama, Israel in September complied with an American request to express its support for Washington's efforts to depose Gen. Manuel Noriega. (President Bush had asked the world's democracies to “reassess” their ties with Panama if Noriega did not resign by September 1.) In August Jerusalem found itself constrained to react following allegations by NBC-TV that a former colonel in the Israeli army, Yair Klein, 44, along with other Israelis in his employ, had given military training to the Colombia drug cartel. A Foreign Ministry communiqué noted that Israel was looking into the matter but was “strongly committed to the war on drugs.”

Israel and World Jewry

The Prime Minister's Conference on Jewish Solidarity with Israel, held in Jerusalem March 20-22, was widely viewed as an attempt by Prime Minister Shamir to demonstrate that he had the support of world, and particularly American, Jewry, two weeks before a crucial visit to Washington for talks with the heads of the newly installed Bush administration who were pressing him to present a peace plan. As
such, many Diaspora leaders were leery of associating themselves with what was perceived as the policy of the Likud wing of the national unity government. Much the same attitude was expressed in the Israeli Labor party, even though its Minister Without Portfolio Mordechai Gur worked closely with the conference chairman, the Likud’s Ehud Olmert, also a minister without portfolio and a close associate of Shamir. (Gur’s high-profile presence did indeed serve to make the event more palatable to those who did not wish to be perceived as backing a Likud show.) The prime minister himself reportedly believed the conference was necessary to rally Jewish support in the wake of the flaccid reaction of U.S. Jewry to Washington’s decision to launch a dialogue with the PLO in December 1988. (According to the Jerusalem Post, Deputy Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu berated American Jewish leaders, in a meeting he held with them in January during a U.S. visit, for their “weak and ineffective response” to the launching of the U.S.—PLO dialogue.)

In the event, some 1,500 prominent Diaspora figures turned up in Jerusalem for three days of speeches—mainly by cabinet ministers—working groups, and briefings on some of the problems facing Israel. The climax of the event was a ceremony at the Western Wall at which the Jerusalem Declaration of Jewish Solidarity with Israel was read out and affirmed. “Linked by our common history and shared destiny,” it asserted, “we support the democratically elected government of national unity in its effort to achieve peace and security with its neighbors.”

AMERICAN JEWRY

Shamir played his hand well among the American Jewish community during his U.S. visit in April, capitalizing on the credit he had accumulated at the solidarity conference. In a speech to the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, Shamir outlined his proposals for elections in the territories, adding that measures Israel had taken to quell the uprising there “will no longer be necessary” once “the riots and manifestations of violence” had ceased. Shamir also reassured an audience of rabbis from the three major movements in Judaism that the “Who is a Jew?” issue—the notion of rewording the Law of Return in conformity with Orthodox demands—“is not on our agenda, even though the problem has not been solved permanently.” By November, however, when Shamir paid his second U.S. visit, the differences and divisions within the American Jewish community, heightened by the prime minister’s apparently inflexible stance on the Israeli peace initiative which bore his name, resulted in a far less enthusiastic reception for the Israeli leader. During his visit Shamir received a letter from 41 leaders, from the heart of the American Jewish establishment, urging him not to rebuff Washington’s efforts to set up an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and to be more forthcoming on the land-for-peace question. Signatories included Hyman Bookbinder of the American Jewish Committee, Edward Sanders of AIPAC, and three former heads of key Jewish organizations: Theodore Mann (Conference of Presidents), Morton Mandel (Coun-
cil of Federations), and Peggy Tishman (UJA-Federation of New York). However, the current head of the Conference of Presidents, Seymour Reich, declared that American Jewry was “solidly behind the prime minister,” that there was “no break in organizational ranks,” and that the letter’s authors were “a few individuals who are out of sync with the Jewish mainstream.”

In his speech to the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Cincinnati (November 16), Shamir, who had been raked over the coals the previous day by President Bush (see “International Relations—United States”), omitted the moderate-sounding phrases which had characterized his April address. Israel, he inveighed, “will not be pressured into committing national suicide. . . . For Israel, every step toward that common objective [of peace] is fraught with risk. One blunder can be fatal.” Returning to Israel, he dismissed the “dissenters” from his policies among American Jewry as no more than a “vocal minority,” and in an appearance a few days later before the Knesset’s Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee, he blasted the “libelous” efforts of certain (unnamed) MKs to incite American Jewish opinion against him.

DEMJANJUK POSTSCRIPT

On June 14, Israel Yehezkeli, 70, a Holocaust survivor who threw acid at attorney Yoram Sheftel, the defense lawyer for convicted Treblinka war criminal John (Ivan) Demjanjuk, was sentenced to five years in prison. He was also ordered to reimburse Sheftel for an operation on his eye by a Boston ophthalmologist ($6,000) and to pay him another NIS 10,000 ($5,000) for his suffering. (See AJYB 1990, pp. 500–501.)

Soviet Jewry; Immigration

That the winds of change were truly blowing through the Soviet Union was well symbolized in February by two events in Moscow: the opening of the Judaic Studies Center established by famed Jerusalem Talmud scholar Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz; and the inauguration of the Mikhoels Jewish Cultural Center. The latter event was attended by Yuli Edelshtein, who became the first former prisoner of Zion representing Soviet Jews in Israel—he went on behalf of the Jerusalem-based Soviet Jewry Zionist Forum, headed by Natan Sharansky—to meet with Soviet officials. In Moscow, Edelshtein and Dr. Mikhail Chlenov, head of the Jewish Cultural Association, representing 29 groups throughout the USSR, signed a proclamation of cooperation between Soviet Jews and those now living in Israel. March saw another symbolic occasion: the arrival in Israel of Yuli Kosharovsky, 48, the last major refusenik in the Soviet Union, who had waited 18 years before getting his exit visa. He and his wife and three sons were met at the airport by Prime Minister Shamir. Effectively, then, by early 1989, the “Zionist” element of Soviet Jewry was wholly in Israel.

Nevertheless, in late March, the Jerusalem Post reported that a secret document,
drawn up by “top government analysts on Soviet Jewry,” was predicting that “hundreds of thousands” of Jews would leave the USSR in the coming few years and that, since the United States would not be able to accept such huge numbers, they would turn to Israel. Prime Minister Shamir, pointing out that the majority of these Jews were well-educated professionals, admitted that Israel lacked “the appropriate tools” to absorb them, and consequently “we will have to create” those tools. In practice, however, besides talk and interdepartmental wrangling, little if anything was done in 1989 to prepare for this anticipated flood of immigrants.

In April the argument between the advocates of “direct absorption” and those favoring the traditional absorption centers flared up again, while the coordinator of the international campaign for Soviet Jewry in the Liaison Bureau for Soviet Jewry of the Prime Minister’s Office, Sara Frankel, charged that HIAS and other groups were still trying to get Jews to settle in the United States rather than in Israel. The cabinet discussed the issue a number of times in May and June. On May 21, Immigrant Absorption Minister Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz told the cabinet that the absorption system was “in a state of collapse,” with thousands of immigrants, particularly from Ethiopia, condemned to remain in absorption centers for years because they lacked the financial means to leave. However, Housing Minister David Levy asserted that his ministry would not build new apartments until the immigrants actually arrived. On May 28, the cabinet, proclaiming absorption a “cardinal national objective,” formed a ministerial committee—Peres (finance), Levy (housing), and Peretz (absorption)—to submit within three weeks, “in coordination with the Jewish Agency,” its solutions to the “pressing needs” of immigrant absorption.

The mud-slinging intensified in June: the head of the World Labor Zionist Movement, Yehiel Leket, charged that the “clandestine methods” of the Liaison Bureau were “anachronistic” in the “era of glasnost and perestroika.” This drove Sara Frankel to engage in a bit of glasnost herself, disclosing to the Jerusalem Post that her unit had sent Israelis to teach Hebrew in the Soviet Union, had brought Soviet Jews to Israel to study Hebrew and other subjects for teaching in the USSR, and had sent voluminous “cultural materials” to the Soviet Union for dissemination. The Liaison Bureau, she said, was “the arm of the Israeli government on the issue of Soviet Jewry,” and its aim was “to foster Jewish consciousness with a Zionist orientation among Soviet Jews.”

In the meantime, the joint government–Jewish Agency coordinating committee on June 25 released a communiqué which described the “prospects for a major wave of immigration to Israel,” particularly from the USSR and Argentina, as “a matter of first-rate priority for Israel and the Jewish people.” Consequently, “a master plan shall be prepared, as soon as possible,” by the government and the Jewish Agency, to cope with the absorption of “the hoped-for immigration wave, including housing and employment.” Later in the same week the Jewish Agency Assembly, meeting in Jerusalem, decided to “renegotiate”—meaning, effectively, cancel—what then-absorption minister Yaakov Tzur had called its “historic” decision to drop its role in immigrant absorption (AJYB 1990, p. 501). A few days later, the Agency’s board
of governors pledged that every new immigrant in Israel would be guaranteed "a place of residence." Housing Minister Levy's plan to settle new immigrants in the occupied territories was savaged by his fellow-Likud member, Jewish Agency treasurer Meir Shetreet, who declared that the government had "no real plan" for immigrant absorption and that the Jewish Agency was barred from allocating funds for projects across the Green Line.

Funding the absorption of 100,000 Jews expected to arrive from the USSR within the coming three years—this was the figure cited by all, even when it became obvious that it was wildly low—was one of the main issues addressed by Finance Minister Shimon Peres during a U.S. visit in September. Peres sought $400 million in loan guarantees from the Bush administration and at least $1 billion from world Jewry, the bulk of it from the American Jewish community, to help offset the projected $3-billion cost of absorbing the wave of new arrivals. Deputy Finance Minister Yossi Beilin stated that two-thirds of the money would be needed for new housing (30,000 units), $400 million for vocational training (half of the new immigrants would have to be retrained at a cost of $7,500 per immigrant), and $110 million would be required to build 110 new schools at $1 million each for the 40,000 school-age children. Infrastructure costs (new roads, expanded utilities) would total $490 million.

These grandiose programs remained abstractions, however. The Absorption Ministry, in growing desperation, proposed housing new immigrants in army camps, hotels, and remote development towns, although an interdepartmental committee chaired by Beilin had recommended that the newcomers be channeled to the center of the country. In late October the Housing Ministry spokeswoman chimed in by reiterating the conception propounded by David Levy earlier in the year. Noting that in the 1970s newly constructed public housing had remained empty because the expected immigration did not materialize, she stated that there was no need to start building “until the immigrants start arriving in large numbers.” To offset mounting criticism, the Housing and Absorption Ministries and the government’s Employment Service on October 20 ran three-and-a-half pages of ads in the weekend Yediot Aharonot, declaring that they were ready to absorb the mass wave of immigration. Featured prominently were photos of David Levy and Yitzhak Peretz with new immigrants.

On October 30, the government and the Jewish Agency announced that they had reached agreement on the absorption of Soviet Jews and issued a 15-point communiqué to prove it. The program, which largely followed the lines of the Beilin plan, asserted that the government and Diaspora Jewry were aware that this was a “historic moment” and that “everything possible must be done to successfully absorb [the Soviet Jews] in Israel.” But the reality on the ground was rapidly making such plans and proposals irrelevant. With the gates to the United States closed since October to all but about 40,000 Soviet Jews a year, in November some 45,000 Jews in the USSR requested “invitations” from Israel so that they could obtain exit visas. The small staff at the Israeli consulate in Moscow, which had been processing the applications and issuing the visas since reoccupying the old Israeli embassy building
in June, staggered under the workload; but, as Prime Minister Shamir told the Knesset’s Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee at the end of November, the Soviet government would not allow the staff to be enlarged. With Shamir and others now talking about half a million to a million Jews entering Israel within three years, MK Michael Kleiner (Likud), chairman of the Knesset’s Immigration and Absorption Committee, asserted that he could not take cabinet ministers’ statements on the subject seriously.

By year’s end, with Soviet immigration beginning to surge, Finance Minister Peres was castigating Diaspora Jewry for not raising the $500 million it had been charged with under the government-Jewish Agency plan. This was blatant “evasion of responsibility,” Peres fumed in the Knesset. “Instead of giving more money to Israel, they increase the share of the [local] federations.” Jewish Agency chairman Simcha Dinitz, back from Moscow, said that 360,000 “invitations” were already in the pipeline and that the Israeli consulate was issuing 200 visas a day. On December 18, Prime Minister Shamir sent greetings to the first Congress of Jewish Communities and Organizations, which opened that day in Moscow (and was attended by Dinitz). “Every bit of reawakening Jewish life is like a fresh breeze to our suffering people,” Shamir wrote, but according to many officials, a good deal of suffering would be incurred by the Soviet Jews when they arrived in an Israel that was unprepared, mentally or materially, to absorb them.

Distress was the lot of many of the Ethiopian Jews who had arrived in Israel in the second half of the 1980s. A major problem was that many families had been split apart when “Operation Moses” was halted in 1985 after a leak to the press. In February a number of Ethiopian groups in Israel formed the Committee for Family Reunification, to try to spur governments and human-rights agencies “to pressure Ethiopia to allow more than 15,000 Jews still stranded [there] to join their families abroad.” Israel, too, they charged, was not doing enough in this regard. That same month, the Israeli branch of the Geneva-based Defense for Children International held a press conference at which a clinical psychologist, Gadi Ben-Ezra, who worked with Youth Aliya, related that about 1,800 Ethiopian children in Israel whose parents were still in Ethiopia (or Sudan) were undergoing “acute emotional distress,” leading to attempts at suicide and self-starvation. The entire 17,000-member Ethiopian community in Israel, he said, was affected by the situation.

In October the Association of Ethiopian Immigrants launched a public campaign to pressure Israel to allocate greater resources to bringing the remaining Jews from Ethiopia. The community in Israel was heartened in November when it was announced that Israel and Ethiopia were restoring diplomatic relations. At a joint press conference in Jerusalem on November 6 with Deputy Foreign Minister Netanyahu, Ethiopian presidential aide Kessa Kebede stated that his government accepted the principle of family reunification. “Those wishing to leave, as per our constitution, should be allowed to do so,” he said.

Immigration to Israel rose dramatically in 1989, by 84 percent as compared to 1988. Of the 24,660 new immigrants who arrived in 1989, half (12,923) were from
the Soviet Union, and of those more than 8,300 came in the year's last four months, 3,631 of them in December. (The year's final week saw 1,556 Soviet Jewish arrivals, including 460 on December 27 alone.) Immigration from the rest of the world remained depressingly low—there were fewer arrivals from the United States than in 1988, for example, and although immigration from Argentina, at 1,850, was up by some 300, the anticipated major movement of Jews from that country failed to materialize. Overall, it was the best immigration performance in a decade.

The Economy

The year began with a devaluation of 8 percent (January 1), following a 5-percent devaluation a few days earlier. This, along with big subsidy cuts, was part of an economic plan proposed by Finance Minister Shimon Peres which the cabinet approved by a vote of 18-2 (Ariel Sharon and Yitzhak Navon) on January 5, following a special 14-hour session. The gist of the program was an attempt to reduce the government deficit by NIS 1.1 billion. The method was the traditional one: across-the-board budget and subsidies slashes whose consequences would be borne largely by the public, although the government sector was to be reduced by 3 percent. One of the most controversial measures was a registration fee for high school, with low-earning families and development towns exempt—a transparent attempt (which, like many other clauses in the plan, ultimately failed to get by the Knesset or was victimized by bureaucracy) to reintroduce payment for high-school education without saying so.

Peres continued to be a lightning rod for Likud attacks all year. In February he was branded a "cheat," a "liar," and a "thief" by Likud MKs for reaching agreement on a cost-of-living allowance with the Histadrut labor federation in which the latter would accept only partial compensation for price rises, but would get higher government funding for its ailing medical insurance program, an extension of price controls, and greater taxes for high wage-earners. The package was expected to cost the Treasury some NIS 200 million. Knesset approval of the budget for fiscal 1989-90 was held up because the Likud would not vote for aid to the economically battered kibbutz movements unless money was also earmarked for the settlements in the territories. The religious parties tried to play both ends against the middle in order to get extra funding for their institutions. Ultimately, none of the three sectors was included in the budget of NIS 59.2 billion ($32.5 billion) approved in late March, but all got their cuts later in the year.

Indeed, Peres's tenure as finance minister, a job he never wanted, but which the labor movement's hard-pressed affiliated institutions and organizations insisted that he take once the idea was broached, may be remembered primarily for the rescue of the kibbutzim. Peres was able to engineer an arrangement in which the banks and the Treasury either wrote off or rescheduled at convenient terms kibbutz-movement debts of NIS 4 billion, and agreed to underwrite the kibbutzim to the tune of NIS 650 million over the coming six years. In return, the kibbutzim were to raise NIS
500 million by realizing assets and reduce their standard of living and their investments by 5 percent.

Peres’s penchant for the spectacular instant solution was well demonstrated in his endeavors to solve the country’s rapidly worsening unemployment problem. With some 10 percent of the workforce jobless by midyear—in some remote towns, particularly in the Negev, unemployment was over 20 percent—and reports rife of imminent large-scale immigration from the USSR, Peres in August got the cabinet to pass (14-2 and 10 abstentions) a so-called “overlords” plan. This would cut red tape by setting up a three-man ministerial committee that would approve 100 major projects within seven months and implement them by sidestepping the bureaucracy. However, with the national unity government feeling the strains of the Labor-Likud discord over the May initiative on elections in the territories, there was little chance that projects on a scale such as this could be carried out.

Peres, for his part, took to traveling around the country with a busload of officials (and reporters), explaining the projects he had in mind for various locales, and making promises. The legislation, though, was stuck in committee, with the Likud again demanding NIS 30 million for settlements as a condition of support for “overlords.” In the meantime, no less a personage than the Finance Ministry’s director-general, Ya’akov Lifschitz, scored the entire idea, saying it would increase inflation and that all resources should be diverted to housing construction to meet the anticipated immigration wave. At the end of September, Deputy Finance Minister Beilin removed the anti-red-tape bill from the Knesset agenda, declaring that codicils inserted by the Likud had effectively destroyed it. Finally, six weeks later, Peres himself formally asked the cabinet to kill the bill, which it did, unanimously. The Likud finally forced Peres to release the NIS 30 million for the settlements in December by threatening to block crucial income-tax legislation in the Knesset’s Finance Committee.

Overall, indeed, the economic year was one of stagnation, particularly in the light of Peres’s statements and plans at its start. “At the end of 1989,” he told business leaders early in the year, “I would like to see three figures: 6 percent growth, inflation of 8–9 percent and an increase of 9 percent in exports.” The actual figures were rather different: industrial production was down by 2 percent, the gross domestic product climbed by a minuscule 1.3 percent, private and public consumption was down by 1 percent, exports rose by only 4.6 percent. Inflation was above 20 percent (20.7) for the first time since the economic stabilization program of July 1985. Private consumption of durables was down by a full 15 percent, with some areas particularly hard hit: car sales decreased by 37 percent, and purchases of clothing and personal items declined by 10 percent on top of an 8-percent fall in 1988. One bright spot was a large fall, of $2.4 billion, in Israel’s foreign debt (from $18.8 billion at the end of 1988 to $16.4 billion a year later). At the same time, the trade deficit declined from $5.2 billion in 1988 to $3.7 billion in 1989.

The effects of the intifada were felt less severely in 1989, indicating that the economy had largely adjusted to the situation. Overall, the two years of the uprising
were estimated to have cost the economy between $800 million and $1 billion, with the great bulk of the loss occurring in 1988. Thus, according to a Bank Hapoalim newsletter, in terms of Israel's total GNP of about $42 billion, the intifada represented a loss of 1.5 percent in 1988 and between 0.5 percent and 1 percent in 1989.

However, there were some who continued to believe in the underlying resilience of the Israeli economy. British press magnate Robert Maxwell bought into two of the country's most successful firms, Scitex, a high-tech computer company, and Teva Pharmaceuticals; Australian investor Jack Lieberman became the sole owner of the Paz Oil Co., acquiring the final 25 percent of the company's stock not in his possession; Bankers Trust of New York agreed to a recovery plan for Koor Industries and halted its liquidation suit against the Histadrut's giant conglomerate for failing to repay a $20 million loan; and Hollinger Inc., a huge Canadian-based newspaper chain, purchased the Jerusalem Post. This development ultimately forced longtime chief editors Ari Rath and Erwin Frenkel to resign over the issue of editorial independence after Hollinger president David Radler installed Yehuda Levy, a 53-year-old former Israeli army colonel with no newspaper experience, as the paper's president and publisher.

**Other Domestic Issues**

The year saw a rise of 22 percent in the number of serious crimes committed, including murder (105 cases, a 61-percent leap), attempted murder, armed robbery, extortion, sexual assault, and arson. All told, 265,498 criminal files were opened during the year—an average of one crime every two minutes.

**RELIGION**

Although a public-opinion survey commissioned by the American Jewish Committee found, in May, that 51 percent of Israeli Jews thought Reform and Conservative rabbis should be accorded the same status as their Orthodox counterparts in marriage, divorce, and conversion, the High Court of Justice thought differently. On July 24, it handed down two landmark decisions in the realm of religious freedom and pluralism in Israel. In one case, the court voted 5–0 to reject the petition of two Reform rabbis asking to be allowed to perform marriages. However, although affirming the exclusive prerogative of the Chief Rabbinate (meaning Orthodox Jewry) to appoint marriage and divorce registrars, four of the five justices expressed their regret that the law (the 1953 Rabbinical Courts Law) gave them no leeway on the issue.

The court did, however, rule by 4–1 that population registry clerks were not entitled to question the halakhic status of new immigrants who declared themselves to be Jews (although a clerk could ask to see documentary proof of an applicant's Jewishness). The petitioners in this case included two political parties, the ultra-
Orthodox Shas (which controlled the Interior Ministry) and the National Religious party, as well as the Reform movement, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, and 14 converts from the three main Judaic streams. Presiding over the panel of justices in both decisions was Supreme Court president Meir Shamgar, who, in writing the majority opinion in the second case, cited the precedent of the Shoshana Miller case. (See also AJYB 1990, p. 499; 1989, pp. 417–18; 1988, pp. 400–01.)

However, the Interior Ministry immediately found a way to circumvent the ruling. “Bowing to political necessity,” the Jerusalem Post editorialized on July 26, “and, no less importantly, to a ruling by Shas’s Council of [Torah] Sages, [Interior Minister Rabbi Arye Deri] proceeded to make a mockery of the institution of identity cards.” Beginning July 31, ID cards no longer carried the signature of either the interior minister or the registration clerk; instead, a fine-print statement was added stating: “According to Article 3 of the 1965 Population Registry Law, the details registered in this document—with the exception of the categories of ‘nationality’ [i.e., religion], ‘personal status’ and ‘name of spouse’—shall be considered prima facie evidence of their accuracy.” Deri’s predecessor as interior minister, Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, also from Shas, had resigned rather than register the Reform convert Shoshana Miller as a Jew; but Deri found a way to retain his seat while, as the Post noted, doing “all he could to uphold the ultra-Orthodox reading of halakha [Jewish religious law] against the civil law.”

At year’s end the High Court handed down another benchmark decision in a case involving a religious issue, ruling that “messianic Jews” were not entitled to immigrant status under the Law of Return. The three justices determined unanimously that Gary and Shirley Beresford, originally from South Africa, and both born to Jewish parents, had in effect undergone a voluntary conversion when they joined a “Jews for Jesus” group in their native country and were therefore “members of a different faith.” As such, they could apply for Israeli citizenship under the Citizenship Law but not under the Law of Return. The Beresfords entered Israel as visitors in 1986 but were turned down by the Interior Ministry when they asked for immigrant status. In court, they insisted that they were still Jews and that, in any event, they had been born Jewish and had not converted.

The High Court was also kept busy trying to settle a variety of cases of lesser principle in the ongoing struggle of the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox religious establishments to prevent encroachment on their turf. In January the court ordered Interior Minister Deri to add his signature on the plan to build a new soccer stadium in Jerusalem; Deri had held up the start of construction for more than 18 months after all the other bureaucratic hurdles had been successfully negotiated because some Israeli National Soccer League games were played on the Sabbath (although this was not one of the various reasons he cited for not signing the document). In July a Jewish belly dancer, Ilana Raskin, won an interim injunction against the Jerusalem Religious Council from the court, when she charged that the council was effectively preventing her from appearing at social functions by threatening to withdraw the kashrut certificate of any hall that hired her.
In a case that was marred by violence, the High Court in August ruled, on a temporary basis, that a group of Jewish feminists called "Women of the Wall," representative of all three denominations, must worship at the Western Wall "in accordance with the custom of the site." As that "custom" was determined by the Orthodox rabbi of the Wall, Yehuda Getz, this meant that the women would not be allowed to wear prayer shawls, read from the Torah, or sing while worshipping at the Wall. On at least four occasions during the year, ultra-Orthodox worshippers, outraged by the women's actions, had physically assaulted them. In March police had to use tear gas to disperse extremists who attacked the women, the first use of tear gas at the Western Wall since 1967. In late November, the Israeli women were joined for a prayer service at the Wall—adhering to the court's instructions—by members of the International Committee for the Women at the Kotel (Wall). In a ceremony held at a Jerusalem school (scheduled to be held at a hotel, it was moved when the Jerusalem Rabbinate threatened to withdraw the hotel's kashrut license) the international group presented the Women of the Wall with a Torah scroll.

More than 20 alleged ultra-Orthodox extremists aged 18-30 were arrested by Jerusalem police, assisted by members of the antiterror unit, in two February sweeps through the Me'ah She'arim quarter. The detainees were suspected of belonging to an underground organization called Keshet, an acronym for "Kvutza Shelosh Ti-tipasher" (a group that will not compromise). The group's main activity consisted of planting bombs at the shops or homes of vendors of "secular" newspapers in the city of B'nei B'rak.

Israel's drug problem drew heightened attention during the year. A newly established government-sponsored body, the War on Drugs Authority, urged the establishment of a series of drug treatment centers to bolster the five already in existence, but in the meantime a new law, passed in July, increased police powers in combating drug traffickers and sharply stiffened the fines the courts could impose on users and dealers. A Health Ministry survey released in August found that there were 18,000 hard-drug addicts in the country, with twice that number using drugs regularly. The report said that drug use had increased by 25 percent per year in each of the past three years. Other officials said the problem had reached "epidemic" proportions and that no fewer than 200,000 Israelis, nearly 5 percent of the total population, were hard-drug users of one degree or another. A police estimate said that 1.5 tons of heroin were smuggled into Israel annually, primarily from Lebanon.

A problem of daily concern to Israelis, the government bureaucracy, was the object of a report by a blue-ribbon commission headed by former Interior Ministry director-general Haim Kubesky. The team's three-year study found, to no one's surprise, that the civil service was "bloated" in size and "mediocre" in quality. The commission called for the restructuring and depoliticizing of the civil service and less government interference in society.

In July the Maccabiah Games, the "Jewish Olympics," celebrated its bar mitzvah in 10 days of events, with the participation of 4,500 athletes from 47 countries,
including a contingent from Lithuania. The closing event included a march by the participants through the streets of Jerusalem and a torchlight ceremony at the Western Wall. Not far from there, in a ceremony held some six weeks earlier, the cornerstone was laid for the development of the Mamilla Quarter, opposite the Old City wall, following 16 years of wrangling over the plans for the hypersensitive site. The bulk of the $250-million project was to be completed within four years.

Israel's population stood at 4,560,000 at the end of 1989, with hopes running high for a major population boost in the form of the surging immigration from the Soviet Union. In 1989 the population grew by 1.8 percent, up slightly from 1988 but below the annual average of 2.4 percent for the decade. Jews accounted for 81.5 percent of the population (3.7 million, an increase of 1.6 percent over 1988); Muslims for 14.4 percent (655,000, an increase of 3.2 percent); Christians for 2.2 percent (107,000, an increase of 2.2 percent); and Druze and others for 1.8 percent (80,000, an increase of 2.8 percent). The Jewish proportion of the population in Galilee continued its slow but steady fall, standing at 47.8 percent of the total in that district. In the occupied territories, however, the Jewish population increased by 9.8 percent, standing at 73,000 at year's end.

Personalia

Personalities who died during the year included Dvora Netzer, founder and longtime head of the Working Mothers Organization (afterward Na’amat) and a Mapai Knesset member for 20 years, on January 4, aged 92; Yitzhak Tunik, Israel's third state comptroller (1982–87) and a former president of the Israel Bar Association, January 9, aged 77; David Laskov, the Israeli army's oldest soldier and an Israel Prize laureate for the invention of weapons systems, February 4, aged 87; Moshe Kol, veteran political leader of the Independent Liberal party, former cabinet minister, and a signatory on the Declaration of Independence, July 7, aged 78; Shmuel Rodensky, best known for over 1,800 appearances as Tevye the Milkman in the Israeli production of Fiddler on the Roof, and an Israel Prize winner for his life's work on the stage, July 16, aged 84; Binyamin Tammuz, noted writer and artist and a leading figure in the "Canaanite" movement in the 1940s, July 19, aged 70; Aviva Uri, considered Israel's leading abstract-expressionist painter, September 2, aged 62; Arye Dulzin, former chairman of the WZO and the Jewish Agency, a leading member of the Liberal party, and a member of the national unity government in 1969–70, September 13, aged 76; Dov Sadan, Hebrew University professor emeritus of Yiddish and an Israel Prize winner in Judaica, October 13, aged 87; Dahn Ben-Amotz, bohemian author and archetypical sabra, who held a "wake" to part with his friends upon learning he had incurable cancer, October 20, aged 66; Dorothea Krook-Gilead, professor of English literature, who helped shape two generations of students in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and an Israel Prize laureate,
November 13, aged 69; and Elisheva Cohen, emeritus chief curator of the Israel Museum, an Israel Prize laureate for her contribution to the advancement of the arts, December 20, aged 78.

RALPH MANDEL
Israeli Culture

Israel, at the end of the 1980s, was a society with an impressive and dynamic cultural life. In poetry and music, fiction, art, and philosophy, Israel maintained a pace of creative achievement and intensity unmatched by many older, larger, and wealthier countries.

An important measure of Israel's vitality is that its cultural life is nourished largely from within. Despite Israel's openness to the West and the admiration for European or American culture which many intellectuals and artists profess, Israeli culture is distinctive not only in its flavor and shadings but in its content and core concerns. This distinctiveness is evident in the basic questions which Israeli literature, art, and thought address, in the manner in which new trends in literature and art react and respond to previous movements so as to form a uniquely "Israeli" tradition, and in the continued importance and influence within Israeli culture of seminal writers and thinkers that Zionism and the reality of the Jewish state have produced over the last 70 years.

The breakdown of Zionist ideology and the unresolved questions concerning self-definition which marked Israel in the 1980s did not seem to stymie the flow of creativity in Israeli literature and art as the decade drew to a close. Instead, these crises of identity prodded artists and writers into a deeper engagement with the past and present, releasing new sources of enrichment and inspiration.

Literature: Fiction

As the 1980s drew to a close, literature in Israel, and especially the prose forms, benefited from a double blessing: Mature writers such as A.B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz, David Shitz, and Yehoshua Koren continued to produce major works, while a younger generation with an abundance of talent and a new perspective on Israeli life brought fresh vitality to an already vigorous literary scene.

What distinguishes the wave of new prose being published in Israel from earlier Israeli fiction? New Israeli fiction is both more pluralist and more populist than the fiction which dominated the Israeli literary scene until the latter part of the 1980s. Writers of "the Native Generation"—a term used to describe the first generation of writers (such as Oz, Yehoshua, and Yaakov Shabtai) to come of age after the creation of the state—sought to create heroes and narratives which would define the meaning and nature of Israeli identity. However critical or ironic was their treatment of Israeli life, these writers assumed that there was a representative Israeli, and a single, more or less coherent, center to Israeli society. Contemporary Israeli fiction shows, however, as Ha'aretz critic Ariel Hirschfeld has said, that "there is a feeling
that the word ‘Israeli’ does not mean one thing anymore, but is a collection of many things, very different from one another.” While the classic hero of Israeli fiction was likely to be an Ashkenazi, secular, and a Sabra (native-born Israeli), new Israeli fiction is just as likely to be by or about immigrants, women, oriental Jews, religious, or formerly religious, Jews. This kind of fiction is more concerned with illuminating one aspect of Israeli existence in depth than making a statement about Israeli society as a whole.

Although David Grossman did not publish new fiction in 1989, his second novel, See Under: Love (published in 1987), is worth mentioning as an influential example of the trend in Israeli fiction described above. Grossman’s hero in See Under: Love is the child of poor immigrants—Holocaust survivors—living in a neighborhood on the outskirts of Jerusalem. It is the shadow of the Holocaust, and not the promise or the disappointments of Zionism, which constitutes the inner world of Grossman’s hero. The Native Generation in Israeli fiction wrote about the existential dilemmas of a new kind of Jew—the Israeli—who was the product of a conscious break with the past, with the Diaspora and all that it represented. Grossman’s novel is concerned, in contrast, with links between generations, with the penetration of the present by the past, with the power and authenticity of private universes of experience.

Bernhard, one of the important new novels published in 1989, is an attempt to reconstruct the innermost experience of a German Jewish immigrant living in the Rehavia neighborhood of Jerusalem during the years of World War II and just before them. Yoel Hoffman, who wrote Bernhard, is an academic expert on Zen Buddhism; his style in Bernhard is both concise and poetic, like a Zen text. Bernhard is a lyrical and meditative work, written as a series of stream-of-consciousness musings which touch upon the most basic of questions. There is hardly any plot to Bernhard: its hero is absorbed in mourning for his late wife; he hears distant reports of the fate of European Jewry but these are always partial and fragmented. Through his isolated hero and his attempt to represent a group of immigrants who arrived in Israel more than 40 years ago, Hoffman pierces deep into the ground of all human experience: human consciousness, in the broadest and most universal sense of the word, is the real hero of Bernhard.

Dan Benayahu Seri, whose second book of short stories, Birds of the Shade, was published in 1989, writes about yet another kind of Israel: the poor Bukharan and Yemenite neighborhoods of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Seri’s language and his storytelling devices reflect the oriental milieu of his settings: places where tradition, superstition, and families that span several generations are, if not intact, still a formidable presence. Seri’s work has a folkloristic flavor to it, but he is sharp and sometimes bitter, more grotesque than nostalgic in his portrayals. He combines the simplest street language with an exceptionally rich, expressionistic, literary Hebrew, to startling effect.

Gershon Shaked, a prominent critic and historian of Israeli literature, remarked that 1989 might properly be called “the year of the woman” in Israeli fiction. Shaked
was referring in particular to three women—Orly Kestel Blum, Chana Bat Shachar, and Yehudit Katzir—who were at the beginning of their path as writers; each published a collection of short stories in 1989 that met with both critical acclaim and popular success.

Orly Kestel Blum’s collection of short stories *Hostile Surroundings* was her second in three years. Kestel Blum writes about men and women who exist on the periphery of society: criminals, prostitutes, alienated teenagers. She mixes literary styles together in anarchic fashion, alternating between—and sometimes combining—flat realistic language which mimics ordinary speech and fantastical plot devices that emphasize the absurdity of her heroes’ lives. Kestel Blum’s writing provokes strong reactions among critics and readers. Her admirers argue that she is highly original and that her shock techniques are an effective weapon aimed at unsettling the complacent Israeli bourgeoisie. Her critics say that she is gimmicky and capricious, that her anarchism is nihilistic, and that her originality is devoid of content.

Chana Bat Shachar is a pseudonym taken by the daughter of a prominent Orthodox rabbinical figure, herself the mother of five children and living an Orthodox lifestyle. The stories in her collection *To Call the Bats* describe an inner world colored by the tension between repression and desire. The heroine in *To Call the Bats* is usually a young or middle-aged woman from an Orthodox background; the stories are particularly concerned with relationships between fathers and daughters. The various episodes in *To Call the Bats* take place along the fluid borderline where secular and religious society in Israel meet. As with Seri’s stories and Hoffman’s novel, Bat Shachar uses her literary gifts to bring a setting or sector neglected in modern Israeli fiction into the mainstream of cultural life. According to Gershon Shaked, *To Call the Bats* is “a deep, intense, complex, and extraordinary book.”

Yehudit Katzir was the first writer of her generation to write about growing up in Israel. At 26 the youngest of the writers we have mentioned, Katzir writes “like a family photographer” about Israeli childhood in the 1960s and ’70s. Childhood, for Katzir, is not a world lost and longed for, but a place where both life and death are foreshadowed suddenly, amidst the seemingly reassuring trappings of bubble gum and afternoons at the movies. Her narrative voice moves back and forth between a childlike quality, innocent and enthused, and an adult knowingness or irony.

In addition to such relative newcomers as Bat Shachar and Benayahu Seri, Hoffman, and Katzir, writers such as Amos Oz, Aharon Appelfeld, and David Shitz, who have been prominent for 20 years or longer, published novels and collections of short stories in 1989.

Amos Oz’s work *To Know a Woman* tells the story of Yoel, a former Mossad agent who has retired, though still middle-aged, after the death of his wife. Yoel’s erotic musings, the regrets that haunt him, and his efforts to find a modicum of peace of mind are the main concerns of *To Know a Woman*. Oz’s novel disappointed most Israeli critics, who found it shallow and passionless. Some critics suggested that Oz’s
writing had reached a stage of decline; since Oz was perhaps the representative writer of the Native Generation, they saw in his decline further evidence that a changing of the guard in Israeli literature had fully begun.

Other mature Israeli writers, however, who had not achieved the prominence of Oz, published books which were well received and widely read this year. David Shitz's novel *Avishag* explores the mystery of erotic attraction, while the short stories in Yehoshua Koren's *Funeral in the Afternoon* take place in stark, dusty settings—a development town, an army base somewhere in the desert—which Koren crafts skillfully into symbols of evocative simplicity.

Aharon Appelfeld, in contrast to both Oz and Koren, has never been considered a "representative" Israeli writer, because of both his Diaspora origins (he was born in Romania and spent the war years in Soviet labor camps) and his subject matter (Jewish life in Europe on the eve of the Holocaust). Appelfeld's previous novels turned an often harshly critical eye toward Jewish communities in Eastern Europe that remained paralyzed and willfully unaware as disaster approached. Appelfeld's novella *Caterina* presents another view of the prewar period. It tells the story of a Gentile woman from a small village who comes to work in a Jewish home after having grown up in an environment where Jews were considered the embodiment of everything demonic and evil. Caterina falls in love with the Jews in general—as well as with a specific Jew. Through her eyes, Appelfeld creates a picture of Jewish life as an island of decency and compassion surrounded by a society whose brutality is an allusion to the murderousness which the war will soon release.

As the decade drew to a close, not everyone agreed that the new trends in Israeli fiction were for the better. During the '80s, more effort was spent by Israeli publishers to advertise new books; the release of a new novel becoming in Israel, as it had been for some time in America, a media event. Some critics lamented this change. They argued that the commercialization of Israeli literature had already affected the quality of writing—by putting pressure on writers to produce more quickly so as to keep their names in the public eye, and by shifting literature from a serious and even visionary pursuit toward the domain of entertainment. "The attempt to bring literature 'closer' to the readers," according to Amnon Nevat, an Israeli critic who disapproved of recent literary trends, "becomes a surrender to the desire of the readers to see their lives reflected in its pages in an easily recognizable way."

Most critics, however, and if book sales are any indication, many enthusiastic readers, believe that literature in Israel is in the midst of a renaissance, and that the new generation of Israeli writers is a tremendously creative and renewing force. What these writers have in common, according to Hirschfeld and other critics, is that almost all of them turned backward at a certain point to the memory of an elemental trauma. Said Hirschfeld: "Contemporary Israeli literature is a literature that is searching for its father and its mother, whereas previous generations of Israeli writers didn't want to speak about who gave birth to it and where. This literature is an expression of a deep and positive cultural process occurring within Israel itself."
Literature: Poetry

Israel has had a strong poetic tradition, with the works of several major poets in each generation becoming part of the cultural heritage of the entire nation: Tchernichovsky and Bialik in the '20s and '30s; Natan Alterman and Uri Zvi Greenberg in the '40s and early '50s; Natan Zach, Dalia Ravikovich, Yehuda Amichai, and Amir Gilboa in the late '50s and '60s; Yona Wallach, Yair Hurwitz, and Meir Weiseltier in the '70s. At least until the 1980s, poetry was central to Israel's cultural life, even more so than fiction.

During the 1980s, much poetry continued to be written in Israel, and a number of new and gifted poets established themselves. Among those who published in 1989, mention should be made of Leah Ayalon (Daniel, Daniel) and Mordechai Goldman (Milano), Admiel Kosman (The Clothes of a Prince) and Tzvi Atzmon (Substitute). In addition to these younger poets, two older writers—Aryeh Sivan and Aharon Shabtai—who had been publishing for several decades, became, in the last few years, important voices in Israeli poetry.

As was the case with fiction, a critical debate accompanied the end-of-the-decade assessments of the state of Israeli poetry. Both sides in the debate conceded that Israeli poetry was in a novel situation: for the first time since the modern revival of Hebrew poetry, there existed no solid and agreed-upon group of leading poets, no single dominant poetic school. Natan Zach and David Avidan, who were leading poets into the '70s, had become increasingly peripheral. Yair Hurwitz and Yona Wallach, outstanding poets of the '70s, had died (Hurwitz in 1989).

Of the poets who were influential in the '60s and '70s, only Yehuda Amichai maintains a consistent presence in Israeli poetry. Amichai, who has been one of Israel's best-loved poets since the late 1950s, published a new collection of poetry in 1989: Even the Fist Was Once a Palm and Outstretched Fingers. The quality of Amichai's poetry has remained constant over the years (one critic termed Amichai "our only evergreen poet"), a trait that some critics deride as repetitiveness.

Ariel Hirschfeld, in a three-part essay titled "Poetry's Betrayal," published in Ha'aretz, argued that Israeli poetry, despite its outstanding quality and an abundance of talented young poets, has sung itself into a corner. Poetry is no longer being read as it once was, Hirschfeld claimed, because, beginning with Hurwitz, Wallach, and Weiseltier, it became increasingly obscure and inwardly directed, demanding unfair and even impossible decoding efforts from its readers.

Hirschfeld's essay drew sharp responses. If poetry has spent some time hiding from the spotlight, critics defending contemporary Israeli poetry argue, this turn inward has yielded beneficial results. Israeli poetry has freed itself from the Zachian model of highly intellectual verse written in spare language and has reestablished a plurality of poetic modes drawn from all the various layers of Hebrew literary history. The language of contemporary Hebrew poetry is rich and metaphorical; poetry, these critics maintain, is still the cutting edge of Israeli culture.
Literature: Continuity

In writing about contemporary Israeli literature, the continuing importance to Israeli culture of such "canonical" modern Hebrew writers as Agnon, Bialik, Brenner, Shabtai, Alterman, and S. Yizhar must be mentioned. Books of criticism on Agnon and Bialik and biographies of the poets Zelda and Yonatan Ratosh appeared this year; when S. Yizhar's great novel about the War of Independence, Yemay Ziklag, was republished after 40 years, A.B. Yehoshua, Amos Oz, and Yehoshua Kenaz all published essays in Ha'aretz about its significance. This continuing conversation between generations of writers makes Israeli literature a particularly rich and fertile component of Israeli culture.

Philosophy, Jewish Thought, and the Academy

Spinoza and Other Heretics, a long (566 pages), dense, learned work of intellectual and cultural history by Prof. Yirmiyahu Yovel, was the nonfiction phenomenon of 1989 in Israel. Some 10,000 hardcover copies of the work were sold, making it a runaway best-seller in Israeli terms.

According to Yovel, Spinoza was the first modern, secular Jew, and also the original and central philosopher—one is tempted to say prophet—of modern secular consciousness itself. Yovel's book is divided into two sections. In the first part, he proposes a fascinating if questionable "prehistory" of Spinoza. Spinoza's secularism, Yovel says, grew out of the very special situation of his ancestors, who were Marranos in Spain and Portugal. The double life that Marranos were forced to live left them alienated from both Christianity, which they had been taught to conform to outwardly while despising it inwardly, and from Judaism, which they experienced as a source of anxiety but not as a living tradition. The Marrano experience was thus the crucible of Spinoza's secularism; the Marranos' simultaneous disconnection from both Judaism and Christianity created a new and empty space from which Spinoza's secular philosophy could spring.

The second part of Yovel's book traces the history of Spinoza's influence on the development of modern thought and on such seminal figures as Kant, Hegel, Goethe, Freud, and Nietzsche. Spinoza's enormous importance to Western culture, according to Yovel, lies in his attempt "to liberate man from any dependence on factors that transcend the horizon of this world . . . to make do with reality as it exists."

Spinoza struck a responsive chord in Israel, in large part because Yovel proposed Spinoza as a spiritual forefather and archetype for the modern secular Israeli: a great Jew who rejected his ancestral religion without hiding or denying his Jewishness and went on to make a massive contribution to humanity as a whole. Yovel's Spinoza Institute, which he founded four years ago, supports Spinoza research and sponsors conferences, well attended by the general public, on subjects such as pluralism and religious tolerance.
Of course not everyone agreed with Yovel’s portrait of Spinoza. Prof. Yosef Ben Shlomo, in a review essay of *Spinoza* (*Nativ*, Spring 1989), argued against all of Yovel’s assessments: Spinoza, according to Ben Shlomo, was neither secular (he was, rather, “drunk on God”) nor modern, but the last of the great metaphysical philosophers. Perhaps even more significantly, Spinoza was not Jewish—except, ironically, according to the strictly halakhic definition. “In none of his writings,” says Ben Shlomo, “does he mention even one word about belonging to the Jewish people.” Spinoza, Ben Shlomo asserts, was not the first modern secular Jew, “unless you wish to identify the modern secular Jew as a person who is completely alienated from his own national culture, and who expresses his world view through the concepts of a culture hostile to the Jewish people and their culture.”

A book about a more recent effort to create a new kind of Jew is Yehoshua Porat’s exacting and definitive biography of the philosopher-poet Yonatan Ratosh: *Weapon with a Pen in His Hand*. *Weapon* was, like *Spinoza*, an outstanding critical and popular success in Israel in 1989. Ratosh was the pen name of Uriel (Halpern) Shelach (1908–1981), one of the outstanding leaders and ideologues of the “Hebrew,” later called “Canaanite,” movement. *Weapon* tells the story of Ratosh’s childhood in Warsaw and Vilna, where he grew up in one of the first exclusively Hebrew-speaking homes in Eastern Europe. In Paris, in 1929, Ratosh began to encounter members of Jabotinsky’s Revisionist party and was quickly attracted to the maximalist faction, who wished to establish a Jewish state on both banks of the Jordan River.

During this time, Ratosh’s Canaanite ideas began to take form. Ratosh believed that the Jewish return to Palestine necessitated a “complete disconnection” from the Jewish past and a return to the premonotheistic culture of the ancient Hebrew tribes. The British, argued Ratosh, should be forced out of Palestine immediately so that a Hebrew state could be established extending from the Nile to the Euphrates. The “Hebrew” people that would inhabit this state would include not only Jews but Druze and Maronite Christians as well. Ratosh emigrated to Palestine and remained faithful to his Canaanite ideas, which he disseminated until the end of his life. Ratosh’s poetry is gripping and hypnotic and ranks among the best Hebrew poetry of modern times. As a cultural-political ideologue, Ratosh-Shelach battled with Yair (Avraham Stern) for domination of the prestate Lechi group, fought against the Latinization of Hebrew, and vehemently opposed including Jewish studies in the public-school curriculum in Israel. Ratosh-Shelach was the most radical expositor of ideas that, in various forms and incarnations, remain very much part of the Israeli scene.

Eli Schweid’s new book, *Jewish Thought in the Twentieth Century: From 1900 to 1945*, is also very much concerned with the question of Jewish identity. In it, Schweid analyzes a wide range of thinkers who have been written about elsewhere—from Abraham Isaac Kook and Jacob Reines to Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber, from Yehezkel Kaufman and Abraham Joshua Heschel to Ahad HaAm and A.D. Gordon. Schweid makes an original contribution to the study of these thinkers
by moving questions that were usually part of the background of each thinker's position onto center stage. For Schweid, the significant questions to Jews posed by the 20th century are sociocultural before they are theological or even political. What is Jewishness? What kind of Jewish civilization do these thinkers envision as ideal? What is their underlying reason or method in deciding between—or attempting to harmonize—the oppositionary poles of Israel and Diaspora, religious and secular, individual and community? Schweid's ultimate message is that for Judaism to thrive, it must allow for various aspects of human identity—political, cultural, spiritual—to be integrated and entwined.

In the world of Jewish studies, 1989 was also marked by the heated dispute that followed the publication of Moshe Idel's *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*. In *Kabbalah*, Idel, a 42-year-old professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, challenges many of the assumptions and conclusions of Gershom Scholem (1897–1982), the undisputed master of modern academic study of Jewish mysticism, a field which he founded almost single-handedly.

Without diminishing the enormousness of Scholem's contribution to the study of Jewish mysticism, Idel calls into question a number of Scholem's basic assertions. Whereas Scholem believed that Kabbalah originated through the penetration of non-Jewish Gnostic notions and myths into Rabbinic Judaism in the second century, Idel argues that Kabbalah developed, for the most part, from within Judaism itself, that basic kabbalistic motifs were already present in the Talmud and Midrash. And whereas Scholem argued that the Kabbalah of Rabbi Isaac Luria (the "Ari"), with its stress on the trauma of exile and the process of redemption, was a response to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, Idel argues that the theme of exile and redemption originated well before the "Ari" and before the Jewish expulsion from Spain.

There are also differences in the two men's scholarly approaches to the study of Jewish mysticism, differences with important implications for Jewish studies as a whole. Scholem used mainly historical and philological tools in the study of Kabbalah; he treated Kabbalah as a history of mystical ideas, and the main focus of his work was on the analysis of kabbalistic texts. Idel's methodology is phenomenological, that is, his concern is with what Kabbalah meant to kabbalists and not as much with the historical context of their work. Idel argues, as well, that mystical union with God was the goal of at least some kabbalists, a possibility which Scholem vehemently denied. Idel's challenge to the dominant Scholemian approach to Kabbalah aroused much heated debate in the academic community, debate that spilled over into the daily newspapers. The most vehement attack on Idel's views was mounted by Prof. Isaiah Tishby, a student and colleague of Scholem's and himself a renowned authority on Kabbalah. The two issues of *Tarbiz*—a journal for the study of Jewish history published in Jerusalem—that were published in 1989 featured a sometimes rancorous 80-page exchange between Idel and Tishby. The Scholem-Idel controversy was of more than the usual interest because of Scholem's extraordinary standing, not just as a scholar but as one of the intellectual masters
Increasing efforts were made in 1989 to bring together, into a single framework, different and even conflicting approaches to Jewish studies, in an effort to stimulate creativity and to foster a new kind of dialogue. The Shalom Hartman Institute founded a center—the Advanced Institute—dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of Jewish texts and contemporary moral, political, and theological issues. Many of Israel's leading scholars in Judaic studies, philosophy, and related fields, along with visiting scholars from the Diaspora, participated in the institute's initial year of ongoing seminars. Ma'aleh—the center for the renewal of religious Zionism, which was founded in fall 1988—opened a bet midrash that combined traditional yeshivah study of the Talmud with insights drawn from academic Talmud study. In the fall of 1989, Ma'aleh opened a school of film and television, in the conviction that an understanding of modern media is crucial if religious Zionism is to emerge as a vital force in contemporary Israel. In the same period, a group of religious and secular Israelis together founded Elul—a pluralistic bet midrash promoting cooperation and dialogue between religious and secular Israelis; their goal is to develop a shared language drawn from a deep encounter with Jewish sources and history.

Art

Since the founding of the Bezalel Art Academy in 1906 in Jerusalem, "there has been enough art produced here," as one Israeli art historian expressed it, "for 10 countries of this size." The visual arts are, in one important respect, the most uniquely Israeli of the forms of cultural expression that developed in the country in the last century. For while the Jews carried with them a densely packed and always growing library of books throughout the centuries of exile, there was no distinctive tradition of Jewish visual arts preserved or produced in the Diaspora. Israeli painting and sculpture have had to invent themselves—and as such they are true children of the Zionist revolution. At the same time, the lack of a peculiarly Jewish artistic tradition has made Israeli art more open to Western influence than other Israeli forms of expression. Thus, the question of identity—the heart of the Zionist dilemma—is a question with which Israeli art is constantly engaged.

Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are the two centers of the Israeli art world. Each has a prestigious art academy—Bezalel in Jerusalem and the Ramat Hasharon Art Teachers Academy near Tel Aviv—where many of Israel's important artists teach. Each has a major museum which mounts frequent exhibitions of contemporary Israeli art: the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and the Tel Aviv Museum in Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv has the edge over Jerusalem in the number and quality of her galleries, especially where avant-garde art is concerned.

In addition to the activity centered in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, there are at least 13 smaller art academies located throughout the country and a number of museums that feature contemporary Israeli art, including museums in Haifa, Herzliyah, Arad, Tefen (in the western Galilee), and Bat Yam. But despite the large number of artists,
art schools, and museums, Israel has one significant missing link in its art scene: there have been few collectors of contemporary Israeli art, and therefore no significant art industry. Thus even the most successful and influential Israeli artists have had to supplement their income by teaching or through some other pursuit. Many artists feel, as well, that the Israeli press does not give contemporary art the coverage it deserves. Artists were particularly incensed when *Ha'aretz* ceased publishing gallery listings in their daily paper "for lack of public interest." Artists do receive some support from the municipal governments in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: these cities each recently set aside several buildings to serve as low-rent studios for deserving artists, and many of Israel's prominent younger artists are in fact working in these subsidized quarters.

The trend or style that dominated Israeli art for close to two decades received a name and a definition in an important exhibition presented by the Tel Aviv Museum in 1986, which was called "The Want of Matter." According to the catalogue of this exhibition, which was written by Sarah Braidburg, then curator of the museum's contemporary art division, modern Israeli art was characterized by the use of simple, inexpensive materials—including "found" objects and industrial paint—by a tendency not to paint with intense or sensuous colors, by the extensive use of pencil and charcoal drawing within paintings, by the juxtaposition of words and images within paintings, and by paintings whose various elements look as if they were placed together almost by accident. The total effect is a deemphasis of the material and the sensual, a demystification of art, and a distancing of art from the world of symbols and mythology which nourished it in Europe.

This Israeli aesthetic, according to Braidburg, was the result of an internalization of the Socialist-Zionist ethos, which devalued outer forms in favor of the torn clothes and meager personal possessions of the Zionist pioneers. These pioneers had broken their ties with both European, and to a great extent Jewish, culture; what they valued was what could be made from scratch, from the materials that were at hand. The relationship of Israeli artists to this ethos was, to be sure, not a simple one. As was the case with Israeli poetry in the '60s, the ironic, skeptical, antimythological language of Israeli art was both an expression of, and a rebellion against, the ideology and pathos of Zionism itself.

The "Want of Matter" style was also a reflection of artists' continuing love affair with the city of Tel Aviv: a city built with much vitality but little esthetic awareness, a city without great monuments or buildings, a city built in a hurry with cheap materials, with peeling stucco walls and colors fading into white under the brightness of the Mediterranean sun.

The exhibition "The Want of Matter" was a summing up and a turning point for Israeli art. In a conscious demonstration of independence from this trend, young artists began in the late '80s to paint and sculpt in an altogether different manner, using expensive materials with polished finishes and a stylized look. "The Want of Matter," according to Yitzhak Livneh, a prominent painter and instructor at Bezalel, "is not an appropriate form for the era of the Likud, an era marked by the
bourgeoisification of Israeli society.” Another important artist, Tamar Getter, who was featured in the “Want of Matter” exhibition, spoke in spiritual rather than political terms: “A culture cannot be built on irony,” she said. “‘Want of Matter’ can also indicate ‘Want of Spirit.’ Cultures must be built out of richness—richness of myth and symbol—not out of poverty.”

Some Israeli artists have begun to paint in ways that reflect a search for some sort of sublime. Artists such as Livneh, Larry Abramson, and Gabi Klasmer paint with abundant brushstrokes, creating images of figurative magic which suggest longing for something infinite. At the same time, the central object of the painting, which might be a common household object in the case of Livneh, or a dark, expressionless face in Klasmer’s paintings, undercuts the quest for the infinite, as if suggesting that such a search can only end in disappointment.

An important theme in recent Israeli art criticism, and to some extent in Israeli art as well, is a renewed interest in Judaism and Jewish sources. The modern period in Israeli art began in 1948 with a manifesto called “New Horizons,” which was prepared by a group of Israel’s most prominent artists. This manifesto declared that art must be universal in its themes and abstract in its form. The New Horizons group declared themselves independent of such Diaspora Jewish artists as Chagall, who worked with themes specific to Jewish life. To a great extent, mainstream Israeli art faithfully adhered to the dictates of the New Horizons group and declared Judaism out of bounds as a subject for Israeli art. Artists such as Avraham Ofek, an immensely gifted and powerful painter whose work was inspired by a deep interest in Judaism and Jewish mysticism, were systematically excluded from the center of the Israeli art scene.

This attitude began to change, at least partly, in the early ’80s, with the growing prominence of Moshe Gershuni, an abstract expressionist painter and perhaps the most influential artist of the decade in Israel. Gershuni’s paintings, whose thick, dark swirls speak directly to the subconscious, often contain Jewish symbols, such as the Star of David, and have passages from the Psalms scrawled through the heart of the painting. Other mainstream artists, such as Jack Jano, Micha Ulman, and Pinchas Cohen Gat began to present work that reflected a new involvement with Jewish themes. “Judaism,” wrote art historian Gideon Efrat, “which was once merely an entertaining aspect of the work of naive Israeli artists, finally, in 1989, reached the doorstep of non-naive Israeli art.”

Perhaps even more than the paintings and sculptures themselves, essays about Israeli art—written by art critics and artists alike—sought increasingly to define the relationship between the Jewish tradition and modern Israeli art. Critics like Efrat, along with artists like Tamar Getter, argue that Israeli art has to return to the basic task of finding a Jewish-Israeli visual tradition, even if only fragments of such a tradition exist.

In a three-part essay published in August-September 1988, Ha’aretz art critic Itamar Levi argued that modern Israeli art is deeply connected to the essence of the Jewish tradition, despite its seeming indifference to overtly Jewish symbols and
images. In fact, even the abstract universalism advocated by the New Horizons artists, Levi suggested, was itself an attempt to express a spirituality whose center is the Jewish God who cannot be directly seen. The collages and mixed-media creations of artists such as Rafi Lavi and Michal Neeman, Levi continued, were the artistic analogues of "a page of Talmud," with its infinite digressions and commentaries circling the original text. The poet Aharon Shabtai and artist Pinchas Cohen Gat continued Levi's theme, devoting essays in 1989 to the "Jewishness" of Israeli art.

Gideon Efrat, the most outspoken advocate for the return of Israeli art to Jewish sources, believes that critics like Levi are premature in their judgment. The kind of Judaism which Israeli artists and critics were willing, at the end of the '80s, to celebrate, he says, is itself an abstraction: a Judaism which negates the importance of physical land and concrete place, a Judaism which is more the product of secular Israel's utopian and universalist fantasies about Judaism than the result of a real engagement with Jewish texts and symbols.

Whether or not Efrat is correct in his assessment, Israeli art's dialogue with Judaism, which emerged as a major concern of critics and artists alike, seems bound to continue and deepen in the decade ahead.

**Theater**

Two million theater tickets are sold every year in Israel—the highest per capita number in the world. There are six major repertory theater companies in Israel: Habimah, the Cameri, and Beit Lessin in Tel Aviv, the Khan in Jerusalem, and the Haifa and Beersheva Municipal Theaters. In addition, there are a number of smaller theater companies, and the three large schools of theater—Bet Zvi in Tel Aviv, and the departments of theater at Tel Aviv and Hebrew Universities—also produce numerous plays.

The Acco Festival for Alternative Theater takes place every year during the Sukkot holiday (usually October) and provides a platform for actors and playwrights working outside the mainstream of Israeli theater. Alternative or avant-garde theater is also represented in Israel by the School for Visual Theater and the Kron Puppet Theater in Jerusalem and by small theater companies such as the Jerusalem Drama Workshop, which specializes in adapting traditional Jewish texts to the stage.

The major Israeli theater companies receive subsidies from the Ministry of Education and Culture equal to 25–30 percent of their budgets (in England, by comparison, repertory companies receive subsidies equal to 70–75 percent of their budgets). For the rest, Israeli theaters must rely on their audiences, which is why they alternate serious dramatic productions with musicals and other forms of popular drama.

Among the new plays written in Hebrew and produced for the Israeli stage in 1989, *Shira*, an adaptation for the stage of S.Y. Agnon's final novel, directed by
Yoram Falk, won the highest critical accolades. Other significant plays of 1989 included *The Work of Life* by Hanoch Levine, whom many consider Israel's finest playwright; *Hevre* by Hanan Peled, a critical look at a group of middle-aged Israelis who grew up in Zionist youth movements but have not lived up to their youthful ideals; *Zahav* by Yosef bar Yosef, about the efforts of a Holocaust survivor to keep her family together in Israel; and *Trumpets in the Wadi*, an adaptation of a book by Sami Michael about a Christian Arab family living in a wadi near Haifa.

Critics, writers, and performers who attempt to answer the question "What is Israeli about Israeli theater?" point in several directions. The plurality of accents, mannerisms, and cultural codes which must be integrated on the stage to produce an authentic representation of Israeli society in all its diversity is one important characteristic of Israeli theater. Another is Israeli theater's almost obsessive tendency toward "relevance"—the idea that today's plays should deal with yesterday's headlines; that the audience to a play should leave with a deeper insight into the moral dilemmas of Israel's political situation than when they came.

The intimate relationship between audience and performers is perhaps the most important characteristic of Israeli theater. To a far greater extent than in Europe or America, the audience in Israel feels included in the magic circle of creativity from which the play has emerged. Theaters are small, audiences are dedicated, and the themes are likely to be drawn from events or conditions which at least part of the audience has experienced firsthand.

**Music**

Israel has a highly developed musical culture. Its major symphony orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic, is considered one of the finest in the world, and other excellent orchestras, chamber groups, and choirs are part of Israel's lush musical landscape. Several contemporary Israeli composers have achieved international recognition for their work, and dozens of younger Israeli composers are involved in attempts to create a modern musical idiom. There is a large and devoted audience for classical music in Israel, and, until recently, when ticket prices began to climb beyond the reach of many ordinary citizens, all Philharmonic seats and many concerts of the other orchestras were sold out each year.

The richness and high quality of Israel's contemporary music scene is in many ways a consequence of the immigration of German Jews to Palestine during the Nazi period. It was German Jewish composers, conductors, teachers, performers, and intellectuals who created the possibility of a generation of world-class Israeli-born musicians.

Stylistically, many of the German Jewish composers prominent in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s were interested in creating music that reflected their new environment, and drew upon their personal Jewish roots and the pathos of the Jewish return to Zion as a whole. These early experiments grew into what was eventually known as "the Mediterranean school"—an attempt, in the years following the War of Indepen-
dence, to create a distinct Israeli musical style. Composers of the Mediterranean school—the dominant force in Israeli composition throughout the 1950s—built symphonies around Jewish liturgical and Eastern European and Jewish folk melodies, attempted to integrate Arabic and oriental Jewish musical traditions with classical Western forms, and even made use of Jewish and Arabic folk instruments. The Mediterranean school was eventually considered a self-conscious and heavy-handed attempt to infuse Israeli music with a distinctive style, and such techniques as the melodic quotation of phrases from Jewish folk songs were abandoned by Israeli composers in the ’60s.

The subsequent use of classical Hebrew texts or Judaic themes as inspiration for new Israeli compositions was much more successful. Such works as Mordecai Seter’s oratorio Tikun Hatzot (1960–61)—based on a medieval Jewish liturgical text that is recited by kabbalists at midnight, Ami Maayaani’s Milhemet Bnai HaOr (“The Battle of the Children of Light”; 1971), and Josef Tal’s Massada (1972) are all considered classics of modern Israeli composition.

The attempt to create a uniquely Israeli musical style was not abandoned by composers here after the Mediterranean school lost its influence but was pursued in a more subtle way. Composers began to draw inspiration from such elements of their Jewish and Israeli surroundings as the natural rhythm of spoken Hebrew, the tonal modulations of traditional biblical intonation, and the intricate, syncopated rhythms of oriental music.

The near obsession with defining Jewish or Israeli music declined noticeably during the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s, for two reasons: first, the desire of composers to be part of the international music scene, to influence and be influenced by styles and trends not limited by country borders; and second, the growing confidence of many composers and musicians that “Israeliness” would seep into their music unconsciously, without having to be forced into existence. As one young Israeli composer, Oded Zehavi, said: “[My] experiences . . . are of course tied to the complicated reality into which I was born and in which I live. . . . My service in the army, my struggles to remain sensitive after taking part in a war, and being a member of a society that relies on strength to survive and cannot afford to fail, in certain ways shaped my creative tools. Furthermore, the air of this city [Jerusalem] . . . is full of sounds for me: Oriental sounds, the sounds from the Sephardic synagogues, Eastern European music—these are not exotic, they are not to be cited and analyzed as ‘sources,’ they are part of my being.”

Perhaps the most sought-after Israeli composer in 1989 was Mark Kopytman, who immigrated to Israel from the Soviet Union in 1972. An orchestral piece called Memory, which he wrote in 1982, with a vocal solo sung by a Yemenite folksinger, was performed in 1989 in Moscow, Leningrad, Portugal, Spain, and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. According to Kopytman, although the composition is abstract in form and not connected to any particular text, it is concerned with Jewish collective memory. Kopytman, who teaches at the Rubin Academy in Jerusalem and also serves as personal mentor to a number of talented young musicians, is
involved in efforts to set up a certification center where musicians immigrating from the Soviet Union can be tested and certified.

Mass immigration from the Soviet Union is expected to change the music scene in Israel more drastically than any event since the arrival of the German immigrants in the 1930s. In 1989 the Ministry of Education and Culture announced that it would grant orchestras hiring new Soviet immigrants a monthly stipend for a limited period of time, and some orchestras, particularly the Beersheva Symphonietta, did indeed hire a number of new Soviet musicians. Many more Soviet musicians were expected to immigrate to Israel in 1990 and in the decade to come. An early assessment by Israel's musical establishment found the Soviet musicians to be technically excellent—perhaps even superior to their Israeli counterparts—but with less developed feeling and artistic sensitivity.

A new orchestra—the Rishon LeZion Symphony—was founded in 1989, under the direction of Noam Sheriff, a prominent Israeli composer and conductor. The orchestra received high marks from critics during its first season's performances.

The Arthur Rubinstein competition—an international piano competition held annually in Tel Aviv—was won in 1989 by contestants from England and Poland.

The Zimriya—a festival of Jewish choirs from around the world, which had been held in Jerusalem tri- or biennially since 1952, was held in 1989. Over a thousand choir members from all over the United States, Israel, and Europe participated.

**Dance**

Dance style in Israel has been influenced by both Eastern European and Yemenite folk traditions and by European and American modern dance forms. Gertrude Kraus, who immigrated to Israel from Vienna in the early 1920s, is considered the founder of Israeli modern dance. According to Hassia Levy-Agron, the founder and head of the School of Dance at the Rubin Academy of Music in Jerusalem, Kraus, "an expressionist dancer of great emotional power," was "one of the lionesses and revolutionaries of modern dance in Europe." After World War II, the center of dance shifted from Europe to America, and Martha Graham became "the standard-bearer of progressive dance." Graham exerted a strong influence on Israeli dance, especially after her visit to Israel in 1958.

In 1989 the major dance companies in Israel included the Batsheva (founded by the Baroness Batsheva de Rothschild, with Martha Graham serving as artistic advisor), the Bat Dor, Sound and Silence, the Kibbutz Dance Company, and Inbal. Sound and Silence (Kol veDemama in Hebrew), founded and directed by Moshe Efrati, is an ensemble of deaf and hearing dancers. This combination, says Levy-Agron, "creates spontaneous ties and tensions that radiate expressive force."

The Inbal Dance Theater was founded by Sarah Levi-Tanai, who spent many years researching the unique forms and gestures of Middle Eastern dance, especially the dance movements of Yemenite Jews. Levi-Tanai virtually revived dance traditions that were in danger of being completely forgotten. Inbal's dancers, who are
also trained in modern-dance techniques, have a repertoire that emphasizes biblical stories and the traditions of the various communities of oriental Jews in Israel.

**Film**

Film is the least developed of Israel's art forms. Although movie-making activity in the State of Israel began soon after the 1948 War of Independence, Israeli films have rarely reached the level of excellence that would distinguish them on the international scene. Even in Israel, foreign films—especially American—are far more popular than Israeli ones. Only about 10 percent of the 12 million cinema tickets sold each year are for Israeli films.

There are a number of reasons for Israel's relative lack of achievement in this field. Perhaps the most important is that filmmaking is too expensive for Israel's economy to support. With high-quality foreign films readily available, Israeli investors and producers have no assurance that a film will be a financial success even if they manage to complete it. Authentically Israeli films must be made in Hebrew—a fact that seriously limits their marketability in other countries.

Despite these obstacles, there is a small but vibrant filmmaking community in Israel. A concise overview of the history of Israeli films adds an important dimension to the understanding of Israeli culture.

According to Renan Schorr, a film historian, Israeli film can be divided into four main periods. "Zionist realism," the dominant filmmaking mode from 1948 until 1961, presented an uncritical celebration of Zionist ideology; it was centered around a hero who represented the mythological Sabra, who was everything the Diaspora Jew was not: strong, confident, and disconnected to a great extent from the pre-Zionist Jewish past. Since filmmaking at that time was completely dependent on government and Jewish Agency support, it is not surprising that many critics dismiss early Israeli films as propaganda pieces.

In the early 1960s, a new kind of Israeli film began to be produced. "The Native Generation" of writers, who were more individualistic and critical than their predecessors, became the dominant force in literature in the 1960s, and a parallel phenomenon emerged in film. Such movies as Uri Zohar's *Hole in the Moon* (1965) and Ephraim Kishon's *Sallah Shabati* (1965) poke gentle fun at the Zionist establishment and focus on individuals who have little in common with the mythological Sabra.

The "Bureka films" of the early 1970s, named after a salty Sephardic pastry, focus even more pointedly on what was once considered the periphery of Israeli society: the masses of Sephardic Jews who immigrated to Israel from North Africa and other Arabic-speaking regions. These films contrast Sephardic loyalty and simple wisdom with the hypocrisy and dishonesty of European Jews. Predictably enough, it was a European Jewish producer, Menachem Golan, who led the way in creating this genre, which exploited the feeling of many Sephardi Jews that they had been discriminated against by the European-dominated Israeli establishment.
During the years after the Yom Kippur War, a group of Israeli filmmakers created a political lobby for the establishment of a foundation to encourage the production of quality films. The Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Education and Culture eventually agreed to fund such a foundation jointly, and this gave a needed push forward to a new generation of Israeli filmmakers.

In the 1980s the politics of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the moral dilemmas of war were the dominant themes of quality Israeli films. Movies such as Hamsin (Daniel Wachsmann, 1982) and Beyond the Walls (Uri Barbash, 1984) portray Palestinian Arabs in a positive light and are sharply critical of their Israeli heroes.

In the late '80s, the most successful of Israel's major films centered around the traumas of war and ethnic conflict, but in a somewhat more subtle fashion. Shell Shock (Yoel Sharon, 1988) and Burning Memory (Yossi Somer, 1989) both examine war from the perspective of an Israeli hospitalized after a psychological breakdown on the battlefield. One of Us (Uri Barbash, 1989) explores the conflict between truth and loyalty when an army investigator is sent to uncover the facts about a soldier accused of abusing a Palestinian. Marriage of Convenience (Haim Bouzaglo, 1988) is a dramatic comedy about a middle-class Israeli who leaves his family and changes his identity. Posing as a Palestinian Arab during the day and an American tourist at night, he takes a job as a construction worker. The film uses a light touch in examining some of the daily tensions of modern Israeli society.

Both The Summer of Avia (Eli Cohen, 1988) and Because of That War (Orna Ben Dor Niv, 1988) are about the Holocaust and its effects on the children of survivors. The Summer of Avia, which won a "Silver Bear" at the 1989 film festival in Berlin, is the story of a 10-year-old girl who is reunited with her mentally disturbed mother, a Holocaust survivor. The film takes place in the newly established State of Israel, in 1951. Although it is told as fiction, it is based on the autobiographical experiences of Gila Almagor, a well-known Israeli actress, who co-wrote the screenplay and also starred in the film.

Because of That War is a documentary about two popular young Israeli rock stars, Yaakov Gilad and Yehuda Poliker, and their parents—specifically, Gilad's mother and Poliker's father—who are both survivors of extermination camps. The film weaves between the extraordinary testimony of the parents about the Holocaust and the children's account of the effect their parents' suffering had on their family life, fantasy life, and music.

As of the end of 1989, Israel had 190 movie houses, 7 film archives, and 3 cinematheques—in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa—which showed classic and contemporary films throughout the year. There were two film schools, one in Tel Aviv and one in Jerusalem, and two yearly film festivals—the Jerusalem Film Festival in the first weeks of July and the International Jewish and Israeli Festival which took place for the first time in April 1989 in Tiberias, but was slated to become an annual event.

Micha Z. Odenheimer
populations: the official population census of the Soviet Union held in 1989, and the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) in the United States, completed in 1990. The respective results basically confirm both the estimates reported by us in previous AJYB volumes and, perhaps more importantly, our interpretation of the trends now prevailing in the demography of world Jewry. At the same time, these new data highlight the increasing complexity of the sociodemographic and identificational processes underlying the definition of Jewish populations—hence the estimates of their sizes. While we address below some of these conceptual problems, users of population estimates should be aware of these difficulties and of the consequent limitations of the estimates.

**Concepts and Definitions**

In many respects Jewish populations are subject to the general difficulties involved in trying to define, identify, and enumerate minority groups. These difficulties are augmented by the uniquely blended character of Jewry, with its religious, ethnic, cultural, historical, and other components as well as the wide geographical scatter and distinctive socioeconomic structure of Jewish groups.

In contemporary societies experiencing intense processes of secularization, acculturation, and social interaction, the ideational (and statistical) boundaries between different religious, ethnic, or cultural groups are no longer clearly and rigidly defined, as they may have been in the past. Multiple bases of identification between individual and community can coexist. Since group identity is not regulated by legal provisions, individuals may change their preferences during their lifetimes. Individuals of Jewish origin may feel varying degrees of personal attachment to Judaism or the Jewish community and may choose to cut the respective links, whether or not formally adopting another group identity. These identificational changes are reversible: persons who disclaim being Jews at some stage of life may change their minds later. Even at the same time, some may admit or deny their Jewishness under different circumstances. Another element in this general picture is the growing frequency of mixed marriages. Some of the partners in interfaith marriages prefer to unify the home, one of them adopting the group identity of the other; others do not. Children of these marriages are likely to be exposed to the different religious and cultural backgrounds of their parents, out of which their own eventual identities will be shaped.

(ISAC) was established. Cochaired by Dr. Roberto Bachi of the Hebrew University and Dr. Sidney Goldstein of Brown University, ISAC's function is to coordinate and monitor Jewish population data collection internationally.

'The 1989–1990 National Jewish Population Survey was conducted under the auspices of the Council of Jewish Federations with the supervision of a National Technical Advisory Committee chaired by Dr. Sidney Goldstein of Brown University. Dr. Barry Kosmin of the North American Jewish Data Bank and City University of New York Graduate School directed the study.
These fluid and voluntaristic patterns of group identification imply that the concept of Jewish population is no longer simple and uniform, but one that offers ground for alternative interpretations and even some confusion and misunderstanding—especially when large and heterogeneous amounts of data are handled and compared. In an attempt to clarify these matters, we briefly outline here one conceptual framework—applied throughout this article—that appears useful in the sociodemographic study of contemporary Jewries.

**Core Jewish population.** In contemporary social-scientific research on Jews, including demography, it is usual to consider as Jews all those who, when asked, identify themselves as such; or, if the respondent is a different person in the same household, are identified by him/her as Jews. We define this aggregate as the “core” Jewish population. It includes all those who converted to Judaism or joined the Jewish group informally. It excludes those of Jewish descent who formally adopted another religion, as well as other individuals who did not convert out but currently refuse to acknowledge their Jewishness. This categorization is intentionally comprehensive, reflecting subjective feelings rather than halakhic (Rabbinic) or other legal definitions.\(^5\) Our definition of a person as a Jew does not depend on any measure of that person’s Jewish commitment or behavior—in terms of religiosity, beliefs, knowledge, communal affiliation, or otherwise. The “core” Jewish population is the conceptual target of our population estimates. In estimating the size of a Jewish population, we include, in principle, all marginal individuals who have not ceased to consider themselves Jewish.

**Extended Jewish population.** We adopt the term “extended” for the sum of the “core” Jewish population and all other persons of Jewish parentage who are not Jews currently (or at the time of investigation). These non-Jews with Jewish background, as far as they can be ascertained, include: (a) persons who have themselves adopted another religion, even though they may claim still to be Jews ethnically; (b) other persons of Jewish parentage who disclaim to be Jews currently. In survey-taking it is usual, for both conceptual and practical reasons, to consider in this context parentage only and not any more distant ancestry.

**Enlarged Jewish population.** We designate by the term “enlarged” the sum of the “core” Jewish population, all other persons of Jewish parentage included in the “extended” Jewish population, as well as their non-Jewish household members (spouses, children, etc.). For both conceptual and practical reasons, this definition does not include any other non-Jewish relatives living elsewhere.

These various definitions point to the importance of the household as the pri-
mary—and in social terms truly significant—reference unit for the study of Jewish
demography. For demographic research purposes, “eligible Jewish households” are
all those including at least one individual who is either currently Jewish or of Jewish
parentage. Ideally, information should be collected on all the members of Jewish
households, Jews and others, to enable researchers to apply the above—and perhaps
additional—definitions and to estimate the respective sizes of the various groups and
subgroups involved.

Clearly, while in the past “core,” “extended,” and “enlarged” Jewish populations
tended to overlap, today the respective sizes and characteristics may be quite differ-
ent. The time perspective employed in these definitions mainly relates to the two
generations of the surveyed individuals and their parents. Other, more extended
 generational or time perspectives might be considered in the attempt to estimate the
size of populations of Jewish origin, based on prolonged genealogical reconstruc-
tions. Such approaches, albeit of some interest for historical research, will not be
considered here.

Another definitional framework stems from the special position of Israel as a
country of destination for Jewish international migration, nowadays chiefly from the
Soviet Union. Israel’s most distinctive legal framework for the acceptance and
absorption of new immigrants is provided by the Law of Return (Hok Hashvut),
first passed in 1950 and amended in 1954 and 1970. That basic law awards Jewish
new immigrants immediate citizenship and other civil rights in Israel. According
to the current, amended version of the Law of Return, a Jew is any person born to
a Jewish mother, or converted to Judaism (regardless of denomination—Orthodox,
Conservative, or Reform). Conversion from Judaism, as in the case of some “ethnic”
Jews who currently identify with another religion, entails loss of eligibility for Law
of Return purposes. Significantly, the law extends its provisions to all current Jews
and to their Jewish or non-Jewish spouses, children, and grandchildren, as well as
to the spouses of such children and grandchildren. It can readily be seen, therefore,
that due to its three-generational time perspective and lateral extension, the Law of
Return applies to a wide population. This population is of wider scope not only than
the “core” but even than the “enlarged” Jewish population, as defined above.

Finally, it should be noted that the actual contents and patterns of Jewish identity
and behavior may vary widely within the “core” Jewish population itself, from
strongly committed to very marginal. The respective differentials are associated with
sociodemographic trends that may ultimately affect Jewish population size. These
issues are, however, beyond the scope of the present article, which is mostly con-
cerned with the bare attempt to estimate the size of “core” Jewish populations in
the countries of the world.

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This approach was followed in the two U.S. National Jewish Population Studies of 1970–
Jewish Population Trends

The world's Jews are highly dispersed. In most countries their number is now rather small, and they constitute no more than a minute fraction of the entire population. Consequently, though Diaspora Jews tend to cluster in large cities, they are greatly exposed to assimilation. While the major thrust of the assimilatory process tends to be associated with secessions from the Jewish population (whether formal or informal), there also are gains through accessions of non-Jewish-born persons. It is the net balance of these identificational changes that matters demographically. Outmarriages may involve demographic losses to the Jewish population if less than half of the children are themselves Jews. Moreover, in the longer run, the overall cohesion of a Jewish community may be affected, with consequences for its population size as well. What counts in the demographic balance of Diaspora Jewries is "effectively Jewish" fertility and birthrate, including only those newborn who are Jews. 7

The Jews in most countries of the Diaspora are characterized by very low fertility, which is the major cause for great population aging. An increased proportion of elderly in the population actually implies not only many deceased and a higher death rate, but also a reduced proportion of persons of reproductive age and therefore a relatively lower birthrate. While there are differences in the levels of these demographic factors between the Jews in various regions and countries, in all major Diaspora populations the joint balance of the natural and identificational changes is now close to nil or outrightly negative, with Jewish deaths frequently outnumbering Jewish births. These negative tendencies have been taken into account in updating the estimates of the Jews in many countries.

A notable paradox of Diaspora Jewish demography is that growth of an "enlarged" Jewish population—following intense outmarriage and an increasing number of persons in households with both Jewish and non-Jewish members—may go hand in hand with stagnation or even diminution of the respective "core" Jewish population. A case in point is provided by the recent demographic transformations of the Jewish population in the United States (see below).

With regard to the balance of external migrations, there is no regularity among the various Diaspora populations or even in the same population over time. Where the migratory balance is positive—e.g., in North America—it counteracts or even outweighs any numerically negative influence of internal demographic developments. Where the migratory balance is negative, as in Eastern Europe, it may cause or aggravate the decrease of a Jewish population. In 1989, the overall volume of international migrations of Jews was higher than in previous years, though the outflow of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union was still restricted.

7A fuller discussion of the subject can be found in U.O. Schmelz, "Jewish Survival: The Demographic Factors," AJYB 1981, vol. 81, pp. 61-117. See also Aging of World Jewry (Jerusalem, 1984), by the same author.
In contrast, in Israel the impact of outmarriage and secessions from Judaism is statistically negligible. The fact that Israeli society has a Jewish majority encourages accessions (formal or informal) of non-Jewish members in mixed immigrant households. A positive net balance of accessions and secessions results. Moreover, until the early 1980s and again in 1990 Israel had a positive migration balance.

Jewish fertility levels in Israel are comparatively high, and the Jewish age structure is significantly younger than among Diaspora Jews and the general populations of the other developed countries. The previously substantial fertility differentials between Jews ingathered in Israel from Asia-Africa and Europe-America are no longer in evidence. Remarkably, European Jews in Israel have not participated in the drastic fertility decline that has characterized the developed nations and particularly the Diaspora Jews during the last few decades, but have actually raised their fertility somewhat. In recent years, both major origin groups among Israel's Jews have displayed a fertility level surpassing not only the vast majority of Diaspora Jewry but also the general populations in other developed countries.

In the overall demographic balance of world Jewry, the natural increase of Israel has, so far, made up for the losses in the Diaspora. But such compensation will not be possible for much longer. As a consequence of the intensifying demographic deficit in the Diaspora, a trend toward some reduction in the total size of world Jewry is probably setting in. The relative share of Israel in that total is on the increase, regardless of *aliyah* and *yeridah* (immigration to, and emigration from, Israel), which obviously constitute only internal transfers within the global Jewish framework.

**Sources of Data and Estimation Problems**

Available demographic information on Jews is deficient in both quantity and quality. Besides the conceptual problems discussed above, difficulties involved in estimating the size of Jewish populations reflect the substantive complexity of Diaspora demography. Relevant aspects are the great geographical scattering of Jews—a factor that makes multiple data collection mandatory but also hinders its feasibility; and the Jews' unusually strong demographic dynamics in many respects—migrations, social mobility, family formation patterns (including outmarriage), etc.. More specific difficulties in estimating the up-to-date size of Jewish populations are due to measurement problems.

Particular difficulties exist with regard to the countries of Eastern Europe, whose Jewish populations were drastically reduced during and after World War II. Prolonged antireligious policies in these countries have had a negative effect on the identity of genealogically Jewish persons, many of whom may have severed, insofar as it depends on themselves, all links with Jewishness. The resulting uncertainties have led to wishful thinking in terms of exaggerated estimates, and account for the widely differing numbers of Jews that have been circulated for these countries.

Figures on Jews from population censuses are unavailable for most Diaspora
communities, though they do exist for some important ones. In general, the practice of self-determination is followed in relevant censuses and surveys which inquire into religion or ethnicity, thus providing results close to our definition of a "core" Jewish population. Even where census statistics on Jews are forthcoming, they are usually scant, because the Jews are a small minority of the total population. There have been instances where detailed tabulations on Jews were undertaken, through Jewish initiative, from official census material; examples are Canada, Argentina, and South Africa. In some countries where Jewishness is associated with actual or feared discrimination, individuals may prefer not to describe themselves as Jews. Elsewhere, as has happened in some Latin American countries, non-Jews may be erroneously included as Jews. These problems require statistical evaluation whose feasibility and conclusiveness depend on the relevant information available. Reliable figures are currently forthcoming for the Jews of Israel from official statistics.

Surveys are the major way of obtaining comprehensive information on Jewish populations in the absence of official censuses. In the Diaspora, Jewish-sponsored surveys have the additional advantage of being able to inquire into matters of specifically Jewish interest, e.g., Jewish education, observances, and attitudes. However, since they address themselves to a small and scattered minority with identification problems, surveys are not easy to conduct competently and may encounter difficulties with regard to both coverage and response, especially from marginal Jews. Again, these aspects require evaluation. Over the last decades, countrywide Jewish population surveys were undertaken in the United States, South Africa, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. Local surveys have been carried out in many cities of the United States, the United Kingdom, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, and some smaller communities. However, these several initiatives have so far been uncoordinated with regard to content and method.

In certain countries or localities, Jewish community registers include the largest part of the Jewish population. Often the same communities keep records of Jewish vital events—especially marriages performed with a Jewish ceremony and Jewish burials. However, communal registers tend to cover mixed households insufficiently. In addition, although the amount and quality of updating varies from place to place, communal registers generally lag behind the actual situation of the respective Jewish populations.

Finally, many estimates of Jewish Diaspora populations for which no solid data from censuses or surveys exist are regrettably of unspecified or dubious source and methodology. This situation contrasts with the amount and quality of demographic information available for Jews in Israel. Israel took its latest census in 1983, but has constantly updated statistics of its Jewish population size and characteristics.

Besides the conceptual and measurement difficulties affecting baseline figures on Jewish population size, similar problems recur with regard to the updating information which should account for all the various types of changes in the time elapsed since that base date. Age-sex-specific models can be of use for vital events and identificational changes. They may be applied after studying the evolution of the
respective or similar Jewish populations. With regard to the migratory balance in any updating interval, concrete information must be gathered, because of the above-mentioned irregularity, over time, in the intensity of many migratory streams.

Not a few Jews have some residential status in more than one country. This may be due to business requirements, professional assignments in foreign countries, climatic differences between countries, periods of prolonged transit for migrants, etc. The danger of double-counting or omissions is inherent in such situations. This is particularly critical regarding some countries in Central and tropical South America, Africa, and East Asia, where the relatively few Jews living permanently may be outnumbered by a floating population of temporary Jewish residents or tourists. As far as possible, we have tried to account for such persons only once, giving precedence to the usual country of residence.

The problem is even more acute with regard to residential status in more than one locality of the same country. This may adversely affect—through omissions, or more likely, double-counting—the accuracy of national Jewish population estimates obtained by summing up reports for individual localities.

**Presentation of Data**

The detailed estimates of Jewish population distribution in each continent (tables 2–6 below) aim at the concept of “core” Jewish population as defined earlier in this article. The reader will recall that “extended” or “enlarged” Jewish populations, including Jews, non-Jews of Jewish parentage, and respective non-Jewish household members, may result in significantly higher estimates. Separate figures are provided for each country with at least 100 resident Jews. Residual estimates of “other” Jews living in smaller communities, or staying temporarily in transit accommodations, supplement some of the continental totals. For each of the reported countries, the four columns in the following tables provide the United Nations estimate of mid-year 1989 total population, the estimated end-1989 Jewish population, the proportion of Jews per 1,000 of total population, and a rating of the accuracy of the Jewish population estimate.

There is wide variation in the quality of the Jewish population estimates for different countries. For many Diaspora countries it would be best to indicate a range (minimum-maximum) rather than a definite figure for the number of Jews. It would be confusing, however, for the reader to be confronted with a long list of ranges; this would also complicate the regional and world totals. Yet, the figures actually indicated for most of the Diaspora communities should be understood as being the central value of the plausible range of the respective core Jewish populations. The relative magnitude of this range varies inversely to the accuracy of the estimate.

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ACCURACY RATING

The three main elements affecting the accuracy of each estimate are the nature and quality of the base data, the recency of the base data, and the method of updating. A simple code combining these elements is used to provide a general evaluation of the reliability of the Jewish population figures reported in the detailed tables below. The code indicates different quality levels of the reported estimates: (A) base figure derived from countrywide census or relatively reliable Jewish population surveys; updated on the basis of full or partial information on Jewish population movements in the respective country during the intervening period; (B) base figure derived from less accurate but recent countrywide Jewish population investigation; partial information on population movements in the intervening period; (C) base figure derived from less recent sources, and/or unsatisfactory or partial coverage of Jewish population in the particular country; updating according to demographic information illustrative of regional demographic trends; (D) base figure essentially conjectural; no reliable updating procedure. In categories (A), (B), and (C), the years in which the base figures or important partial updates were obtained are also stated.

For countries whose Jewish population estimate of 1989 was not only updated but also revised in the light of improved information, the sign “X” is appended to the accuracy rating.

Distribution of World Jewish Population by Major Regions

Table 1 gives an overall picture of Jewish population for 1989 as compared to 1988. For 1988 the originally published estimates are presented along with somewhat revised figures that take into account, retrospectively, the corrections made in 1989 in certain country estimates, in the light of improved information. These corrections resulted in a net decrease of world Jewry’s estimated size by 166,500, primarily due to the new estimate for the United States. Some explanations are given below for the countries whose estimates were revised.

The size of world Jewry at the end of 1989 is assessed at 12,810,300. According to the revised figures, the change between 1988 and 1989 was almost negligible—an estimated loss of 8,200 people, or about —0.06 percent. Despite all the imperfections in the estimates, it is clear that world Jewry has reached “zero population growth,” with the natural increase in Israel compensating for the demographic decline in the Diaspora.

The number of Jews in Israel rose from a figure of 3,659,500 in 1988 to 3,717,100 at the end of 1989—an increase of 57,600 people, or 1.6 percent. In contrast, the estimated Jewish population in the Diaspora declined from 9,159,500 (according to the revised figures) to 9,093,200—a decrease of 66,300 people, or 0.7 percent. These changes were almost entirely due to internal demographic evolution, since in 1989 the estimated net migratory balance between the Diaspora and Israel amounted to about 11,000 (Israel gained migrants on balance).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>12,979,000</td>
<td>12,818,500</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>12,810,300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Diaspora</td>
<td>9,320,000</td>
<td>9,159,500</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>9,093,200</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>3,659,000</td>
<td>3,659,000</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>3,717,100</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>America,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,447,600</td>
<td>6,263,600</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>6,261,700</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>-0.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Northa</td>
<td>6,010,000</td>
<td>5,825,000</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>5,825,000</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>46,500</td>
<td>46,500</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>46,700</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>+0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>392,100</td>
<td>392,100</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>390,000</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Totalb</td>
<td>2,607,500</td>
<td>2,622,800</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>2,558,400</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
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<td>ECB</td>
<td>1,010,400</td>
<td>1,010,900c</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1,019,200c</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>+0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>West, otherb</td>
<td>43,200</td>
<td>43,200</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>52,300</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>+21.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>East and Balkansd</td>
<td>1,553,900</td>
<td>1,568,700</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>1,486,900</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>-5.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Asia, Total</td>
<td>3,692,400</td>
<td>3,692,600</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>3,750,700</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>3,659,000</td>
<td>3,659,000</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>3,717,100</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restd</td>
<td>33,400</td>
<td>33,600</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>33,600</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
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<td>Africa, Total</td>
<td>141,900</td>
<td>149,900</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>149,900</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>12,700</td>
<td>12,700</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>12,700</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>14,100</td>
<td>22,100</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>22,100</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>115,100</td>
<td>115,100</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>115,100</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>89,600</td>
<td>89,600</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>89,600</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aU.S.A. and Canada.
bIncluding Jewish migrants in transit.
cUnified Germany included in the EC.
dThe Asian regions of USSR and Turkey are included in "East Europe and Balkans."
About half of the world's Jews reside in the Americas, with 45 percent in North America. Twenty-nine percent live in Asia, excluding the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey—nearly all of them in Israel. Europe, including the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey, accounts for one-fifth of the total. The proportions of the world's Jews living in Africa and Oceania are very small.

Among the major geographical regions listed in table 1, the number of Jews in Israel—and, consequently, in total Asia—increased in 1989. By the end of 1989, Israel's Jews constituted 29 percent of total world Jewry. The (revised) total number of Jews estimated for North America was not changed. Most other regions remained stable or sustained decreases in Jewish population size.

World Jewry constitutes about 2.5 per 1,000 of the world's total population. One in about 406 people in the world is a Jew.

**Individual Countries**

**THE AMERICAS**

In 1989 the total number of Jews in the American continents was somewhat more than six and a quarter million. The overwhelming majority (93 percent) resided in the United States and Canada, less than 1 percent lived in Central America (including Mexico), and about 6 percent lived in South America—with Argentina and Brazil the largest Jewish communities (see table 2).

**United States.** The 1989–1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations and the North American Jewish Data Bank (NAJDB), provided the much awaited benchmark information about size and characteristics of U.S. Jewry and the basis for subsequent updates. According to first releases of the results of this important national sample study, the "core" Jewish population in the United States comprised 5,515,000 persons in 1990. Of these, 185,000 were converts to Judaism. An estimated 210,000 persons not included in the previous figures were born or raised as Jews but converted to another religion. A further 1,115,000 people, thereof 415,000 adults and 700,000 children below 18, were of Jewish parentage but followed a religion other than Judaism at the time of the survey. All together, these various groups formed an "extended" Jewish population of 6,840,000. NJPS also included 1,350,000 non-Jewish-born members of eligible (Jewish) households. The study's "enlarged" Jewish population thus consisted of about 8,200,000 persons.

Comparison with the results of the previous National Jewish Population Study, conducted in 1970–1971, is complicated by the following: various versions of the

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TABLE 2. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN THE AMERICAS, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
<th>Jews per 1,000 Population</th>
<th>Accuracy Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>26,310,000</td>
<td>310,000</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>B 1981-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>247,341,000</td>
<td>5,515,000</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>A 1990 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Northern America</td>
<td>273,770,000a</td>
<td>5,825,000</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>257,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>C 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>2,941,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>C 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>10,237,000</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>7,018,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>8,935,000</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>B 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>2,483,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>B 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>86,737,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>C 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands Antilles</td>
<td>191,000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>2,370,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>C 1989 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>3,658,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>C 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Islands</td>
<td>111,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>C 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>23,234,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Central America</td>
<td>148,172,000</td>
<td>46,700</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>31,930,000</td>
<td>218,000</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>C 1960-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>7,113,000</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>C 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>147,399,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>C 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>12,960,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>C 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>31,192,000</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>C 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>10,490,000</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>C 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>4,157,000</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>C 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>21,790,000</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>B 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>397,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>B 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>3,104,000</td>
<td>24,400</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>19,245,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Southern America</td>
<td>290,892,000a</td>
<td>390,000</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>712,834,000</td>
<td>6,261,700</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aIncluding countries not listed separately.
1970–71 results were published; time and circumstances did not allow for detailed analysis of the 1990 results before these lines were written; there are margins of error when two sample studies are compared, especially if they were conducted under differing circumstances 20 years apart. Still, it is sufficiently clear—and very relevant to the assessment of trends—that the "core" Jewish population hardly grew, if at all, whereas the "extended," and especially the "enlarged" Jewish population in the United States increased significantly. This attests numerically to the strengthening of assimilatory trends and to intensifying sociodemographic integration of American Jews with the general population. The new data also reflect the use of more systematic random surveying methods, and the somewhat wider definition of eligible households in the 1989–1990 NJPS, in comparison to the 1970–1971 study.

Our previous estimate of the size of U.S. "core" Jewish population, relating to end 1988, was 5,700,000—a figure we had kept steady for several years, explicitly waiting for the results of the new survey. The new estimate essentially confirms the order of magnitude of U.S. Jewry, but is lower by 185,000 persons (−3.3 percent). By reporting for the end of 1989 the NJPS figure, which actually refers to mid-1990, we assume that the current balance of demographic changes in the U.S. "core" Jewish population is close to nil. It is actually possible that in the most recent past the influence of internal evolution on the size of U.S. Jewry may have been negative (though there is no consensus with regard to this assessment). Indeed, several local surveys taken in recent years provide evidence of low "effectively Jewish" birthrates, increasing outmarriage rates, declining rates of conversion to Judaism, and increasing aging among the Jewish population.11

Over the whole 1970–1990 period, several hundred thousand Jews migrated to the United States, especially from the USSR, Israel, Iran, and Latin America. In the earlier years, the international migration balance of U.S. Jewry must have generated an actual increase of Jewish population size. The volume of Jewish international migration during most of the mid-1980s was small, but toward the end of 1988 signs of increase began to appear. In 1989, about 40,000 immigrants from the Soviet Union were admitted to the United States.12 The fact that the expected

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influence of international migration did not show up in the size of U.S. "core" Jewish population according to NJPS indicates that the balance of other factors of "core" population change over that whole 20-year period must have been somewhat negative. Referring again to our conceptual and definitional framework, it is worth noting that in 1990 the "core" Jewish population comprised about two-thirds of the "enlarged" Jewish population; conversely, the latter exceeded the former by roughly one-half.

The research team of the NAJDB, which is responsible for the primary handling of NJPS data files, has also continued its yearly compilation of local Jewish population estimates. These are reported elsewhere in this volume.13 NAJDB estimated the U.S. Jewish population in 1986 at 5,814,000, including "under 2 percent" non-Jewish household members. This was very close to our own previous estimate of 5,700,000. The NAJDB estimate was modified to 5,943,700 for 1987, to 5,935,000 for 1989, and to 5,981,000 for 1990. These changes do not reflect actual sudden growth or decline, but rather corrections and adaptations made in the figures for several local communities. It should be realized that compilations of local estimates, even if as painstaking as in the case of the NAJDB, are subject to a great many local biases and tend to fall behind the actual pace of national trends. This is especially true in a context of vigorous internal migration, as in the United States. The new NJPS figure, in spite of sample-survey biases, provides a more reliable national Jewish population baseline.

Canada. In Canada the 1981 census enumerated 296,425 Jews according to religion. By adding 9,950 persons who reported "Jewish" as their single reply to the census question on ethnic origin, while not reporting any non-Jewish religion (such as Catholic, Anglican, etc.), the figure rises to 306,375. There were additional persons who did not report a non-Jewish religion but mentioned "Jewish" as part of a multiple response to the question on ethnic origin. It is likely that some of them were merely thinking in terms of ancestry and did not actually consider themselves as Jews at the time of the census. Yet, after including a reasonable portion of the latter group, a total "core" Jewish population of 310,000 was suggested for 1981. A further 5,140 Canadians, who reported being Jewish by ethnic origin but identified with another religion, were not included in our estimate.

The population census held in Canada in 1986 provided new data on ethnic origins but not on religious groups. A total of 245,855 persons reported being Jewish as a single reply to the question on ethnic origin, as against 264,020 in the same category in 1981. A further 97,655 mentioned a Jewish origin as part of a multiple response to the question on ethnic origin. Yet, after including a reasonable portion of the latter group, a total "core" Jewish population of 310,000 was suggested for 1981. A further 5,140 Canadians, who reported being Jewish by ethnic origin but identified with another religion, were not included in our estimate.

(ISAC) was established. Cochaired by Dr. Roberto Bachi of the Hebrew University and Dr. Sidney Goldstein of Brown University, ISAC's function is to coordinate and monitor Jewish population data collection internationally.

response to the 1986 question on ethnic origin, as compared to apparently 30,000–40,000 in 1981. Thus, a substantial increase in the number of Canadians reporting partially Jewish ancestry seemed to offset the decline in the number of those with a solely Jewish identification according to the ethnic criterion. Besides actual demographic and identificational trends, changes in the wording of the relevant questions in the two censuses may have influenced these variations in the size of the Canadian "ethnically" Jewish population.

The 1986 census data indicated that about 9,000 Jews migrated to Canada between 1981 and 1986; more immigration arrived in the following years. In the light of this admittedly partial evidence, and considering the increasingly aged Jewish population structure, it is suggested that a migratory surplus may have roughly offset the probably negative balance of internal evolution since the 1981 census. Consequently, the 1981 figure of 310,000 was kept unchanged throughout 1989. The next census, in 1991, is again expected to include questions on both religion and ethnic origin and will thus provide a new baseline for the estimate of Canada's Jewish population.

Central America. The estimate for Mexico was kept unchanged at 35,000. The official Mexican censuses have given widely varying figures—17,574 in 1950; 100,750 in 1960; 49,277 in 1970; 61,790 in 1980. It is generally admitted that the last three censuses mistakenly included among the Jews many thousands of non-Jews living outside the known regions of Jewish residence in that country. In 1990 a new census was undertaken, but the reported figure of Jews was not available at the time of this writing. A Jewish-sponsored population survey of Mexican Jewry was launched at the end of 1990, and results are expected in 1991. Panama's Jewish population—the second largest in Central America—is estimated to have grown to 5,000.

South America. The Jewish population of Argentina, the largest in that geographical region, is marked by a negative balance of internal evolution. Since the 1960s, the balance of external migrations was strongly negative; after the restoration of a democratic regime in the early 1980s emigration diminished and there was some return migration. In 1989, emigration increased again. Accordingly, the estimate for Argentinian Jewry was reduced from 220,000 in 1988 to 218,000 in 1989.

The official population census of Brazil in 1980 showed a figure of 91,795 Jews. Since it is possible that some otherwise identifying Jews failed to declare themselves as such in the census, a corrected estimate of 100,000 was adopted for 1980 and has been kept unchanged through 1989, assuming that the overall balance of vital events and external migrations was close to zero. The 100,000 figure fits the admittedly

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
<th>Jews per 1,000 Population</th>
<th>Accuracy Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>6,500</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>C 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>55,979,000</td>
<td>530,000</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>C 1972–88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>77,271,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>C 1987–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>56,861,000</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>B 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>10,031,000</td>
<td>4,900</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>367,000</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>39,193,000</td>
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<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In transit&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total European Community</td>
<td>340,692,000</td>
<td>1,019,200</td>
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<td>A 1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
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<tr>
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<td>600</td>
<td>20.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td>A 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>15,000</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>C 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>6,514,000</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>B 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>In transit&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>9,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total other Western Europe</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>3,190,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>D X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>9,003,000</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
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<td>58,000</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>38,210,000</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>23,161,000</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>B 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>54,564,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>C 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>285,861,000</td>
<td>1,370,000</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>B 1989 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>23,711,000</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>C 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Eastern Europe and Balkans</td>
<td>463,900,000</td>
<td>1,486,900</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>837,111,000</td>
<td>2,558,400</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Including the German Democratic Republic, formerly listed in Eastern Europe.<br>
<sup>b</sup>In Italy.<br>
<sup>c</sup>In Austria.<br>
<sup>d</sup>Including Asian regions.
rough estimates that are available for the size of local Jewish communities in Brazil. On the strength of fragmentary information that is accumulating, the quite tentative estimate for Uruguay was slightly reduced, while those for Venezuela, Chile, Colombia, and Peru were not changed.

EUROPE

Of the estimated over two and a half million Jews in Europe, 42 percent lived in Western Europe and 58 percent in Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries—including the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey (see table 3).

European Community. The 12 countries that form the European Community (EC) had a combined Jewish population of 1,019,200. Economic integration between these countries is expected to increase after the end of 1992, following the implementation of existing treaties. This will most likely stimulate some geographical mobility in response to occupational needs and opportunities, with possible effects on the distribution of Jews among the EC’s different countries. France has the largest Jewish population in Western Europe, estimated at 530,000. Monitoring the plausible trends of both the internal evolution and external migrations of Jews in France—including a study conducted in 1988 at the initiative of the Fonds Social Juif Unifié—suggests that there has been little net change in Jewish population size since the major survey that was taken in the 1970s.15

Periodic reestimations of the size of British Jewry are carried out by the Community Research Unit (CRU) of the Board of Deputies. Based on an analysis of Jewish deaths during 1975-1979, a population baseline for 1977 was set at 336,000 with a margin of error of +/—34,000.16 An excess of deaths over births is clearly shown by the vital statistical records regularly compiled by the Jewish community. Allowing for some assimilatory losses and emigration, the update for 1984, as elaborated by the CRU, came to 330,000. The update for 1986 was 326,000; continuation of the same trends suggests an estimate of 320,000 for 1989.

West Germany, Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands each have Jewish populations ranging around 30,000. There is a tendency toward internal shrinkage of all these Jewries, but in some instances this is offset by immigration. In 1989 the momentous process of German political unification began. Although it was formally completed only in 1990, our 1989 estimate is for the reunited country. In the German Federal Republic, the 1987 population census reported 32,319 Jews. Jewish community records—which are among the most complete and up-to-date availa-

ble—pointed to over 27,500 affiliated Jews, with minimal changes between 1986 and 1989. From the scarce information that existed about the number of Jews in the former German Democratic Republic, we gave an estimate of 500 for 1988. Our 1989 estimate for unified Germany is 35,000, the increase over the sum of Jewish populations in the previous West and East Germanys reflecting assumed recent immigration.

In Belgium, the size of Jewish population is probably quite stable owing to the comparatively strong Orthodox element in that community. In Italy, until 1984, Jews were legally bound to affiliate with the local Jewish communities. Since then, membership in the communities has been voluntary. Although most Jews confirmed their membership, the looseness of the new legal framework may reduce both the completeness of the communal registers and, in the long run, the cohesion of Italian Jewry.

Other EC member countries have smaller and, overall, slowly declining Jewish populations. An exception may be Spain, whose Jewish population is very tentatively estimated at 12,000.

Other Western Europe. Countries which are not EC members together account for a Jewish population of 52,300, including migrants in transit in Austria. Switzerland’s Jews are estimated at below 20,000. While there is evidence of a negative balance of births and deaths, connected with great aging and frequent outmarriage, immigration may have offset the internal losses. The Jewish populations in Scandinavian countries are, on the whole, numerically rather stable.

USSR. East European Jewry is characterized by very low levels of “effectively Jewish” fertility, connected with a frequent and prolonged practice of outmarriage, and by heavy aging. Therefore, the shrinking of the Jewish populations there must be comparatively rapid. By far the largest Jewish population in Eastern Europe is still concentrated in the USSR, including its Asian territory.

Data on “nationalities” (ethnic groups) from the Soviet Union’s official population census, carried out in January 1989, were released in 1990. The new figure for Jews, 1,450,000, confirmed the declining trend already apparent in the previous three population censuses: 2,267,800 in 1959; 2,150,700 in 1970; and 1,810,900 in 1979. Our own estimate for Soviet Jewry, relating to the end of 1988 and projected from the 1979 population census, was 1,435,000. It thus deviated by only 1 percent from the new official baseline figure.

Our reservation about Soviet Jewish population figures in previous AJYB volumes bears repeating: some underreporting is not impossible, but it cannot be quantified and should not be exaggerated. Indeed, the official census figures appear to be remarkably consistent with one another—in view of the known volume of

emigration, on the one hand, and the internal demographic evolution of the Jewish population in recent decades, on the other. The latter was characterized by very low fertility and birthrates, high frequencies of outmarriage, a preference for identification with non-Jewish nationalities among the children of outmarriage, aging, and a clear surplus of Jewish deaths over Jewish births. Viewed conceptually (see above), the census figures represent the "core" Jewish population in the USSR. They actually constitute a good example of a large, empirically measured "core" Jewish population in the Diaspora, consisting of the aggregate of self-identifying Jews.

The respective figures for the "enlarged" Jewish population—including all current Jews, any other persons of Jewish parentage, and their non-Jewish household members—must be substantially higher in a societal context like that of the USSR, which has been characterized by high intermarriage rates for a considerable time. It is not possible to provide an actual estimate of this "enlarged" Jewish population in the USSR, for lack of appropriate data. It is obvious, though, that its size is exceeded even by the wider provisions of Israel's Law of Return (see above), which apply to virtually the maximum emigration pool. Any of the high numbers attributed recently to the size of Soviet Jewry, insofar as they are based on demographic reasoning, do not relate to the "core" but to the various components of the "enlarged" Jewish population.

Just as the numbers of declared Jews in successive censuses remained consistent, the numbers of persons of Jewish descent who preferred not to be identified as Jews were also rather consistent, at least until 1989. However, recent developments, especially the emigration urge so impressively illustrated by the exodus of 1990, have probably led to cases of self-identification as Jews by persons who did not describe themselves as such in the returns to the 1989 census. In terms of demographic accounting, such persons constitute net increments to the numbers of Soviet as well as world Jewry.

With regard to updating the January 1989 census figure to the end of the same year, it must be noted that Jewish emigration from the USSR increased significantly during that year. An estimated 71,000 Jews left—including non-Jewish family mem-


19Though one should cautiously keep in mind the possible effects on census declarations of the prolonged existence of a totalitarian regime as well as societal preferences for other than Jewish nationalities in the various parts of the Soviet Union.

20The statistics of immigrants to Israel offer no help in determining the ratio between Jews and non-Jews in an "enlarged" Soviet Jewish population. Due to the highly self-selective character of *aliyah*, non-Jews constitute a small minority of all new immigrants from the USSR.
bers—as against 19,300 in 1988; 8,100 in 1987; and only 7,000 during the whole 1982-1986 period. (The spectacular upsurge in 1990—over 225,000 migrants—is not dealt with here, since the present article covers 1989.) Assuming that not all of the migrants were themselves Jewish, we deducted a figure of only 60,000 from the “core” Jewish population remaining in the USSR at the end of 1989. In view of the intervening political developments, we also assumed a greater readiness to declare their ethnicity on the part of some Jews in the USSR who previously had preferred to conceal it. These “returnees” imply an actual growth in the “core” Jewish population in the USSR. At the same time, the heavy deficit of internal population dynamics must have continued and even intensified, due to the great aging which is known to have prevailed for many decades. Aging cannot but have been exacerbated by the significantly younger age composition of the emigrants. On the strength of these considerations, our estimate of the “core” Jewish population in the USSR was reduced from the revised figure of 1,450,000 at the end of 1988/beginning of 1989 (according to the recent census) to 1,370,000 at the end of 1989.

In 1989 the choice of country of destination by Jews leaving the Soviet Union followed the same pattern as in the preceding few years. A minority went to Israel (13,000 or roughly one in each 5-6 emigrants), while a majority chose to settle in Western countries. However, because of the strong preference for settling in the United States and that country’s selective immigration policies, there were more would-be immigrants than available immigration permits (40,000 in 1989). Consequently, the number of Soviet Jews in transit in temporary accommodations in Europe increased from 10,000 at the end of 1988 to about 28,000 at the end of 1989: of these, 19,000 were living in Italy and 9,000 in Austria. The relevant figures are shown separately in table 3. It was only in the large emigration wave of 1990 that the destination again changed dramatically, the great majority moving to Israel.

Other Eastern Europe and Balkans. The Jewish populations in Hungary and Romania and the small remnants in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia are all reputed to be very overaged and exhibiting frequent outmarriage. Their inevitable numerical decline is reflected in reduced estimates. The size of Hungarian Jewry—the largest in Eastern Europe outside the USSR—is quite insufficiently known. Our estimate only attempts to reflect the declining trend that prevails there too, according to the available indications. Comparatively large emigration of Jews continued to take place from Romania, which was reflected in the detailed community records available there. Romania’s Jewish population declined to 19,000 in 1989.

The Jewish population of Turkey, where a surplus of deaths over births was reported, was estimated at about 20,000.

Age structures of Jewish migrants from the USSR to the United States and to Israel in 1989 are available, respectively, from: HIAS, Statistical Abstract, vol. 30, no. 4 (New York, 1990); Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, unpublished data.
ASIA

Israel accounts for 99 percent of all the three and three-quarter million Jews in Asia, excluding the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey (see table 4). Israel's Jewish population grew in 1989 by about 58,000. About 81 percent of this growth was due to natural increase; 19 percent was due to the net migration balance. It is difficult to estimate the Jewish population of Iran for any given date, but it continues to dwindle. The estimate for 1989 was kept at 20,000. In other Asian countries with small long-standing communities—such as India and Syria—the Jewish populations tend to decline slowly. Very small communities, partially of a transient character, exist in several countries of Southeast Asia.

AFRICA

About 150,000 Jews are estimated to remain now in Africa. The Republic of South Africa accounts for 76 percent of total Jews in that continent (see table 5). In 1980, according to the official census, there were about 118,000 Jews among South Africa's white population. Substantial Jewish emigration since then has been compensated in good part by Jewish immigration. Considering a moderately negative migration balance and an incipient negative balance of internal changes, the Jewish population estimate for 1988 was reduced to 114,000. In 1989, the numbers of emigrants, on the one hand, and immigrants and returning residents, on the other, possibly balanced—suggested no considerable changes in Jewish population size compared to the previous year. A Jewish-sponsored survey of South African Jewry was launched in 1990, and results will be forthcoming in 1991.

According to recent reports, the Jews remaining in Ethiopia at the end of 1989 were estimated very roughly at 20,000, instead of 12,000 as was previously assumed. The remnant of Moroccan and Tunisian Jewry continued to shrink slowly through emigration. It should be pointed out, though, that not a few Jews have a foothold both in Morocco or Tunisia and in France, and their geographical attribution is uncertain.

OCEANIA

The major country of Jewish residence in Oceania (Australasia) is Australia, where 95 percent of the estimated total of nearly 90,000 Jews live (see table 6). The 1986 census of Australia, where the question on religion was optional,

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### TABLE 4. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN ASIA, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
<th>Jews per 1,000 Population</th>
<th>Accuracy Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>5,768,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>835,812,000</td>
<td>4,900</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Iran</td>
<td>54,889,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>18,279,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>4,561,000&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3,717,100</td>
<td>815.2</td>
<td>A 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>122,933,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>C 1988</td>
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<td>Korea, South</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
<td>60,927,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
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<td>Singapore</td>
<td>2,674,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>C 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>12,062,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>54,916,000</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>Yemen</td>
<td>7,770,000</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,773,347,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3,750,700</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.3</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>End 1989.

### TABLE 5. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN AFRICA, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
<th>Jews per 1,000 Population</th>
<th>Accuracy Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>52,757,000</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>C 1988</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>45,687,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>Kenya</td>
<td>24,097,000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>B 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>24,521,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>34,492,000</td>
<td>114,000</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>C 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>7,990,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaire</td>
<td>34,853,000</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>8,148,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>9,419,000</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>B 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>386,353,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>628,317,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>149,900</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
enumerated 69,065 declared Jews. However, it also indicated that about 25 percent of the country's whole population either did not specify their religion or stated explicitly that they had none. This large group must be assumed to contain persons who identify in other ways as Jews. In addition, Australian Jewry received migratory reinforcements during the last decade, especially from South Africa. At the same time, there are demographic patterns with negative effects on Jewish population size, such as strong aging, low or negative natural increase, and some assimilation. Therefore, for 1989 we repeated a provisional estimate of 85,000. The new census in 1991, as well as a Jewish survey now being planned, will hopefully provide firmer data on Jewish population trends since previous censuses. The Jewish community in New Zealand—now estimated at 4,500—attracted some immigrants but incurred a negative migration balance with Australia.

### TABLE 6. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN OCEANIA, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
<th>Jews per 1,000 Population</th>
<th>Accuracy Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>16,553,000</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>C 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>3,353,000</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>C 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6,203,000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26,109,000</td>
<td>89,600</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dispersion and Concentration**

Table 7 demonstrates the magnitude of Jewish dispersion. The individual countries listed above as each having at least 100 Jews are scattered over all the continents. In 1989, more than half (42 out of 74 countries) had fewer than 5,000 Jews each.

In relative terms, too, the Jews are now thinly scattered nearly everywhere in the Diaspora. There is not a single Diaspora country where they amount even to 3 percent of the total population. In most countries they constitute a far smaller fraction. Only three Diaspora countries have more than 1 percent Jews in their total population; and only nine countries have more than 5 Jews per 1,000 of population. The respective nine countries are (in descending order of the proportion of their Jews, regardless of the absolute numbers): United States (22.3 per 1,000), Gibraltar (20.0), Canada (11.8), France (9.5), Uruguay (7.9), Argentina (6.8), Great Britain (5.6), Hungary (5.5), and Australia (5.1). The other major Diaspora Jewries having lower proportions of Jews per 1,000 of total population are the USSR (4.8), South Africa (3.3), and Brazil (0.7 per 1,000).
### TABLE 7. DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORLD'S JEWS, BY NUMBER AND PROPORTION (PER 1,000 POPULATION) IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Jews in Country</th>
<th>Jews per 1,000 Population</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Below 1</td>
<td>1–4.9</td>
<td>5–9.9</td>
<td>10–24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 1,000</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000–4,900</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000–9,900</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000–49,900</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000–99,900</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000–999,900</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000,000+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Jewish Population Distribution (Absolute Numbers) |
|----------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total                                  | 12,810,300\(^b\) | 374,200 | 1,628,200 | 1,235,400 | 5,825,600 | 3,717,100 |
| Below 1,000                            | 9,700   | 7,400   | 1,700   | —       | 600     | —       |
| 1,000–4,900                           | 48,200  | 43,700  | 4,500   | —       | —       | —       |
| 5,000–9,900                           | 32,200  | 20,700  | 11,500  | —       | —       | —       |
| 10,000–49,900                         | 353,300 | 202,400 | 126,500 | 24,400  | —       | —       |
| 50,000–99,900                         | 143,000 | —       | 143,000 | —       | —       | —       |
| 100,000–999,900                       | 1,592,000| 100,000 | 114,000 | 1,068,000| 310,000  | —       |
| 1,000,000+                            | 10,602,100 | —     | 1,370,000 | —       | 5,515,000 | 3,717,100 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jewish Population Distribution (Percent of World's Jews)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000–4,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000–9,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000–49,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000–99,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000–999,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000,000+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Excluding countries with fewer than 100 Jews and Jews in transit in Europe.

\(^b\)Including countries with fewer than 100 Jews and Jews in transit in Europe.
In the State of Israel, by contrast, the Jewish majority amounted to 81.5 percent in 1989, compared to 81.7 percent in 1988—not including the Arab population of the administered areas.

While Jews are widely dispersed, they are also concentrated to some extent (see table 8). In 1989, nearly 96 percent of world Jewry lived in the ten countries with the largest Jewish populations; 83 percent lived in the three countries that have at least a million Jews each (United States, Israel, Soviet Union). Similarly, nine leading Diaspora countries together comprised over 94 percent of the Diaspora Jewish population; two countries (United States and Soviet Union) accounted for 76 percent, and the United States alone for over 61 percent of total Diaspora Jewry.

U.O. SCHMELZ

SERGIO DELLA PERGOLA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
<th>% of Total Jewish Population</th>
<th>% in the Diaspora</th>
<th>% in the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>5,515,000</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>3,717,100</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>1,370,000</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>530,000</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>310,000</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>218,000</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>114,000</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>