

# Federal Republic of Germany

## *National Affairs*

THE EVENTS OF 1991 IN GERMANY were dominated by the process of unification. The two German states had been formally reunited on October 3, 1990, and the first all-German national elections were held in December. The resounding victory for the incumbent Christian Democrats and Liberals (CDU/CSU-FDP) led to the reelection of Helmut Kohl as the first all-German chancellor since 1945, on January 18. Despite its strength in the national elections, the conservative CDU did poorly in local elections that followed, largely to the advantage of the Social Democrats (SPD). Some of the strength of the SPD, however, simply derived from a weakening of the CDU, because in several of these elections, the Christian Democrats lost voters to stronger radical right parties. This became especially apparent in Bremen, where in the September state elections the Deutsche Volksunion (DVU), the right-wing party led by the notorious Gerhard Frey, made surprising gains.

With the opening of the East German market, the West German economy experienced a boom. At the same time, major changes in industry took place in Germany's so-called Five New Länder, the states of the former German Democratic Republic. In April, the last GDR automobiles—Trabant and Wartburg—rolled off the assembly lines. Volkswagen assembly plants were scheduled to open in Mosel and Chemnitz in 1993. In the same month, the East German airline Interflug made its last flight and was then taken over by Lufthansa. The shutting down of most large industrial and agricultural units in the east led to massive unemployment—which climbed to over a million, or 12.1 percent, in July—and underemployment. In February and March, large demonstrations protesting closings and layoffs and demanding higher wages took place in Mecklenburg-W. Pomerania (Vorpommern), Chemnitz, Erfurt, Halle, Leipzig, and East Berlin.

Throughout the year, migration—especially of young people—from the former GDR to the west averaged 10,000 per month. In April, the lifting of visa requirements for Polish citizens crossing into Germany aggravated the increasing competition between unemployed East Germans and foreign workers and asylum seekers. Right-wing radical attacks on foreigners reached new highs in late April (Hitler's birthday) and early October (the first anniversary of unification). (See below, "Anti-Semitism and Extremism.")

With unification and the end of the Cold War, Bonn attempted to put its relations with Eastern Europe on a new footing. In March, Kohl met with Prime Minister Jan Bielecki of Poland in Bonn after the German government had formally recognized its border with Poland as final; and in June—after opening the border with

Poland in May—the German-Polish “good neighbor” treaty was formally signed. In November, Russia’s Boris Yeltsin visited Germany, a visit which clearly consolidated the relationship between the two countries and reaffirmed Germany’s commitment to Russia.

In June, by a narrow majority of 17 votes, the Bundestag decided that the future seat of government should be moved from Bonn to Berlin over a 12-year period; this move was supported by most of the (older) leadership of the major parties except the Bavarian Christian Social Union; many of the younger parliamentarians, however, opted for Bonn. The cost of moving to Berlin was estimated at 15 billion Deutsch marks.

### *The Gulf War; Relations with Israel*

Outside the Middle East itself and possibly the United States, nowhere did the Gulf War arouse as much heated debate as in Germany. This debate between “pacifists” and “militants,” between those supporting UN intervention and those opposed to it, cut across virtually all parties, from the Christian Democrats to the Greens. Israeli politicians were quick to criticize the “anti-American” sentiments underlying the German antiwar movement, as well as the neutral stance taken by German politicians and media and the cessation of visits to Israel by parliamentarians, unionists, and leftists. In January, in front of the German embassy in Tel Aviv, Holocaust survivors protested the “hypocrisy of German citizens who are now demonstrating against the Americans” and the complicity of German firms in the armaments buildup in Iraq.

A report by the Hamburg-based news magazine *Der Spiegel* indicated that numerous German firms had assisted in the development of the Iraqi Scud-B missile. The article identified several firms that were under investigation in this regard, including the Düsseldorf-based Thyssen AG. In March the State Prosecutor’s Office in Darmstadt (Hesse) brought charges against 12 business executives and one corporation for having broken the law on arms exports to Iraq. In reaction to international criticism of the involvement of German firms in armaments exports, the Bundestag approved changes in the foreign trade law regulating such exports.

The Central Council of Jews in Germany (Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland) demanded that Germany “stop its reticence and get actively involved in protecting Israel.” The German government, according to the Zentralrat, knew full well about the shipments of poison-gas equipment and arms of mass destruction to Iraq but had not taken any action. The Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats were both internally divided over the war. The biggest controversy by far erupted when the leader of the Green party in Bonn, Christian Ströbele, visited Israel in February, where he stated in effect that he opposed the sale of Scud missiles to Israel because Israel’s own policies had brought the Iraqi attacks upon it. In the uproar that followed, Ströbele was forced to resign his position, and the party leadership apologized to Israel for Ströbele’s statements.

Indeed, by that time, the tide of German public opinion had begun to turn in Israel's favor. Already on January 24, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Minister for Economic Cooperation Carl-Dieter Spranger, and CDU general secretary Volker Rühle had flown to Israel, bringing a promise of \$250 million in financial aid, plus a DM 5-million contribution toward the reconstruction of Scud-damaged Tel Aviv neighborhoods. Apart from signaling support in the Gulf conflict, this move was also meant to indicate continued support for Israel after unification—the fact that the close political relationship between the two states was unchanged.

In this period, a number of demonstrations in support of Israel took place, often initiated by Jewish groups. The Federation of Jewish Students demonstrated in front of the Iraqi embassy in Bonn and against anti-American demonstrators; church groups working with the Stuttgart Jewish community organized an event in solidarity with Israel; 12,000 demonstrated in Berlin, with sponsorship from the Jewish community and the established political parties; similar demonstrations took place in Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, and other centers. In early February, a delegation led by the speaker of the Bundestag (parliament), Rita Süßmuth, left for Israel; and a Zentralrat delegation went to visit in mid-February. Meanwhile, Germany made a promise to Israel of \$670 million in military aid, it supported the allied war effort with a pledge to the United States of \$5.5 billion, and it sent military goods and gas masks valued at DM 100 million. Bonn did not send troops, however, because the German constitution excludes military involvement outside NATO.

Bonn's moves vis-à-vis Israel were complemented by meetings with major international Jewish organizations. Already in January, Kohl met with Kent E. Schiner, president of B'nai B'rith, who praised Bonn's show of solidarity with Israel; Chancellor Kohl, in turn, expressed his appreciation for B'nai B'rith's positive stance on German unification. And in March, Kohl received a delegation of the American Jewish Committee, reassuring them as well of Bonn's continued support for Israel.

A major crisis occurred in late October when harbor police in Hamburg discovered that an Israeli ship was carrying 14 tanks and other military materiel instead of its declared cargo of agricultural equipment. The armaments were Soviet in origin and came from the army of the former GDR; the shipment was engineered by the German secret service (BND); its intended recipient was the Israeli Mossad. Defense Minister Stoltenberg and his state secretary denied knowledge of this shipment, but in early December, the state minister in the Chancellery, Lutz Stavenhagen, was forced to resign over the incident.

The Israeli consulate in Berlin, which opened in October, served as a focus of Israel-oriented activity. The major outreach organization, the Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft (Germany-Israel Society), which was established in West Germany in 1966, took over the GDR-Israel Society and opened chapters in Chemnitz, Dresden, Erfurt, Leipzig, and Rostock. The founding of chapters in Magdeburg and Halle was planned for 1992.

One indication of the positive orientation of important segments of East German society toward Israel was the fact that Konrad Weiss (Alliance 90) of East Berlin was

the only German politician in Israel on January 15, the date of the ultimatum which marked the beginning of the Gulf War. (Alliance 90 is a coalition of former dissidents who were active in the 1989 revolution and is somewhat akin to the West German Greens.) Over the course of 1991, the speakers of the parliaments of three eastern states—Brandenburg, Thuringia, and Mecklenburg-W. Pomerania—visited Israel, as did the ministers of culture of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Mecklenburg-W. Pomerania. Preliminary talks were held regarding the possibility of student and teacher exchanges between Israel and the East German states; the major impediment appeared to be lack of financing. Some personnel exchanges and demonstrations of solidarity were organized by church groups in the east (see Jewish-Christian Relations below). In November, the Jüdische Volkshochschule (Jewish Adult Education Program) in Berlin organized a weekend seminar for teachers from East Berlin and Brandenburg to inform them about Israel.

In March, Gregor Gysi, president of the PDS (the renamed former GDR Communist party), led a party delegation on its first visit to Israel. Gysi and his entourage were invited by Shimon Peres, head of the Labor party. They also spoke with representatives of the Likud bloc, the Communist party, and the trade unions. In July, Gysi met with Yasir Arafat in Tunis to demonstrate solidarity with the PLO.

#### CULTURAL RELATIONS

The first East German-Israeli symposium was held in May at the Charité, the medical faculty of Humboldt University in East Berlin. The symposium, attended by 70 students from all over Europe, grew out of the agreement signed by Humboldt University and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1990. A student exchange between the two universities was in the planning stages.

The Jewish Cultural Festival in Erfurt, in June, featured the Israeli film *Aviya's Summer* and performances by the Batsheva Dance Company of Tel Aviv. In November, a weekend youth seminar on "The Possibilities and Risks of Peace in the Middle East" was held in Leipzig. In December, German president Richard von Weizsäcker traveled to Israel with the Dresdener Staatskapelle to perform a benefit concert. This event, originally scheduled for February, had been postponed because of the Gulf War. Other Israel-oriented cultural events included a number of exhibits of contemporary Israeli art. "Israeli Art 1990," shown from January to March at the prestigious Städtische Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf, was the largest exhibit of Israeli art ever to be shown abroad. Israeli artist Dorit Ya'acoby had an exhibit in October in Bad Salzhausen, later shown in Berlin and Munich.

#### *Anti-Semitism and Extremism*

In 1991, 2,368 racially motivated incidents were recorded in Germany, ten times as many as in 1990. The German Intelligence Service estimated the number of right-wing extremists to be about 40,000, organized particularly in the DVU and

the National Democratic (NPD) parties. A further estimate speaks of 4,500 militant neo-Nazis. In the east, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt became centers of neo-Nazi and racist activity which peaked in late September-early October, around the first anniversary of German unification. Bernd Wagner, director of the security division of the General Länder Criminal Authority, estimated that there were 1,500–2,000 neo-Nazi militants in the east, but he emphasized that accurate figures were impossible to come by. This was due to the enormous volatility of the mood, especially in the east, as well as the cooperation between East and West German neo-Nazis. A good example is Rainer Sonntag (see below). He grew up in East Germany, moved to West Germany in 1987, then came back to the east after the border was opened in 1989 and assumed a leading role in the radical right.

Most of the racism in the east in 1991 was aimed, not at Jews, but at Vietnamese and black Africans who had been guest workers in the German Democratic Republic under Erich Honecker and at refugees and asylum-seekers from Eastern Europe and the Third World. On New Year's Day in Görlitz a group of neo-Nazis shouting "*Dieses Jahr brennt die ganze Oder-Neisse Linie*" (This year the whole Oder-Neisse line will burn) tried to cross the border and enter Poland, but were held back by police. In April, neo-Nazi riots marked Hitler's 102nd birthday in Magdeburg, Dessau, Dresden, Leipzig, Erfurt, Chemnitz, and East Berlin. In June, Heinz Galinski, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and of the Jewish Community of Berlin, criticized Harald Wagner (CDU), mayor of Dresden, for allowing 1,500 neo-Nazis to organize a funeral procession for their leader Rainer Sonntag, slain May 31 in a street riot.

By far the most serious incident occurred in late September in Hoyerswerda (northern Saxony), where, for five days, several hundred young East Germans attacked barracks housing Vietnamese, Mozambiquans, and Gypsies (Sinti und Roma) from Romania. Five hundred local residents stood by and applauded as the German youths threw bottles and Molotov cocktails at the buildings housing the unarmed foreigners. On the fourth day, a convoy of autos organized by citizens' committees and the Alliance 90 political party in Berlin arrived in Hoyerswerda to protect the victims, thereby serving to enlarge the melee. Rudolf Krause (CDU), Saxony's minister of the interior, appealed to local residents to avoid the scene of the conflict, which he attributed to abuse by foreigners of Germany's liberal asylum law.

In January Heinz Galinski reported receiving threatening mail daily because of his efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewish refugees seeking admission to Germany. In February Soviet Jewish immigrants were attacked in Brandenburg, Glauchau, and Rostock. In April a plaque on the Grosse Hamburger Strasse (in East Berlin), dedicated to the 50,000 Berlin Jews murdered by the Nazis, was damaged. In August three neo-Nazis sprayed "*Schluss mit dem Holocaust*" (Enough about the Holocaust) on directional signs at the former Sachsenhausen concentration camp. And November 9—the anniversary of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of 1938 and of the opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989—saw clashes between neo-Nazis (800 in Halle)

screaming "Ausländer und Juden Raus" (Foreigners and Jews out) and demonstrators protesting violence and hostility to foreigners. On the other hand, in Cologne, Berlin, and elsewhere, rallies commemorating *Kristallnacht* drew hundreds of thousands of protesters demonstrating against the increasing hostility to foreigners.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

### *Demography*

The year 1991 was one of considerable flux in the Jewish population of Germany, especially in the five eastern states. A complicated and confusing element of the demography, particularly in the east, was the immigration of the Soviet Jews. Because many Soviets entered Germany on tourist visas and later tried to regularize their status, and moved frequently after they arrived, the statistics fluctuated and administrative categories changed. (Indeed, the Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle, the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany, in contrast to previous years, was still compiling its demographic data for 1991 at the time this report was being written.)

At the start of 1991, the number of Jews in unified Germany—Jews as registered members of *Gemeinden* (central communal organizations)—could be conservatively estimated at 32,000 to 34,000. Of these, some 4,000 were recent arrivals from the former USSR. During the year, an estimated 5,000 additional Soviet Jews entered the country, raising the official Jewish population at the end of 1991 to an estimated 37,000–39,000. Estimates of unaffiliated Jews, including many Soviet Jews, ranged from 10,000 to 35,000. The largest single community was that of united Berlin, which at the end of 1991 had grown to about 9,000, from 6,411 in 1990.

Some reorganization of the official Jewish communal bodies occurred in former East Germany. On January 1, the Jewish communities of East and West Berlin officially merged; the 209 members of the East Berlin community were absorbed into the West Berlin community to form a new united Jewish community. The Jewish community of Schwerin was disbanded; in September, a new Jewish community organization was established in Potsdam; and the remaining six communities registered increases, largely through the admission of newly arrived Soviet Jews.

As of December 1991, 408 Jews belonged to the seven Jewish communities in the east (*not* including East Berlin): 53 members in Erfurt, 98 in Dresden, 46 in Chemnitz, 54 in Leipzig, 40 in Potsdam, 75 in Magdeburg, and 42 in Halle. An estimated 4,000 East German citizens of Jewish or partly Jewish ancestry did not belong to any organized Jewish community, and there were, in addition, several thousand new Soviet arrivals (see below). Additionally, in East Berlin, Adass Jisroel, legally recognized as a corporate body but not as a religious community, reported having 200 members who met halakhic requirements. The Jewish Cultural Association, a community service organization, reported that its 400 members (including 100 Soviets) claimed to be Jewish or of partly Jewish ancestry.

## *Soviet Jews*

Throughout 1991, policy on the admission of Soviet Jews was a point of heated contest between Germany, the Zentralrat, and the Israeli government. The Central Council of Jews in Germany supported the right of Soviet Jews to seek refugee status; the Israeli government sharply criticized this position of the German Jewish leadership, which had actually become somewhat stronger after their earlier vacillation on this issue (see AJYB 1992, pp. 367–68); and the German government sought to limit Soviet Jewish immigration, partly because of the strains placed on the housing and job markets, and partly because of strong pressures emanating from Jerusalem.

Officially, Jews were considered admissible as so-called *Kontingentflüchtlinge* (a special status enabling them to be admitted immediately as refugees, without having to go through bureaucratic and legal procedures). However, in the early months of 1991, the government applied a series of changing categories and statuses to try and limit the immigration—ultimately unsuccessfully, though it was more successful in minimizing the extent of the immigration to the German public. In the course of the year, Bonn's attitude moved gradually in the direction of acceptance of these refugees.

Starting in January, Jews arriving from the Soviet Union were admitted only to Berlin, where they were “tolerated,” i.e., allowed to remain but with no clear legal status and no rights. At one point, 100 immigrants were arriving each day, and approximately 11,000 in the Soviet Union had applied to German consulates for visas. By the end of January it was reported that 4,000 Soviet Jews had arrived “in recent weeks”; 3,500 were housed in temporary quarters—barracks or dormitories—in or near East Berlin. At the end of February, 1,516 Soviets were living in 25 camps in former East Germany, in addition to the 3,500 Soviet Jews in Berlin. Because of this concentration, Ingrid Stahmer, Berlin's social services minister, announced that Jews arriving from the USSR would be admitted only on 90-day tourist visas. Subsequently, in December, Minister of the Interior Schäuble agreed to award refugee status to all Soviet Jews who had arrived in Germany before November 10—altogether 23,218 since spring 1990. (This figure, which seems high, includes many who were not Jewish according to Halakhah or who never joined the Jewish community.) This concession was seen as resulting at least partly from expressed fears of a new outbreak of anti-Semitism in the former USSR in the wake of the failed putsch attempt in August and the resulting dissolution of the Soviet Union.

After the outbreak of the Gulf War, in January, about 270 Soviet Jews arrived on flights from Tel Aviv, without visas, prompting the Israeli government to insist that Jews arriving from Israel should under no circumstances be considered “refugees,” and that they should be returned to Israel. In Germany, on the other hand, advocacy groups insisted on the right of these Jews to remain.

Problems of dealing with immigrants, many of them of marginal Jewishness, and

of verifying identity papers, plagued the admission process throughout. Such problems were no doubt exacerbated by the reluctance of immigration officials—sensitive to the Nazi past—to appear to be questioning the identity of anyone who claimed to be a refugee from anti-Semitism—a fact that was understood and exploited by various illegal organizations that, for a fee, arranged for Soviets to enter Germany. Officials of the Berlin Jewish community, often acting on behalf of the Central Jewish Welfare Board, attempted through personal interviews to determine the halakhic status of the immigrants. Many did not qualify but were permitted to remain in Germany nevertheless.

There were several reasons for the concentration of Jews in the east. For one thing, the Jewish community hoped that the immigrants, with their children and teenagers, would settle into and rejuvenate the virtually geriatric existing Jewish communities and establish new ones in this all but *judenrein* region. The latter applied most notably to Potsdam, the new capital of the state of Brandenburg. For another, the Zentralrat was interested in claiming former communal Jewish property in the east for its own use, rather than let unused properties, which hitherto had not been dealt with in restitution agreements, fall into the hands of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization. The latter, by agreement, would acquire the properties unless it could be shown that a presently existing Jewish community could make use of the synagogue or school building in question. Finally, on a purely practical level, disbanded army camps and other GDR government installations were available in the east for temporary housing, in contrast to the west.

Jews arriving from the Soviet Union were looked after by the Central Council of Jews in Germany, by the Jewish Central Welfare Board, and by the local Jewish communities. The Central Welfare Board, housed in Frankfurt and Berlin, which in the early postwar years had had a pivotal role in German Jewish life, assumed renewed importance. In the east, Soviet Jewish immigrants were placed without regard to the existence of a Jewish community and were supported, from a distance, by the Central Welfare Board. In East Berlin they were also cared for by Adass Jisroel, the recently reestablished neo-Orthodox congregation, the Friedländer Multinational Language School, and the Jewish Cultural Association. All these were, to a degree, competing with the larger established Jewish institutions and with organizations such as the Brandenburg RAA (Regional Workshop for Problems of Foreigners) and the Berlin FIS (Support Group for Immigrants from the USSR).

Hundreds of immigrants were dispersed to Jewish communities throughout West Germany. In contrast to the situation in the east, those sent to the west were placed into the direct charge of local Jewish communities, which had greater resources and ability to absorb immigrants more easily. The numbers, however, remained small. Frankfurt/Main agreed to take 400; other communities took in between 200 (Munich) and 60 Jews (Hamburg). Hamburg also took some responsibility for immigrants in Rostock, in the eastern state of Mecklenburg-W. Pomerania.

Official statistics were notably hard to come by, but by the end of October, these figures were released for the five new states of former East Germany: 595 Jewish

immigrants from the Soviet Union in Brandenburg, 383 in Mecklenburg-W. Pomerania, 1,201 in Saxony, 628 in Saxony-Anhalt, and 506 in Thuringia. Of the 2,000 Soviet Jewish immigrants in East Berlin, 773 had joined the Berlin Jewish community. Of the Soviets in East Berlin and the east not registered with the Jewish communities, some were in the process of applying for admission to the Jewish communities; others, presumed either uninterested in Judaism or non-Jews with false papers, received help from the Jewish communities and then disappeared into the larger population.

The Central Council of Jews in Germany continued to insist on the right of the arriving Soviets to refugee status, even as problems developed, some of them originating in the behavior of the immigrants themselves. A number of Soviet Jews, admitted as political refugees, made visits to the USSR and reentered Germany with cars full of goods for sale. And police raids on the quarters where the Soviets were being housed turned up copious commodities of unknown origin.

Leaders of the Jewish communities who were working with the Soviet Jewish immigrants complained that the Soviets found it hard to learn German and that they tended to stick together, which impeded their ability to find jobs and to make contact with the German population. In the east, especially, local Jewish leaders attempted to disperse the Soviets to facilitate their integration and to avoid the formation of "ghettos" that could become targets for increasingly active neo-Nazi youth gangs. Another source of tension was that the arriving Soviets had little or no knowledge of Judaism and often resisted efforts of the Jewish communities to "educate" them. The Jewish communities were also irritated that the Soviet Jews expected the communities to provide them with money, cars, and television sets but were unwilling to participate in community activities or to take on positions of responsibility within the Jewish communities.

Still, the community took seriously its responsibility for the immigrants. In January the Yiddish Cultural Festival in East Berlin ended with a benefit concert for Soviet Jews, featuring Soviet Jewish instrumentalists. Another benefit featured Wolf Biermann, a highly acclaimed singer whose father had perished in Auschwitz. In February, the East Berlin theater Die Volksbühne, in cooperation with the Brandenburg RAA and the Friedländer Language School, organized a weekend of cultural events to raise money for Soviet Jews and provide exposure for newly arrived Soviet Jewish artists. In June, the Jewish Cultural Festival in Erfurt included an exhibit and sale of works of Soviet Jewish artists. In the west, numerous Hanukkah and Purim parties were designed to welcome and integrate the newcomers, and in October, Heinz Galinski opened an exhibit in the Jewish Community Center of Berlin, featuring Russian émigré artists.

### *Community Relations*

A major item on the agenda of the Central Council of Jews in Germany was the negotiation of agreements with state governments in the east to regularize Jewish

community-provincial relationships. Two primary areas for discussion were restitution for formerly Jewish property "Aryanized" by the Nazis and protection of the generous pensions enjoyed by victims of Nazism and by resistance fighters in the GDR.

Over the course of the year, the Central Council signed agreements with each of the five eastern states (contracts with the western states had been signed in the 1980s). The state governments undertook to repair and maintain the numerous Jewish cemeteries within their borders; to provide financial support for their Jewish communities, as well as social support and housing for Soviet Jewish immigrants; and to help locate and effect the return of formerly Jewish property. Throughout the year, though, complaints were heard from the eastern Jewish communities that the state administrations, financially strapped and overwhelmed by the demands of national unification and economic collapse, failed to allocate flats and jobs for Soviet immigrants or, for example, adequate quarters for the new Jewish community organization in Potsdam.

The Central Council retained attorney Simona Reppenhagen, a member of the Berlin Jewish Community Council, to locate and pursue claims to formerly Jewish communal property in the east. Claims were filed for the return of 477 properties (including 13 synagogues) in East Berlin; 176 properties (including 63 synagogues and 86 cemeteries) in Brandenburg; 109 properties (including 42 synagogues and 58 cemeteries) in Mecklenburg-W. Pomerania; 103 properties (including 32 synagogues and 47 cemeteries) in Saxony-Anhalt; 293 properties (including 21 synagogues and 10 cemeteries) in Saxony; and 112 properties (including 39 synagogues and 43 cemeteries) in Thuringia.

A confrontation took place in October between the Central Council and the federal government in Bonn, which attempted to reduce pensions awarded to resistance fighters and victims of Nazism in the east. Bonn hoped to equalize eastern pensions with the lower pensions awarded to these categories in the western states and to initiate a case-by-case review of pension recipients in the east to exclude persons who had transgressed human rights under the Communist government. These measures would have affected 10,000 pensioners and saved the government 90 million marks.

The Central Council argued that, in contrast to those in the east, victims of Nazism in the west had already been compensated for their lost property. An agreement was reached in November. Pensions for resistance fighters in the east were lowered from DM 1700 to DM 1400 per month, while pensions for victims of Nazism remained at DM 1400 per month. Individuals in the east who, for political reasons, were excluded from these categories could apply to have their status recognized. The case-by-case review was scrapped, but major abusers of human rights were scheduled to be excluded—the category "major abuser of human rights" was left undefined for the time being.

### *Holocaust-Related Matters*

After the unification of Germany, nothing more was heard about the restitution payments promised Israel by the GDR. In December, a television report on the question of these payments brought a flood of hate mail to Jewish communities.

Over the summer, the town of Fürstenburg (in Brandenburg) became a scene of confrontation when it was revealed that a Kaisers supermarket and a Renault dealership were being built on the outskirts of nearby Ravensbrück concentration camp, where 90,000 women and 1,000 children were murdered by the Nazis. The Association of Ravensbrück Survivors protested, as did the Central Council of Sinti und Roma (Gypsies). The only local resident to join the protest was the Protestant minister Eberhard Erdmann. Residents of the town told journalists they wanted a modern supermarket; the mayor felt it was time for "normal life here." A compromise was reached: the auto showroom and the supermarket parking lot were moved several meters to keep commerce off the historic road leading to the camp. Heinz Galinski, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, and Manfred Stolpe (SPD), prime minister of Brandenburg, agreed that, in the future, the Central Council of Jews in Germany would be represented on all Brandenburg commissions dealing with historical monuments.

### *Jewish-Christian Relations*

National unification reduced the role of the Lutheran Church's Arbeitskreis für Christen und Juden (Workshop for Christians and Jews) in the east. Founded in 1981, it was for many years the only nongovernment group that provided information about Israel and Judaism to those outside the GDR's Jewish communities. It also served as a framework for the church and the Jewish communities to pool scarce resources, such as guest speakers and printed documents. Since 1990, the Jewish communities and the church had been preoccupied with their own restructuring. Moreover, other institutions—e.g., DIG (Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft) and the universities—had begun to administer Jewish culture programs and exchanges with Israel. Most important, young Christians and Jews were emigrating west and were busy reestablishing their own lives, leaving little time or inclination for interfaith activity.

Despite these changes, programs to bring Christians and Jews together continued. In the east, because of its size and location, East Berlin was able to provide the richest offerings; but in smaller cities lacking an active Jewish community the Workshop for Christians and Jews often provided the only contact with Judaism for the larger public. In 1991 a delegation of 42 members of the workshop visited Israel for two weeks. Money was raised and Hanukkah presents were sent to Neve Chanah, a home in Kiryat Gat for children from broken families. The Berliner Domkantorei (a Lutheran choir) organized a benefit concert on November 9 (*Kristallnacht*) to raise money for handicapped children at Migdal Yam Kinneret. And

four lectures on Jewish subjects were offered, with speakers from East and West Berlin.

In Greifswald, a commemorative prayer service was held on November 9; and a seminar was organized on "Jewish Concepts of the Messiah." In Saxony two lectures took place: "The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Yellow Star" and "Rashi." In Thuringia, the workshop organized the rededication of the synagogue in Berkach. And in Dresden, in June, in the wake of increasingly violent activity by right-wing radical youth gangs, the Lutheran church sent social workers to the area to work with the juveniles.

### *Communal Affairs*

On January 1, the official Jewish communities of East and West Berlin merged. Two immediate problems were the Jewish old-age home in the east (in which only non-Jews were living and which did not conform to the new building code), and maintenance and repair costs for Jewish community property in the east—estimated at DM 1.4 million—which pushed the projected budget deficit for 1991 to DM 1.9 million. The mayors of East and West Berlin assumed responsibility for East Berlin's extensive and dilapidated Jewish cemeteries at Weissensee and Schönhauser Allee.

By April, many Jewish community services, such as lectures and rabbinical counseling, were being offered in the east, but the largely western functionaries complained that members in East Berlin made limited use of them. In June, the Jewish community opened a club for art, culture, and leisure in East Berlin. Organized to integrate the Soviet immigrants, it contains a café with kosher cuisine, a video theater, and space for art exhibits and dance performances.

Construction of the dome and facade of the New Synagogue Berlin-Centrum Judaicum was completed in September, in time to mark the 125th anniversary of the building. The center is expected to serve as a Jewish museum and research and conference center, after completion of the total reconstruction in 1995.

The existence of a unified, if not streamlined, Jewish communal life continued to be challenged by two alternative Jewish organizations in East Berlin. The Jüdische Gemeinde Adass Jisroel had attained legal corporative status under the de Maizière government, and the Jüdische Kulturverein (Jewish Cultural Association) was recognized for its secular work. Both, however, served largely East Berliners and Soviet immigrants who were uncomfortable with the cool, bureaucratic, and anti-Communist tone of the established Jewish community.

Adass Jisroel considered itself Orthodox and claimed to have 200 members (from both parts of the city) who met halakhic requirements. Throughout the year, it offered a program of religious and cultural services and opened a kosher dairy café. Over the spring and summer months, it conducted a campaign for full recognition as Berlin's second Jewish community; this recognition would have made it eligible for government funding and enabled it to have undisputed title to valuable pieces of real estate. Adass's strategy included a well-publicized exhibit of enlarged docu-

ments and photographs of demolished synagogues, along with indisputable evidence that, in the postwar decades, with the cooperation of both official Jewish communities, East and West Berlin blew up many synagogues that had survived the war. (The facts, while accurate, fail to take account of the circumstances at the time: many of the buildings were damaged beyond feasible repair; there were too many synagogues for the existing Jewish population; money that could have been spent on restoration was desperately needed for housing and other necessities; and so on.)

The Galinski-led Berlin Jewish community charged that Adass Jisroel was not a Jewish community but a private enterprise and that the Offenberg family which in effect controlled Adass did not represent the surviving members of the prewar Orthodox Jewish community of the same name to which Adass claimed to be heir. By deploying theatrical tactics—i.e., publicly comparing Berlin Jewish community president Heinz Galinski to the Romanian dictator Ceausescu—Mario Offenberg escalated the conflict into a public scandal. In the meantime, the Berlin Senate began legal action aimed at rescinding Adass Jisroel's status as a legal corporate body with special privileges.

The Jewish Cultural Association, which is not a religious community but a community service organization, claimed to have 400 members who are Jewish, partly Jewish, or "friends of Jewish culture." It sponsored regular cultural programs—lectures, films, holiday celebrations, and get-togethers—in German and Russian. Though it considered itself secular, it regularly invited ultra-Orthodox rabbis from Israel as guests and maintained a kosher kitchen. The Jewish Cultural Association was officially administered by an elected board of directors, but in fact, Irene Runge, a writer and former sociology lecturer with an acknowledged Stasi (state security) past, was in charge. Many of the group's members came from institutions central to the former East German state—i.e., the state prosecutor's office, the university, the foreign ministry, and the media.

Elsewhere in the east, the tiny aged Jewish communities were overwhelmed by the demands of national unification: these included communal reorganization, looking after the newly arrived Soviet immigrants and processing their applications for admission to the communities, as well as developing a new and higher public profile. Functionaries reported that the Jewish communities had become more respected; for example, they were now invited to send representatives to sit on many provincial and local civic committees. But, as many younger Jews emigrated west or became preoccupied with reorganizing their own lives, these new responsibilities fell on the shoulders of a handful of pensioners. The social and financial chaos in the larger society made everything more difficult and less certain.

In Leipzig, for the first time in 40 years, there was no seder; the newly expanded community did not have enough money, tables, or chairs. The Jewish community in Halle was struggling to keep its old-age home in operation; the future of its four cemeteries remained unclear. In September, a new Jewish community was founded in Potsdam: almost all members were recently arrived Soviet immigrants. Despite generous promises by the province of Brandenburg, it was functioning with great

difficulty in three rooms (80 square meters), with no adequate space or furnishings for prayer or for social gatherings. Officeholders of the Jewish communities in the east appealed for help, particularly for a trained itinerant Hebrew teacher and rabbi.

## *Culture*

Jewish themes figured prominently in German cultural and academic life this year, continuing a trend of several years. In the academic sphere, two highlights were a conference at the Salomon-Ludwig Steinheim Institute of Duisburg entitled "Social Utopias and Religious-Cultural Traditions: Jews and the German Labor Movement Until 1933" and an international symposium, "The Jewish Woman in Germany," in Heidelberg, organized by the College for Jewish Studies and the Leo Baeck Institute of London. The first chair in Yiddish language in Germany was inaugurated at the University of Trier.

A number of exhibitions of Jewish photographers and artists were mounted this year: photographs by Benjamin Katz were shown in Berlin and those of Lotte Jacobi in the Folkwang Museum in Essen; oils and gouaches by Marc Chagall were on view in Munich's Hypo-Kulturstiftung, and Chagall's murals made for the Moscow Jewish Theater were shown in Frankfurt. The Leipzig Art Museum organized an exhibit of five representatives of the Vienna School, "Die Phantasten": Arik Brauer, Ernst Fuchs, Rudolf Hausner, Wolfgang Hutter, and Anton Lemden, the first three of whom were Jews. Stuttgart held a retrospective of the work of Otto Dix, later to be shown in Berlin and Friedrichshafen, and works by the Polish painter Maurycy Gottlieb were shown in the Jewish Museum of Frankfurt. Other exhibits were devoted to Ilex Beller (Giessen; on the Polish shtetl), Max Ernst (Stuttgart), Ludwig Meidner (Darmstadt), Georg Meistermann (Cologne), and the German-Jewish sculptor Leopold Fleischhacker (Düsseldorf), as well as Motke Blum (Frankfurt, with "Pictures of Jerusalem"). The 200th birthday of composer Giacomo Meyerbeer was the occasion for an exhibit at the Dahlem Museum in Berlin.

Exhibitions on local Jewish history included the following: "Die vergessenen Nachbarn. Juden in Frankfurter Vororten" (Jews in Frankfurt suburbs) at that city's Jewish Museum; "Joods," a photodocumentary by the Dutch photographer Jenny Wesly, in Cologne's Germania Judaica; pictures and documents of Berlin synagogues at the Berlin Jewish Museum; an exhibit about Jewish émigré life in Prague before and during Nazi persecution, in Frankfurt's Deutsche Bibliothek; and "Breslau Jews, 1850-1945," in Wiesbaden and Stuttgart.

Under the patronage of North-Rhine Westphalia's premier, Johannes Rau, an Else Lasker-Schüler Society was founded in Wuppertal, the city where this Jewish German poet was born. The Ulrich Becker Archive was taken over by the "Exilarchiv," devoted to émigré writers, of the Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt.

In theater, George Tabori's Jewish western, "Weisman and Redface," played in East Berlin. An impressive one-woman show, "Jonteff," by Adriana Altaras, was presented in an "off-Broadway" theater in West Berlin. In it, the young Jewish

actress reflected on her life's journey from Sarajevo and Italy to Germany and her difficulties as a Jew in Germany.

This year saw an expansion of Jewish cultural offerings in the east and some export of East German Jewish culture to the west. The Leipziger Synagogalchor, an amateur choir founded in 1962, performed in Karlsruhe in March and in Frankfurt in April. In Berlin, the Jüdische Volkshochschule (Jewish Adult Education Program) organized events to acquaint (West) Berlin Jews with Jewish cultural activities in the east. In September, it sponsored an excursion to the Jewish Museum in Gröbzig; in May, Sylvia Schlenstedt of East Berlin and Erwin Martin of Leipzig gave lectures, and Jürgen Rennert of East Berlin read from his translations of Yiddish literature.

The fifth annual Yiddish Cultural Festival, organized by Jaldä Rebling, took place in East Berlin, in January. In June, for the first time, a Jewish Cultural Festival—with 35 events on the program—was produced in Erfurt. A public discussion of Soviet Jewish literature was held at the Literaturcafé Wolkenbügel in East Berlin. And in October, an exhibit on Berlin Jewish cemeteries was mounted in East Berlin.

The nonaffiliated East Berlin Jewish organizations Adass Jisroel and the Jewish Cultural Association organized regular cultural programs—in German and Russian—featuring films, lectures, readings from new books, and celebrations of Jewish holidays.

### *Holocaust Commemoration*

As in the past, a number of communities invited former citizens back for visits. Participants this year included the villages of Hachenburg and Gangelt, the towns of Hamm, Wetzlar, Fürth, Schweinfurt, Braunschweig, and Koblenz, and large cities such as Mannheim-Ludwigshafen, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, and the state of Schleswig-Holstein.

Exhibits in Mühlhausen, Erlangen, Ichenhausen, and Berlin-Kreuzberg portrayed Jewish life in a world gone by. Former Jewish citizens of the town of Mühlhausen (Thuringia) who returned for a visit attended the openings of two exhibits: "Jews in Mühlhausen" and "Traces of a Minority." The documentation center situated at the site of the Gestapo headquarters in Berlin, Topographie des Terrors, featured an exhibit, "War Against the Soviet Union." Two Anne Frank exhibitions were mounted: "The World of Anne Frank, 1929–1945," with previously unpublished photos, at Herford's, and one sponsored by the SPD's Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which traveled to a number of East German cities. Marl, a town in Westphalia, showed an exhibit on the Star of David called "Sign of Shame, Symbol of Hope," which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the decree requiring Jews to wear a yellow star. A Christian-Jewish Brotherhood Society in Koblenz organized an exhibit on "One Hundred Years of German Racism," and the Congress of German Pharmacists presented an exhibit on the "Expulsion and Annihilation of Jewish Pharmacists in the Third Reich."

In May, an exhibit was opened in Steckelsdorf (near Rathenow) to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the deportation of Jews from Rathenow and from the Zionist camp in Steckelsdorf where, in the late 1930s, young German Jews received agricultural training as preparation for immigration to Palestine; almost none of them survived the Holocaust.

In July, a former synagogue in Aschenhausen (Thuringia) was restored and transformed into a site for "discussion and remembrance." The renovation costs—DM 300,000—were covered by the federal, provincial, and district administrations. In September, a commission of historians in Weimar held a conference to discuss reorganizing the informational aspect of Buchenwald concentration camp so as to recognize that not only Communists were killed there, and that after 1945 it became a Soviet internment camp. It was decided to invite representatives of all groups of victims—including Jews—to participate in the deliberations.

A plaque was unveiled in Chemnitz, in November, in memory of Hermann Fürstenheim, director of the Jewish department store H. and C. Tietz. In December, a lecture series on Jewish life in Saxony was held in Leipzig, in conjunction with an exhibit at the University of Leipzig on the murder of Jews during the Third Reich. Both the lectures and the exhibit were sponsored by Fischer Pocket Books (a West German publisher, which published the book based on the exhibit), the Ephraim Carlebach Foundation in Leipzig, and the department of history of the University of Leipzig.

Beginning with the *Kristallnacht* commemorations of 1988, individual cities and towns in the east began to publish—following a long-standing practice in the west—chronologies and documentation of their Jewish communities or former Jewish communities. New publications in this category included: Günther Kunge, *Juden in Schönebeck* ("Jews in Schönebeck"), published by the Kreismuseum Schönebeck (near Magdeburg), and Roland Otto, *Die Verfolgung der Juden in Görlitz unter der faschistischen Diktatur 1933–1945* ("The Persecution of the Jews in Görlitz Under the Fascist Dictatorship 1933–1945"), published by the city of Görlitz.

## *Publications*

National unification affected the operations of the publishing business in former East and West Germany. Works of East Germans appeared in the catalogues of West German publishing houses and vice versa; and some major East German publishers were taken over by West German enterprises. Still, although the official division between east and west no longer existed, differences in markets and issues persisted.

A new literary genre emanating from the east was the critical or self-critical (auto)biography of Jewish Communists or socialists. New works in this category included: Helmut Eschwege, *Fremd unter meinesgleichen: Erinnerungen eines Dresdner Juden* ("A Stranger Among My Peers: Memories of a Dresden Jew"), and Annette Leo, *Briefe zwischen Kommen und Gehen* ("Letters Between Coming and

Going”), annotated letters of her grandfather, a Jew who was forced out of the Communist party in the 1920s because of his dissident views.

Important new works relating to German Jewry included: F. Hager, ed., *Geschichte Denken: Notizbuch für Leo Löwenthal* (“Thinking History: A Notebook for Leo Löwenthal”), an interview and essays in a dialogue with the last remaining representative of the Frankfurt School (the critical social-science tradition founded in the 1920s by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno); A. Lixl-Purcell, ed., *Erinnerungen deutsch-jüdischer Frauen 1900–1990* (“Memories of German Jewish Women 1900–1990”); Peter Weiss, *Briefe an Hermann Levin Goldschmidt und Robert Jungk 1939–1980* (“Letters to Hermann Levin Goldschmidt and Robert Jungk, 1939–1980”), letters of young, unknown Jewish writers trying to establish themselves in exile; Nea Weissberg-Bob, ed., *Der dumme Fuß will mich nach Deutschland tragen—Eine Auseinandersetzung um Deutschland. Gespräche, Gedichte, Briefe* (a literary anthology about the problem of Jewish existence in Germany); Horst Göppinger, *Juristen jüdischer Abstammung im Dritten Reich. Entrechtung und Verfolgung* (“Lawyers of Jewish Descent in the Third Reich”; second, fully revised edition); Ellen Presser and Bernhard Schossig, eds., *Junge Juden in Deutschland. Protokoll einer Tagung* (“Young Jews in Germany: Conference Proceedings”); Gerd Stolz, ed., *Zwischen Gestern und Heute—Erinnerungen jüdischen Lebens ehemaliger Schleswig-Holsteiner* (“Jewish Life in Schleswig-Holstein Remembered”); Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Dimension des Völkermords. Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (A new calculation of the number of victims of the Shoah by country), by the new director of the Institute for Research on Anti-Semitism in Berlin; Claus Stephani, *War einer Hersch, Fuhrmann. Leben und Leiden der Juden in Oberwischau* (portrait of rural Jewish life); Ralph Giordano, *Israel, um Himmels willen Israel* (“For Heaven’s Sake, Israel”), mildly critical notes from a visit to Israel; Heinz Knobloch, Alfred Etzold, Joachim Feit, and Peter Kirchner, *Die jüdischen Friedhöfe in Berlin* (“Jewish Cemeteries in Berlin”); Hans Küng, *Das Judentum—Die religiöse Situation der Zeit* (“Judaism and the Religious Situation of Today”); Fritz Fischer, *Hitler war kein Betriebsunfall* (“Hitler Was No Accident”); Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Das Exil der kleinen Leute. Alltagserfahrungen deutscher Juden in der Emigration* (everyday experiences of average German Jewish émigrés); Michael Wolffsohn, *Spanien, Deutschland und die “jüdische Weltmacht.” Über Moral, Realpolitik und Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (essays on Jewish “world power” and coming to grips with the past); Dan Diner, *Krieg der Erinnerungen. Deutsche und Israelis im Ernstfall* (“The War of Memories: Germans and Israelis in the Gulf War”); Micha Brumlik, *Weltrisiko Naher Osten. Moralische und politische Perspektiven in einem Konflikt ohne Ende* (moral and political issues in relation to the Middle East).

A work by Thea Altaras, *Synagogen in Hessen—was geschah seit 1945?* (a complete register of synagogues in Hesse and their history after 1945) received an award from the state of Hesse.

## Personalia

The federal state of Hesse honored the president of the Jewish community of Frankfurt, Ignatz Bubis, for his involvement in Jewish affairs. Former lord mayor of Frankfurt Volker Hauff received the silver seal of the Frankfurt Jewish community. A number of Jewish writers and playwrights received prizes this year, among them: György Konrad of Hungary, the Peace Prize of the German booksellers association, Germany's most prestigious literary award; George Tabori, playwright, the Peter Weiss Prize of the city of Bochum, awarded for the first time; Marcel Reich-Ranicki, the Polish-born critic for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, considered the most influential literary critic in Germany, the Hermann-Sinsheimer Prize of the city of Freinsheim; Jenny Aloni, an Israeli writer who writes in German, the Droste Prize of Meersburg; Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, who was born in Hamburg and lives in France, the Geschwister Scholl Prize; Irene Dische, who has written on her life in America, the Jeannette-Schocken Prize of Bremerhaven; Wolf Biermann, a singer and songwriter whose father perished in Auschwitz, the important George-Büchner Prize; Ilse Aichinger, on the occasion of her 70th birthday, the literature prize of the Bavarian Academy of Arts; and Carl Amery, the newly created prize for literature of the city of Munich. The award given by the Heinz Galinski Foundation, which is linked to the Berlin Jewish community, was given to Lea Rosh and Irmgard von zur Mühlen. The Israeli writer David Grossman was awarded the Nelly Sachs Prize of Dortmund.

A number of German politicians were honored for work on behalf of Jewish and human-rights causes. Ben-Gurion University in Beersheba awarded an honorary degree to former Bundestag president Annemarie Renger; the former federal commissioner for foreigners in Germany, Lieselotte Funcke, who resigned her position in protest against the government's inaction in this area, was awarded the Carl von Ossietzky Medal of the League for Human Rights for her "untiring and fearless engagement on behalf of foreign citizens in Germany; and the Theodor Heuss Award went to Anetta Kahane, who, together with others from the former GDR, was recognized for her peaceful political activity in the fall of 1989 and for her leadership in integrating Soviet Jewish refugees and other foreign groups in the east.

Novelist Stefan Heym received an honorary doctorate from Cambridge University (England), in June. In August, Nathan Peter Levinson (rabbi of Hamburg and former rabbi of Berlin 1950–52) gave a lecture in the building in East Berlin which used to house his office. Levinson was also awarded the Augsburg Peace Prize for his work in Christian-Jewish relations. Elie Wiesel spoke at graduation ceremonies at Humboldt University in East Berlin.

Among prominent German Jewish émigrés who died this year were the artist Gitta Alpar, 87, who died in Palm Springs, California; Brigitte Bermann-Fischer, 86, co-owner of the S. Fischer Verlag publishing house in Switzerland; and two distinguished rabbis: Hans Chanoch Meyer, 82, and Manfred Lubliner, 81. Meyer, who was born in Crone (Posen), later lived in Berlin and from 1938 in Palestine.

In 1958 he returned to Dortmund and later taught Jewish history at Bochum University. He subsequently lived in Haifa but returned frequently to Germany. Lubliner was born in Halle, was a rabbi in Cottbus, fled to Chile in 1938, and returned from there to Berlin in 1970, where he was a highly respected and popular figure. Two other deaths of note were those of the publisher and journalist Marian Gid, 85, who wrote for French papers and published what was for many years the only Yiddish paper in Germany, the *Naie Yiddishe Zaitung*, in Munich; and Richard Löwenthal, 83, a Berliner, a major intellectual figure in the Social Democratic party. In the Nazi period, he belonged to a group of former Communists who came together in the resistance group New Beginning; he left for Britain and returned to Germany in 1945 as a journalist with the *Observer*; beginning in 1961 he occupied a chair of political science at the Free University of Berlin. He was a critic of the student movement of 1968 and later on of the new social movements, as well as of the Vietnam War and some armament policies of Chancellor Schmidt.

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