Federal Republic of Germany

National Affairs

In the atmosphere of east-west détente that spread throughout Europe in 1989, the West German people showed growing impatience with the heavy burden of defense placed on them by membership in NATO. This was expressed, for example, in more open protest against the pervasive low-flying military aircraft of NATO, especially after several serious accidents. Moreover, a federal Parliament report on the state of the German army pointed to the declining acceptance of the Bundeswehr in German society and continuing problems with morale in the army itself. This shift in popular attitudes in turn forced changes in the defense policy of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic (CDU)–Free Democratic (FDP) coalition. Due primarily to the dovish views of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Kohl was forced to resist U.S. pressure for modernization of short-range nuclear missiles and to press for U.S.-Soviet nuclear disarmament.

In early January, the New York Times revealed that a German firm, Imhausen-Chemie, had played a central role in the construction of a poison-gas factory at Rabta in Libya. The German Foreign Ministry at first denied the allegations, claiming insufficient evidence, and the government charged that a campaign against the Federal Republic was being mounted in the American media. Later on it became known that the German government had been informed by Washington in November 1988 about the involvement of German firms and even earlier by its own intelligence service (Bundesnachrichtendienst, BND). Indeed, the director of the BND, Bernhard Wieck, indicated that reports from his office to the government in August 1987 had not received proper attention. Subsequently, ever more evidence became available—on the falsification of freight papers by a firm in Antwerp, Belgium, the involvement of the firms Salzgitter and Siemens, and the fact that equipment was shipped to Libya via Hong Kong. Later in the year, a full-scale investigation was launched, and Imhausen-Chemie was brought to trial.

The Two Germanys

In West Germany, there was renewed debate this year on the German question, with the Christian Democrats (CDU) stressing the concept of one German nation and the Green party, in particular, opposing it. Despite dissatisfaction with the generally poor relations between the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), lower-level contacts intensified. City partnerships were established, such as that between Bonn and Potsdam. The prime ministers of Baden
Württemberg (Lothar Späth), Hamburg (Henning Voscherau), and North Rhine-Westphalia (Johannes Rau) visited the GDR, aiming to ease travel restrictions and further economic ties and to have the order to shoot for border guards rescinded. Foreign Minister Genscher in particular advocated a more rapid pace of international détente. At a meeting of the Council for European Cooperation (CEC) in April, he proposed that Western Ostpolitik be “modernized”; in June, at the Helsinki Conference in Paris, he appealed for a Europe without the Iron Curtain. He and other West German politicians urged the Eastern European countries to liberalize their systems (at an earlier CEC meeting, Genscher had urged the GDR and the USSR to show greater respect for human and civil rights). In retrospect, the state visit by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to the Federal Republic in June proved to be a decisive event: it improved the atmosphere between the FRG and the Soviet Union significantly, and it changed the mood in the GDR, whose government felt somewhat isolated due to the improved ties between Bonn and Moscow. Gorbachev was welcomed cordially by the German population; both countries agreed on the need to overcome the divisions in Europe and stressed Gorbachev’s idea of “a common European house.”

THE EAST GERMAN INFLUX

In response to increasing pressure from its citizens to leave the country, the GDR eased emigration rules in January and again later in the spring. However, growing unrest led thousands to flee to West German embassies in East Berlin and Budapest and later in Prague. The opening of the Hungarian border with Austria on September 10 led to a mass exodus that by early November 1989 brought 220,000 refugees to West Germany. Events surrounding the 40th anniversary of the GDR’s founding, on October 7, created a setting for public protest. Swelling demonstrations peaked on October 9, when an estimated 100,000 marched in Leipzig, following which the East German state began to unravel quickly.

On November 8, as demonstrations continued in East Germany, West German chancellor Kohl delivered a state-of-the-nation speech in which he demanded free elections in the GDR and a multiparty system, offering increased aid as an inducement. The next day, East Berlin party secretary Günter Schabowski announced that citizens would be allowed to leave the country through any border crossing. Although he later claimed that such permission was not intended to be either unconditional or immediate, that very night, tens of thousands of East Germans climbed the wall and came to West Berlin and West Germany in what turned into a carnival type of atmosphere that continued into the 10th of November.

When West German politicians—including Social Democratic chief Hans-Jochen Vogel—proposed the opening of the Berlin wall as a new national holiday in Germany, the suggestion came in for strong criticism from Jewish representatives. Some, in fact, questioned whether the 9th of November had been intentionally
chosen for the opening of the wall, as an attempt to overshadow the stigma of Kristallnacht, which occurred on the same date in 1938. On the basis of current knowledge, this appears unlikely, however. East German politicians were under continuous pressure from the street and had little room to maneuver. In addition, there was a complete lack of suggestions in this regard from the politicians involved, and the actual announcement of the open border was unspecific as to date. Nevertheless, in German history, the 9th of November has been a carnivalesque day of upheaval of the established order, enshrined as such in the public memory—from the revolution that produced the Weimar Republic in 1918 to Hitler’s “beer-hall putsch” in 1923 to Kristallnacht in 1938. Some unconscious awareness of this may have helped trigger the late-evening move to the wall and its sudden breaching.

Relations with Israel

The Palestinian intifada had a definite impact on West Germany's relations with Middle Eastern states. In June the opposition Social Democratic party (SPD) invited a PLO delegation to talks in Bonn, SPD chief Hans-Jochen Vogel claiming that such contacts were important in the search for a peaceful solution in the Middle East. In early fall the federal government issued its own statement expressing interest in official dialogue with the PLO, and in October the first meetings were held between the PLO and the governing Christian Democrats. These contacts expressed a consensus in West German politics on the Middle East and indicated Israel's growing political isolation, a result of what was viewed as the inflexible attitude of the Israeli government in its dealings with the Palestinians. The only protests against this policy shift came from Israel and from the Central Council of Jews of Germany.

The changing climate in Germany also facilitated German arms shipments to the Middle East, which were criticized by Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, on his visit to Bonn and Frankfurt in January, and by the German Coordinating Council of the Societies of Christian-Jewish Cooperation. The critical attitude toward Israeli policies was also evident in broader circles of German society. The German-Israeli Youth Exchange Program, for example, experienced a decline in its attractiveness after the beginning of the intifada. Even traditionally pro-Israel circles, such as groups in the Protestant Church active in Jewish and Israel-related issues, expressed more critical views. The head of the organized Jewish community, Heinz Galinski, gave hints of his own position on a number of occasions when he declared his strong support for Israel even though particular Israeli policies could be disputed.

Despite the definite cooling in German-Israeli relations, the underlying strong bonds between the two states were expressed in ongoing contacts of various sorts. Israeli foreign minister Moshe Arens came to Bonn in June, where he presented Israel's proposal for Israeli-Palestinian talks as outlined by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, and where he met with the SPD leadership. Michael Pagels, chairman of
the Berlin section of the DGB (German Labor Federation), visited Israeli Labor representatives in June, and an Israeli Labor delegation came to Bonn to talk with the DGB’s committee on education and culture. Premier Björn Engholm of Schleswig-Holstein, current president of the Bundesrat (West German Upper House), who ranked second after the president of the Federal Republic, paid an official visit to Israel in July; other visitors included Frankfurt mayor Volker Hauff and Defense Minister Rupert Scholz. Haim Klugman, state secretary in the Israeli Ministry of Justice, and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres came to Bonn on the occasion of Willy Brandt’s 75th birthday, in December.

Close contacts were also apparent in scholarly and cultural areas. In June, for example, at a colloquium held near Günsburg, German and Israeli scholars discussed joint projects relating to heart and circulatory diseases. In Freiburg/Baden, in May, German and Israeli writers held a joint meeting on the theme “Writers as Citizens and Critics of Their State.”

Right-Wing Extremism and Anti-Semitism

There were a number of contradictory developments this year on the Right, involving Franz Schönhuber’s Republican party (Die Republikaner) and a younger generation of neo-Nazis and other right-wing extremists. In January Land (state) elections in Berlin, the Republicans, running for the first time, managed to win 7.5 percent of the vote. It was apparent that their supporters, lower-middle-class and working-class voters, felt increasingly threatened by foreign workers, including Eastern Europeans declared to be ethnic Germans by the citizenship offices. In February the Republicans managed to gain 6.6 percent of the vote in local elections in Hesse, with some district tallies in the 20-percent range.

In the elections for the European Parliament, the Republicans gained 7.1 percent of the vote. The size of the vote was undoubtedly helped by support from some Christian Democratic leaders who, in the face of their own severe losses in all recent Land elections, advocated coalitions with the Republican party. Polls indicated, moreover, that one-third of CDU and one-half of CSU (Bavarian counterpart of the CDU) voters approved of political coalitions with the Republicans. Studies showed that the Republicans were not a party of old Nazis but rather of youthful protesters.

The Republican party’s rise was abruptly halted in the fall, due to a number of new developments. First, the influx of East Germans and ethnic Germans from the USSR and Romania produced substantial hostility that deflected attention somewhat from ordinary racism against other immigrants. (Campaigns against both ethnic Germans from the Baltic and asylum seekers appeared in the Deutsche National-Zeitung of Gerhard Frey and other right-wing publications.) The Republicans were unable to turn this situation to their advantage. Chancellor Kohl’s use of right-wing demagoguery in his refusal to recognize the Oder-Neisse border and his probable role as chancellor in a possible unification with the GDR also managed to draw support away from the Republicans. These developments, in turn, brought
to the fore divisions within the Republican party, which weakened it considerably.

Cause for at least as much concern as the Republicans were some often violent groups on the fringe in the neo-Nazi spectrum. At the end of 1987, the Interior Ministry counted 25,200 right-wing extremists; the 1989 report showed an increase to 28,000 members of extremist groups. Some of these groups, including Michael Kühnen's Nationale Sammlung and similar successor organizations, were easily identifiable due to their stable organizational structure; others, however, were located in the volatile youth culture, often engaged in violent battles with left-wing rivals.

Among a number of particularly serious incidents that occurred during the year—and were attributed to right-wing groups—were the desecration, with pigs' heads, of the Putlitzbrücke, Plötzensee, and Rosa Luxemburg memorials in Berlin and an arson attack against the Gestapo headquarters memorial. There were also anti-Semitic excesses at soccer games, desecration of cemeteries such as that in Wetter (Hesse), and swastika daubings at Hamburg's city hall.

The rise of neo-Nazism gave rise to a rash of new publications such as *Der Adler*, *Erste Etappe*, and *Freiheit*, and revived others such as *Nation Europa*, with many of their articles directed specifically at young people. The neo-Nazi magazine *Leitheft* spread revisionist views and attempted to rehabilitate the Waffen-SS. It was published by the Waffen-SS Veterans' Association (Kameradenkreis der ehemaligen Waffen-SS). Moreover, as in other countries, neo-Nazi computer games were multiplying, and in some schools—evidenced by a report of the Berlin education ministry, for example—right-wing elements had made considerable inroads.

Various levels of government recognized the danger from extremist groups and their increasing proneness to violence. A New Year's Eve party of Wiking Jugend was broken up by police; 27 neo-Nazis were arrested. A few weeks later, a group of militant extremists, the Deutsch-Nationalen, were caught in East Frisia; they had planned terrorist actions. Members of the FAP of the National Front were arrested by police in Hildesheim; they were charged with arson directed at a dormitory for political refugees and at a youth center. In April police carried out a massive strike against the right-wing militia Stahlhelm-Bund; homes were searched and weapons seized. In February the Bonn Interior Ministry outlawed Michael Kühnen's Nationale Sammlung and carried out a search of members' homes.

A number of significant developments this year centered around Hitler's 100th birthday on April 20. To the extent that the press covered it at all, they dealt mostly with the Hitler "phenomenon" and welcomed the anti-Hitler memorial at his birthplace in Braunau; there was little commemoration of his victims. The right-wing extremists, on the other hand, managed to produce a great deal of publicity and exploited the date for their own purposes. Neo-Nazi leaflets on Hitler's birthday, for example, called for pogroms against Turkish immigrants. Other statements demanded the removal of the Dachau concentration-camp memorial. The connection between neo-Nazism and racism directed against the immigrants was generally not pointed out in the press.

On another anniversary, that of Rudolf Hess's death two years earlier, 200
neo-Nazis, including Michael Kühnen, held a demonstration in Hess's hometown of Wunsiedel; a counterdemonstration was held by a "Working Group Against Old and New Nazis"; arrests were made. There were many other instances of strong local reactions against right-wing manifestations.

Apart from Chancellor Kohl's own chauvinist remarks on various issues, problematic statements were made by other public figures. Hans Klein, a close aide to Kohl, spoke on a number of occasions expressing rightist views. His statements on the Waffen-SS were denounced by Central Council chairman Heinz Galinski as being intolerable for the victims of Nazism. He noted that the Waffen-SS units included concentration-camp guards and that the massacre of Oradour, for one, was the work of a Waffen-SS division. The SPD and the Greens asked the federal government to repudiate Klein's remarks regarding the Waffen-SS, and Hildegard Hamm-Brücher of the Liberals rejected his claim that the Waffen-SS had not been criminals. Klein defended his statements in an interview in June; he said he wanted the younger generation to identify with their "fatherland" and therefore with these phenomena as historical traditions. In the Bundestag, the Greens and SPD again demanded that the government repudiate Klein's statements, without success.

Nazi War Criminals

In January the Frankfurt prosecutor opened proceedings in 670 new cases of Nazi crimes, on the basis of documents that had been locked up in the United Nations archive until fall 1988. Gottfried Weise, an Auschwitz guard, was sentenced in May to life in prison. He then disappeared but was arrested and extradited from Switzerland in August. Other former concentration-camp guards sentenced to life were Horst Czerwinski in Sulze, for the murder of two Russians, and Wilhelm Wagner for the murder of three Jews in Poland. Two notorious gynecologists charged with euthanasia, Aquilin Ullrich of Stuttgart, and Heinrich Bunke of Celle, received three-year sentences following their Frankfurt trial. SS-Obersturmführer Karl-Friedrich Höcker was sentenced to four years in jail in Bielefeld. He was involved in mass murder at the Lublin-Maidanek concentration camp. Wolfgang Otto, accused as an accomplice in the murder of Communist leader Ernst Thälmann in 1944, was acquitted by the Supreme Court in a decision that was strongly criticized.

The Federal Republic requested the extradition of former SS guard Bruno Karl Blach from the United States. This was the second such request for extradition.

It was learned that the University of Tübingen Institute of Anatomy had preserved considerable quantities of tissue from corpses of Nazi victims. Most of the victims were believed to be members of the political resistance who had been executed by the regime. The Jewish community of Stuttgart was critical of the use of this human tissue for research, although a committee set up by the community did not find evidence that Jewish victims were involved. After discussion with university officials, it was agreed that all specimens would be removed from the institute and buried.
Demography

As of January 1, 1990, overall Jewish community membership had risen to 27,711, a slight gain over the previous year's 27,552. The number of unaffiliated Jews was estimated to be an additional 20,000–30,000.

Some 695 Soviet Jews settled in West Germany in 1989, almost half of them in Berlin and the rest in larger Jewish centers such as Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Düsseldorf. Munich was excluded due to Bavaria's stubborn refusal to grant special permission for Soviet Jews to settle there.

Using the number of children 11 years old or younger as a measure of community vitality, of the communities with over 500 members, Cologne was first (1,358 members; 14.7 percent children); followed by Stuttgart/Württemberg (677; 12.4 percent), Hamburg (1,344; 11.9 percent); Frankfurt (4,842; 10.4 percent); Berlin (6,411; 9.7 percent); Munich (4,050; 8.5 percent); Düsseldorf (1,510; 7.7 percent); and Offenbach/Hesse (829; 7.35 percent). The figures suggest that Jewish families were moving into dynamic industrial areas that hitherto had not had a strong Jewish presence. Some smaller communities fitting that pattern were Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Nuremberg, Hannover, Aachen, and Dortmund. Smaller communities in more stagnant areas, on the other hand, continued to dwindle; significant drops were recorded this year in the Saarland, Westphalia, the Rhineland-Palatinate, and Lower Saxony.

Communal Affairs

After last year's turmoil in the wake of the Nachmann scandal, this year proved to be relatively calm. (See AJYB 1990, pp. 362–365. The scandal involved embezzlement of funds intended for Nazi victims by the late Werner Nachmann, when he was chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.) The Nachmann case itself was put to rest by the prosecutors even though many questions remained unanswered and most of the missing funds were never located.

Elections were held this year in local Jewish community organizations (Gemeinden). In Berlin, in May, in a heavily financed campaign, although the opposition succeeded in doubling its share of votes to nearly one-third, Heinz Galinski was reelected chairman of the community. At a membership meeting of the North West German Jüdische Gemeindefonds, a new executive was elected, with Michael Fürst of Hannover as president. Elections also took place in the Hamburg community, after the death of its longtime president Günter Singer. Micha Guttmann, a journalist, was appointed new general secretary of the Central Council.

Heinz Galinski expressed displeasure publicly—on behalf of the Central Council—when he was not invited by Chancellor Kohl to a dinner for President George Bush in Bonn in May. In an interview, Galinski indicated that his predecessor had always received invitations to such events.
An academic forum arranged by the World Zionist Organization in June, in Frankfurt, entitled “Jewish Identity and Right-Wing Extremism in the Federal Republic,” posed the question whether Jews should emigrate because of the electoral successes of the ultra Right. While participants generally agreed that the new rightist movements differed from the older National Democratic party—in that they consisted mostly of very young people who appeared openly in public—opinions were divided on the danger posed by these groups. There was clearly a great deal of fear on the part of Holocaust survivors, but many younger Jewish panelists felt that right-wing extremism had to be confronted openly and forcefully.

Much of the Israel-oriented activity in the community emanated from the energetic work of WIZO, the Women’s International Zionist Organization. Successful WIZO bazaars were held this year in Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Cologne, Stuttgart, Berlin, and Munich; the Frankfurt chapter of WIZO held a benefit concert on behalf of the Theodor Heuss Home for mothers in Herzliah. In Hannover, WIZO celebrated its 25th anniversary as part of the Israel Week celebrations of Lower Saxony. Some of the WIZO chapters, such as that of Berlin, had active non-Jewish members. The Israel embassy and the Central Council held a benefit concert for the reforestation of Mount Carmel. In individual philanthropy, the Prajs family of Berlin was a major benefactor of Keren Hayesod and dedicated a project in Tel Aviv. U.S. Jewish leader Seymour Reich, president of B’nai B’rith and chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, visited the Federal Republic in March. He met with Chancellor Kohl and with Heinz Galinski in Berlin, seeking to strengthen American-Jewish ties with Germany.

The condition of postwar German Jewry and its relationship to the larger German society was discussed at the first international conference on the subject to be held outside of Germany. The conference, which convened in Toronto in November, was entitled “How Can Jews Live in Germany Today?” Papers dealt with the reestablishment of Jewish communities in Germany after the war, their pariah status vis-à-vis world Jewry, their symbolic importance for the West German state and its society, and the instrumentalization of Jewish officials there. Other contributions considered the significance of the increase in awareness of the Shoah among segments of the German public and the “myth of the émigré,” especially in German cultural life. The latter paper suggested that whereas Jewish émigrés play an important symbolic role in Germany, the role of younger Jewish intellectuals living in German society is negligible.

In a resolution, the conference lamented the neglect and destruction of records relating to the history of the postwar German Jewish community and called for the establishment of proper archives; in a second resolution, a group of participants questioned the results of the inquiry into the Nachmann affair and called upon the Jewish leadership to hold a new and impartial investigation.
Holocaust-Related Matters

The Bonn coalition rejected the plan proposed by the Greens, in June, to set up a foundation to provide compensation to victims of Nazi forced labor. The government considered the existing compensation via the hardship funds sufficient. Occasionally, compensation of individual cases was hampered by officials; one such case was reported this year from North-Rhine Westphalia. An appointee of the state government, Dr. Halbekann-Esser, showed distinct prejudice against victims and put obstacles in the way of those seeking compensation.

In the continuing émigré visitor program (see AJYB 1990, p. 366), visits took place this year to Düsseldorf, Herford-Minden, Karlsruhe, Duisburg, Frankfurt/Main, Stuttgart, Freiburg, Weiden (Upper Palatinate; on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Weiden synagogue), Usingen, Emmendingen, Mönchen-Gladbach, Schleswig-Holstein, Minden, Wetzlar, Klever, Bad Nauheim, Ludwigshafen, Mannheim, and Berlin.

The eight-year battle over plans for an international youth center in Dachau showed no signs of resolution. The committee promoting the center encountered opposition from the Education Ministry in Munich, which disagreed with a pluralistic conception that would open the center to a variety of groups working with youth; it was also alleged that the ministry was not sufficiently sensitive to the victims of Nazism.

Memorials and Commemorative Events

A number of new memorial sites were dedicated this year, including a memorial to the "Victims of Nazi Justice," on the grounds of the German Judges' College, in Trier, which was dedicated by Justice Minister Hans Engelhardt. The memorial was of special significance because the German justice establishment had been particularly reluctant to accept its responsibility for Nazi crimes and had survived virtually unscathed into the Federal Republic.

Memorial plaques were dedicated this year to victims of the Kaufering concentration camp in Erpfing Forest near Landsberg, Bavaria, and in Kiel, where the synagogue was destroyed in November 1938. A memorial plaque was erected for Zionist leader Max Bodenheimer (1865–1940) in Cologne.

The synagogue in Straubing was rededicated in April after careful renovation; the former synagogue in Schweich/Moselle was restored and turned into a cultural center.

It was announced that the Wannsee Villa, site of the infamous conference at which Nazi leaders planned the "Final Solution," would become a center for documentation of Nazism. This followed the suggestion of the late historian Joseph Wulf, originally proposed 25 years ago.

As in previous years, there were again numerous commemorations of the November 1938 pogroms. The main event took place in Bonn with the participation of
Israeli ambassador Benjamin Navon. Kristallnacht was also observed in Frankfurt, Berlin, Bayreuth, Cologne, Wuppertal, Marburg, Neuss, Freiburg, Karlsruhe, Kassel, and Münster.

**Jewish-Christian Relations**

In February, Frankfurt celebrated the 18th anniversary of the founding of the Franz-Oppenheimer-Gesellschaft. The society, which promotes Jewish-Christian understanding, was established by Heinrich Guttmann, whose son came from Israel to attend the celebration. This year's annual Brotherhood Week, sponsored by the Coordinating Council of Associations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation, had as its theme “Law and Justice.” Yehudi Menuhin was awarded the Buber-Rosenzweig Medal at the opening of Brotherhood Week early in March. The 40th anniversary of the 50 or so Associations for Christian-Jewish Cooperation was celebrated in October at a gathering in Bad Nauheim.

The German Protestant Church's convention in Berlin, in June, gave ample space to Jewish themes. However, the commentator in the *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* found that in the sessions relating to Jewish subjects, commonalities were emphasized to the point of being forced, without recognition of the fundamental differences between Judaism and Christianity. The Christian drive for harmony, which appeared to appropriate Judaism under a common Judeo-Christian umbrella, effectively paralyzed efforts at discussion. On the occasion of the convention, a memorial service took place on the grounds of former Gestapo headquarters, with Heinz Galinski as a speaker.

**Culture**

The Germania Judaica, an internationally recognized research library in Cologne, celebrated its 30th anniversary this year. The library was started as a private foundation at the initiative of a small group of writers and journalists, led by Nobel laureate Heinrich Böll. During its first 15 years it remained small and without much recognition; later it was given premises in Cologne's central library and began to receive state funding. The 40,000-volume library, which collaborates with the Leo Baeck Institute, specializes in the history and literature of German-speaking Jews since the Emancipation, and has holdings in anti-Semitica and the history of Zionism and of Palestine-Israel. Its present director, Monika Richarz, is an internationally respected historian of German Jewry.

A number of exhibits on Jewish history in Germany were presented this year, many of them focusing on the history of Jews in particular cities. Among several exhibits shown in Berlin were “. . . als wär es nie gewesen—Menschen, die nicht mehr entkamen” (“As if it had never happened—people who could not escape”), photographs from the last years of Jewish community life in Berlin; and “Und lehrt sie: Gedächtnis” (“And teach them not to forget”), organized by the East German
government and the GDR Association of Jewish Communities, and shown the previous year in East Berlin. Another Berlin exhibit presented Weissensee cemetery as a mirror of Jewish history in Berlin, and another was on "Jewish Athletes in Berlin, 1898–1938." Exhibits portraying local Jewish environments and histories were presented in Düsseldorf ("Witnesses of Intolerance"), Cologne, Karlsruhe, Gütersloh (on Leo Baeck), in Bonn (on the Philippson family there), Munich, Hannover, and in small towns such as Gröbenzell. A Hannover exhibit on the history of Jews there, which was displayed in the Jewish cemetery's old funeral hall, was compiled, in part, by émigrés.

An exhibit honoring the writer and artist Arie Goral, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, was opened at the Institute for Social Research in Hamburg (November). The late Isaak Lachmann was honored with an exhibit, and his hand-written collection of music was donated to the European Center for Jewish Music in Augsburg.

**Publications**

The body of literature on local Jewish history continued to grow, much of it compiled by schoolteachers, usually focusing on the history up to and including the persecution in the particular town or city. Subjects of recent monographs and their authors included: Karlsruhe (Heinz Schmitt); Grossmannsdorf (Joachim Braun); Mainz Jewish cemetery (Bernd A. Vest); Hagen (Hermann Zabel); Bamberg (Karl Mistele); Osnabrück (Peter Jund and Martina Sellmeyer); Munich (Wolfram Selig); Darmstadt (Benno Szklanowski et al.); Lindau (Karl Schweitzer); Nienburg/Weser (Rainer Sabelleck); Dinslaken (Jürgen Grafen and Kurt Tohermes); Raesfeld (Adalbert Friedrich); Lichtenfels/Hesse (Josef Urban and Josef Motschmann); Baden-Württemberg (Joachim Hahn); Rheydt, Odenkirchen, Mönchen-Gladbach (Günter Erckens); Ahlen/Westphalia (Felix Fechenbach); Leverkusen (Rolf Müller).

Öffentlichkeit und die Judenverfolgung 1933–45 (on the amnesia of the German public on the Shoah); Renate Wall, Verbrannt, verboten, vergessen. Kleines Lexikon deutschsprachiger Schriftstellerinnen 1933–1945 (a dictionary of persecuted female German writers; 1988).

New biographies, memoirs, and related works included Hartmut Binder and Jan Parik, Kafka, Ein Leben in Prag; Klaus Mann, Tagebücher 1931–1933 (diaries of Thomas Mann’s son); Karl Löwith, Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933. Ein Bericht (autobiography of a leading German-Jewish philosopher); Betty Schollem/Gershom Scholem: Mutter und Sohn im Briefwechsel 1917–1946, edited by Itta Schedletzky and Thomas Sparr (the correspondence of Gershom Scholem and his mother); Resi Weglein, Als Krankenschwester im KZ Theresienstadt Erinnerung einer Ulmer Jüdin, edited by Silvester Lechner and Alfred Moos (memois of a Jewish nurse from Ulm in Theresienstadt); Erwin Blumenfeldt, Durch tausendjährige Zeit (memoirs of a well-known fashion photographer); Isaac Breuer, Mein Weg (“My Road”); Inge Deutschkron, Milch ohne Honig. Leben in Israel (reflections on the author’s life in Israel); Joachim Kaiser, ed., Leonard Bernstein’s Ruhm. Gedanken und Informationen über das Lebenswerk eines grossen Künstlers (on Leonard Bernstein).

In the area of literature, new works included Meir M. Faerber, ed., Auf dem Weg, an anthology of German-language literature written in Israel, with an introduction by Siegfried Lenz; and Hans Otto Horch and Horst Denkler, eds., Conditio Judaica, Judentum, Antisemitismus und deutschsprachige Literatur vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg, part 1 (on Jews and German literature until 1914).


Works of Jewish history included Yehuda Eloni, Zionismus in Deutschland von den Anfängen bis 1914 (a comprehensive history of the first 17 years of the German Zionist Federation, published by the Institute for German History, Tel Aviv University); and Arno Lustiger, Schalom Libertad. Juden im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg (Jews in the Spanish Civil War). Other new works of interest were Israel Meir Levinger, ed., Die Basler Hagada (the Basle Haggadah); Peter N. Levinson, Dem Andenken der Gerechten. Nachrufe (eulogies by a leading German rabbi); Fritz Eschen, Photographien Berlin, 1945–50 (photographs of postwar Berlin, by a photographer of Jewish origin); and Helge Grabitz and Wolfgang Scheffler, Letzte Spuren (“Last Traces,” based on an exhibit about persecuted Jews from Berlin).

The new thematic issue of Dachauer Hefte dealt with medicine under Nazism.
Two books were published on the work of Jewish writer and playwright George Tabori, on the occasion of his 75th birthday. The books were by Gundula Ohnegemach and by Jörg W. Gronius and Wend Kassens.

**Personalia**

Moshe G. Hess received the Federal Service Cross. He left Germany in 1935 for Palestine and later represented Israel in diplomatic missions abroad, including in Germany. In 1964, he returned to Germany, where he was a director of the Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft and cofounder of the Deutsch-Israelische Wirtschaftsvereinigung (economic association) in Frankfurt and Tel Aviv.

Schalom Ben-Chorin, a German-born writer living in Israel, received, jointly with Karl-Alfred Odin, a Protestant journalist, the prize of the Bible and Culture Foundation. Ben-Chorin also received the Golden Citizen's Medal of the City of Munich and was named an honorary member of the Jewish Community of Munich. Sociologist Leo Lowenthal, 89, last surviving member of the Frankfurt School for Social Research, later a faculty member at the University of California, Berkeley, was awarded the Theodor Adorno Prize in the Paulskirche Frankfurt, by the city. Rabbi Nathan Peter Levinson received an honorary professorship from the prime minister of Baden-Württemberg.

Sir Ernst Gombrich, the art historian, was honored on his 80th birthday with the Goethe Medal of the German Goethe Institute. Born in Vienna, he emigrated to England in 1936; he became famous with a popular art history published in 1950 and translated into 18 languages. For many years, he was director of the Warburg Institute in London.

Edgar Hilsenrath, a Jewish writer, was a corecipient of the Alfred Döblin Prize for his novel *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken* ("The Tale of the Last Thought"). The newly established Heinz Galinski Prize was awarded to writer Siegfried Lenz. The Leo Baeck Prize was awarded to Professors Gisbert zu Putlitz and Gerhard Rau. Putlitz was for a time the acting head of the College of Jewish Studies in Heidelberg.

The Rothschild banking houses (N.M. Rothschild & Sons, Limited, London; Rothschild & Cie Banque, Paris; and Rothschild AG, Zurich) returned to Frankfurt after an absence of almost 90 years. The Frankfurt branch was closed in 1901 because the last representative of the family there, Baron Wilhelm Carl von Rothschild, was left without male heirs.

Among prominent German Jews who died in 1989 were the following: Martha Markus de Vries, in Recklinghausen, aged 77, who with her husband helped to rebuild that Jewish community after the war (December 30, 1988); Ida Ehre, a nationally revered actress, in Hamburg, aged 88; publisher and writer Wieland Herzfelde, in East Berlin, aged 93; Dr. Ernst Katzenstein, who played a key role in achieving compensation for Nazi victims and served as director of the Claims Conference in Germany, near Frankfurt, aged 91; Otto Küster, who was instrumen-
tal in negotiating the Hague treaties in the early 1950s, in Stuttgart, in his late 80s; Max E. Levy, former director of ORT Germany, in Frankfurt; Günter Singer, for many years chairman of the Hamburg community, survivor of Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Birkenau, in Hamburg, aged 73; Hermann Zwi Wollach, Auschwitz survivor who emigrated to Palestine, was a candidate for mayor of Tel Aviv, returned to Germany, where he was active in the Stuttgart community, honorary citizen of Sarajevo, honored also by the Bonn government and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, aged 82.

Lola Hahn-Warburg, who worked as a volunteer during the war with the Refugee Children’s Movement in London and the Children and Youth Aliyah in London and Berlin, died in London at 88 years of age. Eric Lüth, a non-Jewish journalist, head of the Hamburg State Press Office and founder of “Peace with Israel,” the first German program to come to grips with the past and confront Germany’s relationship with Israel, died at the age of 87.

Y. Michal Bodemann
German Democratic Republic

National Affairs

As in the other countries of Eastern Europe, the year 1989 saw dramatic political movement in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), culminating in the overthrow of the government of Erich Honecker in October and the opening of the border with West Germany in early November. The previous May, following local elections, the already frustrated and increasingly impatient East German population had been outraged by the government's announcement that 98.85 percent of the voters cast their ballots for the Socialist Unity party, when poll monitors in most districts observed that 20 percent of eligible voters had either boycotted the election or voted against the party.

The Honecker regime's support of the Tienanmen Square massacre in Peking a few weeks later heightened the already tense situation. The broadcasting of film footage of Tienanmen Square three times on GDR television was seen by many as an implicit threat. In late summer and early autumn tens of thousands of mostly young GDR citizens camped out in West German embassies in Prague and Warsaw and, after the border between Hungary and Austria opened in September, fled to West Germany. Over the course of 1989, 343,854 East Germans resettled in West Germany, disrupting the economy and the supply of goods and services in the GDR and creating a sense of panic. Those citizens who remained in the GDR took to the streets to demand political and economic reform.

Tension heightened as the Honecker government dug in and prepared to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the East German state on October 7. After bloody confrontations between police and demonstrators on October 7 and 8, on October 9, the government renounced the use of force and agreed to a peaceful dialogue with the people, many of whom were organizing in newly established opposition groups and revived non-Communist political parties. On October 18, Honecker resigned; many of his ministers were forced out of office shortly thereafter. On November 9, the border was opened, ending more than four decades of isolation of the East German population.

Jews and the GDR

The Jews of the GDR—a tiny but unusually visible and, given Germany's past, symbolically important group—participated in, and in turn were affected by, the social upheaval in many ways. Several Jews were among the officials close to Honecker who were forced to resign in October and November, among them Her-
mann Axen, Günther Schabowski, and Günter Mittag. The most notorious of these, Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, disappeared after being accused of embezzling millions of marks which he deposited in Western banks. In December Gregor Gysi, a prominent lawyer of partly Jewish descent and a supporter of the Jewish community, was named the new head of the Socialist Unity party. Gysi had earned a reputation as a defender of dissidents and spokesperson for proreform forces within the party. Ibrahim Böhme, a dissident, emerged as leader of the new Social Democratic party. Böhme evaded reporters' queries about possible Jewish elements in his background, but he nonetheless received anti-Semitic hate mail.

Individual Jews were also among the intellectuals and leaders of the emerging opposition groups which articulated popular demands. These personalities included the writers Stefan Heym and Stefan Hermlin and former-spymaster-turned-reformer Mischa Wolf.

The Jewish community in the GDR remained close to the Socialist Unity party. It negotiated with the old and new administrations for diplomatic relations with the State of Israel, government protection against the attacks of the increasingly active right-wing elements of the population (see below), and for support for Jewish institutions and recognition of GDR Jews as active antifascists. The reluctance of the Jewish community to take a public position on the issues of national political and economic reform frustrated many members and supporters who stopped frequenting the Jewish community and began to work with the new reform groups. At the same time, many older Communists and young people attracted by the new youth programs (see below) began to appear at Jewish community events.

One casualty of the events of autumn 1989 was the observance of Kristallnacht: November 9, which had been previously observed by German Jews as a day of remembering the crimes of Germans against Jews, became a national celebration of the end of the division of Germany. And the weekly popular demonstrations in Leipzig, which started in early autumn and continued through the end of the year, became increasingly nationalistic with anti-Semitic overtones.

Anti-Semitism

Expressions of anti-Semitism increased and were more open after the Honecker government resigned in October, though often in conjunction with acts of hostility directed toward non-Jews: Russians, Communists, and homosexuals. For example, in October high school students attacked three blacks in a discotheque, shouting "Jewish Pigs!"

Jewish cemeteries in East Berlin and Erfurt were desecrated, neo-Nazi groups stepped up their activities, and, especially once Gregor Gysi became president of the Socialist Unity party, anti-Semitic slogans became increasingly visible at the weekly mass demonstrations in Leipzig. Particularly disturbing was the fact that those expressing positive feelings toward Jews tended to be older citizens and people from traditionally "antifascist" backgrounds, while the increasingly vocal anti-Semites
were almost all young men 14 to 30 years old. The situation appeared even more complex in the fall when it became apparent that many “anti-Semitic” incidents were being instigated and/or misrepresented to the public by the Stasi (the state security service), which had come under pressure to shut down and wanted to prove that it was still needed.

**Relations with Israel**

Although the GDR remained the only Eastern Bloc state with no official ties to Israel, over the course of the year some contacts were initiated, creating the expectation that the realization of full diplomatic relations was only a matter of time.

In late January, Kurt Lößfler, GDR minister for church-state affairs, visited Israel as a guest of the Holocaust institution Yad Vashem. This was the first visit to Israel of such a high-ranking East German official. Lößfler, accompanied by two diplomats, met with Israeli minister of religion Zevulun Hammer. Although the Israelis were disappointed that Lößfler continued to deny any responsibility of the GDR for the Holocaust, his visit was nonetheless considered the first step toward direct dialogue between the two states. One concrete result of Lößfler's trip was an agreement between the GDR and Yad Vashem to exchange archival material and exhibits and to undertake cooperative research projects and academic exchanges. As a follow-up to Lößfler's Israel trip, in March two representatives of Yad Vashem toured the GDR to meet with officers of the Jewish communities and to estimate the extent and location of the relevant GDR archival material.

Although the internal political crisis interrupted the development and implementation of foreign policy, in December the new prime minister, Hans Modrow, offered to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and to negotiate restitution payments to Holocaust survivors. Many observers close to the scene saw this move as part of an effort of the new government to broaden its legitimacy as a separate German state, and, at the same time, to win the sympathy of the international Jewish community and demonstrate its break with the Nazi as well as the Stalinist past. The Israeli government reacted to Modrow's verbal offer with a decided lack of enthusiasm, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens responding that Israel was awaiting a formal written application for diplomatic relations from the GDR.

In January conductor Kurt Masur toured Israel with the Leipzig Radio Choir. In June the Berliner Ensemble participated in a Jerusalem theater festival. Aktion Sühnezeichen-GDR (Operation Sign of Atonement), a Protestant group that had been rehabilitating Jewish cemeteries since the 1960s, was invited, for the first time, to undertake projects in Israel.
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JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

For the first time in many years, precise statistics for Jewish communal membership were released by Jewish authorities. On December 31, 1989, 370 Jews belonged to the GDR's eight organized Jewish communities: 203 in East Berlin, 45 in Dresden, 37 in Leipzig, 35 in Magdeburg, 31 in Erfurt, 9 in Karl-Marx-Stadt, 5 in Halle, and 5 in Schwerin. The East Berlin figure—despite 8 deaths and considerable emigration to the West—actually showed an increase for the first time in decades. An additional 2,000–3,000 GDR citizens of Jewish ancestry did not belong to any of the Jewish communities, though approximately 400 of them frequented the Jewish communities' cultural programs. Thirty applications for membership were being processed, not only from individuals but also from entire families. Complaints were again heard that in several cases application procedures were being prolonged over years, though efforts were being made to alleviate this problem.

Communal Affairs

Through the months of national unrest, the Jewish communities of the GDR intensified their activities. Their strengthened ties to the international—and particularly to the West German—Jewish communities were evidenced in the many greetings sent to Heinz Galinski, president of the Central Council of Jews in West Germany and of the West Berlin Jewish community, on his birthday, and in the exchange visits of East and West German Jewish communities for Shavuot and Hanukkah celebrations. After the opening of the border, representatives of the Association of Jewish Communities of the GDR were invited to the Central Council's annual meeting to plan for future cooperation. The council, along with the Ronald Lauder Foundation in New York, donated equipment and financial support for various Jewish community activities.

The East Berlin Jewish community, which in previous years had sponsored four or five events per month, listed approximately ten events per month in 1989. Besides weekly Sabbath prayer services and the monthly Sunday-afternoon lecture series, meetings of the Friends of the Jewish Community, a children's program, youth group, and occasional special events, a monthly Friday community evening was instituted, and the Jewish women's group was revived. The women held open public discussions of topics considered too delicate for some of the other programs; they also organized programs for the Jewish elderly, and in December they held a bazaar that raised 2,105 marks for the planned Jewish cultural center, the Centrum Judaicum. In January a biweekly course in modern Hebrew was introduced. When it became oversubscribed and applicants were turned away, Pastor Johannes Hildebrandt arranged for a second course in Hebrew to be given at the nearby Sophienkirche. The East Berlin community also offered a course in Jewish customs taught by Prof. Shlomo Tischauer of West Berlin.
New Jewish activity outside East Berlin included the introduction of regular Sabbath prayer services in Erfurt and a weekend seminar in Dresden, in November, for Jews aged 12–47. (Other projects of Jewish interest organized outside the Jewish community are listed under “Culture” below.)

On May 10, the East Berlin Jewish community held a membership meeting where, for the first time, reference was made to Yom Ha’atzmaut, Israel Independence Day, and Hatikvah was sung. The Jewish communities in Dresden, Erfurt, and Leipzig, however, continued to observe the Tag der Befreiung (the day of liberation from the Nazis by the Soviet army) on May 8.

Over the year many GDR Jews made private visits to relatives living in Israel. Irene Runge of the East Berlin Jewish community spent the summer in Israel as a guest of the Jerusalem Foundation, and two members of East Berlin’s Jewish youth group participated in the Israel Seminar for East European Youth. The Israelis who visited the GDR included Dahlia Itzik, Naphtali Eitan, and Mordechai Groner of Jerusalem’s municipal government; Dr. Avi Becker of the Israel Office of the World Jewish Congress; Prof. Zeev Falk of the Hebrew University; Prof. Schalom Ben-Chorin, Dr. Jaacov Zur, and Izchak Schwersenz.

This year saw the introduction of a variety of programs for children and young people, a novelty in a Jewish community two-thirds of whose members were 60 years of age and older. The programs were made possible with considerable support from abroad, particularly from the West German and Western European Jewish communities and from the Lauder Foundation. In March, at a weekend seminar in Köpenick, organized by the East Berlin Jewish community, young Jews from East Berlin met with representatives of Western European Jewish youth organizations. Also in March, the East Berlin Jewish youth group organized an excursion of 20 young people to the restored former synagogue which now functioned as a Jewish museum in Größig. In June a weekend seminar for young people was organized in Dresden.

Over the summer, 18 children aged 8–14 attended a three-week summer camp in Rügen, at which a trained Hebrew teacher (from West Germany) offered daily instruction in Hebrew and other Jewish subjects. Fourteen GDR children aged 12–16 attended another Jewish summer camp, sponsored by the Lauder Foundation, in Balatonfuredes, Hungary, where a teacher from Israel gave instruction in various Jewish subjects. Two members of the East Berlin youth group participated in a summer seminar in Israel (see above); eight young Jews attended the summer university of the European Union of Jewish Students in Montecampione, Italy; and in December four young people were guests at a Jewish ski camp in Switzerland.

The fall of the Honecker government intensified political conflict within the Jewish community and the larger circle of its supporters. On November 11, 150 people participated in a daylong colloquium in East Berlin for Jews within and outside the organized Jewish communities. For the first time since 1949, a large Israeli flag hung in the hall and was photographed by local camera teams. Participants in the colloquium debated the long-standing question of whether the GDR Jewish community should be a religious or a cultural organization and such new
issues as the formation of a GDR-Israel Friendship Society and the future policy of the Jewish community with respect to the larger social changes taking place. Many of those present were disappointed that the Jewish community had not taken part in the October and November demonstrations—though many individual Jews had—and, unlike the Protestant Church, had not opened its doors to dissident Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals.

After the border with West Germany opened, attendance at most Jewish community programs dropped significantly, as did attendance at cultural events generally in the GDR. It was assumed that most East Germans were engaged in reorganizing their lives, enjoying their new right to travel, and taking part in the intense political debates and struggles of those months.

NEW SYNAGOGUE BERLIN-CENTRUM JUDAICUM

The establishment of a foundation to create a cultural center and an archive on German Jewish history—to be housed in the once-grand synagogue on the Oranienburgerstrasse, slated for restoration—was announced in 1988 with great ceremony and publicity (see AJYB 1990, pp. 375-76). In 1989, however, the project moved slowly toward realization. Over the year several donations to the foundation—especially from the Protestant churches of the GDR—were announced, but the total sum raised was not made public.

The first regular meeting of the board of directors took place in June. In addition to GDR citizens, the board included Heinz Galinski, president of the Central Council of Jews in West Germany and of the West Berlin Jewish community; Rabbi Philip Hiat of New York; Rabbi Alfred Schöner of Budapest; Prof. Kurt Schubert of Vienna; and Sir Sigmund Sternberg of London. At the end of the year the foundation reported that the rebuilding of the synagogue was behind schedule due to a shortage of construction workers. Skilled workers were heavily represented among the GDR citizens who emigrated west in the second part of the year.

Holocaust-Related Matters

Internally there was no major event to compare with the massive observance of the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht in 1988, but smaller commemorative projects were undertaken by various groups and institutions. In April the East Berlin Jewish community observed Holocaust Memorial Day (Yom Hashoah) for the first time. Avi Becker, director of the Israel office of the World Jewish Congress, was the speaker, and the GDR Ministry for Church-State Affairs sent a message. In July a local library in East Berlin was renamed for Anne Frank.

Throughout the year, Aktion Sühnezeichen-GDR continued to mobilize groups to work in Jewish cemeteries and to organize cultural events with Jewish content, as it had done since the 1960s. The city of East Berlin held a competition for the
design of a monument to the achievements, the persecution, and the resistance of Berlin's Jews during the Nazi years. All 74 entries were exhibited at the Humboldt University in October. The winning design was by Karl Biedermann and Eva Butzmann.

In December the Central Committee of the Organization of Anti-Fascist Resistance Fighters invited two representatives of the Jewish community to discuss the long-standing Jewish complaint that while the East German state recognized Jews as victims of Fascism, it suppressed their active struggle against Hitler and denied them the privileges awarded to resistance fighters. It was agreed to pursue this grievance further at the local level. Also in December, Dr. Peter Kirchner, president of the Jewish community of East Berlin, called together a committee of Jews from different regions of the GDR to suggest changes and new concepts for teaching history and citizenship in GDR schools.

**Jewish-Christian Relations**

In May, at the first official meeting between representatives of the Association of Jewish Communities of the GDR and the board of directors of the GDR Federation of (Protestant) Churches, Bishop Werner Leich underlined the churches' guilt concerning the past. He stressed the need to inform members about Judaism and the Judeo-Christian tradition and to help older Germans confront and work through their wartime experiences. At the July conference of the (Protestant) Church of Saxony in Leipzig, the workshop on Christian-Jewish relations attracted at times 1,000 participants, of whom 300 signed a petition urging the GDR government to establish relations with Israel.

**Culture**

The intensification of Jewish life in the GDR in 1989 included an increased number of cultural events with Jewish content. However, because the GDR's Jewish population was small, and the antifascist theme played an important role generally in East German discourse, many producers of GDR "Jewish culture" were non-Jews.

In January the GDR exhibit on Jews in Berlin "Und lehrt sie: Gedächtnis" ("And Teach Them Not to Forget") was shown in West Berlin in exchange for the West Berlin exhibit "Topographie des Terrors" ("Topography of Terror"). An exhibit on Anne Frank was shown in East Berlin and Magdeburg, and Leipzig hosted an exhibit of the works of GDR Jewish artist Anatoli Kaplan. Works by the Viennese Jewish painter Heinrich Sussman (1904–1986) were shown in East Berlin. In Erfurt the Medical Academy held an exhibit of 600 art works collected by Alfred Hess, a local Jewish industrialist in the pre-Nazi decades.

The annual five-day Yiddish Cultural Festival, produced by Jalda Rebling in East Berlin, this year featured Yiddish culture in the USSR. The program included
unusually straightforward presentations about the anti-Jewish measures that all but wiped out Jewish culture in the Soviet Union in the 1950s. In May the Deutsches Theater premiered Schuldig Geboren (“Born Guilty”), based on Peter Sichrovsky’s book of interviews with children of Nazis. The play had been previously produced in West Berlin. DEFA, the GDR state film studio, released a short documentary, Spuren (“Traces”), an exploration of the remaining traces of prewar Jewish life in Berlin. The American klezmer clarinetist Giora Feidman gave concerts in East Berlin and Karl-Marx-Stadt, and the American folksinger Leonard Lehrman performed in East Berlin and Dresden. The musicians Daniel Barenboim, Itzhak Perlman, and Leonard Bernstein gave concerts in East Berlin. Important to the development of Jewish culture in the provinces were the formation of a Society of (largely non-Jewish) Friends of Jewish Culture in Halle and the establishment of a Working Group on the History of Jews in Leipzig, initiated by Erwin Märtin (also a non-Jew). This group organized a three-day Jewish cultural festival in Leipzig in November.

Publications

In 1989, 27 books of Jewish interest were published in the GDR. They included seven translations (one each from Hebrew, Polish, Hungarian, Dutch, Yiddish; two from English); nine works of fiction; six biographies of antifascists; two children’s books; twelve books about the Nazi era; and one book about Palestine in the 1940s.

Among the most important new works were the following: Kleine Kunst-Stücke (“Small Feats”), a selection of short works by Walter Benjamin, written between 1928 and 1935, edited and with an afterword by Klaus-Peter Noack; Misstrauen lernen. Prosa, Lyrik. Essay (“Learning to Distrust: Prose, Lyrics, and Essays”) by Erich Fried, edited by Ingeborg Quaas, the posthumous first GDR publication of a major left-wing Jewish poet, an important influence on the West European student movement of the late 1960s, whose works had already been published in West Germany; Curriculum Vitae. Erinnerungen eines Philologen. 1881-1918 (“Curriculum Vitae: Memoirs of a Philologist, 1881-1918”) by Victor Klemperer, edited by Walter Nowojski, the remembrances of a major East German Jewish writer and his thoughts on Jewishness, Germanness, literature, and history; Damit die Nacht nicht Wiederkehre (English edition: Beware Lest the Nightmare Recur), prepared by Panorama (GDR State Office of Information), the programs and speeches given at the major events organized by the GDR government to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Pogromnacht (formerly called Reichskristallnacht), November 9, 1938; and Berlin-Palästina und zurück. Erinnerungen (“‘Berlin to Palestine and Back: Memories’”) by Günter Stillman, the experiences of a German Jewish Communist in Palestine in the 1940s.

Robin Ostow
Two major themes, one relating to Austria's historical past and the other to its political future, dominated Austrian politics in 1988 and 1989. In 1988 the country observed the 50th anniversary of its annexation by Nazi Germany. In numerous ceremonies and special events, Austria was forced to confront its largely unexamined role as part of the Third Reich. This process of self-examination and introspection took on a special significance as the country was still beset by the so-called Waldheim affair.

The other theme concerned Austria's future role in the 12-nation European Community (EC). The coalition government, made up of the Socialist party and its junior partner, the People's party, agreed to apply for full membership in the EC, even though the Socialists hesitated somewhat, out of concern for the possible effect on employment and agriculture. There was growing concern, too, about the impact of the move on the country's 33-year-old status of "permanent neutrality." The Soviet Union viewed with mistrust attempts to change this status but agreed not to try and block Austria's application to the European Community as long as it remained committed to permanent neutrality.

These developments, which cast a large question mark over the future direction of Austrian foreign policy, were further complicated by the completely unanticipated events in Eastern Europe, which brought about the end of the Communist-dominated governments in the region. With the demise of Communist rule in Eastern Europe and the winding down of the Cold War, Austria was faced with the prospect of losing its special position as a bridge between East and West. One not unlikely consequence of this change was that Vienna might prove less attractive as a venue for major political conferences. On the positive side of the ledger, Austria's stable economy would almost certainly attract more foreign companies to use Vienna as a springboard to the new markets of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Waldheim Affair

Contrary to public expectations, the controversy surrounding Kurt Waldheim's election as president of Austria in June 1986 did not quickly die down and disappear. Once in office, Waldheim was unable to discharge many of the largely ceremonial functions of his position. Because of the controversy surrounding his past, Western European countries declined to invite him for state visits; nor could he come to the United States, which had placed him on its "watch list" of undesirable persons.
The practice of a number of foreign dignitaries of bypassing Vienna and meeting their Austrian counterparts in provincial cities in order to avoid being received by the president. Diplomatic snubs from the foreign ministers of Italy, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia were part of the continuing price Austria paid for the president’s World War II record as a lieutenant in the German army and his attempted cover-up of that record. He was even shunned at home by many groups which refused to offer him the normal courtesy of invitations to their functions. He had become, as many observed, a virtual prisoner in the Hofburg, the presidential palace.

Beginning in 1988, the 50th anniversary of the Anschluss, the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany in 1938, there were a number of demonstrations, staged mostly by young people, calling on Waldheim to resign. The protests only served to harden Waldheim’s resolve to hang on to his office.

At the end of 1987 the government had appointed an international panel of six eminent historians to investigate Waldheim’s record of wartime service and submit a report on its findings. President Waldheim approved the naming of the panel, implicitly agreeing, it could be argued, to be bound by its verdict. After an exhaustive investigation of wartime archives, the panel concluded (February 1988) that Waldheim had sought for decades to conceal his record as a staff lieutenant with a German army unit that waged a brutal campaign in the Balkans from 1942 to 1945, and then, once he could no longer hide it, tried to make it appear harmless. Although the panel found no evidence that he was personally guilty of war crimes, it was clear that while serving in that army unit, Waldheim had to have known about German atrocities yet did nothing to stop them. Waldheim had all along maintained that after being wounded on the Russian front in 1942, he was released from military service and spent the rest of the war in Vienna writing his doctoral thesis in law.

The report, and Waldheim’s response to it, created a furor and prompted demands that he resign. In a brief televised address to the nation, on February 14, 1988, in which he showed no inkling of remorse or repentance, Waldheim rejected the findings of the panel and declared that he would not bow to “outside pressure” to resign. Instead of the detailed rebuttal to the findings that had been expected, Waldheim said only that “parts of the report do not correspond to the facts but are built on presumptions and hypotheses,” and, “for that reason, the conclusions drawn cannot be upheld.” The closest he came to acknowledging fault was in the admission that after the war he did not want to talk much about the “bitter period.” That might have been a mistake, he conceded, “. . . but it was certainly not a strategy of covering up.”

In political and intellectual circles, the findings were seen as formally endorsing charges that Waldheim had repeatedly lied about his past. Reaction in Socialist party circles stressed that Waldheim’s continued presence in office would now become an even heavier burden for the nation to bear. A number of prominent figures, including former chancellor Bruno Kreisky and Simon Wiesenthal, called on Waldheim to resign. In rejecting these demands, Foreign Minister Alois Mock,
head of the People's party and Waldheim's staunchest supporter, averred that the
times called for unity and reconciliation.

These political differences reflected the deep division within the country. Following Waldheim's address, some 5,000 people demonstrated in front of the Cathedral of St. Stephen in Vienna to demand the president's resignation. The same demand appeared over the names of 1,500 prominent Austrian intellectuals, professionals, writers, and actors in a three-page advertisement in the magazine Profil. At the same time, letters from supporters of Waldheim filled the pages of the pro-Waldheim tabloid Neue Kronen Zeitung, some of them reflecting the sharp anti-Semitic tone of the debate surrounding the Waldheim affair. Former foreign minister Karl Gruber, a close associate of Waldheim, provoked a furor by asserting that the report was critical because the panel was composed of Socialists and Jews.

50th Anniversary of the Anschluss

The report came out as Austria was preparing to observe the 50th anniversary of the Anschluss, or annexation, by Nazi Germany. Waldheim's presence in office served to magnify the importance of the anniversary which, under more normal circumstances, would probably have attracted far less public attention. His enrollment in Nazi organizations, service in the German army, forgetfulness of this past, and refusal to show the least bit of remorse or contrition symbolized the past and mirrored the behavior and attitudes of a great many other Austrians.

Commemoration of the Anschluss on March 11, the day Austria lost its independence in 1938, was marked by a demonstration of an estimated 10,000 people outside the office of President Waldheim demanding that he resign. Some 2,000 Jews crowded into the Stadttempel for a service commemorating the sufferings inflicted on their families a half-century earlier. It was recalled in ceremonies taking place throughout the country that a great many Austrians enthusiastically joined the Nazis in persecuting Jews, forcing many to their hands and knees to wash gutters and toilets. Scores of thousands of Jews were jailed and their property confiscated; many thousands were forced to flee the country. Ultimately, 70,000 Austrian Jews were killed in German-occupied countries and in concentration camps, a great many of whose officers and guards were Austrians.

With President Waldheim barred from speaking before Parliament and other meetings dedicated to the occasion, Chancellor Franz Vranitzky played the leading role in urging citizens to ponder the past to ensure that the country did not fall “into an abyss as happened in 1938.” Chancellor Vranitzky, while rejecting the notion that Austria bore a collective responsibility for Nazi crimes, told a special meeting of the cabinet, “one must face the fact of a historic guilt.”

In an address before 15,000 people attending a memorial service at Mauthausen, on the 43rd anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp by American troops, the chancellor stated that Austria bore no collective guilt for the crimes of the Nazis, which, he said, had to be laid at the doorstep of individuals. The Austrian
state, Vranitzky averred, had gained its identity by resisting the Nazis and "... is the antithesis of the National Socialist regime of injustice. . . ."

A major theme of the anniversary, stressed by Socialists and Conservatives, was that Austria had lost its sovereignty in 1938 but that since 1945 it had rebuilt its democratic institutions in a way that would prevent a new dictatorship from arising. According to this view, the Anschluss was forced on an unwilling population, depicted in school textbooks as the victims of Hitler's aggression. Critics of this view argued that it glossed over the fact that a great many Austrians fervently wished for the Anschluss and fought for it. As if to underscore this point, many Austrians generally referred to the defeat in 1945 as the Umbruch, or "changeover," and not as the moment of liberation. Gustav Spann, a professor at the University of Vienna's Institute for Contemporary History and an expert on the teaching of history in Austrian schools, observed that hardly any mention was made in textbooks about Nazis in Austria. Spann left the People's party in 1987 because he disagreed with its position on the history of the Nazi period.

By and large, despite a nationwide agenda of speeches, ceremonies, historical exhibitions, and cultural events, the anniversary drew a limited popular response. Most of the demonstrations were attended largely by young people. Also, after this period of intense preoccupation, public interest in the Waldheim issue began to recede. People grew tired of it, particularly in view of the failure of the public protests to force Waldheim from office. Public-opinion polls taken in February 1988, after the historians' report, indicated that sentiment was evenly divided between those who wanted Waldheim to stay on and those who favored his resignation. This represented a decline in support for the president but did not signal the massive shift in public sentiment that analysts said would be needed to bring about his ouster.

There was other evidence that Austrians retained an ambiguous attitude toward the Nazi past. Historians estimated that fewer than 20 percent of Austrians were enthusiastic about Hitler before the annexation. However, many Austrians, while skeptical of the Nazis, had favored union with Germany since the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian empire at the end of World War I. Apparently these feelings persisted among a small segment of the population. A 1988 poll of 1,500 people, commissioned by Austrian television, found that 20 percent of Austrians believed that the Anschluss resulted in "the natural union of the German people." The same survey revealed that 47 percent of Austrians thought the annexation had good effects as well as bad ones. Only 15 percent said that it had an exclusively bad effect. The article reporting these results in the Vienna newspaper Kurrier carried the caption: "One-half believe: Hitler was not so bad."

Visit of Pope John Paul II

Although Pope John Paul II's pastoral visit to Austria in June 1988, the second in five years, was intended solely to provide religious encouragement to the overwhelmingly Catholic population and to celebrate the first East-West mass, in Eisen-
stadt, it received more than the usual amount of attention. The year before, in a meeting in the Vatican, the pope had become the first Western leader to receive President Waldheim, provoking much criticism from Jewish circles. Not only did John Paul II's visit to Austria revive memories of the Waldheim affair, but feelings worsened when the pope, during a visit to the Mauthausen concentration camp, failed to make specific reference to the Jewish victims who perished there. (At least 122,766 persons were murdered or died at Mauthausen and surrounding camps between 1939 and 1945, a great many of them Jews.) Chief Rabbi Chaim Eisenberg, echoing the sentiment of the Austrian Jewish community, deplored the omission, stating, "I profoundly miss the word 'Jews' in his speech. . . ."

At a meeting with Jewish leaders, the pope addressed this concern by stating: "The memory of the Shoah, the extermination of millions of Jews in the concentration camps, continues to burden you, and us as well." Paul Grosz, head of the Jewish community, expressed regret that the pontiff had not made a public statement concerning Austria's relationship to its past. The events of the past two years, Grosz observed, demonstrated that Austria had not come to terms with this past, and he urged the pope to stress the importance of this for all Austrians. He also requested the Catholic Church to examine why it had not more actively opposed the Nazis.

**Anti-Semitism**

The Waldheim affair set loose currents of anti-Semitism that rippled through Austrian society. Expressions of negative or hostile attitudes toward Jews that until then would have been suppressed or kept to a whisper were voiced openly in many social circles. No less disturbing were incidents involving the desecration of Jewish cemeteries and anti-Semitic graffiti scrawled in public places. Segments of the press and certain political leaders linked to conservative groups played no small role in fomenting this animus. With many Austrians convinced that the campaign against Waldheim was being orchestrated by international Jewish organizations, Jews became the special target of anger. Mindful of this, Chancellor Vranitzky, in a television interview in February 1988, called on the president and his supporters to stop blaming his problems on an "international Jewish conspiracy."

Segments of the Austrian press, notably the daily *Neue Kronen Zeitung*, did much to thicken the atmosphere of anti-Semitism. This sensationalist tabloid, which had the largest circulation of any newspaper in Austria, carried articles and letters from readers that many believed inflamed the already tense situation. Austrian state radio and television, and a number of newspapers, notably the *Salzburger Nachrichten*, by contrast, reported on the Waldheim affair in a restrained and balanced manner.

Sentiment toward Jews was further inflamed by a statement of World Jewish Congress president Edgar M. Bronfman in Brussels, early in 1988, urging the European Community not to accept Austria as a member as long as Waldheim remained president. These remarks drew a strong negative response from a wide spectrum of public opinion. They also created much uneasiness in the Jewish com-
community, which felt that the statement was unfair and an attempt to interfere in a matter of great national importance to the government and people of Austria. In January 1989, in Luxembourg, the leader of the WJC reiterated his plea that the EC withhold approval of the Austrian application for membership, this time demanding that it accept responsibility to pay reparations to Holocaust survivors.

The Waldheim affair undoubtedly led to an increase in anti-Semitic feelings among Austrians. Results of a study done by the Institute for Conflict Research in 1988 showed a definite reversal of past trends of tolerance toward Jews. Racially inspired anti-Semitism, which had dropped from 18 percent in 1976 to a low of 7 percent, returned in 1987 to 18 percent. In 1973, roughly a fifth of Austrians were of the view that the country would be better off without Jews. This figure, which declined in the succeeding years to 8 percent, rose to 13 percent. According to the survey, 10 percent of the adult population described themselves as harboring strong feelings against Jews, and another 27 percent showed latent signs of anti-Semitism. Particularly disturbing was the increased number of educated people who revealed negative attitudes toward Jews.

Austrian Jews were shocked and angered by the upsurge in anti-Semitism, having come to believe that Austrian society had become more tolerant and open. There was the sinking feeling that much of the progress in promoting sound Christian-Jewish relations had been undone by the Waldheim affair. Not a few younger Jews wondered whether there could be a future for them in their own country when it revealed such an ugly face to them.

By 1989, much of the anti-Semitism that bubbled up in the aftermath of the Waldheim affair showed signs of returning to previous levels. In part, this could be attributed to the strong stand taken against it by government and church leaders. Also, other social concerns arose that absorbed public attention, notably a fear of the growing influx of refugees from Eastern Europe.

**Relations with Israel**

Despite the political fallout from the Waldheim affair, relations between Austria and Israel remained good. One exception to this was Israel's steadfast refusal to name a new ambassador to Vienna as long as President Waldheim remained in office. A new ambassador would have to present his credentials to the president of the Republic, a contact that Jerusalem had taken pains to avoid. As a result, Israel continued to be represented by a "chargé d'affaires ad interim," a title suggesting the temporary nature of the appointment. The Austrian Foreign Ministry, unwilling to exacerbate what was seen as a delicate issue, maintained ambassadorial-level representation in Tel Aviv. Once President Waldheim served out his term of office, Israeli officials had let it be known, Jerusalem would be quick to name a full-fledged ambassador.

Although a few political leaders expressed understanding of Israel's predicament in the matter, most, reflecting public sentiment, were critical of it. They did not
understand why Israel refused to present credentials to the democratically elected president of the country. Indeed, the Vienna correspondent of the Israeli daily Davar, in an article on the subject, wrote that Israel lost more than it gained by being represented by a lower-level diplomat.

The issue of Jerusalem's representation in Vienna apart, relations between the two countries remained friendly. For example, Austria continued its liberal policy of providing transit facilities for Soviet and Iranian Jewish emigrants. (See more, below.)

In the more conventional areas of trade, tourism, and scientific and cultural exchanges, good to excellent ties were maintained. Trade in both directions amounted to about $100 million annually, a figure that had held fairly constant over the past years. Tourism between the two countries flourished, with an estimated 30,000 Austrians visiting Israel and approximately 50,000 Israelis traveling to Austria. The Jewish Welcome Center, a branch of the Austrian Tourist Office, assisted tourists from abroad to become acquainted with Jewish life in Vienna and arranged individual and group travel from Austria to Israel. Its director was Dr. Leon Zelman. The federal minister of science and research, Dr. Ewald Busek, visited Israel to sign contracts under which Austrian universities and the Weizmann Institute would engage in collaborative efforts in various scientific fields.

Cultural links between the two countries continued to develop in a strong manner. The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra had performed at the Salzburg Festival in 1987, and the Vienna Philharmonic, in turn, gave a series of five concerts in Israel under the direction of Leonard Bernstein. There were, in addition, a number of exchange visits of Austrian and Israeli artists. Austrian youth groups, under the sponsorship of the Austrian-Israeli Friendship Society, paid visits to Israel that were reciprocated by Israeli youth groups. An added dimension to these cultural ties was the signing in 1989 of a twin-city agreement between Bregenz, in western Austria, and Acco (Acre), the ancient Mediterranean port city.

Relations between the two countries were burdened by the Palestinian problem. The government's position was that Israel should recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as a partner to negotiations under United Nations auspices. It did not, however, maintain a high profile on the Arab-Israeli conflict as it had done in the years when Bruno Kreisky was chancellor (1970 to 1983).

Holocaust-Related Matters

ANTIWAR MONUMENT

The Socialist-led government of the city of Vienna agreed to erect in the Alberтинаплатц, a prominent part of the city, a stone and bronze monument against war and fascism. The monument was built by one of Austria's most famous architects, Alfred Hrdlicka. Hrdlicka, a former Communist and a controversial figure be-
cause of his espousal of left-wing causes, was an ardent opponent of Waldheim's presidential aspirations.

The focal point of the monument was a three-foot-high figure of a man, skullcap on its head, crouching on the paving stones, with a brush in its hand. Few Austrians could fail to recognize the image of an Austrian Jew forced to clean the gutters after the German annexation of Austria in 1938. The monument also included two large granite blocks set close together, symbolizing the violence of fascism; another figure seen disappearing into a block was symbolic of the victims buried beneath the rubble of an Allied bombing attack on the Albertinaplatz; another stone had an inscription of the Austrian declaration of separation from the Third Reich, proclaimed on April 27, 1945.

The monument stirred up much impassioned controversy, as much over where it should be sited as over its theme. Champions of the monument argued that it was a powerful reminder to Austrians of the fate that had befallen the Jews and the role they had played in this tragedy. At the unveiling of the monument on November 24, 1988, Chief Rabbi Chaim Eisenberg spoke of its powerful symbolism, saying: "If one stands shocked before this monument, then it can serve as atonement for those who complacently walked by the living street-washing Jew. . . . It should teach that one should not ignore injustice." While many if not most Jews expressed satisfaction with the monument, others took exception to it, notably to the kneeling figure as a flawed portrayal of the Jews and their fate.

A heated argument also broke out over where to place the monument. The mayor of Vienna, Helmut Silk, an ardent supporter of the monument, decided that it would be placed on the Albertinaplatz, right behind the State Opera, facing the historic Albertina museum, a spot traversed each day by thousands of tourists. The highly visible site was favored by the Socialist party but strongly opposed by the conservative People's party, which preferred to have the monument placed in Morzin Square, where the Gestapo headquarters were located between 1938 and 1945 and which was now dominated by a parking garage and gas station. The People's party was accused of opposing the memorial, but, lacking the courage to say so publicly, trying to have it shunted away from public view. Underlying these sentiments were the negative feelings of many conservative leaders toward Hrdliczka, whose strong opposition to Waldheim, they believed, should have disqualified him from being selected for the job. In protest, Foreign Minister Alois Mock, head of the party, and others of its leading members, stayed away from the unveiling ceremony.

REPARATIONS

Troubled by criticism that Austria had never paid reparations to Jews or to others who suffered at the hands of the Nazis, in March 1988 the Austrian Parliament voted $4.2 million to these victims. Sponsors of the legislation took pains to emphasize that the one-time payments of between $220 and $440 were a symbolic token,
or *Ehrengabe* (gift of honor), as no amount of money could compensate the victims for the suffering they experienced. The fiercely debated measure had the approval of all parties represented in Parliament. In announcing her support for the bill, Freda Meissner-Blau, the leader of the Green opposition party, said she could only "blush with shame" at the niggardly sums offered.

Leaders of the Austrian Jewish community expressed deep misgivings about the measure, which they insisted provided no justice to the many victims of Nazism. Paul Grosz revealed that he had been repeatedly approached by members of the community who said they would not accept the money so as not to ease the conscience of the Austrians. Others said they would accept the money but would donate it to poor people. The New York-based Committee for Jewish Claims on Austria issued a statement declaring that the compensation offer "demeans the memory of those who perished and woefully ignores the needs of the aged Jewish Nazi victims from Austria."

**KREISKY-WIESENTHAL CASE**

A Vienna court rendered a judgment against former chancellor Bruno Kreisky for having made defamatory remarks about Simon Wiesenthal, the head of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna. The remarks were made in an interview given by Kreisky in 1986 in which he claimed that Wiesenthal managed to survive the war by collaborating with the Nazis. In ruling that Kreisky pay 270,000 shillings (about $20,000) to Wiesenthal, the judge suspended sentence on condition the offense not be repeated.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

**Demography**

The Jewish community of Austria was estimated to number about 12,000–15,000, of whom 6,400 were registered in the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, the organized Jewish community. The great majority of the community lived in Vienna, with approximately 300–400 making their homes in the large provincial cities, notably Linz, Innsbruck, Baden, and Salzburg. The Jewish population had been augmented over the years by the arrival of Soviet Jews, mostly from Georgia and Bukhara, who had first gone to Israel and then returned to Austria, as well as others who arrived in Austria in transit to other countries but never left. The estimated number of this group was 2,000–3,000, about half of whom were members of the Kultusgemeinde. There was, in addition, a sizable population of assimilated Jews married to non-Jewish partners.
SOVIET AND IRANIAN JEWS

As noted above, Austria continued its traditional liberal policy of granting transit facilities for Jews emigrating from the Soviet Union and Iran. An estimated 55,000–60,000 Soviet Jews, with visas to Israel, came to Vienna in 1989, but fewer than 1,000 chose to go on to Israel. The rest were sent to transit camps in Italy where, after a wait of between six months to a year, they received visas to settle in the United States and Canada. Austrian Jewish leaders approached the government with a request that a number of these émigrés be allowed to stay in Austria. Although there was a government promise that 5,000 of the Soviet Jews would be granted permission to remain, nothing came of this.

Vienna also served as a transit point for a steady stream of Jews who came from Iran. After a waiting period ranging from one to six months, virtually all of these Jews went on to the United States.

A major change in U.S. immigration policy that went into effect on October 1, 1989, had the effect of sharply curtailing the Soviet traffic. Starting on that date, Soviet Jews could no longer process their papers to emigrate to the United States in a Western European country but had to do so in Moscow, where the waiting period was long and uncertain. As a result of the new administrative regulations, transit traffic to Vienna began drying up almost immediately. Soviet émigrés were now channeled to Bucharest, Budapest, and other points in Eastern Europe and from there were transported to Israel.

This dramatically changed pattern of emigration routes had both immediate and long-term consequences for Austria and its Jewish community. For Austrian officials, for whom Vienna's role as the major point of entry for Soviet Jews emigrating to Israel or to the West, which it had played for nearly two decades, posed diplomatic and security problems, the change was something of a relief. The loss of Vienna as a transit point also had serious demographic implications for the Jewish community. Over the years the small but important number of Soviet Jews who stayed on had nourished the modest growth of the country's Jewish life. Of the registered population, only about 1,400 were of Austrian origin, with the remainder having come from Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union. During 1988–1989, the Jewish population grew by several hundred, partly as a result of the influx of Soviet Jews, mostly from Bessarabia, Georgia, Bukhara, and other regions of Soviet Central Asia.

Jewish-Christian Relations

Catholic Church leaders and a number of Christian groups were in the forefront of efforts to promote conciliation between Christians and Jews during the difficult period when the groundswell of anti-Semitism threatened to take on disturbing proportions. Rheinhold Stecher, archbishop of Innsbruck and Tyrol, was honored by the B'nai Brith for his work and for ordering the removal of an image of a ritual
murder in Tyrol that had long been a tourist attraction. The archbishop was a strong supporter of Christian-Jewish dialogue.

An international seminar, sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Mankind, was convened in the Hofburg in November 1988, and was attended by a group of European and American intellectual and clerical leaders. A recurrent theme of the weeklong meeting was the need to deepen the dialogue between Christians and Jews. Had there been such dialogue, in the view of Cardinal Franz Koenig, former archbishop of Vienna, the Christian churches of Europe and North America might have been willing to take a forthright stand to protect the Jews against the Nazi onslaught and thus have prevented the Holocaust. Christians, Cardinal Koenig stated, were the “spiritual sons” of the “tribe of Abraham,” and anti-Semitism had to be opposed, not alone for humanitarian reasons but for religious ones as well. At the closing session, Lord Coggan, former archbishop of York and Canterbury, announced the launching of an ecumenical foundation which would initially be based in London. The foundation, whose creation was mainly the handiwork of Lord Weidenfeld, the publisher, and Sir Sigmund Sternberg, chairman of the Council of Christians and Jews of England, would collect and disseminate information on interfaith matters.

Communal Affairs

Extensive renovations to Vienna’s main synagogue, the Stadttempel, located on Seitenstettengasse, as well as to the offices of the Kultusgemeinde in the same complex, were completed in the fall of 1988. The estimated $3–4-million cost of the renovations was borne by the federal government and the city of Vienna. Chancellor Franz Vranitzky and Kultusgemeinde president Paul Grosz delivered addresses celebrating the event. The building project was intended, in part, to memorialize the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht that took place on November 9–10, 1938. The Stadttempel was the only one of Vienna’s many synagogues not destroyed in the November pogroms.

Culture and Education

Largely at the initiative of the city of Vienna, and with the approval of the Kultusgemeinde, a new Jewish museum was established in the city. The museum was assigned a section of the building that housed the Kultusgemeinde offices, on Seitenstettengasse, and would remain there until suitable permanent quarters were found. Most of the objects on display were part of the Max Berger Judaica collection, which was acquired from the family for the museum. The purchase price of the collection—28 million Austrian shillings, or approximately 2.2 million dollars—was shared by the federal government and the city of Vienna. The proceeds were given to the Jewish National Fund.

Considerable controversy within the Jewish community surrounded the establish-
ment of the museum. Some were of the view that its location isolated it from the cultural and social mainstream of the city. Others contended that its contents were not representative of the contributions Jews had made to Austrian culture, the arts, science, and literature. Thus, there was a widely held view that both its location and its contents had the unintended effect of marginalizing Jewish culture.

A new play, *Heldenplatz*, by the Austrian playwright Thomas Bernhard, opened to great controversy at Vienna's Burg Theater in November 1988. The play consists of long monologues by relatives who have gathered after the death of a Jewish professor, a man who, having returned to Vienna after 50 years of self-imposed exile, was driven by despair to suicide. For most of the four-hour play, the professor's brother and daughters heap scorn on Austria. At the end, the professor's widow is driven to death by chants she alone can hear. It is the chanting of the crowds on the square outside—the Heldenplatz or Heroes' Square—shouting "Sieg Heil" as they had years before.

Hardly anyone or anything in contemporary Austria was spared Bernhard's caustic criticism. These included President Waldheim, Chancellor Vranitzky, the press, the Catholic Church, and the city of Vienna, which was described as a "cold, gray provincial city, where everything has been destroyed by Americanization." The opening-night audience cheered and jeered for 45 minutes after the curtain came down. The Austrian writer and playwright Peter Sichrovsky, a Jew, sharply criti-
cized the play and attacked Bernhard for using "synthetic Jews" as a vehicle for personal grievances.

Two plays by Peter Sichrovsky opened in Vienna in 1988 to favorable reviews. One, *Born Guilty (Schuldig Geboren)*, ran for three months at the Kreis Theater, and the other, *The Supper (Das Abendmahl)*, had its premiere at the Akademie Theater. *Born Guilty* draws on a series of monologues by grown children who come from Nazi families in which they describe quite different reactions to their parents' past. In *The Supper*, the playwright starkly etches the trauma of a Christian woman and her Jewish husband when they are obliged to confront the Nazi past of her parents.

A new Jewish publication made its appearance in 1988. This was the *Judische Kulturzeitschrift*, a quarterly devoted to cultural and social issues related to Jewish life, edited by Ilan Berensin.

The Jewish Institute for Adult Education (Judisches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung), located in Vienna's Second District, opened its doors to the public in 1989. The institute, which catered mainly to non-Jews, was financially and legally independent of the Kultusgemeinde but worked in close cooperation with it. It offered courses in Hebrew and Yiddish language, Jewish history, culture, and politics.

Dr. Jacob Allerhand's three-volume *History of the Jewish People* was published in 1989. Dr. Allerhand was a professor at the Institute of Jewish Studies, University of Vienna.
Personalia

Simon Wiesenthal, whose efforts in tracking down Nazi war criminals had brought him international renown, was given the Jabotinsky Award of the Anti-Defamation League in Los Angeles in 1988. He had been among the first to propose the creation of a panel of international historians to investigate President Waldheim’s activities as an officer in the German army.

Hans Landesmann, a prominent lay figure in cultural and musical affairs, was named a member of the board of directors of the Salzburg Festival.

Stella Kadmon, well-known actress and singer, died in October 1989 in Vienna. She and her mother managed to flee Austria after the Nazis came to power and spent the war years in Palestine. She returned to Austria in 1947 where she later founded the Theater der Courage.

Murray Gordon