

Federal Republic of Germany

National Affairs

POLITICAL LIFE DURING the latter half of 1995 and the first six months of 1996 was dominated by Chancellor Helmut Kohl's efforts to shore up the economy and to reduce the unemployment rate of over 9 percent (15 percent in the former East Germany). The first half of 1996 showed signs of slowly increasing economic activity, but unemployment was still the main problem.

The government's proposed "Sparpaket" (savings package) was the focus of ongoing controversy. The package that Kohl formally presented to the Bundestag on April 26, 1996, included cuts of DM 25 billion (roughly \$15 billion) from the 1997 budget in social spending, notably in sick leave and unemployment benefits, in postponed increases in payments to families with children, and in salaries of public employees. The opposition Social Democrats' Oskar Lafontaine charged that the plan would undermine Germany's postwar consensus on social justice and offered a substitute plan to increase personal income taxes at the higher end of the social scale along with other tax measures.

The period also saw significant episodes of white-collar crime involving some of the country's biggest industrial enterprises, culminating in the arrest of ten senior officers of the Ruhr coal-and-steel producer Thyssen AG. The ten were accused of illegal financial transactions in connection with the liquidation of a former East German metallurgical company. Top officers of other manufacturing giants, like Mannesmann AG, carmaker Daimler-Benz AG, factory-installation company Klöckner-Humboldt-Deutz AG, and shipbuilder Bremer Vulkan Verbund AG, were under investigation. The implicated firms had allegedly overcharged the Treuhandanstalt, the government agency overseeing the sale and disposal of former East German industrial concerns, defrauding the government of billions of Deutsche marks and leading to the bankruptcy of a number of companies—in turn aggravating the serious unemployment situation.

Elections to state parliaments took place in March 1996 in Schleswig-Holstein, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Baden-Württemberg, the results strengthening the position of Kohl's governing coalition—the Christian Democratic Union, Christian Social Union, and Free Democratic Party. The centrist Free Democrats (FDP) managed to increase their share of the vote in all three states, while the Social Democrats (SDP) declined somewhat in all three. In both Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein, the Greens outpolled the FDP, putting them in the state parliaments of all 11 pre-unification western states and in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt. Among the extreme right-wing parties, the xenophobic Repub-

likaner managed to win enough votes (9.1 percent) in Baden-Württemberg to enter that state's parliament, while the Deutsche Volksunion (German Popular Union) failed in Schleswig-Holstein. Both parties were classified as extremist and were on the observation list of the German Office for Protection of the Constitution.

In summer 1995, while on an official visit to Poland, Chancellor Kohl visited Auschwitz and had a private tour of the Jewish quarters of Krakow and Kazimierz, home of the famous Remuh Synagogue.

Israel and the Middle East

Germany's relations with Israel remained generally cordial, with occasional episodes of tension.

Along with other European Union (EU) countries, Germany did not take part in the official opening ceremonies of Jerusalem 3000 in September 1995, on the ground that as long as the final status of the city was not settled, participation would be seen as one-sided support for the Israeli position. However, the festivities included performances by the Berlin State Opera under Daniel Barenboim of works by Beethoven—*Fidelio*, the Ninth Symphony, and the oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*. Although there was some criticism by Israelis of having German artists perform for such an event, the general reaction was positive.

The murder of Israel's prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, on November 4, 1995, was a shock for the German public, and many commentators expressed fear that the peace process in the Middle East could come to a sudden end as a result of his death. Rabin's funeral, which was attended by German president Roman Herzog, Chancellor Kohl, and other officials, was shown in full on German television. Within a very short time, a rash of new books about Israeli politics and Rabin biographies appeared in bookstores. Both Doron Arazi's Rabin biography and the autobiographical work by Rabin's granddaughter, Noa Ben Artzi, sold very well.

Germany's relations with Iran came under fire in connection with a conference of Islamic and Western nations to promote East-West dialogue, in Bonn, in November. A majority in the Bundestag called on Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel to rescind the participation of Iranian foreign minister Ali Akbar Velayati. Parliament was reacting to a statement by Iran's president, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, that the murder of Israel's prime minister was "God's Revenge." Kinkel too denounced Rafsanjani's comments but stressed the need to maintain Germany's "critical dialogue" with Iran. Some leading members of the governing coalition, including Bundestag president Rita Süßmuth, voted with the opposition to pass the resolution.

On January 15, 1996, Ezer Weizman, president of the State of Israel, the first Israeli head of state to visit Germany since unification, addressed both houses of Parliament, the Bundestag and the Bundesrat. Bundestag president Süßmuth (who is not a Jew) included a Hebrew quotation from the "Wisdom of the Fa-

thers" in her address ("The world stands on three things: on law, on truth, and on peace") and stressed the importance of German-Israeli relations for German internal policy and foreign affairs. President Weizman's speech was both moving and disturbing, as he recalled the suffering of the Jewish people through the ages and identified himself with all persecuted Jews, beginning with the slavery in Egypt until the return to the Land of Israel. As Israel's president, Weizman said, he could not forgive Germany for the Holocaust in the names of the victims. He urged the deputies to remember the past and to be vigilant in countering racism and neo-Nazism. He visited the former concentration camp at Sachsenhausen, where he recited the Jewish prayer for the dead, and the execution site of the German anti-Nazi resistance members in Berlin-Plötzensee. Weizman touched off a controversy when he told Israeli reporters that he could not understand how Jews could live in Germany. He was criticized by Ignatz Bubis, head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, who stressed that the Germany of today was not the Germany of the Nazi era.

Early in March, in the wake of a series of terrorist bombings in Israel, Foreign Minister Kinkel paid a brief visit to Israel and Gaza to demonstrate German support for the people of Israel and to press for movement in the peace process. He met separately with PLO chairman Yasir Arafat and Prime Minister Shimon Peres. Before his departure for the Middle East, the government issued a statement condemning the terrorist actions as "vile attacks directed against innocent people." That visit was followed up by meetings with EU colleagues, who drafted a resolution calling on governments everywhere to disavow support for terrorist activity, regardless of its motivation.

Later in the month, Chancellor Kohl attended an emergency international summit in Egypt, chaired by Presidents Hosni Mubarak and Bill Clinton and attended by Arab and Israeli leaders and representatives of some two dozen countries. The participants agreed to cooperate in fighting terrorism and urged greater efforts in the search for peace.

Following the change of government in Israel in May, German political leaders stressed that there was no change in their commitment to support the peace process. Bundestag president Süßmuth warned against misjudging new prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and said he must be given "a fair chance."

Among important German visitors to Israel in the period covered was Rudolf Scharping, then head of the German Social Democratic Party, in the fall of 1995, who met with Israeli political leaders and with Yasir Arafat. He was accompanied by Ignatz Bubis, head of the German Jewish community, with whom he visited Yad Vashem. There he wrote in the visitors' book: "Always remember -- never again let it happen." Also in the fall, the heads of German welfare institutions, such as the German Red Cross, German Caritas-Union, the Diaconate Works, Workers' Welfare, and the Parity Welfare Organization, visited Israel together with the heads of the Central Welfare Office of Jews in Germany, president Paul Spiegel and director Benny Bloch.

OTHER MATTERS

The 16th annual German-Israeli Conference, held in Cologne in July 1995, dealt primarily with the question of the peace process in the Middle East and youth exchanges between the two countries. Delegates of the Israeli-German and German-Israeli Societies and members of both parliaments discussed the need to increase knowledge of each other's country. In the meantime, it was announced that German could now be taught as a first foreign language (on a par with English) at some schools in Israel—something unheard of since the Holocaust.

In September 1995 a monument by Fritz Koenig was erected to commemorate the 11 Israeli athletes and a German policeman who were murdered during the Olympic Games held in Munich in 1972. There was disagreement in the final stages about the inscription, but after intervention by the Israeli National Sports Organization and the Jewish community of Munich, and after consultations with the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the responsible parties finally agreed to include the information that the victims were "murdered by a terrorist act" and not the planned nebulous words "in violent circumstances." In May 1996, the suit filed by the athletes' surviving dependents for compensation was dismissed by the Munich regional superior court on technical grounds.

The "Yekkes in Israel" ("Yekkes" is the name by which emigrants from German-speaking countries are called) were the subject of an exhibition in the Koenig Museum in Bonn, also in September. The impact of the German immigration to Israel—composed mostly of academic, non-Zionist, and relatively assimilated Jews—had generally been underestimated in Israeli society, and only now that the immigrant generation was almost gone did it gain in interest. Among the prominent Yekkes are the writer Yehuda Amichai and politicians Teddy Kollek and Uri Avnery, whose contributions to Israeli culture parallel those of earlier generations of Yekkes like Theodor Herzl, Gershom Scholem, and Else Lasker-Schüler. One of the last German newspapers outside of Germany is the *Israel Nachrichten* (Israel News), published in Tel Aviv by the "last of the Mohicans," as the Yekkes are called. Its editor in chief, Alice Schwarz-Gardos, was awarded the Cross of the Order of Merit 1st Class of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1982 and the Great Cross in 1995 for her work on behalf of German-Israeli understanding.

As part of Jerusalem 3000, a major exhibition, "The Journey to Jerusalem," was organized by the Jewish community of Berlin in the Orangery of the Charlottenburg Palace at the end of 1995. It documented the importance of the Holy City for Jews, Christians, and Muslims and also depicted visits of leading Germans to the Holy City, among them the prince royal Friedrich Wilhelm in 1869, 30 years later Kaiser Wilhelm II, and Chancellor Willy Brandt on a short visit in June 1973. The trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 was also covered.

In an effort to enrich Jewish life in eastern Germany, where knowledge of Judaism and Israel was still very limited but interest was high, the Israeli consulate

in Berlin helped organize the first "Shalom" Israeli Culture Weeks in Thuringia, from September to December 1995. The activities included theatrical performances, readings, films, lectures, concerts, and exhibitions on German-Jewish and Israeli topics. The program met with a warm reception. A similar program took place in the spring of 1996 in Brandenburg, and events were planned for the fall in Mecklenburg and Saxony-Anhalt.

Extremism, Anti-Semitism, Holocaust Denial

According to the annual Report of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution for 1995, extremist violence by native Germans of both the left and the right was on the decline, but internal security was threatened by foreign-born extremists.

The number of asylum-seekers remained constant in 1995 (127,937), due largely to the restrictive Asylum Law passed in 1993. Although the militant antforeigner sector of the right remained active, and violence and harassment directed at foreigners continued to occur within the society as a whole, the figure for racially motivated crimes in 1995 (2,468) was lower than in 1994 (3,491).

The worst case of antforeigner violence occurred in January 1996, in Lübeck, when a house in which several families of asylum-seekers were living was set on fire, killing ten of the occupants. The police first arrested suspected neo-Nazis but released them soon after; a Lebanese resident of the house was then arrested, but half a year later the case was still unsolved.

According to the annual report of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution for 1995, the number of anti-Semitic acts of violence dropped from 41 in 1994 to 26; punishable anti-Semitic offenses overall fell from 1,366 to 1,155, and Jewish cemetery desecrations from 65 to 37. In the first half of 1996, there were 380 anti-Semitic offenses, including 25 acts of violence, with eight Jewish cemetery desecrations.

Besides cemetery desecrations, there were cases of vandalization of other sites, such as the memorial to Nazi victims at the Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin, in November 1995, and the memorial mirror wall for deported Jews in Berlin-Steglitz in January 1996. Among other targets of defacement were the exhibition "The World of Anne Frank 1929–1945" in Berlin, and an exhibition in Potsdam, "After Auschwitz—Reactions to the Holocaust in Modern Art," in March 1996.

A registry of "desirable and undesirable" Jews was published in February 1996 by the extreme-right FZ-Company: *Wer ist wer im Judentum? Lexikon der jüdischen Prominenz. Ihre Herkunft. Ihr Leben. Ihr Einfluß* (Who Is Who in Judaism? Lexicon of Jewish Celebrities. Their Descent. Their Life. Their Influence). In the negative column are Albert Einstein, who "out of paranoid hatred of Germany helped the US to build a bomb aimed at Germany" and the politician Egon Bahr, who is "responsible for the loss of the Ostgebiete" (the territory in the east), while the historian Michael Wolffsohn is labeled positively as "nationally oriented."

According to research carried out by the Moses Mendelssohn Center in Potsdam and the Institute for Applied Research on Family and Children on the "Attitudes of Teenagers in Brandenburg Toward Jews and the State of Israel," published in 1995, anti-Semitism among youth in eastern Germany had grown since unification. Among pupils aged 14 to 18, 20 percent showed prejudice toward Jews, compared to their parents, of whom only 4 percent did so.

THE RIGHT

The total number of members of far-right parties and organizations had dropped by about ten thousand to 47,240 (1,140 had multiple memberships). During 1995, the activities of the far right were undoubtedly hampered by unrelenting police and legal attention. Also, the prevailing ban on, or police control of, meetings and demonstrations organized by both the extreme right and left succeeded in reducing their number. In addition, a large number of court cases against far-right extremists terminated with convictions.

A sharp rise was recorded in the use of computers and other electronic technology to distribute extreme right-wing propaganda, unhindered by laws or boundaries. Holocaust-denial, extremist, and anti-Semitic propaganda was online on the extreme right's "Thule-Net" and in Internet mailboxes with texts supplied by old and new Nazis like the German-Canadian Ernst Zundel and many others. In the spring of 1996, Deutsche Telekom—at government request—blocked access through its network to Zundel's site. Aiming at new target groups in eastern Germany, the Internet was becoming the most important forum for Holocaust-deniers worldwide. In order to counteract this, a World Wide Web site called "Niskor-Project" was installed, on which an expanding digital library, the "Shofar-FTP-Archives," with over 3,000 documents about the concentration camps and other topics, could be consulted.

The main forum for the "Neue Rechte" (New Right), a loose grouping of German right-wing, revisionist historians and intellectuals, was the German weekly *Neue Freiheit* (New Liberty), founded in 1991. In fall 1995, the publication rented space under a false name in the Mosse-House building in Berlin, which was built by the prominent Jewish publisher Rudolf Mosse (grandfather of historian George L. Mosse) at the turn of the century. The newspaper was thrown out after the tenant's true identity became public.

According to a report in the German news magazine *Der Stern*, more than 50 professors at German universities regularly wrote or had written for extreme right-wing publications, some of them denying the Holocaust.

The publication of a volume in a highly regarded series of books on German history, the *Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands*, in fall 1995, caused consternation in scholarly and literary circles. It turned out that the publisher had commissioned a member of the New Right, schoolteacher Karheinz Weissmann, to write the history of the National Socialist regime instead of the designated author, the rec-

ognized historian Hans Mommsen. Out of the total of 503 pages in Weissmann's book, ten were devoted to the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." After massive protests, the publishers withdrew the book and said it would be rewritten by Mommsen after all.

In a study carried out by the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, which was published in April 1996, approximately 4 percent of students in Hesse identified with the far right and a further 11 percent leaned toward it. Of those questioned (1,400 male and female students), 28 percent believed that there should be "an end to the debate about German history." The majority of the students supporting the right came from the highest social levels.

In March 1996 the ministers of justice in the 15 member countries of the European Union agreed to take common action against neo-Nazis and to employ measures to simplify their extradition. The German government supported European action and legislation to combat the extreme right.

In late August 1995, 29-year-old neo-Nazi Bela Ewald Althans was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for inciting racial hatred and slander of the dead through Holocaust denial. At issue was a 1993 documentary film, *Beruf Neonazi* (Profession: Neo-Nazi), a behind-the-scenes look at the German radical right, in which Althans delivers a harangue at Auschwitz calling claims of Nazi genocide of the Jews "an enormous deception." The judges rejected Althans's claim that he had renounced neo-Nazism and was only acting a part, calling him a "dangerous spiritual arsonist."

In September 1995 the American neo-Nazi Gary Lex Lauck was extradited from Denmark to Germany, having been taken into custody by Danish police near Copenhagen in March, in connection with a German warrant for his arrest. He faced charges of incitement to violence and racial hatred and importing neo-Nazi propaganda to Germany, production and distribution of which is explicitly prohibited by German law. The Nebraska-based Lauck headed the self-styled "overseas branch" of the Nazi party and was a major distributor of neo-Nazi material in Europe. His trial began in May 1996 in Hamburg. If found guilty, he could face up to five years in prison.

Günter Deckert, former head of the right-wing National Democratic Party (NPD), who was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in April 1995 for disseminating lies about the Holocaust, lost his appeal and began serving his sentence in October. (See AJYB 1996, pp. 287–88.) In November he was sentenced to one more month of prison for insult and defamation and was further sentenced to seven months on probation in March 1996, based on an open letter, published in 1994, to Michel Friedman—Frankfurt lawyer, board member of the Christian Democratic Party, the Frankfurt community, and the Central Council of Jews in Germany—urging him to emigrate to Israel and making insulting comments about Jews.

The British historian and Holocaust denier David Irving remained *persona non grata* in Germany. In March 1996 the Administrative Court in Munich rejected

his appeal of the sentence he received in November 1993, expelling him from the country on the ground that his appearances posed a threat to internal security and harmed Germany's image abroad.

Holocaust-Related Matters

The anniversary of the 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogrom, November 9, was observed in 1995 with special ceremonies in most Jewish communities in Germany. Everywhere, the memory of the just murdered Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, was honored as well.

After lengthy public discussion, on January 3, 1996, German federal president Roman Herzog proclaimed January 27—the date in 1945 when the Auschwitz extermination camp was liberated—as a “day of remembrance” for the victims of Nazism. However, because the suddenness of the announcement left little time for preparation, and institutional schedules had been planned long in advance, the official ceremonies for the first memorial day were held not on the 27th but on other dates, and even the main ceremony at the Bundestag took place on January 19. President Herzog's speech expressed the hope that this might turn into a day of reflection (*Nachdenken*) on the country's National Socialist past and the lessons for the future it offers. The day would be a voluntary day of commemoration, not an official holiday.

On Holocaust Memorial Day in April 1996, the youth group of the Berlin Jewish community memorialized the 55,000 murdered Jews of that city with a public reading of all the victims' names, in alphabetical order, at the Grunewald railway station, the point of departure for many Jews to the concentration camps. The reading was based on a compilation of names published in 1995, the product of several decades of research.

MONUMENTS AND COMMEMORATIONS

A monument to “the women of Rosenstrasse,” heroines of an extraordinary incident of resistance to the Nazi regime, was unveiled in Berlin's Rosenstrasse in October 1995. The work of sculptor Ingeborg Hunzinger, the monument commemorates the courageous resistance by non-Jewish women against the roundup and planned deportation of approximately 1,500 of their Jewish husbands and sons by the Gestapo in February 1943. The women stood their ground day and night, for a week, outside the building housing the deportation center, faced by heavily armed SS troops, until the Gestapo relented and released the men.

In April 1996 officials involved in the creation of a national Holocaust memorial in Berlin announced that the cornerstone would be laid on January 27 (the new Holocaust memorial day), 1999. However, it was still not known what the memorial would look like. The design selected by a jury in June 1995, created by an artists' group headed by Christine Jakob-Marks, had subsequently been re-

jected as being too controversial. (See AJYB 1996, p. 288.) Apart from objections by Holocaust survivors, reservations expressed by Chancellor Kohl and other government officials were decisive, since both the federal and Berlin governments were contributing financially to the privately sponsored project. A new design was to be chosen from among the seven best works of the over 500 that were submitted for the original competition. On May 9, 1996, the German Parliament debated the merits of the proposed monument — “of the German nation for the Jews” — for two hours. Ignatz Bubis, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, demanded that Parliament leave the decision about the form of the planned memorial to the jury and the initiators of the project. He claimed, too, that there was no reason to wait until 1999, that the monument could be erected in 1998.

The controversy continued when a group of historians and cultural figures associated with the Fritz Bauer Institute in Frankfurt issued a statement demanding a different site for the memorial than the one planned. They claimed that the chosen site in the former Ministergardens, between the former Berlin Wall and Hitler’s so-called Führerbunker, was not adequate, and proposed instead the site of the new government quarters in Berlin. Some of the signers of the statement also wanted to have Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) and other Holocaust victims included in the memorial. Discussions about the final form and site of the memorial were to continue in the fall of 1996, with relevant experts and artists meeting to try to resolve the dilemma by spring 1997.

Related to the issue of the Holocaust memorial in Berlin was a new debate over a proposed central Jewish Holocaust museum in Germany, with proponents opting for Berlin as a location. The head of the Social Democratic Party, Oskar Lafontaine, the prime minister of Saxony, Kurt Biedenkopf (Christian Democratic Party), and the writer Günter Grass were leading supporters of such an initiative; among the harshest critics were the minister for culture and science in Berlin’s neighboring state of Brandenburg, Steffen Reiche (a Social Democrat), and the director of the Memorial Sites Foundation of Brandenburg, Jürgen Dittberner (Free Liberal Party). They argued that instead of investing in a new institution, funds should be used to preserve authentic existing memorial sites in the former concentration camps of Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück — currently neglected for lack of funds.

In fact, the plans for other original Holocaust-related sites slated to become memorials or documentation centers were hampered by lack of funds. Among them was a permanent structure to house the “Topography of Terror,” an exhibit located at the virtually destroyed site of what had been SS headquarters and a Gestapo jail in which prominent opponents of the regime were interrogated. The deteriorating condition of former concentration camps was dealt with in the press, but the politicians had not found a solution to the problem.

A memorial to the destroyed Jewish community of Frankfurt am Main was solemnly inaugurated in June 1996 in the former ghetto area where in 1938 the Börne Synagogue was burnt down. The memorial is a wall on which are engraved

11,134 names of Jewish Nazi victims who were murdered in concentration camps or committed suicide.

In Berlin, the head of the community, Jerzy Kanal, commented on the dilatory attitude of the authorities in the process of renaming streets which had been given other names by the Nazis for political or racial reasons. Kanal also criticized German Federal Army authorities for similar slowness in removing the names of Nazi generals from barracks. A positive step was the renaming of the barracks in Berlin for the Social Democratic leader Julius Leber, who was executed by the Nazis in 1945.

RESTITUTION

Various issues relating to restitution for Holocaust victims continued to claim public and communal attention. In September 1995 the German government agreed to pay compensation to Hugo Princz and ten other American concentration camp survivors who were U.S. citizens at the time of their ordeal and who had been excluded from previous compensation arrangements. In January 1996 the German Parliament voted to provide pensions to 35,000 ethnic German Jews who were driven from their homes in Eastern Europe by the Nazis and who also did not qualify under previous compensation regulations.

On May 8, 1996, a year after the major observances of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, the Union of Anti-Fascists issued a statement deploring the fact that many victims of the Nazis had still not been rehabilitated. They referred specifically to Wehrmacht (army) deserters and to forced-labor convicts who were never compensated by the concerns that used them, most of which were still in existence and prosperous. The Central Council of Jews in Germany supported the demand for urgent rehabilitation and compensation for these groups.

The 50th anniversary of the end of World War II awakened interest in the ongoing problem of prewar Jewish assets in Swiss banks. Only as the result of pressure from international Jewish organizations, the U.S. government, and growing media attention did the Swiss reluctantly begin to deal with the matter in the spring of 1996.

A conference on "Unsettled Questions of Property of the Victims of Nazi Persecution" took place April 17 and 18, 1996, in Berlin, organized by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, under the patronage of Ignatz Bubis. The assembled government officials and scholars discussed the complications that resulted after unification, since the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had pursued a different policy than West Germany in this regard—not regarding itself as guilty and refusing to pay reparations—and there were many open claims for restitution. When there are no heirs to Jewish properties in the former GDR or if heirs do not lay claim to them, the Claims Conference is entitled to take them over. In cases of heirless property, the Claims Conference sells it and distributes the money to Holocaust victims worldwide. In March 1996 the

German weekly *Focus* falsely accused the Claims Conference of keeping 3,000 houses and apartments in East Berlin empty for speculative purposes; the conference claimed that the authorities took a long time to process Jewish applications for property restitution, and that by taking them over, the conference was protecting them for their rightful owners or their heirs.

NAZI WAR CRIMINALS

In September 1995 German prosecutors offered a reward of DM 500,000 (about \$294,000) for information leading to the arrest of Nazi war criminal Alois Brunner, who was responsible for the deportation and murder of 128,500 European Jews between 1938 and 1945. Brunner, personal secretary to Adolf Eichmann, was wanted by prosecutors in Germany, Austria, France, and Israel. Long believed to be in Argentina, he was now thought to be in Syria, living under the name of Dr. Georg Fischer.

OTHER MATTERS

Oral history was becoming popular in Germany. Apart from Steven Spielberg's project, "Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation," which was collecting interview material in Germany, the Moses Mendelssohn Center in Potsdam was cooperating with Yale University in an oral history project, interviewing survivors in the Berlin-Brandenburg area. Copies of the videotaped interviews would be preserved in the Wannsee Conference House in Berlin for pedagogical purposes after the project was finished at the end of 1996.

The first international conference on "The Situation and Life of Jewish DPs 1945-1949" took place in July 1995 in the Munich City Museum. It was organized by the Fritz Bauer Institute in cooperation with the Munich and Innsbruck Institutes for Contemporary History, the American Jewish Archives, the Yad Vashem Archives, and the Literaturhandlung Munich. Among the 150,000 Jewish "Displaced Persons" located in 1945 in the three Western-occupied zones in Germany, there were approximately 70,000 survivors of concentration camps and 80,000 refugees from the east.

"National Socialism in Literature for Children and Youth" was the subject of an exhibition and a symposium in September 1995 at the Catholic Academy in Hamburg. Approximately one thousand books on the subject had been published in Germany since 1945, the majority in the last 20 years.

In December 1995 the Fritz Bauer Institute organized a symposium on the "History of Anti-Semitic 'Centers of Research' Under National Socialism." Among the participants was Jewish-American scholar Susannah Heschel, who spoke about "Pro Hitler German Theologians: Walter Grundmann and the Eisenach Institute for the Study and Elimination of Jewish Influence on German Church Life."

An exhibition titled "Reactions to the Holocaust in Modern Art" was shown in the Altes Rathaus in Potsdam in March 1996. It featured works by internationally renowned artists, among them Magdalena Abakanowicz of Poland. The exhibition "1936: The Olympic Games and National Socialism" was presented in Berlin from May through August 1996.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish community continued to grow in this period, due to the influx of Jews from the former Soviet Union (FSU). In December 1995, the community had 53,797 registered members, according to the records of the Central Welfare Office of the Jews in Germany. This was up from 45,559 on January 1, 1995, the increase due primarily to arrivals from the FSU. The figures also showed that 206 persons emigrated, 168 resigned their membership, and 501 died during the year. The number of Jews in Germany not affiliated with the organized communities was estimated at close to 20,000, among them many from the FSU.

The largest communities were in the cities of Berlin (10,105), Frankfurt (5,934), Munich (4,964), Hamburg (2,851), and Cologne (2,466). Of the states, Bavaria had the most affiliated Jews (8,373), followed by North Rhine (6,847), Westphalia (3,959), Lower Saxony (3,393), Hesse (2,818), Baden (2,583), and Württemberg (1,474). The smallest western communal federations were Rhineland-Palatinate (654), Saarland (604), and Bremen (557); in the east, Saxony (294), Saxony-Anhalt (273), Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (270), Brandenburg (206), and Thuringia (136).

Communal Affairs

German Jews were no longer collectively sitting on their suitcases, as they had been only a few years ago, uncertain about their future and the viability of a Jewish community life. The community was in fact undergoing a process of expansion and consolidation. In this regard, the immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, they increased the size of the community—adding to the pool of potential marriage partners, it should be noted—and also enhanced its cultural life, especially since many of them were artists or academics. On the other hand, the sudden growth caused upheaval in many local communities, forcing rapid institutional change. Since 1989, between 45,000 and 50,000 Jews reportedly entered Germany from the FSU; however, only 20,000 joined the organized Jewish community. Many of these people have little or no knowledge of Judaism and have problems identifying with it. Also, ap-

proximately 5 percent of them are not Jewish at all but are either married to Jews or acquired forged documents. Many newcomers do come to feel integrated enough to participate in the communities' executive bodies, and some of them form purely "Russian" groups to represent their interests.

Because some of the older functionaries tended to see these new developments as attempts to overthrow the establishment, there was growing potential for internal conflict. Some of the communal disputes became public and were seized on by the German media, which are quick to publicize dissension in the Jewish community. In February 1996, for example, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported on controversies in the communities of Freiburg, Karlsruhe, Konstanz, and others, either between the Russians and the establishment or between the Orthodox and Reform. Similar conflicts came up in Hannover in Lower Saxony and in east German Halle, and it was anticipated that the newly established Jewish arbitration court—composed of five judges from Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Stuttgart, and Cologne, with no permanent seat—would have to deal with such cases more often in the future.

The Central Welfare Office of the Jews in Germany founded an orchestra composed exclusively of new immigrants from the former Soviet Union, thus solving the employment problem for at least some of the excellent musicians among them.

Conflict arose between the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the German government in June 1996, when council president Ignatz Bubis accused the German Foreign Ministry of launching a campaign against Jewish immigration from the FSU by disseminating exaggerated numbers. The clash began when the minister of development aid, Carl-Dieter Spranger (Christian Social Union), declared after a short visit to Kiev that in Ukraine alone up to 800,000 Jews were waiting for visas to Germany, and that there would not be unlimited entry for them. Bubis and a spokesperson for the Bündnis 90/Green Party demanded a stop to such fantasy "horror news" aimed at stopping the immigration of Jews from the FSU.

In July 1995 a delegation of the American Jewish Committee visited the Central Council of Jews in Germany in Frankfurt in order to learn more about Jewish life in Germany today. According to Rabbi Andrew Baker, director of European Affairs, this was in preparation for the opening of a German AJC office in Berlin in a year's time. The German media reported the speech given by Foreign Minister Kinkel in May 1996 at the Committee's annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Referring to the new book by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, which blamed deep-seated German anti-Semitism for the Holocaust, Kinkel rejected the notion of collective culpability and stressed the concept of individual guilt.

In Berlin, the Adass Yisroel Jewish Community in the eastern part of the city continued to press its case for legal recognition as the successor to the prewar community of that name, including claims to property owned by that group. The Ad-

ministrative Court ruled in favor of Adass Yisroel in 1994, but the Berlin Senate appealed; in February 1996 the Higher Administrative Court rejected the lower court's action, denying the group's right of continuity on the ground that its religious activity did not begin at the end of the war, but only in 1986. Adass Yisroel planned a further appeal.

The Central Council of Jews in Germany, which had a new administrative director, Hans Kirchner, relocated from Bonn to Berlin—the official capital—on January 1, 1996. It planned to establish its headquarters in 1998 in the building that housed the famous Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in eastern Berlin, which was founded in the 19th century by Leopold Zunz and closed down by the Nazis. The Hochschule building is in Tucholsky Street, near the Stiftung Neue Synagoge Berlin—Centrum Judaicum (Berlin New Synagogue Foundation—Center for Jewish Culture), which was officially reopened as a cultural center in May 1995 and is close to the prewar Scheunenviertel area in which lived many Jews, mostly from Eastern Europe. A renaissance of Jewish life had taken place in the area in the last few years, including the opening of art galleries and restaurants. A Jewish trade center was also planned there. With the planned transfer of the German government to the city, the council's move to Berlin was viewed as a sign of confidence in a secure future for the Jewish community.

The *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung*, the biweekly news magazine published by the Central Council of Jews in Germany, one of the most important sources for news of Jewish affairs, celebrated its 50th anniversary in spring 1996.

Religion

The debate within German Jewry about the new activism of the Reform and Conservative movements not only continued but became more vehement. Open warfare almost erupted when the small Jewish communities of Oldenburg and Braunschweig engaged a Conservative woman rabbi in 1995, the first such to work in postwar Germany. (She actually had a predecessor, Regina Jonas, who was ordained in 1931 in Berlin but was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.) The new rabbi, Swiss-born Bea Wyler, who was educated at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, was not recognized by the German Conference of Rabbis, connected to the Central Council of Jews in Germany. Rabbi Wyler became an immediate star in the German media, which gave wide coverage to the internal Jewish debate between conservative and traditional forces, focusing on prominent leaders on each side, like Ignatz Bubis, the rather conservative president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and head of the Frankfurt Jewish community, and reform-oriented “rebels” like Micha Brumlik, founder of the Kehilla Hadashah, member of the Green Party, and university professor. Brumlik was one of the founders of the Union of Conservative and Reform Jews in Germany, which was founded in July 1995 in Göttingen and made known its intention to employ more female rabbis in German communities.

Education

The European Union of Jewish Students organized the first “summer university” on German soil since World War II, September 3–10, 1995, on the theme “50 Years After Liberation: The Politics of Memory in Germany and Israel.”

On September 15, the Heinz Galinski School was inaugurated in Berlin’s Waldschulallee. The building housing the elementary school, the work of Israeli architect Zvi Hecker, was the first new structure to be erected for a Jewish school in Berlin since before the Holocaust. The president of the German Federal Republic, Roman Herzog, and the mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen, were among the speakers. The school had eight grades and 160 pupils. The Jewish High School in Berlin, in the Grosse Hamburger Strasse (the prewar Boys’ School) had ten grades and 230 pupils.

The growing interest in Judaism and Israel in the new federal German states of former East Germany had led to the establishment of a number of new academic institutions and university programs for Jewish studies. At the University of Potsdam, the interdisciplinary Jewish studies program founded in 1994 had 75 students enrolled. The Potsdam program was associated with the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies and the Einstein Forum for Advanced Studies, both at Potsdam. Following Potsdam’s example, other German universities in both the eastern and western parts of the country were developing bigger or smaller programs in Jewish studies, among them Halle, Leipzig, Mainz, Münster, Duisburg, and Oldenburg. In Munich, a new chair in Jewish history and culture was to be established in 1997. An Association of Jewish Studies was founded in January 1996, in Potsdam, representing scholars from Germany and other countries who work in this field and exchange experiences.

Yiddish was becoming an accepted part of the curriculum. In addition to Trier, where it was already offered, a new chair in Yiddish was established at the University of Düsseldorf, and there were plans to establish one in Potsdam. The interest in Yiddish language, literature, and (mostly klezmer) music was not limited to universities. There were groups and societies active in this area, such as the Salomo Birnbaum Yiddish Society in Hamburg, founded in the fall of 1995.

Community Relations

A ruling by the German Federal Constitutional Court in August 1995 almost caused a new German Kulturkampf. The court ruled that the Bavarian school regulation mandating placement of a crucifix in every classroom was unconstitutional, that it was incompatible with the requirement of “neutrality toward the various religions and denominations.” Bavarian politicians criticized the highest German court for its decision to remove the crucifixes from the classrooms; the former minister of culture and science in Bavaria, Hans Maier, compared the sentence to the Nazi anti-Christian policy, and the archbishop of Fulda attacked the

growing “dechristianization” of German society. Bavarian officials essentially defied the court ruling by introducing legislation requiring the placement of crucifixes in all classrooms.

Related to the Bavarian issue was the introduction of a new subject in the state school curriculum of Brandenburg. Called *Lebengestaltung, Ethik, Religion* (LER—Formation of Life, Ethics, and Religion), it replaced the traditional Protestant and Catholic religion classes with instruction deemed more appropriate in a multicultural society. Both churches, which feared the impact on other federal states, were strongly opposed to this development, but it was supported by the majority of parents in Brandenburg.

The Carl von Ossietzky Medal of the International League for Human Rights was awarded in December 1995 to the social-welfare organization of the Jewish community of Sarajevo, *La Benevolencija*, which helped all victims of the Balkan war, regardless of religious persuasion, and to Hans Koschnick, the former administrator of the European Community in Mostar, for his courageous humanitarian commitment in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Jewish-Christian Relations

An example of Christian-Jewish reconciliation was the planned erection of a new Jewish community center in Potsdam on the site of a former church, whose structural remains were to be integrated in the complex. Since the octagonal church building contained no overtly Christian architectural elements, there was no halakhic obstacle to its use for Jewish purposes. However, there were objections from some Jewish quarters—articulated by Michel Friedman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany—to turning Christian churches into synagogues in Germany, given the number of former synagogues desecrated by the Nazis and available for restoration. In Potsdam, the old synagogue in the center of the city did not exist anymore, the ruined structure having been pulled down by the Communist authorities in 1957. The Jewish community in Potsdam practically ceased to exist during the Holocaust and only came to life again in the 1990s when 200 Jews from the former Soviet Union settled there.

The Theology Faculty of the University of Tübingen awarded its Dr. Leopold Lucas Preis Award for 1996 to Dr. Pnina Navé Levinson and her husband, Rabbi Prof. Dr. Peter Nathan Levinson, for their active role in Jewish-Christian dialogue. Both were professors of Jewish studies at German universities, and Peter Levinson served as the rabbi of the federal states of Baden, Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein. The couple established the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg and were the authors of several books on Judaism in Germany.

The 450th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther was marked in 1996 by numerous events. Richard Schröder, professor of Protestant theology and parliamentary deputy of the Social Democratic Party, who was from former East Germany, tried to defend Luther from the accusations made by some scholars that

his theology had led to Hitler and downplayed Luther's wrathful attacks against the Jews as being part of the "spirit of the time." The president of the Council of Protestant Churches in Germany, Klaus Engelhardt, by contrast, speaking at the opening ceremony of Brotherhood Week in March 1996, explicitly warned against any attempts to explain or justify this part of Luther's teachings on theological grounds.

The Buber-Rosenzweig Medal of the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation was awarded to Israeli professor Joseph Walk and the American historian of religion, Franklin Littell, for their work in behalf of Christian-Jewish dialogue.

Pope John Paul II visited Germany in June 1996 to beatify the former provost of Berlin's Hedwig Cathedral, Bernhard Lichtenberg, who protested against the persecution of non-Aryan Christians and Jews and who died while being deported to the concentration camp at Dachau. During his visit, the pope met with officials of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, whose president, Ignatz Bubis, commended the present positive relationship between the Vatican and the Jews and urged the pope to use his influence to halt the construction of a supermarket near the Auschwitz extermination camp.

Culture

The prewar Jewish Museum in Berlin, which was forced to close in 1938 and was never reopened, was the focus of ongoing controversy. Plans for a new Jewish museum had been discussed since the 1970s, and internationally renowned Jewish architect Daniel Libeskind submitted a design for it in the 1980s. After construction began, the Berlin Senate announced that the building would house a Berlin City Museum with a "Jewish department," not an independent Jewish museum, and that the appointed director, Amnon Barzel, an Israeli, who had already been working in Berlin for two years on the project, would be subordinate to Reiner Guntzer, director of the newly established Stiftung Stadtmuseum (City Museum Foundation). Barzel and Guntzer, however, had sharply opposing views of what a Jewish museum or even a Jewish department should be.

The controversy became acute in May 1995 at the time of the roofing ceremony of the Libeskind building in the Lindenstrasse, when Barzel presented his conception of an autonomous museum devoted to the achievements of Jewish culture and the role of Jews in German history, as opposed to a narrower conception focusing on ritual and ethnic objects and depicting Jews as victims. In June 1996 a group of interested people began collecting signatures on a petition to restore the original plan for a culturally and financially independent Jewish museum.

During 1995, in Frankfurt am Main, in Princeton, in Frankfurt am Oder, in Berlin, and in Posen (Poland), academic conferences marked the 100th birthday of Ernst H. Kantorowicz, the famous German-Jewish historian who was forced to leave Germany in 1934 and who lectured at the University of California-Berke-

ley from 1940 to 1949 and after 1951 at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton. Kantorowicz, who died in 1963, was best known for the prewar best-seller *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Emperor Frederick the Second) and *Die zwei Körper des Königs* (The Two Bodies of the King, 1957).

"Joseph Roth, 1894–1939," an exhibition about the Galician-Jewish author of *Job* and other novels, who died in exile in Paris, was shown in 1995 in Munich and other cities. The exhibit was prepared by the Vienna Documentation Center for Modern Austrian Literature.

Many cultural activities took place all through 1995 in connection with the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. One unusual event was the children's opera "Brundibár," staged by the Berlin State Opera. It premiered in Prague in 1942 and was performed 55 times in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1943. The opera is an appeal to fight against evil, personified by the street-organ player Brundibár. Theresienstadt was the setting of the Hamburg Opera's production of Handel's *Belshazzar*, which aroused controversy when it was performed in Tel Aviv. Israeli audiences, some of them survivors of Theresienstadt, called this version a "gimmick."

The program of the fourth Berlin-Brandenburg Book Weeks, November 5–26, 1995, included readings of works by Jewish writers, such as Franz Kafka and the late Rabbi Malwin Warschauer; and appearances by living Jewish authors, including Halina Birenbaum, Orly Castel-Bloom, and Inge Deutschkron from Israel; Harry Mulisch from the Netherlands; and Aleksandar Tisma from former Yugoslavia.

Among scholarly meetings on Jewish subjects were two conferences on East European Jewry at the Ostsee-Academy in Lübeck-Travemünde, in June and December 1995, and an international symposium on Jewish culture in France and Italy, in June 1996, organized by the newly founded Romania Judaica, a research institute at the University of Münster.

A documentation center for the work of the Czernowitz-born poet Rose Ausländer was founded in the German village of Uxheim. She survived the Nazi period in the United States and died in Düsseldorf in 1988.

At the Berlin Film Festival ("Berlinale") in February 1996, the internationally renowned Polish director Andrzej Wajda presented *Holy Week*, a film about Polish anti-Semitism during the Nazi occupation, based on the short story by Polish writer Jerzy Andrzejewski. The present open discussion in neighboring Poland about attitudes toward Jews was followed with interest by the German public.

In connection with the 3000th anniversary of Jerusalem, a School Theater Festival took place in March 1996 in Berlin on the theme "Berlin–Jerusalem: Building Bridges–Finding Paths." Approximately 20 drama groups from secondary schools all over the city, including the Jewish High School, participated in the event. Students prepared literary collages of texts by Jewish poets and writers for stage presentation. They also met with contemporary Israeli authors of books for youth, including Nira Harel, Ruth Almog, and Uri Orlev. The Israeli

consulate and the Jewish Evening School for Adults in Berlin cooperated in the project, which was organized by the education department of the city of Berlin.

In June 1996 the second Jewish Film Festival took place in Berlin, organized by the Jewish Evening School for Adults and the Friends of the German Cinematheque, this year focusing on comedy. Both historic and modern movies like *Jewish Luck* (Soviet Union, 1925), *Meyer from Berlin* (Germany, 1918–19), *The Producers* (USA, 1967), and *Genghis Cohn* (1994) were screened.

An exhibition about Sanary-sur-Mer in southern France, a place of refuge for persecuted writers in the Nazi era, was shown at the Heinrich Heine Institute in Düsseldorf in May 1996. Among the Jewish refugees who found safety in France were Arnold Zweig, Lion Feuchtwanger, Stefan Zweig, Joseph Roth, Ernst Toller, Franz Werfel, Ernst Bloch, Emil Julius Gumbel, Arthur Koestler, Egon Erwin Kisch, Albert Drach, Alfred Kantorowicz, and Hermann Kesten.

Publications

Interest in Jewish matters was reflected in a remarkable stream of publications on topics of Jewish interest and modern Israeli literature, both in German and in translation from other languages (the majority from English).

Two books on the Holocaust were widely read and commented on, and each caused a stir lasting for months, but for quite different reasons. The revealing wartime diaries of Victor Klemperer (*Diaries 1933–1945*), son of a Reform rabbi, professor of Romance languages in Dresden, who converted to Christianity, had an impact beyond all expectation. Klemperer (1881–1960), who was posthumously awarded the prestigious Geschwister-Scholl Prize for Civic Courage in November 1995, shortly after the book's publication, seemed to fascinate German readers because of his belief in a German-Jewish symbiosis and his staunch German nationalism (“Das Deutschtum bedeutete mir alles und das Judentum gar nichts” — “Germanness meant all to me, Jewishness nothing”). Klemperer's diaries record in minute detail the humiliations of life under the Nazis and his bitter disappointment at the realization that National Socialism and anti-Semitism were supported by the broad mass of Germans.

The English-language edition of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's spring 1996 book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, initiated a new “historians' debate” months before the German translation was available, the echoes reverberating throughout the mass media, with critical judgment ranging from primarily utter rejection to respectful approval. The German weekly *Die Zeit* published over the course of several weeks statements by historians debating Goldhagen's thesis that deep-rooted anti-Semitism embedded in the character of Germans and not a Nazi aberration enabled the Nazis to carry out the Holocaust. Goldhagen announced that he would come to Germany and react to his critics after the German translation was published in August.

There were still other controversial new works. One was the translation of

American John Sack's *Auge um Auge. Die Geschichte von Juden, die Rache für den Holocaust suchten* (An Eye for an Eye: The Untold Story of Jewish Revenge Against Germany in 1945), which, after being turned down by prominent publishing houses, was issued in 1995 by a minor firm. Called "Pornographie der Revanche" (pornography of revenge) by the author of a book on Jewish resistance, Arno Lustiger, and "a brew of facts and fiction" by other critics, the book deals with an alleged Russian plan to hire Jewish victims of Nazi terror to run concentration camps for Germans. Tom Segev's *The Seventh Million: Israelis and the Holocaust*, which was published in German in 1995, criticizes Israel for misusing the Holocaust for political purposes. Y. Michal Bodeman's *Gedächtnistheater. Die jüdische Gemeinschaft und ihre deutsche Erfindung* (Theater of Memory: The Jewish Community and Its German Invention) attacks the German "epidemic of commemoration" and "*Betroffenheit*" (deep consternation) and the Jewish officials who cooperate in this "theater," while at the same time criticizing the less sensitive postwar attitude of some German intellectuals, in particular the editor of the weekly *Die Zeit*, Marion Gräfin Dönhoff.

Elie Wiesel's memoir *Alle Flüsse fließen ins Meer* (All Rivers Flow into the Sea) was translated from the French in 1996. This reflected the steadily growing market for the memoirs of concentration camp survivors, among them child victims. New works in this genre were Wolf H. Wagner's *Wo die Schmetterlinge starben. Kinder in Auschwitz* (Where the Butterflies Died: Children in Auschwitz); Alwin Meyer's *Die Kinder von Auschwitz* (The Children of Auschwitz); and Deborah Dwork's *Kinder mit dem gelben Stern. Europa 1933–1945* (Children with the Yellow Star: Europe 1933–1945; translated from the English). The relations between the children of the Nazi murderers and the children of the Jewish victims and their respective psychological states is the subject of a book originally published in the United States as *Generations of the Holocaust* and translated into German as *Kinder der Opfer, Kinder der Täter. Psychoanalyse und Holocaust* (Children of the Victims, Children of the Perpetrators. Psychoanalysis and the Holocaust), edited by Martin S. Bergmann and Milton E. Jucovy. Götz Aly's "*Endlösung*". *Die Entscheidung zum Mord an den europäischen Juden* ("Final Solution": The Decision to Murder the European Jews) adds substantially to the knowledge of this chapter of German history.

The role of the German army (Wehrmacht) in the Holocaust—more culpable than previously believed—was examined in several new books, most notably *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht, 1941–1944* (War of Extermination: The Crimes of the Wehrmacht, 1941–1944), edited by Hanne Heer and Klaus Naumann, published in 1995. Another aspect of the Holocaust is explored in *Menschlichkeit in unmenschlicher Zeit. Allee der Gerechten* (Humanity in Inhuman Time: The Avenue of the Righteous), edited by Gustav Trampe with an introduction by Elie Wiesel, published in 1995. It deals with some better-known and lesser-known rescuers of Jews, some of them caught and punished or executed by the Nazis.

A much discussed book on Germany's more recent history was Michael Wolffsohn's *Deutschland-Akte* (File Germany, 1995), dealing with the East German (GDR) secret police and the role of the—often misused—Jews in the German Communist regime. The book includes lists of Jews involved, taken from East German archives. Among other new works on Jewish life in postwar Germany was Michael Brenner's *Nach dem Holocaust. Juden in Deutschland 1945–1950* (After the Holocaust: Jews in Germany 1945–1950).

Alexander Stephan of the University of Florida published a study in 1995 about German writers in exile in the United States who were suspected of spying for Germany. According to *Im Visier des FBI. Deutsche Exilschriftsteller in den Akten amerikanischer Geheimdienste* (In the FBI's Line of Sight: German Exile Writers in the Files of the American Secret Services), the most highly suspect writers were Klaus and Erika Mann and the Jewish Communist Anna Seghers, and some of the suspects were themselves informants.

Several books appeared on the integration of Soviet immigrants into both Jewish and German society, among them *The Russian Jews in Germany: Integration and Self-Assertion in a Foreign Country*, edited by Julius H. Schoeps, Willi Jasper, and Bernhard Vogt, published in 1996.

Jutta Ditfurth, a former politician from the radical wing of the Green Party, published a thriller with a Jewish heroine, about an extremist right-wing international organization planning to take over the world: *Blavatzkys Kinder* (Blavatzky's Children). Ruth Westheimer and Jonathan Mark's amusing study *Heavenly Sex* was published in German under the title *Himmlische Lust: Liebe und Sex in der jüdischen Kultur*.

Amos Oz, who won the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade Association in 1992, was one of the regularly translated Israeli authors. In 1995 his novel *Nenn die Nacht nicht Nacht* (Don't Call the Night Night) appeared. Among other well-received Israeli books were Yoram Kaniuk's novel *Tante Schlomzion die Grosse* (Aunt Shlomzion the Great), David Schütz's autobiographical account of his German-Israeli experiences, *Das Herz der Wassermelone. Deutsch-israelische Erfahrungen* (The Core of the Watermelon), and Shulamit Lapid's novel *Lokalausgabe* (Local Issue).

The growing field of feminist research in Germany produced a number of studies about the Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt, among them the correspondence between Arendt and Kurt Blumenfeld . . . *In keinem Besitz verwurzelt. Die Korrespondenz* (Rooted in No Possessions), edited by Ingeborg Normann and Iris Pilling. In connection with the recent debate about Martin Heidegger's involvement with the Nazi regime, Hannah Arendt's relationship with him also became a focus of interest. Noteworthy in this regard were Elzbieta Ettinger's *Hannah Arendt–Martin Heidegger. Eine Geschichte* (Hannah Arendt–Martin Heidegger: A History), originally published in the United States, and Monika Plessner's *Die Argonauten auf Long Island: Begegnungen mit Hannah Arendt, Theodor W. Adorno, Gershom Scholem und anderen* (The Argonauts of Long Island: En-

counters with Hannah Arendt, Theodor W. Adorno, Gershom Scholem, and Others).

The diaries of the perennially popular Gershom Scholem, the German-Jewish Kabbalah scholar, were now being edited by Karlfried Gründer and others. A volume covering the years 1913–1917 was published in 1995. The memoirs of Berlin rabbi Malwin Warschauer, *Im jüdischen Leben* (In Jewish Life), who served the Berlin New Synagogue for 40 years and survived the Nazis because he managed to escape to England, where he died in 1945, were a bestseller in Berlin.

The existence of the Serb Jewish writer and winner of the Austrian State Award for European Literature, Aleksandar Tisma, was discovered by Germans in the 1990s, related to interest in the war in former Yugoslavia. His novel about the massacre of the Jewish population of Novi Sad in 1942, *Das Buch Blam* (The Blam Book), was serialized in the leading daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1995. He also won the 1996 Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding.

Deutschland wohin? (Whereto, Germany?), edited by Frank Schirmacher of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, published in spring 1996, presents the texts of discussions on German sociopolitical topics between Ignatz Bubis, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and member of the Free Liberal Democratic Party, and Wolfgang Schäuble, chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the German Christian Democratic Party. Also, Michel Friedman, member of the board of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, published *Zukunft ohne Vergessen. Ein jüdisches Leben in Deutschland* (Future Without Oblivion: A Jewish Life in Germany), in the form of a dialogue with TV journalist Ernst Dieter Lueg, also in 1995.

Books on Jewish life for children and youth were also popular. The small Alibaba Verlag publishing house in Frankfurt was a pioneer and for many years the leader in the field. In 1996, despite financial difficulties, it continued to publish important books, such as Yuri Suhl's *David soll leben* (David Should Live), a translation from English of a story about a Jewish childhood in Poland after the German occupation.

Former Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek's latest autobiographical work, *Jerusalem und ich. Memoiren* (Jerusalem and I: Memoirs), was published in Germany in 1995 and very well received.

Personalia

A number of persons were honored for their contributions to German-Jewish relations in different fields.

The internationally renowned Israeli artist Micha Ullman was awarded the Käthe Kollwitz Prize 1995 for his complete works, which include a sculpture "Niemand" (Nobody) and a subterranean monument in Berlin, "Bibliothek" (The Library)—an empty room—to commemorate the Nazi book-burning of May 10, 1933.

German-born Israeli writer and politician Uri Avnery was awarded the Erich Maria Remarque Peace Prize of the City of Osnabrück for his over-40-year struggle for peace between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East.

The senior cantor of the Jewish community of Berlin for 48 years, Estrongo Nachama, was awarded the Great Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in November 1995. The 77-year-old survivor of the Holocaust was renowned as a singer throughout the country.

The Heinz Galinski Foundation Prize, named for the deceased long-term former head of the Jewish community of Berlin and president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, was awarded in 1995 to the former Israeli ambassador to Germany, Asher Ben-Nathan, and to the former mayor of Berlin and later German ambassador to Israel, Klaus Schütz.

Sociologist Jürgen Habermas was awarded an honorary doctorate by Tel Aviv University in 1995 for his opposition to revisionist tendencies among German historians attempting to depict the history of the Third Reich in a positive light. Johannes Gerster, vice-president of the German-Israeli Society, was awarded an honorary doctorate by Ben-Gurion University of Beersheba. The German-Jewish historian and director of London's Leo Baeck Institute, 75-year-old Arnold Paucker, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Potsdam.

In memory of Frankfurt banker and Social Democratic Party member Walter Hesselbach, a longtime supporter of German-Israeli economic relations who played an important role in the amelioration of German-Jewish relations in Hesse, a forest of 5,000 trees was planted in Israel in 1995 by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in the "Forest of the German Federal States," at the initiative of the Jewish National Fund.

The 1995 Leo Baeck Prize, the highest distinction of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, was awarded to Johannes Rau, prime minister of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia for his life's work and his contributions to German-Jewish relations. Previous prizewinners included the former president of the Federal Republic of Germany, Richard von Weizsäcker. In 1995 Rau also received the highest award of the Keren Kayemeth Le-Israel, the Jewish National Fund, the Golden Olive Branch, as a friend of the State of Israel and the sponsor of many social projects there, as well as for his commitment to Christian-Jewish dialogue.

Germany's leading literary critic, Marcel Reich-Ranicki, who was born in Poland and escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto, was awarded the 1995 Ludwig Börne Prize for "outstanding achievements in the field of essay, literary criticism, and commentary" in the spirit of the writer Börne. Ludwig Börne, born in 1786 in the ghetto of Frankfurt as Judah Loew Baruch, died in exile in Paris in 1837.

Polish writer Andrzej Szczypiorski, a non-Jew, was awarded the 1995 Andreas Gryphius Prize for his efforts on behalf of Polish-German reconciliation. Szczypiorski had published many articles on the subject of Polish anti-Semitism, about

which he also published a novel, *Die schöne Frau Seidenman* (The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman), which became a bestseller in Germany.

On January 25, 1996, German chancellor Helmut Kohl received the B'nai B'rith Gold Medal for humanitarian merit and for his support for Israel within the European Community, as Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres stressed in his laudatory speech.

Ignatz Bubis, the president of the General Council of Jews in Germany, was awarded the 1996 Theodor Heuss Prize for open-mindedness and effective dialogue with all segments of German society. The Liberal Theodor Heuss was the first president of the Federal German Republic of Germany after the war and a friend of Israel.

Austrian Jewish writer Robert Menasse delivered the opening speech at the Frankfurt International Book Fair in fall 1995. Menasse was also awarded the Hugo Ball Prize of the city of Pirmasens in 1996. The former mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, was awarded the Tolerance Prize of the city of Münster in 1996 for his commitment to peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs.

The president of the German Parliament, Prof. Rita Süßmuth, was awarded the 1995 Josef Neuberger Medal of the Jewish Community of Düsseldorf for her support of minorities and her attitude toward German history; German film director Michael Verhoeven received the 1996 medal for his sensitive treatment of the subject of the Holocaust, especially in his last film, *Mother's Courage*, about the mother of George Tabori, the Hungarian-born Jewish stage director.

The official cultural center of the Republic of Hungary in Berlin, Haus Ungarn, acquired a Jewish director in fall 1995, the writer György Dalos, who was well known in Germany for his book *The Circumcision*, about postwar Hungarian-Jewish life.

Several prominent Jews died in the period under review. Gottfried Bermann Fischer, publisher, aged 98, died in September 1995 in his Italian domicile, but he was buried in the traditional Jewish cemetery of Weissensee in Berlin alongside members of his family. In 1996: Sen. Julius Spokojny, president of the Jewish community of Schwaben-Augsburg, one of the pioneers of Jewish life in Germany, member of the administrative board of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and of the Senate of Bavaria, in January, aged 73; and Hermann Kesten, one of the most popular writers in the Weimar Republic and recipient of the prestigious German literary award, the Büchner Prize, in 1974 in Switzerland, where he had lived since the end of the war, in May, aged 96.

ELVIRA GRÖZINGER

Austria

National Affairs

THE SECOND HALF OF 1995 and the first half of 1996 saw Austria facing possible political turmoil. On October 12, 1995, the conservative, center-right People's Party abruptly abandoned the coalition led by the center-left Social Democratic Party, thereby precipitating a political crisis. Elections were held on December 17, 1995, barely 14 months after the last national election. Officially, the falling out was over differences on how to reduce the ballooning budget deficit, with the Social Democrats (SPO) favoring increased taxes and the People's Party (OVP) largely supporting a reduction in spending on social services.

Chancellor Franz Vranitzky's Social Democratic Party finished a strong first with 38.6 percent of the vote, up from last year's result. The People's Party gained 28.3 percent of the vote, little changed from what it had won the previous year. Contrary to expectations, the far-right Freedom Party (FPO) finished third with 21.9 percent of the vote, a drop of almost a half of a percent. In preelection polls, the FPO, which had explicitly called for a ban on all new immigrants, appeared poised to become Austria's second-strongest party. Instead, for the first time since he took control in 1986, Jörg Haider's party failed to increase its share of the vote. The two small parties, the Greens and the centrist Liberal Forum, also suffered setbacks. The Greens dropped from 7.31 percent to 4.80, while the Liberals showed only a minor loss, falling from 5.97 percent to 5.51 percent of the vote.

Overall, the Social Democrats won 71 seats in Parliament, a gain of six; the People's Party won 53 seats, one more than it had held; and the Freedom Party took 40 seats, a loss of two in the 183-seat legislature.

Public-opinion polls showed two-thirds of Austrians favoring a broad coalition of the Social Democrats and the People's Party. After two months of post-election bargaining over the allocation of ministerial posts and policy positions, the two parties announced on March 7, 1996, that they had resolved their differences and would form a new government.

Under terms of the coalition pact, it was agreed that the budget deficit would be reduced and the public sector pared down so that Austria could meet the criteria for participating in the European monetary union. After it took office, the new government pushed through an austerity package that sharply curtailed social-service programs, early retirement privileges, and student subsidies; froze civil-service salaries; and raised certain taxes. In foreign-policy matters, the OVP

made some headway in getting the SPO to participate fully in common European security policy, which many Social Democrats had long resisted out of fear this could compromise Austria's neutrality.

The failure of the FPO to increase its standing at the polls was a serious blow to the political ambitions of its leader. At the previous election, Haider had triumphantly pledged that he would become chancellor by 1998. A large majority of the electorate, including practically all of the country's Jews, welcomed the election outcome. Austria's Jewish community viewed Haider's xenophobia, his strident anti-immigrant rhetoric, and his "Austria first" position with great concern. (In the 1994 national referendum on whether Austria should join the European Union, which was supported by two-thirds of the electorate, Haider spearheaded opposition to membership.) Although Haider had no public record of anti-Semitism, one in three of his supporters, according to an American Jewish Committee poll released in May 1995, harbored strong anti-Semitic sentiments.

Compounding Jewish mistrust of Haider were statements he had made in the past about the Nazis, praising the "orderly labor policies during the Third Reich" and insisting that Romas (Gypsies) had been taken to work camps, not to concentration camps, during World War II. Just before the 1995 federal election, Haider provoked a political storm with the release of a videotape showing him addressing a meeting of Nazi SS veterans in Austria. Among the guests at this conclave was Gudrun Burwitz, daughter of Heinrich Himmler, chief of the SS and the Gestapo. In the videotape, which was broadcast on German television and widely reported in Austrian newspapers, Haider called the veterans "dear friends" and praised them as "upstanding citizens who still have character and who have remained true to their beliefs despite the greatest opposition." While it appeared that the speech would cost Haider votes, the final result showed his party suffering only a small decline in popularity. With a little more than a million votes—that is, almost 22 percent of the electorate—going to the Freedom Party, Austria now had the strongest far-right party of any country in Western Europe.

Federal President Thomas Klestil paid a working visit to President Bill Clinton in Washington on October 19, 1995, underscoring the excellent ties between Austria and the United States. Among the topics discussed were the situation in the former Yugoslavia and developments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which were of vital concern to both Vienna and Washington. The Austrian president visited the Holocaust Memorial Museum, where he was welcomed by Miles Lerman, chairman of the museum. President Klestil also addressed a meeting of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which honored him with its Humanitarian Award. In presenting the award, Milton Wolf, president of the organization, praised Austria for having provided food, shelter, and relief to the 125,000 Soviet Jews who passed through Austrian transit facilities on their way to Israel and to the West.

THE WALDHEIM AFFAIR: A POSTSCRIPT

In a memoir published in spring 1996, Kurt Waldheim, former United Nations secretary-general and onetime president of Austria, ascribed his banishment from the United States to a conspiracy involving American Jews. Specifically, he attributed his exclusion from the United States in part to the World Jewish Congress. Elan Steinberg, executive director of the congress, denied that there had been any such attempt by the organization. Waldheim had been barred since 1987 from entering the United States, when the Justice Department determined that he "assisted or participated in" the deportation, mistreatment, and execution of civilians and Allied soldiers in World War II. In the newly published book, *The Answer*, he again denied the charges and said that the decision of the U.S. government to place him on a watch list of unwanted persons was unjustified. In his autobiography, *The Glass Palace*, published in 1985, Waldheim omitted all reference to his military service in the Balkans between 1942 and 1945. He subsequently acknowledged serving as a junior staff officer, but the Justice Department maintained that he was an intelligence officer. He claimed that he had been made into a scapegoat and denied committing war crimes "directly or indirectly."^m

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

No acts of anti-Semitism were reported in the period covered. There were, however, a spate of letter bombs sent to different people and organizations resulting in some injuries. This pattern of violence had continued for several years. Although the police had so far been unable to apprehend the perpetrators, they suspected a showdowry racist group calling itself the Bajuvarian Liberation Army, which aimed to reunite German-speaking peoples in Bavaria, the Alps, and along the Danube River, a unified region between the sixth and twelfth centuries.

Israel and the Middle East

Relations between Austria and Israel remained cordial, and contacts between them at the cultural, scientific, and technical levels continued to develop. For the most part, these contacts were based on previous agreements signed between the two countries, since political developments, including the holding of elections, in both Austria and Israel slowed the development of new initiatives. An exception to this was the dispatch to Israel of a high-ranking delegation led by Peter Hochenfelder, head of the Foreign Ministry's political section, to review bilateral and multilateral issues affecting the two countries. As for Israel, normal contacts started up following the election in May 1996, among the first of which were bilateral consultations held in Vienna in June to strengthen cultural contacts.

A sign of the friendly relations between the two countries was the decision of

Chancellor Vranitzky to attend the funeral of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995. The chancellor, along with Vice-Chancellor Wolfgang Shussel and Mayor Michael Haupl of Vienna, also attended a ceremony at the Stadttempel on March 7, 1996, honoring the victims of the Hamas terror attacks in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ashkelon. A large crowd of mourners attended the service, which concluded with a silent march to Judenplatz. Also attending were Israeli ambassador Yoel Sher, Paul Grosz, president of the Jewish community organization, and Chief Rabbi Chaim Eisenberg, who delivered the eulogy.

The Israel Museum in Jerusalem mounted a special exhibition of 85 masterpieces drawn from the collection of Vienna's Kunsthistorische Museum. The famed Kunsthistorische agreed to lend the paintings and statues to mark the 85th birthday of Vienna-born Teddy Kollek, former mayor of Jerusalem. Featured among the paintings was "The Destruction of Jerusalem" by Nicolas Poussin, based on the depiction of the Arch of Titus in Rome. The exhibition opened on June 1, 1996, and was scheduled to run until October.

Holocaust-Related Matters

The special fund of 500 million schillings (\$50 million) established by the Austrian government in June 1995 "for the victims of National Socialism" began processing applications and making payments to eligible persons. Of the estimated 20,000 eligible people, 18,700 had already been contacted. The amount paid to each beneficiary was fixed at S70,000 (\$7,000), though in cases of special hardship, this could be tripled. It was generally understood that the payments were to be seen as a goodwill gesture by the government and were not to be considered as reparations to the victims.

The legislation setting up the fund set forth the conditions for eligibility. These included people who were persecuted because of their political opinions, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or were considered by the Nazis as asocial; people who were forced to flee Austria in order to escape persecution also qualified for payments. Other conditions included certification of Austrian nationality as of March 13, 1938, and proof of residence in the country. The regulations were subsequently eased to permit payment to the estate of an individual who died while his or her claim was being processed. As of December 1995, payments had been made to 1,760 people, most of them in Austria, the United States, Israel, and Argentina; the youngest of these recipients was 52 years of age and the oldest 104.

The idea for the creation of the fund gained support following Chancellor Vranitzky's statement to Parliament several years earlier that Austrians were not only victims of Hitlerism but also collaborators in their evil doings. In calling for establishment of the fund, the Constitutional Committee of Parliament stated that Austria should "remember all the immense wrongs inflicted on millions of

human beings by Nazism as well as the fact that Austrians, too, were involved in these crimes. . . .”

According to the general secretary of the fund, Hannah Lessing-Askapa, reaction among the beneficiaries varied widely. Many expressed satisfaction that the Austrian government had come around to making this belated gesture acknowledging their suffering at the hands of Austrians during the Nazi era. Others shrugged off the monetary payments as being too little and too late.

At the initiative of Simon Wiesenthal, the City of Vienna decided to erect a monument in remembrance of Austrian victims of the Holocaust. Following an international competition for the design of the monument, in January 1996 a committee of architects selected the design submitted by British architect Rachel Whiteread. The monument was to be erected in Judenplatz in Vienna's first district. In erecting the monument, care was to be taken to insure access to the site of a recently discovered synagogue dating back to the 12th or 13th century.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish community of Austria was undergoing changes in size, age, and composition. It was getting somewhat larger and younger and becoming more varied, though its growth was expected to slow, if not stop, due to recently enacted restrictive immigration and asylum laws. About 8,000 Jews were registered with the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, the official Jewish communal body, but knowledgeable observers claimed that the actual number of Jews in the country was at least twice that. The overwhelming majority of Jews were concentrated in Vienna, with only about 300 to 400 making their homes in the large provincial cities of Salzburg, Innsbruck, Graz, and Linz.

With the virtual cessation of immigration from the former Soviet Union, the small but steady growth was now due to the increased fertility rate, mainly among Sephardic and Orthodox Jews. It was generally agreed that the Sephardic Jews—most of them from the former Soviet republics of Georgia and Uzbekistan (Bukhara) and a smaller number from Tajikistan—would soon outstrip the Ashkenazic community in size.

Communal Affairs

As a result of the reorganization of its social services, the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (IKG), the representative body of Austrian Jewry, was no longer involved in the direct provision of such services. It now oversaw the operations of

ESRA, the agency entrusted with responsibility for administering the community's wide array of social programs, which mainly served people with Holocaust-related problems and the large Jewish immigrant population. Most of this aid was directed toward the elderly, youth, and families, and included legal advice to recent immigrants; financial aid to people in need; help with family problems, housing, and work for unemployed young people. Most of ESRA's 10-million schilling (\$1 million) budget was covered by grants from the Austrian government, with the IKG also making a contribution. In 1995, the agency's outpatient clinic provided psychotherapeutic and related assistance to 1,006 people with Holocaust-related problems and to immigrants. Its social-service section had contact with 2,692 individuals and families in need of financial, housing, legal, and employment assistance.

A senior day center (Tagesheim) was opened in Vienna in September 1995 for elderly Jews living alone. The facility offered game and reading rooms, artistic activities, concerts, lectures, and inexpensive meals. It served as a vital meeting place for seniors, many of whom had few friends and relatives.

The B'nai Brith chapter of Vienna, with 86 members, sponsored programs at the national and international levels. It provided scholarships for study in Austria to a number of Israeli students and assisted in the formation of B'nai Brith chapters in several Eastern European cities, notably Sofia, Prague, and Pressburg. It also cosponsored a conference on Theodor Herzl in March 1996. Jacob Allerhand, professor of Jewish studies at the University of Vienna, was president of the Vienna chapter until the spring of 1996, when his term of office ended.

Culture

The Jewish Museum of Vienna reopened its doors to the public on February 29, 1996, after five months of extensive renovations. With its additional space, the museum expanded its permanent exhibitions and offered more varied temporary exhibitions. Among the permanent exhibitions were the Max Berger collection of Jewish artifacts and the artistic works of American artist Nancy Spero on Jewish religion and history.

The first special exhibition, "Wien Heute," which ran from March 1 to April 14, 1996, presented a collection of 130 black-and-white photos taken by the well-known Viennese Jewish photographer Harry Weber, depicting diverse scenes of contemporary Jewish life in Vienna. From May 3 to June 30, the museum presented an exhibition on chess, highlighting its role in the arts, sciences, and politics. Under the title "The Song of Rationality—The World in 64 Squares" (Das Lied der Vernunft—Die Welt in 64 Feldern), artistic chess pieces from the Middle Ages to the present were on display. This was followed from May 24 through July 7 with a special exhibition of the life and works of the Austrian-Jewish actress Stella Kadmon (1902–1989). Kadmon started her career between the wars

and founded the Lieber Augustin cabaret in 1931. After emigrating to Palestine, she continued her career as an actress and dramatist. After World War II, her Theater of Courage became an important Viennese institution. In keeping with its goal of showing diverse strands of Austria's rich cultural past, the museum put on display 70 of the most important oil paintings and graphic works of the impressionist painter Tina Blau, who was known for her landscapes of Austria, Italy, and Holland, as well as still lifes.

In connection with the chess exhibition, the Jewish Museum, in collaboration with *Der Standard*, a daily newspaper in Vienna, sponsored a chess festival featuring the Hungarian Jewish grandmaster Sofia Polgar, who played simultaneously against 20 players. Part of the festival, which ran from June 1, 1996, until October, was an exhibition of books and artifacts on chess and the showing of the famous film *Chess Fever*, produced by Vsevolod Pudovkin in 1926.

The museum maintains its own library, which is open to scholars and researchers. It contains 25,000 volumes, as well as periodicals, devoted to the history of Austrian Jewry. Its collection includes a number of important *sifrei kodesh*, sacred texts, as well as books published by the famous publishing house of Anton Schmid. The library, located in the complex housing the offices of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde on Seitenstettingasse, recently completed cataloguing and computerizing its collection of German and English titles and was working on a project to do the same for its Hebrew titles.

Jewish Culture Week was held in Vienna, November 5–28, 1995. In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps, part of the week was devoted to themes of the Holocaust. The program featured films, concerts, readings of poetry and literature, plays, and lectures.

A conference celebrating the centennial of the publication of Theodor Herzl's *The Jewish State (Der Judenstaat)* was held in Vienna, March 18 to 21. The sponsors of the conference were the City of Vienna and the B'nai Brith chapter of Vienna. Among the participants who presented papers and participated in discussions were scholars from Austria, Israel, France, Italy, and the United States.

Personalia

The prestigious Dr. Karl Renner Prize, named for Austria's first president and awarded only every three years, was presented to Rabbi Arthur Schneier, founder and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation and rabbi of Park East Synagogue in New York City, in March 1996. Rabbi Schneier was recognized particularly for his initiatives on behalf of religious freedom and human freedom in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and for his efforts in conflict resolution in the former Yugoslavia. Rabbi Schneier, a Holocaust survivor, was born in Vienna. The award was presented at Vienna City Hall by Mayor Michael Haupl in a ceremony that was attended by U.S. ambassador Swanee Hunt, Israeli

ambassador Yoel Sher, and dignitaries of the Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Islamic faiths, as well as officials of the Austrian government.

The Austrian government conferred on Prof. Jacob Allerhand the Cross of Honor for Science and Art for his writings and lectures on the role of Jews in Austrian literature.

MURRAY GORDON

East-Central Europe

THROUGHOUT LATE 1995 and early 1996 Jewish communities in East-Central Europe continued the process of revival that mushroomed after the collapse of Communism in 1989–90. Numbers of self-identifying Jews remained small, but some communities registered growth in membership, and younger as well as older people continued to flock to classes, schools, community centers, and other formal and informal programs devoted to Judaism and Jewish life.

Increasingly, the question of community development and planning for the future became important both for local leaders and for the international Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, and World Jewish Relief that funded both educational and social-welfare programs in these countries.

Contacts among Jewish communities and individual Jews in various countries were encouraged. The European Council of Jewish Communities (ECJC) continued to be a clearinghouse to coordinate a growing number of conferences, seminars, get-togethers, and exchanges. E-mail and Internet links proved important in fostering communication and information exchange.

The restitution of Jewish property taken over during or after World War II by the state or private individuals, as well as compensation for Holocaust victims, continued to be issues of concern. In December 1995 the European Parliament passed a resolution urging countries of Central and Eastern Europe to “adopt appropriate legislation regarding the return of plundered property of Jewish communities and Jewish institutions” and asked those countries to “adopt appropriate legislation for the return to its rightful owners of other property plundered by Communists or Nazis and their accomplices.”

Xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and nationalism remained a concern, but internal issues were increasingly seen as crucial to the future of local communities.

Albania

Albanian president Sali Berisha made an official visit to Israel in January 1996 to promote political and economic ties. During the trip he signed two economic cooperation agreements with Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres, establishing “favored-nation status” between the two countries and providing for Albanians to be trained in Israel. Berisha also urged Israeli businesses to invest in Albania.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Most of the approximately 300 Jews who were living in Albania when the Communists fell left for Israel in 1991, leaving just over 60 Jews in the country. Under what had probably been the most repressive Communist regime in Europe, all religious practice had been banned, and Albanian Jews knew virtually nothing about their heritage or religious practice. Although there was no officially constituted Jewish community in Albania, individual Jews increasingly asserted their identity and joined together for ceremonies, celebrations, and study, largely supported by the JDC, which also sponsored an Italian Jewish student's travel to Albania to teach local Jews about their traditions.

At Passover there was a community seder, and in December 1995 the student helped organize the public celebration of Hanukkah in Tirana, the Albanian capital, for the first time in more than 50 years. An invitation to the event appeared in a local newspaper, and more than 50 local Jews attended the celebration at a Tirana restaurant. Virtually all known Albanian Jewish youth—about 15 youngsters—attended the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation/JDC international Jewish summer camp at Szarvas, Hungary, in August 1995.

Bulgaria

The transformation from Communist to free-market economy continued its slow pace—about 90 percent of businesses were still in state hands—leading to economic stagnation and plunging living conditions.

In March 1996 Bulgaria said it would recall its ambassador to Switzerland following her marriage to a Bulgarian-born man who lived in Switzerland and was known there as an anti-Semite who admired Hitler and denied the Holocaust. Bulgaria's Jewish organization Shalom wrote to the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry expressing concern over the matter.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

There were about 6,000 Jews in Bulgaria, about half of whom lived in the capital, Sofia. Many were elderly and lived below the poverty line. Shalom, the main organization of the Jews in Bulgaria, had 19 branches throughout the country. Supported in part by the JDC and Britain's World Jewish Relief as well as by income from property restitution, Shalom provided social welfare and other assistance to more than 1,400 individuals. Pensioners' health clubs operated in several cities. Shalom also ran a variety of Jewish cultural and educational programs including a community newspaper, a book publishing operation, choirs, a Hebrew dance group, and even a chamber orchestra.

About 40 Jewish children were enrolled in a Jewish kindergarten program in Sofia, and more than 60 took part there in Jewish Sunday school. More than 300

Jewish children were enrolled in the Jewish elementary school in Sofia, which operated on the premises of a public school. This became the first primary school in Bulgaria to go onto the Internet, with the opening of a computer lab sponsored by the JDC, ORT, and the Doron Foundation.

Jewish summer and winter camp programs for children and entire families drew hundreds of participants, as did Hanukkah celebrations and community seders in Sofia and the provinces, often under the guidance of Rabbi Behar Kahalane, community rabbi since 1994. In December 1995 the first traditional Jewish wedding in more than 40 years took place in Sofia, and in 1995–96 two groups of boys and young men underwent ritual circumcision.

Czech Republic

Based on its significant economic progress, the Czech Republic became the first former Soviet-bloc country to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which represents the world's 27 more developed economies. In January 1996 it submitted a formal application for membership in the European Union. Still, Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus and his Civic Democratic Party fared less well than expected in parliamentary elections held May 31–June 1, and were forced to form a minority coalition government.

Israeli president Ezer Weizman paid a three-day visit to the Czech Republic in January 1996. President Vaclav Havel awarded Weizman his government's highest honor, the Order of the White Lion with Chain. Weizman also received an award from Charles University and signed an agricultural agreement. The visit was interrupted when Havel flew with Weizman on Weizman's private jet to Paris for the funeral of former French president François Mitterrand.

On May 20, 1996, the Czech Republic signed a free-trade agreement with Israel—its first free-trade agreement with a country outside Europe and Israel's first such agreement with a European country outside the European Union. Meanwhile, Israeli investment in the Czech Republic grew, with dozens of Israeli businesses operating in the country, ranging from the Himi Jeans chain of casual clothing shops to the Scitex software and computer graphics company. Also in May, Prague Castle became the first site outside Israel for a traveling photographic exhibition on the life of assassinated Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. Rabin's widow, Leah, along with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel and Czech president Havel, attended the opening of the exhibit.

In the summer of 1995, Parliament amended the penal code to warrant stiffer sentences for racially motivated hate crimes. Nonetheless, in March 1996 authorities announced that 1995 had seen a huge growth in the number of such crimes, mainly directed against Romanians (Gypsies). The trend appeared to continue in the first part of 1996, with the newspaper *Lidove Noviny* reporting that in the first three months of 1996, 36 skinhead attacks against Romanians were reported, while in all of 1995, 84 such cases were reported. On December 10, 1995,

Czech chief rabbi Karol Sidon expressed solidarity with Romanies, taking part in a demonstration protesting anti-Gypsy violence and addressing the 400 participants. "I think there is racism in this country and that it is necessary to draw attention to this problem," he said. "At the moment, Czech racism is directed at Gypsies, but that doesn't mean it can't change in the future and be directed at some other group. That is why it is dangerous for the whole society."

While few hate manifestations were directed against Jews, several incidents were reported. Two firebombs were thrown at the Jubilee Synagogue in Prague, October 6, 1995, but caused no damage. The central Jewish organization, the Federation of Jewish Communities, which also received a series of threatening anonymous letters and phone calls, issued a statement saying that this was the most serious act of anti-Jewish violence so far in the Czech Republic, "proving that militant anti-Semitism is present in the Czech Republic and current counter-measures have not been sufficient." A few incidents of vandalism in Jewish cemeteries were reported, and in November a Holocaust memorial in Teplice was spray-painted with Nazi graffiti. In June 1996 vandals spray-painted swastikas and a star of David hanging from a gallows on a former synagogue in an industrial neighborhood of Prague, now used as an art gallery and cultural center.

At the end of May 1996, Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal was awarded an honorary law doctorate by Palacky University in Olomouc, east of Prague.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

About 3,000 people registered themselves as members of the organized Czech Jewish community. Although this number was roughly the same as before the so-called Velvet Revolution of 1989–90, the demographics were much different. Many older Jews had died in the interim, and many younger Jews had joined the community. There were ten organized Jewish communities in the country, linked under the umbrella of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic. Prague was the largest with about 1,300 members. In addition, an undetermined number of other Jews, or people of Jewish origin, were living in the Czech Republic.

The constitution of the federation allowed various Jewish organizations to participate in it as affiliated collective members. These groups included B'nai B'rith, WIZO, Maccabi, Hidden Child, and others. It was estimated that these organizations had a membership of up to 10,000 people.

The most important organization newly affiliated to the federation was Bejt Praha, a non-Orthodox "open Jewish community" directed largely to the several thousand American and other expatriate Jews living in Prague, but also including local Czech Jews. Bejt Praha, which was founded at the end of 1994, sponsored weekly Israeli dance evenings and Kabbalat Shabbat speaker-and-discussion groups twice a month as well as special programs and events, often linked to Jewish holidays and open to the general public. At the High Holy Days, Bejt Praha

helped organize non-Orthodox services for more than 400 people in the Spanish Synagogue, which had long been unused. Services were conducted by Rabbi Arnold Turetsky of White Plains, New York. More than 300 people attended a Hanukkah party organized by Bejt Praha, which featured candle lighting by Chief Rabbi Sidon, a speech by the Israeli ambassador, and music by a Czech klezmer band. The much smaller non-Orthodox Havurah Bejt Simcha also hosted outside speakers at weekly Friday evening meetings in Prague.

A new kosher food and snack store opened in Prague, and 1995–96 saw the first full year of production of kosher vodka, plum brandy, and sherry by the Moravian distillery Jelinek Vizovice, under the supervision of Chief Rabbi Sidon.

Two major issues were the focus of Jewish community attention: the restitution of Jewish property and the compensation of Holocaust victims. On the basis of legislation and government decisions over the past few years, the Federation of Jewish Communities had to negotiate separately with individual municipalities to regain the former Jewish community properties it was agreed should be returned. By mid-1996, fewer than half of the properties had been turned over. There was friction, however, between the federation and the World Jewish Restitution Organization as to how to secure and manage returned communal property. The federation also held ongoing negotiations on obtaining compensation for Holocaust victims. The issue was complicated by the broader issue of Czech-German relations and the delicate political problem of the hundreds of thousands of Sudeten Germans who were expelled from Czechoslovakia after World War II.

Numerous cultural events of Jewish interest or content were organized by Jewish communities in Prague and other towns and cities. In Prague, there were concerts, lectures, plays, performances, or other events each week. The federation's Sefer publishing house brought out several books a year, and a weekly radio program, "Shalom Aleichem," was estimated to have one million listeners. One of the most important cultural events was the monthlong Old Testament in the Arts festival, held in September 1995, under the cosponsorship of the Israeli embassy. This festival, which drew tens of thousands of people, featured a wide range of exhibits and performances in numerous venues around Prague. Concurrently with the festival, the Center for Jewish Art of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem held an international symposium in Prague on Jewish art in Bohemia and Moravia. The Jewish Museum in Prague announced ambitious plans to augment and revise exhibits, to install a state of the art security system, and to set up a new education center.

In July 1995 Prague was the site of a major international conference on "Planning for the Future of European Jewry," which drew 200 Jewish community leaders, policymakers, and scholars from Europe, the United States, and Israel.

On Holocaust Memorial Day in April 1996, the Holocaust memorial at Prague's historic Pinkas Synagogue was reopened after nearly four years of restoration work. The memorial consists of the names of nearly 80,000 Czech

Jews killed by the Nazis written on the walls of the synagogue. The names were inscribed in the 1950s, but were removed under the Communist regime after the synagogue was closed for renovation in 1968. In 1992, after the ouster of the Communists, workers began to reinscribe all the names.

Two leading members of the Czech Jewish community died in the period under review. Josef Klansky, an author and journalist, the correspondent in Prague for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and the *London Jewish Chronicle*, died in July 1995, aged 74. Zeno Dostal, filmmaker, writer, and chairman of the Prague Jewish community, died in January 1996, aged 62. Dostal wrote a 12-volume series of novels and made two films. The second and final film, released in the spring of 1995, was about an Orthodox Jewish community in Carpathia in the 1930s.

Hungary

According to public-opinion polls, the popularity of the governing coalition of the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Alliance of Free Democrats dropped due to austerity measures instituted in 1995, which led to protests and strikes. Inflation in 1995 was 29 percent and unemployment was 13 percent.

On March 4, 1996, a Budapest municipal court, citing freedom-of-speech provisions, ruled that two leading Hungarian neo-Nazis were innocent of violating the law against incitement to hatred and use of prohibited symbols. Albert Szabo, 41, and Istvan Gyorkos, 55, had gone on trial in November 1995, charged with incitement to racial hatred, using prohibited swastika-like symbols, and circulating neo-Nazi propaganda. Five juveniles were also tried on the same charges. Szabo and Gyorkos founded the extreme right-wing Hungarian World National Popular Rule Party, which regarded itself as the successor to the wartime fascist Arrow Cross. After this party was banned by the Hungarian Supreme Court in 1994, the two men founded a similar group, the Hungarian Welfare Association, which they claimed had 3,000 members. Hungarian Jews bitterly protested the acquittal verdict, and Prime Minister Gyula Horn was quoted as saying he was shocked by the ruling. About 2,000 Jews and non-Jews staged a rally both to protest the verdict and to condemn recent Hamas terrorist bombings in Israel.

On March 13, just days after the neo-Nazis were acquitted, Parliament approved an amendment toughening the legal response to racially motivated crimes. Anyone who attacked a member of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group would now be subject to five years' imprisonment, and anyone who incited hatred against any national ethnic, racial, religious, or social group would be subject to imprisonment for up to three years. In the first verdict based on the new law, the Supreme Court on March 16 convicted a self-described Nazi for stabbing another man while using anti-Semitic language and sentenced him to two years in prison.

Various anti-Jewish incidents took place. In December 1995 police thwarted a firebombing of the main Dohany Street Synagogue in Budapest, catching a man

inside the synagogue's courtyard as he prepared the explosive device. In the spring of 1996, vandals damaged a Jewish cemetery in Budapest as well as cemeteries in at least two provincial towns. Police stepped up security at Jewish institutions in April 1996 after an Afghani, angry at Israel's bombing of southern Lebanon, stabbed and lightly wounded two staff members at a Budapest Jewish school.

Relations with Israel were good, with increased contact on many levels, including educational: about 800 Israeli university students were believed to be studying in Hungary. In November 1995 Israeli specialists met with Serb, Croat, and Muslim health-care professionals in the Hungarian town of Visegrad for a three-day conference and workshop on treatment methods for war trauma, organized by UK Jewish Aid. Also in November, after five years of bargaining, the Israeli Teva pharmaceutical firm finalized a deal enabling it to purchase a majority stake in the Hungarian firm Biogal Pharmaceuticals. Since Israel and Hungary restored diplomatic relations in 1989, Israeli firms had invested more than \$200 million in Hungary. Hungarian defense minister Gyorgy Keleti met in Israel on February 29 with Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres. They discussed cooperation on security matters, the Middle East peace process, and the possibility of Israeli aircraft companies upgrading Hungarian MIG-21 fighter planes.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Estimates of Jews in Hungary ranged from 54,000 to more than 100,000. It was hard to give a precise figure because the vast majority were assimilated and had no contact with the Jewish community or Jewish organizations. About 6,000 to 7,000 people, most of them elderly, were registered as members of the Jewish community.

About 90 percent of Hungary's Jews lived in Budapest, with the others scattered in more than two dozen smaller towns and cities. The Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary and the Association of Jewish Communities in Budapest operated under a single joint executive director and were supported by the JDC in carrying out religious, social-welfare, and education activities.

Regular religious services were held in fewer than a dozen provincial towns. At Passover, the JDC and the Jewish Agency brought volunteers from Israel who traveled to three small provincial communities—in Nagykanizsa, Zalaegerszeg, and Veszprem—to help local Jews prepare for the holiday and to celebrate community seders, the first seders in these communities since World War II. Several dozen people attended the seders in each town, and local television ran programs about the activity.

Most practicing Jews were Neolog (Conservative/Reform), as were the chief rabbi and the Rabbinical Seminary. There was also a small Orthodox community with its own rabbinate and administrative organ, the Autonomous Orthodox Community of Hungary. In addition, Sim Shalom, founded in 1994, operated in Budapest as a small progressive Jewish group independent of the official Jewish

institutions. Sim Shalom brought in a Reform rabbi from England for the High Holy Days and sponsored a woman rabbinical student who was studying at the Leo Baeck Institute in London. She was expected to complete her studies in 1997. Chabad was active, sending a monthly newsletter to 14,000 people—possibly the largest Jewish mailing list in Hungary. In the spring of 1996, Chabad in Hungary also published the first new Hungarian-Hebrew prayer book to be issued since before World War II. It had an initial press run of 10,000.

In Budapest, there was a full infrastructure for Jewish life, including about a score of active synagogues, plus kosher food shops, two kosher restaurants, Talmud Torahs, Jewish publications, secular organizations, clubs, and other associations and institutions. The Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary also ran a kosher summer resort at Balatonfured on Lake Balaton.

Budapest had three Jewish schools, with a total enrollment of 1,200 pupils: the Anna Frank High School, run by the Jewish community; the Orthodox Msoret Avot American Endowment School; and the secular Lauder Yavne Jewish Community School. In addition, about 150 children attended Jewish kindergartens. Budapest was also the site of the Rabbinical Seminary (with fewer than a dozen students) and the Pedagogium Jewish teacher-training institute.

In February 1996 the Lauder school opened a new, state-of-the-art campus for its 600 pupils, from kindergarten through high school. Hungarian president Arpad Goncz and the Israeli and U.S. ambassadors, among other officials, took part in the opening ceremony, and at the ceremony Goncz presented Hungary's highest medal of honor awarded to a non-Hungarian to Ronald S. Lauder in recognition of his contribution to the renewal of Jewish life in Hungary. The \$4.5-million campus, the first new Jewish day school campus to be built in East-Central Europe since the war and the first privately funded campus to be built in Hungary since the war, includes three buildings, 24 classrooms, a gymnasium, a 12,000-book library, and a synagogue. Before the new campus opened, students at the Lauder school, founded in 1990, attended classes in three different locations. The new school facility was built on a five-acre tract of land donated on a rent-free, 99-year lease by the Budapest city government. The school aimed at filling the role of community center for its pupils and their families, in order to foster a broader involvement with Jewish life. Parents were encouraged to stay for coffee in the morning after dropping their children off, and weekly Kabbalat Shabbat services were held in the school's synagogue.

The JDC/Lauder Foundation summer camp at Szarvas in southern Hungary hosted about 2,000 children a year from all over former Communist Europe. In 1995, for the first time, children from Albania attended the camp. Elderly Jews were also taken to Szarvas on outings.

Hungary had numerous nonreligious Jewish organizations, most centered in Budapest, including the Federation to Maintain Jewish Culture in Hungary, with about 2,000 members, B'nai B'rith, the Hungarian Union of Jewish Students, several Zionist youth groups, and other small groups of various types including an organization of gay Jews, a Jewish matchmaking bureau, a club for Jewish

hearing-impaired, Jewish choirs, and several Christian-Jewish dialogue groups.

The International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCCJ) held a conference in Budapest in the summer of 1995. President Goncz was presented with the ICCJ's Sir Sigmund Sternberg Award for 1995 at the conference, which was attended by some 200 participants from 25 countries. The Hungarian Jewish-Christian Society organized an International Biblical Conference in Szeged just before the High Holy Days. During that conference, the papal nuncio to Hungary joined the Israeli ambassador and government representatives at a concert and ceremony in the ornate Szeged Synagogue.

Budapest's Balint Jewish Community Center, which opened in 1994 as the first full-service JCC in East-Central Europe since the end of World War II, took on an increasingly important role as a focus of Jewish life outside the synagogue. Various Jewish organizations, from Chabad to the monthly Jewish magazine *Szombat*, maintained office space in the Balint Center, and center activities were listed in mainstream newspaper "What's On" calendars.

A large percentage of Hungarian Jews were elderly, many of them needy. The JDC underwrote cash grants, food support programs, including meals-on-wheels, and other social-welfare services, carried out by the Jewish Social Support Foundation. More than 500 elderly Jews attended five day-care centers in Budapest and Szeged. Budapest had a Jewish hospital and two Jewish old-age homes.

Among the numerous cultural events of Jewish interest that took place in Hungary was Jerusalem Week in Budapest in September 1995, a five-day celebration of Israeli and Jewish culture that involved concerts, performances, film screenings, exhibitions, and multimedia happenings. The monthly Jewish magazine *Szombat* sponsored a conference on Hungarian Jewish literature in January 1996. In June the Budapest-based Central European University hosted a conference of leading scholars from Europe, Israel, and North America to discuss whether and how to set up a Jewish studies program at the university. Also in June, the last two pieces of Judaica stolen from the Budapest Jewish Museum in December 1993 were returned. The rest of the more than 200 items were discovered in Romania and returned in 1994 and 1995.

In May and June of 1996, annual commemorations of the anniversary of the 1944 deportations of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz were held in more than two dozen towns and cities, including in the northern town of Salgotarjan, where a small new synagogue had been inaugurated during the Holocaust memorial ceremonies in 1995.

Talks continued between Jewish representatives and the Hungarian government on a plan for restitution of confiscated or destroyed property, and the two sides were said to be nearing agreement.

Poland

Poland's strong economic performance made it one of Europe's fastest developing countries. The GDP rose by 6.5 percent in 1995 compared to 5.2 percent

in 1994 and 3.8 percent in 1993. Industrial product in 1995 was up 10 percent over 1994. Inflation in 1995, however, was about 28 percent. Unemployment decreased but was still 14.6 percent.

In Poland's second postwar free presidential election, former Communist Aleksander Kwasniewski, 41, defeated incumbent Lech Walesa in November 1995 to become Poland's new president. Anti-Semitism was present in the campaign but was of limited or marginal significance. Ultra-nationalist, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic skinhead leader Bogdan Tejkowski was disqualified from running for president for presenting forged signatures on his electoral petition, and public television refused to air a campaign show for one fringe candidate, Leszek Bubel, which included anti-Semitic elements. Bubel, the only candidate running specifically as an anti-Semite, received only 7,000 votes in the first round of balloting. During the campaign, several candidates, including Kwasniewski, were "accused" of being Jewish as a means of discrediting them. When a public-opinion survey several weeks before the election asked people whether they "knew" that some of the candidates were Jews (even though no Jew was a candidate), 18 percent answered that they did. Asked if they would change their vote if they learned that the candidate they liked was a Jew, 25 percent of respondents said they would and 56 percent said they would not.

There were anti-Semites among supporters of both of the main candidates, Walesa and Kwasniewski, although those supporting Walesa appeared to be more overt. Anti-Semitism was also expressed by supporters of right-wing candidate Jan Olszewski, who won about 1,225,000 votes and came in fourth in the first round of balloting. In June, Walesa's friend Gdansk priest Rev. Henryk Jankowski, who organized campaign events for Walesa, preached a sermon in Walesa's presence in which he listed the Star of David along with Nazi and Communist symbols as representing sinister forces threatening Poland. It took Walesa more than a week to issue a condemnation of the statement. Both Walesa and Jankowski came under heavy criticism from Jewish groups, Roman Catholic church hierarchy, and even President Bill Clinton. Jankowski, who eventually apologized for his statements, again drew criticism for apparently anti-Semitic remarks made in December 1995 during a meeting in his Gdansk church.

One of the losers along with Walesa was the Roman Catholic Church, which had backed Walesa's campaign and which appeared to be losing political influence. Kwasniewski's victory was viewed as having potentially positive results for Jews, even though one of the first casualties was Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski. Bartoszewski, an Auschwitz survivor and Righteous Gentile, resigned along with two other cabinet ministers who were Walesa supporters.

In August 1995, before the presidential elections, the government named Catholic intellectual Krzysztof Sliwinski—formerly a journalist as well as ambassador to Morocco—to the unprecedented position of roving Polish ambassador to the Jewish Diaspora. The move, largely on the initiative of then foreign minister Bartoszewski, demonstrated increasing efforts by Polish officials and government to achieve better relations and reconciliation with Jews.

A major step came in 1996, when Polish authorities formally asked forgiveness for the July 4, 1946, pogrom in Kielce during which 42 Jewish Holocaust survivors were killed by an anti-Semitic Polish mob. In January, Foreign Minister Dariusz Rosati sent a letter to the World Jewish Congress in which he said that "newly democratic Poland deeply regrets and mourns all the injustice suffered by the Jewish people," in particular the Kielce pogrom. "We are ashamed that Poles were the ones who committed this crime," he wrote. "We would like to ask for your forgiveness." Rosati's breakthrough message was followed by an announcement of a plan to hold an official commemorative event in Kielce in July.

The government's efforts were not pleasing to Polish rightists, including some Polish-Americans. In May, Edward Moskal, head of the Polish American Congress, wrote to President Kwasniewski: "The lack of decisive action on the part of the Polish government and some misjudgment has enabled the Jews to take advantage of the situation and acquire more and more influence." Among other things, Moskal said the apology issued by the government over the Kielce pogrom was "unfortunate and unnecessary," and he attacked what he termed "preferential treatment" given Jews seeking return of former property in Poland. The Polish government rejected Moskal's criticism and made clear it would stand firmly by its current policies. The American Jewish Committee described Moskal's letter as having the "unmistakable ring of old-style anti-Semitism" and terminated its joint sponsorship with the Polish American Congress of a council formed 17 years earlier to promote Polish-Jewish relations.

In July 1995 World Jewish Congress vice-president Kalman Sultanik was awarded the Commander's Cross of the Order of the Rebirth of Poland from the Polish government for his contribution to the "normalization of Polish-Jewish relations" and to the remembrance of the Holocaust in Poland.

In late September a monument was unveiled in Warsaw, near the Warsaw Ghetto monument, to honor Poles who risked their lives during World War II by forming a secret organization called Zegota to save Jews from the Nazis. One of the founders of Zegota was Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, who spoke at the unveiling ceremony, along with the U.S. and Israeli ambassadors and representatives of the local Jewish community and the Catholic Church.

A number of anti-Semitic incidents took place during the period under review. In August 1995 skinheads tried to disrupt ceremonies commemorating the anniversary of the Bialystok Ghetto uprising. They attempted to destroy a monument to the memory of the victims the night before the ceremony and to break up the ceremony itself. Police had to intervene but made no immediate arrests. In early April 1996 a group of about 100 skinheads staged a march at Auschwitz, in part to protest a government ban on building a mini-mall there. In June a bomb exploded shortly before midnight outside Warsaw's only kosher restaurant. It shattered windows but caused no casualties.

Anti-Semitic sentiments appeared in various fringe, right-wing extremist publications and also occasionally in the mainstream media. In October 1995 the Polish episcopate's commission for the public mass media issued a statement criti-

cizing the Roman Catholic radio station Radio Maryja and other Catholic media for disseminating anti-Semitic stereotypes.

As a means of educating people away from anti-Semitism, the American Jewish Committee for the third year arranged for a Jewish scholar to spend five weeks in Poland teaching priests, seminarians, and lay people about Jews and Judaism at pontifical institutes in Warsaw, Krakow, Lublin, and Wroclaw.

Auschwitz remained a center of both commemoration and controversy. Numerous dignitaries, along with more than half a million other visitors, visited Auschwitz, including German chancellor Helmut Kohl in July 1995 and UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali in November. It was announced in January 1996 that a center for the study of Romanies (Gypsies) killed during World War II would be opened at the Birkenau section of Auschwitz. In April some 6,000 mainly Jewish teenagers from nearly 40 countries took part in the March of the Living, visiting Holocaust sites around Poland and then marching the three kilometers from the Auschwitz I camp to Birkenau. A group of non-Jewish Polish young people also took part in the march. Organizers announced that the event, originally held every two years, would be held annually.

Controversy flared over planned construction across the street from the Auschwitz I camp, which is now the main Auschwitz museum. In early 1996 developer Janusz Marszalek began building a mini-mall to serve local residents of Oswiecim, the town outside which Auschwitz is located, but was forced to halt work after widespread protests by Jews and by the Polish government. The mini-mall would have been within a 500-meter protective zone around the camp established in 1979. Despite the protective zone decree, the area had developed into an unsightly collection of ramshackle buildings housing meat, tobacco, paint, and produce warehouses. Marszalek said he would change his plans and would construct instead a center to serve visitors to the Auschwitz museum. This won support by the international committee overseeing the Auschwitz museum, but by the end of June, Oswiecim city officials had not yet approved that plan.

In April 1996 President Kwasniewski met with an Israeli parliamentary delegation led by Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, which was in Poland for the March of the Living. Kwasniewski accepted an invitation to visit Israel and also called for more exchanges between Polish and Israeli youth.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

It is difficult to quantify the number of Jews in Poland. Estimates ranged from the 7,000–8,000 officially registered with the community or receiving aid from the JDC to 10,000–15,000 people of Jewish ancestry who had shown interest in rediscovering their heritage to as many as 30,000–40,000 people of Jewish ancestry.

The Jewish Religious Community of Poland, funded by the JDC, maintained religious services in 15 localities and seven kosher canteens serving free meals to needy Jews.

Events over the year demonstrated a continued growing interest among younger Jews, and some older Jews, to recover a Jewish identity. Education and youth programs run by the JDC and the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation increased in scope, attracting hundreds of participants. The Jewish Forum organization, part of the international Jewish Forum movement, brought together adult professionals.

In July 1995 German chancellor Helmut Kohl met with representatives of the Krakow community and visited a synagogue in Krakow after he toured Auschwitz.

The Lauder Foundation, along with London-based World Jewish Relief and the Association of Children of the Holocaust in Poland, opened a Holocaust survivor center in Warsaw in September 1995. The opening ceremony was attended by the Israeli and U.S. ambassadors as well as Polish government officials.

At Passover 1996 community seders drew scores of people in 11 cities: Warsaw, Wroclaw, Lodz, Krakow, Katowice, Bytom, Lublin, Bielska-Biala, Legnica, Walbrzych, and Gdansk. Some seders were sponsored by the Lauder Foundation, some by the Jewish community organization funded by the JDC. In some cities, there was one combined community seder, while in others, partly because of space problems, there were two. The Polish Jewish community's first bat mizvah took place during this period.

Numerous cultural events with Jewish themes took place in Poland during this period. The annual Festival of Jewish Culture took place in Krakow in June 1995 and 1996, drawing performers from North America, Europe, and Israel for audiences mainly composed of local, non-Jewish Poles. The 1995 festival in Krakow was used as backdrop for filming part of an American PBS television documentary on violinist Yitzhak Perlman and klezmer music. In September and October 1995, "Israel Days" festivals were held in Cieszyn, Bialystok, Gdansk, Kazimierz-on-Vistula, Krakow, Lodz, Poznan, Warsaw, and Wroclaw.

Among exhibitions on Jewish themes were "Representations of Auschwitz: 50 Years of Photographs, Paintings and Graphics," shown in Krakow in July 1995, and an exhibition called "And I Still See Their Faces," which drew tens of thousands of visitors in Warsaw in May 1996. This exceptionally moving display included 400 old photographs of mainly prewar Polish Jews and Jewish life, most taken by non-Jews. The organizer of the exhibit, the Warsaw-based Shalom Foundation, which promotes Polish-Jewish culture, had placed advertisements all over Poland for such photographs and was swamped by 8,000 submissions. Many people sent messages and written memories along with the photographs. All the pictures in the exhibition, along with some of the written commentaries, were published in a coffee-table book. The exhibition—which traveled to Krakow in July and later was to go to Israel and Germany—generated national television coverage, a documentary film, and numerous articles in the Polish media.

In April 1996 the Warsaw Jewish Historical Institute cosponsored an international conference in Warsaw on "The Role of History Museums in Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe." The conference, which focused on teaching the history of Jewish life, brought together scholars from Europe, North America, and Israel.

Two new Jewish institutions were under discussion in Warsaw. One was a proposed Museum of the History of Polish Jews, for which the city of Warsaw had granted a parcel of land near the Warsaw Ghetto monument. The other was a Jewish Cultural Center, to be erected by the Shalom Foundation near the Nozyk Synagogue.

There were various private and public initiatives aimed at restoring Jewish cemeteries and synagogues in Poland. Most Jewish cemeteries were untended and abandoned. In November 1995 an updated and revised version of its Survey of Jewish Monuments in Poland was published by the Jewish Heritage Council of the New York-based World Monuments Fund. In April 1996 a B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) group taking part in the March of the Living did clean-up work at the main Warsaw Jewish cemetery. Three months later the cemetery was hit by vandals who overturned or damaged about 70 tombstones.

Jewish tourism to Poland increased. In the summer of 1995 the Nissenbaum Foundation opened a kosher restaurant in Krakow's Jewish quarter, Kazimierz, to cater to this growing clientele. The foundation was criticized for the design of the restaurant, whose modern glass and metal entryway appeared to violate building codes and looked out of place next to the 16th-century Remuh Synagogue.

Polish filmmaker Andrzej Wajda was awarded the Silver Bear at the 1996 Berlin Film Festival for his film *Holy Week*, which tells the story of a Jewish woman who fled the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 and was taken in by a Catholic couple.

Another film about Poland—a documentary shown on American television's PBS—engendered considerable debate wherever it was shown and in Poland accusations of “anti-Polonism.” The film *Shtetl*, by a Polish Jew, Marian Maszynski, a convert to Christianity now living in Chicago, explored the Jewish history of a small town in eastern Poland, implying that even contemporary Poles who are sympathetic to Jews and Jewish culture are anti-Semitic.

Romania

Economic conditions remained difficult in Romania, with the political opposition claiming that more than 75 percent of the population lived below minimum standards. Inflation was at least 35 percent and possibly more.

President Ion Iliescu's left-wing ruling Party of Social Democracy in Romania, which counted for more than three years on support from neo-communist and nationalist allies, cut its ties late in 1995 with Romania Mare (Greater Romania), an openly anti-Semitic party led by Sen. Corneliu Vadim Tudor. The break came after Romania Mare's newspaper launched vitriolic accusations that Iliescu had sold Romania to what it called a Jewish conspiracy. In early 1996 the Social Democrats also broke with the neo-communist Socialist Labor Party and the nationalist Party of Romanian National Unity.

Tudor was involved in an incident with a delegation of visiting Israeli writers in June 1995. The Israelis, delegates to an international conference of Romanian-

language writers, encountered Tudor at a reception at the presidential palace, after being assured they would not have to meet with any known anti-Semites. The Israelis, backed by the head of the Romanian writers' union, protested Tudor's presence at the reception, and President Iliescu sympathized with them. Tudor and his supporters retaliated with vicious anti-Semitic articles.

Sen. Alfonse D'Amato and Rep. Christopher H. Smith of the United States wrote to Iliescu in July 1995 protesting the erection of monuments to wartime fascist leader Ion Antonescu and also protesting the desecration of Jewish cemeteries. In June a dozen boys aged 9 to 14, possibly aided by adults, had gone on a vandalism rampage in Bucharest's main Jewish cemetery, smashing or toppling dozens of tombstones and damaging as many as 201. The next day there was a break-in at the cemetery office. In August, seven tombstones were toppled in the Jewish cemetery in Iasi.

At ceremonies on January 14, 1996, marking the 55th anniversary of the wartime pogrom in Bucharest that killed 131 Jews, Romanian Jewish leaders warned against the danger of a revival of extremism, including the revival of the "Legionary" or Iron Guard movement. "We are deeply concerned about the revival of the Legionary movement in Romania," Nicolae Cajal, president of the Federation of Romanian Jewish Communities (FEDROM), said at the ceremony in Bucharest's Choral Synagogue. "The danger of fanatical extremism is a threat not only to Jews, but also to non-Jews." At a conference in Bucharest the day before the ceremony, local Romanian historians eulogized Romanian Legionary leaders who died in the 1936–39 Spanish civil war. There was also concern at the rehabilitation of General Antonescu, for whom a third monument was unveiled in October 1995, and ceremonies were held in June 1996 memorializing his post-war execution.

In November 1995, following the detention by police of an Israeli and three Romanians accused of smuggling babies to Moldova and Israel, a Bucharest weekly, *Baricada*, raised the blood-libel slander, implying that the babies were used for Jewish ritual purposes, because "as is well known, Jewish matzah demands kosher, young Christian blood."

On September 7, 1995, the Romanian government, the World Jewish Restitution Organization, and FEDROM signed an agreement promising specific steps toward compensation for Jewish property seized during World War II. In January 1996 the European Parliament passed a resolution commending Romania (and Hungary) for taking steps to return Jewish property and called on other countries to follow suit.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

There were fewer than 14,000 Jews in Romania, including 5,000 non-Jewish spouses of Jews. About 6,000 Jews lived in Bucharest. Some 69 synagogues functioned around the country, 20 of which had a daily *minyan*, 35 of which were open

for Sabbath services, and 15 of which operated only on the High Holy Days.

Most of Romania's Jews were elderly. FEDROM president Cajal said young people accounted for only 7.5 percent of the Jewish population, and at a conference of rabbis in London in May, Romanian acting chief rabbi Yehezkel Mark said there were only 28 Jewish children between the ages of 4 and 13, and only 54 between the ages of 14 and 18. In August 1995, 20 Jewish children, the first ever from Romania, attended the JDC/Lauder Foundation Jewish summer camp in Szarvas, Hungary. In a report drawn up in May 1996 for the American Jewish Committee, Cajal said about 400 Jews died each year and some 275 to 300 emigrated to Israel, meaning that "except for a miracle, there will be no Jewish communities left in Romania in 15 to 18 years from now."

Cajal offered a much less confrontational policy against anti-Semitism in Romania than did his predecessor, the late chief rabbi Moses Rosen, who died in 1994. Some observers were uneasy with this, particularly with repeated statements by Cajal that there was no anti-Semitism in Romania, only anti-Semites. "One can hardly speak of anti-Semitism in Romania, but rather of a few anti-Semites voicing their brainless rhetoric in a small number of newspapers," he wrote in his report to the American Jewish Committee. Cajal's tactic in responding to anti-Semitism was to promote what he called "real-Semitism" with a "tireless, positive assertion" of the contributions that Romanian Jews had made to the country's development.

Rabbi Mark, 67, formally took office as acting chief rabbi in August 1995. Mark was born in northern Romania, survived World War II, and left for Israel in 1946, where he fought in the 1948 War for Independence. The only other rabbi in Romania was in Timisoara. Romanian Jews were also served by a few elderly cantors and five ritual slaughterers.

Support from the JDC, working in partnership with FEDROM, remained the mainstay of Romania's Jews, but budget cuts in JDC programs were painful, as they eliminated some welfare payments completely and sharply lowered levels of other relief programs.

There were regular Jewish cultural and educational programs, a Jewish theater in Bucharest, and small Jewish museums in Bucharest, Iasi, Bacau, and Timisoara. In early 1996 FEDROM's publishing house, Hasefer, brought out a book of paintings by Romanian artists, to add to its other publications of volumes of Romanian Jewish history and literature, translations of Yiddish classics, and other works. The Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca maintained a Hebrew Jewish history institute that sponsored courses and research and hosted an annual scholarly conference.

Slovakia

Continuing efforts by nationalists to celebrate the Nazi-allied wartime Independent Slovak State and its leader, the priest Josef Tiso, raised some concern.

In March 1996 more than 1,500 people, including pensioners and skinheads, gathered in Bratislava to mark the anniversary of the founding of the wartime regime. In June 1996 a new book, *The Silenced Truth About Slovakia*, a series of essays by various authors, was published by "friends of President Tiso at home and abroad" and was sympathetically reported on the main state TV news. In May 1996 Bartolomej Kunc, a senior member of the Slovak National Party, declared on Czech TV that the wartime deportation of Slovak Jews "must be seen in the context that they were robbing the Slovak people of their wealth." The Slovak Jewish community responded with a statement calling Kunc's words an "incarnation of the whole spectrum of anti-Semitic stereotypes spread by fascist and Nazi propaganda and repeated today by those who sympathize with Slovak fascism."

Attempts to rehabilitate Tiso and the wartime state were criticized by opposition parties, the president's office, the Slovak Anti-Fascist Fighters' Union, and other groups. In June 1996 Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar told the *Jewish Chronicle* of London that he wanted to make amends for Slovakia's past and to stamp out lingering anti-Semitism. He also characterized relations with Israel as very good. Negotiations were under way for the abolition of visas, and in May 1996 Slovakia and Israel signed a free-trade agreement to come into force at the beginning of 1997. After the signing ceremony in Bratislava, Israeli industry minister Micha Harish said he hoped that economic cooperation between the two countries would go beyond trade.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Some 3,000 Jews lived in Slovakia. More than half were in Bratislava and Kosice, with the rest in 24 other scattered communities. American-born Chabad rabbi Baruch Myers was based in Bratislava, where he worked actively to promote religious and educational activities, including running a kindergarten for more than a dozen children, as well as Talmud Torah classes for adults and children and a summer day camp. In June 1995 a new mikveh was opened in Bratislava. Myers had initiated the public lighting of the Hanukkah menorah in 1993, and in 1995 Bratislava's mayor took part in the ceremony. Rabbi Dov Goldstein, an Israeli who was born in Bratislava, took up the post of rabbi in Kosice. His arrival ended a difficult period linked to the previous rabbi, who had been fired by the Jewish community but contested his dismissal and refused to leave the apartment provided to him with his post.

Most Slovak Jews were elderly, and clubs for elderly pensioners operated in both Bratislava and Kosice, including a Holocaust survivors group in Kosice. A youth club with about 50 members aged 6 to 16 also operated in Kosice, with club activities centering on Jewish themes. Young adults took part in the Union of Czechoslovak Jewish Students, which had about 80 members in Bratislava and drew 600 people to a Hanukkah gala.

The monthly Jewish Forum meetings in Bratislava, which hosted a variety of guest speakers, continued to be popular. The summer of 1995 marked the fifth year during which an event called "Bridges" took place, a two-week session during which Jewish and Catholic young people worked together to restore both a synagogue and a church and took part in joint study programs and discussions. A Christian-Jewish Society organized several other events aimed at promoting interreligious cooperation and knowledge.

In 1995 Slovak television began providing regular programming about Jewish holidays and also aired two documentaries on Slovak Jews. In May 1996 plans were announced to open an institute for Jewish studies at Comenius University in Bratislava.

FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Bosnia-Herzegovina

With the signing of the Dayton agreement in December 1995, Bosnia-Herzegovina entered a period of peace (or relative peace) for the first time since the war broke out in 1991. The nearly four-year siege by Bosnian Serbs of the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, formally ceased at the end of February 1996.

Six months before the Dayton accord, in July 1995, a mortar shell hit the Jewish community center in downtown Sarajevo, destroying an empty room but causing no injuries. In February 1996 Bosnian Serbs expelled veteran Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld from their territory when he traveled to the Bosnian Serb capital, Pale, outside Sarajevo, to try to convince Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic to surrender to the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

In mid-1996, between 800 and 900 Jews were known to be living in Bosnia-Herzegovina, divided among six towns and cities in both the Muslim-Croatian sector and the Bosnian Serb sector. These were, in the Muslim-Croat sector: Sarajevo (572 Jews), Zenica (39), Tuzla (109), and Mostar (26); in the Bosnian Serb sector: Banja Luka (62) and Doboï (19).

During the war, about 300 people who before the fighting had not declared themselves as Jewish joined the Jewish community, presenting written documentation such as marriage or birth certificates. Before the war, these people had declared themselves as "Yugoslavs." Some of them remained in Bosnia-Herzegovina, while others went to Israel. In the six months following the Dayton accord, about 60 Jews who had fled Sarajevo during the siege returned to the city from Spain, Israel, Germany, Croatia, and Yugoslavia. Community officials expected more Jewish refugees to return if the peace remained stable.

Throughout the war, the Jewish cultural, educational, and humanitarian organization La Benevolencija became a key conduit of humanitarian aid for all citizens of Sarajevo and Bosnia, on a nonsectarian basis. One-third of La Benevolencija volunteers were Jews, the others, Serbs, Muslims, and Croats. From mid-1995 to mid-1996, La Benevolencija continued its wide range of activities, including the distribution free of charge of medicine, food, clothing, and other necessary goods, and services such as running a post office. It also ran Jewish Radio La Benevolencija, one of the most popular stations in Sarajevo. La Benevolencija was supported financially by the JDC, the British-based World Jewish Relief, and numerous individual Jewish communities in Europe and North America. Groups of Jews and non-Jews in a variety of countries also founded groups of "Friends of La Benevolencija Sarajevo" to contribute to La Benevolencija's activities. The organization received political support from groups such as the American Jewish Committee, the World Jewish Congress, and the European Council of Jewish Communities, which enabled it to begin activities aimed at promoting reconciliation among ethnic groups in Bosnia.

La Benevolencija's activities won it international recognition. The organization's president, Jakob Finci, received the Pentland Young Jewish Care Award for 1995 in London and was awarded the title "Righteous Among the Righteous" by the city of Rimini, Italy. La Benevolencija itself was named "Newsmaker of the Year 5756" by the London *Jewish Chronicle* and was awarded the Wateler Peace Prize from the Carnegie Foundation and the Carl von Ossietzky Medal from the International League for Human Rights in Berlin.

Throughout the war period and siege of Sarajevo, regular Saturday morning services were held in the Sarajevo synagogue, and other religious and community activities ranging from sisterhood meetings to a Sunday school took place. In spring 1996 the Sunday school had about 30 pupils — about half of them Jewish. The others were Muslims, Catholic Croats, and Serbian Orthodox Serbs, reflecting the open, reconciliatory quality of the community and its activities.

Sarajevo had no rabbi of its own, but visiting rabbis from Israel, the United States, Great Britain, or the Netherlands came for the High Holy Days and other occasions. At Passover 1996 the tradition continued of two seders, one only for members of the Jewish community and the second for community members along with high-ranking state officials, dignitaries from other religious groups, diplomats, and other guests. At the 1996 seder, a representative of the Iranian embassy was among the guests.

Various international Jewish and other delegations met with the Jewish community in Sarajevo throughout the year, some timing their visits in order to celebrate holidays such as Purim or Passover with the Jews of Sarajevo.

Croatia

In parliamentary elections in October 1995, President Franjo Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union lost in almost all major cities, including the Croatian cap-

ital, Zagreb, but won more than 45 percent of the vote nationwide and 75 of the 127 seats in the lower house of Parliament. Tudjman, who maintained an autocratic mode of governing bolstered by the extensive powers granted the president by the constitution, signed the Dayton peace accord in December, ending the war in Bosnia.

There was little overt anti-Semitism in Croatia, but a trend toward historical revisionism, supported by elements in the government and at times apparently spearheaded by President Tudjman, raised concern. This trend tended to whitewash the World War II activities of the fascist Croatian Ustasha organization and minimize the reality of the Holocaust in Croatia. During the war Croatia was a Nazi puppet state ruled by the Ustasha, which saw to the death or deportation of 80 percent of Croatia's Jews. Some revisionists claimed that Croatia's Jews were killed only by the Nazis, not the Ustasha; others stated that only Jews who committed criminal acts against the state were killed. Some revisionists apologized to Jews, saying that killing Jews during the war was a mistake.

After the parliamentary elections, Vienna-based Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal expressed concern over Croatia's future, telling the Austrian news agency APA that Croatian Jews were "living in fear" because the election had been won by "a party that was renewing the Ustasha Nazi regime." Croatian Jewish leaders sent Wiesenthal a letter assuring him that Jews were not in danger in Croatia. The letter, which was read out on Croatian television, said Jews "do not feel imperiled because there is no open anti-Semitism in Croatia, either in everyday life or in any political party program, or in the attitude of government representatives toward Jews" and expressed a belief "that the Republic of Croatia is paying attention to the standpoints of our community and that there is a mutual dialogue."

Tudjman triggered controversy by proposing in January 1996 that the former Ustasha concentration camp at Jasenovac, where scores of thousands of Serbs, Jews, Romanians, and opponents of the regime were killed, be turned into a memorial to victims of fascism, communism, and the 1991 Serb-Croat war—a memorial, as he put it, that would be "a tribute to all the victims . . . on Croatia's way to independence and sovereignty . . . reconciling the dead as well as the living, their children and grandchildren." Tudjman said he wanted to rebury Ustasha death camp guards at this memorial alongside their victims as a sign of reconciliation. He shrugged off criticism of the plan from Croatia's Jews and from U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher.

In February prominent Jewish community activist Slavko Goldstein wrote an open letter to Tudjman asking him to cancel the initiative and threatening to sue him if he carried out the plan. "If your intention is realized I will sue you for desecrating memorial sites and graveyards," Goldstein wrote. Goldstein also urged Tudjman to repair many antifascist monuments he said were destroyed since Croatia became independent in 1991. Tudjman fueled more controversy in April when he revised downward the number of people believed to have been killed at

Jasenovac to under 28,000; most independent estimates say at least 80,000 people were killed at the site.

In November 1995 Croatia turned over to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington a package of documents shedding light on the deaths of more than 6,500 Croatian Jews in the Holocaust. The handover followed an agreement signed in 1995 between the museum and the Croatian State Archives for cooperation on documentary research.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

About 2,200 Jews lived in Croatia, most of them in Zagreb, the capital, which had about 1,400 Jews, and in the cities of Osijek, Split, and Rijeka. It was an aging community (more than 60 percent over 65 years of age), with a low birthrate and a rate of intermarriage estimated to be more than 75 percent. Many younger members of the intelligentsia emigrated from Croatia after the start of the war in 1991. About 60 community members were under 15 years of age, and about 120 were aged 16 to 26. Almost all the younger children were from mixed marriages.

The Jewish community center in downtown Zagreb had a wide array of facilities and programs including a bar, clubroom, auditorium, exhibition gallery, library, computer lab, kindergarten, and Sunday school. The Ladislav Svarc Old Age Home, founded in 1911, provided a home for about 80 elderly Jews. The community sponsored numerous cultural, educational, religious, and other events and a bimonthly bulletin with a circulation of about 1,000. In the spring of 1996 it issued the first edition of *Voice*, a magazine in English about Croatian Jewish topics. The Croatian Union of Jewish Students also put out a magazine.

In early 1996 the community's Miroslav Salom Freiberger Cultural Society initiated work on a biographical lexicon of Jews in Croatia that aimed to include names and biographical sketches of 5,000 Jews who lived and worked in the territory of present-day Croatia, from Roman times to the present. The Freiberger Cultural Society, in association with the Novi Liber publishing house, issued a book entitled *Mishpaha—the Family*, which traces the history of Croatian Jews who survived the Holocaust and details the fate of their families.

Several dozen people attended regular Sabbath services, though Zagreb did not have a regular rabbi. Services were led by a full-time Jewish educator sent from Israel to Zagreb in 1995 by the JDC. He also organized Hebrew classes and other Jewish educational activities in Zagreb, Osijek, and Split. The community seder in Zagreb in 1996 drew many teens and college-age members of the community, and there were community seders in several other cities.

In October 1995, four years after the war forced its closure, the Jewish summer camp at Pirovac, on the Croatian coast, reopened with a special three-day program for about 50 young Croatian Jews. Also in October, seven Jewish refugees from Bosnia who died while living in emergency housing in Croatia run by the JDC were memorialized with a ceremony and tombstone unveiling at the Jewish

cemetery in Split, on the Croatian coast. Ranko Jajcanin, a young man from Sarajevo studying for the rabbinate in Israel, conducted the ceremony, which was attended by about 50 people and carried out under the auspices of the Hebrew Free Burial Association, an organization newly formed in 1995.

Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)

Yugoslavia's president Slobodan Milosevic's signing of the Dayton peace accord opened the door to the removal of UN sanctions against Yugoslavia. Four years of sanctions had had a harsh effect on the Yugoslav economy. Unemployment was 50 percent or more, and industrial production was about 30 percent of capacity.

Although there was little tradition of grassroots anti-Semitism, isolated anti-Semitic instances occurred, including articles in the press and occasional individual publications. In September 1995 anti-Semitic graffiti were found daubed on the wall of Belgrade University, and in October anti-Semitic slogans were scrawled in the entryway of the Jewish community building in Belgrade. Most of these appeared to be directed against Israel and world Jewry, some against local Jews, for perceived anti-Serbian stands in the Bosnian war. Such manifestations of anti-Semitism were condemned by the authorities.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

About 3,500 Jews lived in Yugoslavia, most of them in Belgrade, where a well-equipped community center offered a wide range of educational, cultural, and social activities. There were also newly renovated community centers in Novi Sad, Sombor, and Zemun. The Federation of Jewish Communities was attempting to implement programs aimed at revitalizing several provincial communities.

Yugoslavia's new rabbi, Itzhak Asiel, a local man who, supported by the JDC, trained for more than six years in Israel and took up his post in early 1995, was extremely active in coordinating Jewish life on many levels. He was based in Belgrade, but traveled to smaller communities, including communities in Serbian-held parts of Bosnia. A Jewish Service Corps volunteer, supported by a private U.S. donor, also helped organize youth, educational, and cultural activities.

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

Russia/Former Soviet Union

National Affairs

RUSSIA AND OTHER REPUBLICS of the former Soviet Union (FSU) continued to experience a good deal of political and social turbulence in 1995–96. In December 1995 Russia held parliamentary elections, and in June 1996, a presidential election. In the parliamentary election, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) and the Liberal Democratic Party, headed by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, which shared the Communists' hostility to democratization and private enterprise, together won 209 of the 450 seats, and many other deputies were sympathetic to their views. Our Home Is Russia—the party of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, and presumably, of President Boris Yeltsin—won only 10 percent of the vote. While the president has much more power than the Parliament, the election showed that there was considerable popular opposition to Yeltsin's policies and perhaps to him.

In the presidential campaign, Yeltsin was challenged by Grigory Yavlinsky, a reformist democrat who refused to give up his candidacy in order to strengthen Yeltsin's; Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, a demagogic anti-reformer and Russian imperialist; Aleksandr Lebed, a general-turned-politician; and the last leader of the Soviet Union and its Communist

Party, Mikhail Gorbachev. Public-opinion polls showed a steady decline in Yeltsin's popularity throughout the year, which his serious health problems exacerbated. Still, Yeltsin toured the country, ordering the payment of back wages, increasing individuals' pensions, and using the resources at his disposal to "buy people's votes," as his opponents charged. A number of top officials were fired, among them his unpopular, pro-Western foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev. He was replaced by Yevgeny Primakov, director of the Foreign Intelligence Service and a Middle East expert of Jewish origin who was widely seen as a friend of Arab states and leaders, including Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

Aleksandr Lebed pledged to end the war in Chechnya, restore the pay and prestige of the military, reverse "unfair privatization," punish "dishonest entrepreneurs," and work toward reducing the number of political parties. Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist candidate, deliberately kept his platform vague, but promised to restore some state control of major industries and provide more social welfare. His platform was a mixture of Russian nationalism, conservatism, and Communist economic policies.

In the first round of the presidential election, Yeltsin got 35 percent to Zyuganov's 32 percent and Lebed's 14 percent (Zhirinovskiy got only 6 percent,

Yavlinsky 7, and Gorbachev less than 1 percent). In a master political stroke, Yeltsin then named former General Lebed as his top national security adviser. This move paid off on July 3 when, in the second round of the presidential election, Yeltsin beat Zyuganov by a margin of 55-39 percent. Polls showed clearly that those who had voted for Lebed and Yavlinsky threw their support to Yeltsin in the runoff.

One of Lebed's appeals was that he might be able to end the devastating, embarrassing, and demoralizing war in Chechnya. On July 30, 1995, a partial treaty was signed by the Chechens and Russians, ending the fighting but not resolving Chechnya's status. Fighting resumed, however, resulting in thousands of civilian and military deaths and the destruction of Russian and Chechen villages in the early months of 1996. On March 31, after Chechen fighters surprised the Russian garrison and entered Grozny, capital of Chechnya, Yeltsin ordered a halt to all military operations and offered autonomy to the Chechens. The very next day the Russian air force bombed Chechen villages and continued to do so on and off for several months. On May 27 another Russian-Chechen agreement was signed, but it did not discuss Chechen independence nor set a timetable for the withdrawal of Russian troops.

Natural disasters and violence added to Russia's woes. On May 30, 1995, at least 2,000 people were killed in a huge earthquake on Sakhalin Island in the Russian Far East. By mid-1995, four parliamentary deputies, 35 bankers, and 32 journalists had been murdered (ten died covering the war in Chechnya). Police estimated that there had been 500 contract killings in 1994. Eduard Shevardnadze, leader of the Georgian republic, was wounded by a car bomb while on his way to sign a new constitution. In September a grenade was fired from the street into the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Two American balloonists were shot down over Belarus. Corruption was widespread and discouraging to foreign investors and international financial institutions. A Swedish scholar, Stefan Hedlund, characterized the country as a "decentralized kleptocracy."

In late 1995 the Russian economy seemed to have improved, as inflation went down to 5 percent a month, the ruble stabilized at about 5,500 to the U.S. dollar, and industrial production ceased its slide. But the gross domestic product still fell by 4 percent during the year, and the fall grain harvest was the worst in 30 years. Real incomes continued to fall, and a quarter of the population was said to be living below the official poverty line. Indeed, some of the republics saw their gross domestic product fall even further than Russia's, though Armenia's grew by 5 percent.

Israel and the Middle East

There were several high-level diplomatic visits between Israel and the former Soviet republics. Turkmen president Saparmurad Niyazov visited Egypt and Israel in May 1995 and firmed up Israeli involvement in irrigation and gas pipeline

projects in the Central Asian republic. Nursultan Nazarbayev, president of another Central Asian republic, Kazakstan, spent three days in Israel in December and signed four accords there. He also met with Yasir Arafat and declared his support for an "independent Palestinian state." At the same time, Iranian foreign minister Ali Akbar Velayati warned Azerbaijan's leaders not to get too close to Israel and "not to allow Zionist elements to infiltrate into the Caucasus."

Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, on a visit to Ukraine and Russia in September 1995, failed to persuade Russian officials to abandon their involvement with the construction of a nuclear reactor in Iran. Foreign Minister Kozyrev said that if Israel was so concerned with nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, it should sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. Rabin discussed an Israeli role in the modernization of Russian military aircraft and signed trade and medical agreements with Ukraine. Israel's Elbit company was modernizing Russian T-55 tanks and helicopters. When Defense Minister Pavel Grachev visited Israel in December, an agreement was made for Israel to purchase military transports from Russia. The two countries were also to work together to extract magnesium from the Dead Sea and to construct a power plant that would use shale oil deposits in the Negev.

The volume of Russian trade with Israel went from around \$10 million in 1991 to about \$650 million in 1995. In the latter year, Belarus exported nearly \$10-million worth of goods to Israel, an 88-percent increase over 1994. Israel exported agricultural and food products, chemicals, and items for the construction industry, while it imported precious metals and stones, wood and paper products, and some agricultural goods.

On April 4, 1996, Russia revoked the Jewish Agency's accreditation and then closed its offices in Birobidzhan in the Far East and Makhachkala in the Caucasus. An Agency conclave in Piatigorsk was broken up on April 30. The Russians said that the Agency was operating under a 1992 accord that permitted it one roving official based in Moscow, but that it had established many local offices and was not conforming to new Russian laws. Russian ambassador to Israel Aleksandr Bovin told Jewish Agency chairman Avraham Burg that Russians did not like the Agency's encouragement of emigration by Jewish intellectuals, and that Jewish emigration was psychologically difficult for residents of the Russian Federation who saw a large outflow of talent (*Ha'aretz*, May 17, 1996).

Speculation about Russia's motivations in curbing the Agency centered on three hypotheses: (1) the security services, embarrassed by failures in Chechnya and elsewhere, were trying to "score points" by striking against people who could be construed as "foreign agents"; (2) Yeltsin was trying to steal the anti-Western and possibly even anti-Jewish thunder of his opponents in the presidential election campaign; and (3) Israeli arrogance and blithe disregard of Russian law had provoked this reaction. Agency officials and the deputy director of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs went to Russia to try and reverse the decision, and the U.S. State Department tried to intervene on Israel's behalf. In a newspaper in-

terview in June, Russian deputy minister of foreign affairs Viktor Posuvalyuk charged that the Agency had violated Russian law by "selecting gifted teenagers" for illegal exit from the country. He observed that "the 'honeymoon' period in our relationship with Israel is over, and now they have entered a time of maturity. I hope that we will be able to deal with all the problems that arise between us in a way befitting mature partners" (*Moskovskie Novosti*, June 9–16, 1996).

About 150,000 Russian citizens, more than half of them non-Jews, came as tourists to Israel in 1995, making Russia the fifth-largest source of tourism to Israel.

Ostankino Television, one of the main channels in Russia, broadcast made-in-Israel programs, one of which ("Notes from Jerusalem") was disseminated on 70 channels throughout Russia.

Anti-Semitism

There was no evidence of any governmental anti-Semitism in the FSU; however, grass-roots anti-Semitism continued to manifest itself. *Al-Quds*, a virulently anti-Semitic newspaper that had been banned for ten months because its publisher was a Jordanian and not a Russian citizen, reappeared in November 1995, after the publisher obtained Russian citizenship. It appeared with a huge headline, "We will bury Zionism in Russia!" It claimed: "Real power in Russia rests not with the people and not even with the bureaucrats but with Zionists, and they do what they want."

In the same month, the president of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenka, told an interviewer for the German *Handelsblatt* that "Germany was once built up out of the ruins with the help of a strong hand. Not everything that was connected to a certain Hitler in Germany was bad. . . . The history of Germany is a model for the history of Belarus. . . . It took centuries to form the German order. Under Hitler, this formation reached its highest point. This corresponds with our understanding of a presidential republic and the role of a president in it." (This from the head of a republic that suffered proportionately greater losses at the hands of the Nazis than any other area in Europe.)

Leaders of the Russian Va'ad, the umbrella organization of Russian Jewry, presented Procurator General Yuri Skuratov with a large collection of anti-Semitic items from the Russian press and urged that the government pay attention to these manifestations of ethnic hatred.

As in previous years, Jewish cemeteries were desecrated in several locales, including Rybinsk, Nizhni Novgorod, and Kursk in Russia, and Chernihiv in Ukraine. It was reported, but not confirmed, that the grave of Hassidic rebbe Levi Yitzhak, a place of pilgrimage for many Hassidim, was destroyed in Berdichev.

During the June 1996 election campaign, an extremist nationalist newspaper urged its readers to vote for Zyuganov since, among other things, his party was largely Russian, unlike the Soviet Communist Party, "which was dominated by

Jews"; he and his wife are Russian; and "he understands the Jewish question" (*Russkie Vedomosti*, no. 25, May 1996). Zhirinovsky said that the "Russian mafia" in the United States is really Jewish. "We already had a 'Russian' revolution, 'Russian' politicians and culture which were all based somehow on Talmudic postulates" (*LDPR*, 6 [26]).

Another Russian politician, Aleksandr Lebed, remarked on June 27 that Russia had three "established, traditional religions—Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Buddhism." Later he was reported to have reproached a questioner at a meeting of Cossacks: "Are you a real Cossack? If so, why do you mumble like a Jew?"

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

Emigration continued to erode FSU Jewry, whose low birthrates, aged population, and high mortality rates could not compensate for the outflow of over 85,000 Jews and their families. By the very generous estimates of the Jewish Agency for Israel, there were some 656,000 Jews in the Russian Federation in 1994, 474,000 in Ukraine and 98,000 in Belarus. For 1995, it would be reasonable to subtract over 100,000 from those figures, since not only were the émigrés not replaced, but the natural decline of the population continued. A census in Russia was projected for 1999; the issue of how to define "nationality" in the census and how to formulate questions about it was under discussion.

EMIGRATION

Over 100 Jewish refugees from the fighting in Chechnya had emigrated to Israel by the fall of 1995, and another 200 were in the process of doing so. In 1995, a total of 86,554 Jews emigrated from the former Soviet Union (FSU). The great majority—65,131—went to Israel, and 21,423 immigrated to the United States.

Communal Affairs

A definite pattern of Jewish communal organization had emerged in the FSU. Most small and medium-sized cities had a Jewish Sunday school or day school or both; association of veterans of World War II; welfare organization serving the poor and elderly; cultural society; synagogue or religious group; and library. Volunteers staffed most of these activities, but in many localities there were representatives of the Jewish Agency, the Israeli government's Liaison Office (*Lishkat hakesher*), and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). These institutions could be found, for example, in Ekaterinburg, Nalchik,

Nizhni Novgorod, Orel, and Perm in Russia; Chernihiv, Donetsk, and Lviv in Ukraine; and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. In larger cities there was a more elaborate institutional network. In St. Petersburg in 1995–96 there were several facilities for feeding the poor; organizations that assisted the elderly, blind, deaf, and disabled; a home visiting service and one that distributed medical supplies and equipment; several kindergartens, day schools, Sunday schools, and *ulpanim* (Hebrew-language programs), as well as a Jewish high school and university; a newspaper (*AmilNarod Moi*) with a circulation of 10,000; and a training institute for communal and social workers. In addition, there was a musical society for adults and one for children, a boys' chorus, artists' association, musical theater, and chamber orchestra. Several clubs (pensioners, war veterans, survivors of Soviet purges, sports, businessmen) were active, as was an Institute for Research on the Jewish Diaspora, which did archival work and tried to discover and preserve Jewish material culture.

Welfare activities took a larger share of budgets than before, since as young people emigrated in large numbers, a disproportionate number of elderly and ill were left behind. In Ukraine, it was estimated that 60 percent of the provincial Jewish population was elderly. Most people were receiving pensions of between seven and 25 dollars a month. Therefore, of the 11 million dollars spent by the Joint Distribution Committee on activities in the FSU, about four million went for welfare activities. The JDC was operating in 120 cities, delivering services and training local people to do so. About 22 percent of its budget went to educational services, and the rest was evenly divided between community organization and religious and cultural activities.

The Jewish Agency operated 16 exit stations for those going to Israel, about 200 *ulpanim*, about 100 youth groups, and 90 summer and 14 winter camps. It sponsored teacher- and leadership-training programs. The Agency also sponsored the "Na'aleh 16" program, which brought about 2,000 adolescents to Israel for a year and more, and a program that recruited FSU Jews for specific jobs and housing in Israel. In 1994, the Agency and JDC—between whom there had been some tension, with the Agency working to get Jews to leave for Israel and the JDC helping reconstruct Jewish life in the FSU—concluded an agreement that allowed them to cooperate.

In February 1996 Jewish Agency operations in the FSU were reorganized so that four territorial representatives reported directly to Jerusalem and no longer to an overall FSU office. The Liaison Office managed Israeli Culture (or Culture and Information) Centers in 18 cities, 14 "*ma'avar*" (transition) schools, which operated according to Israeli curricula, and 160 Sunday schools. Two more *ma'avar* schools and a dozen more Sunday schools were scheduled to open in 1995–96. The world ORT organization opened two educational technology centers, one in Moscow and one in St. Petersburg, where students were instructed in computers, multimedia technology, and other technical subjects. The Moscow school went from grades six to nine and was planned for 110 students.

On January 10, 1996, a Russian Jewish Congress was established at a lavish dinner in one of Moscow's most expensive hotels. The event, which drew as much criticism as praise, was attended by the Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel, Israeli cabinet minister Rabbi Yehuda Amital, and leaders of the Jewish Agency, JDC, Liaison Office, Va'ad, and other foreign and local groups. The only leading politician attending was the mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov. President Yeltsin sent greetings. The organization was founded by three Jewish bankers—Vladimir Gusinsky, Vitaly Malkin, and Mikhail Fridman—with the aim of funding Jewish communal activities, combating anti-Semitism, and helping to reclaim communal properties. It was reported that Gusinsky contributed a million dollars to the Congress and that each of four vice-presidents had contributed half a million.

Religion

There were an estimated 140 synagogues in the FSU, most without rabbis or their own building (Betty Gidwitz, *Jerusalem Newsletter*, no. 310, March 1, 1995). About 25 Hassidic and a dozen non-Hassidic Orthodox rabbis were serving FSU communities. The Conservative (Masorti) movement had not established congregations but focused on schools and summer camps, whereas the Progressive (Reform) movement had concentrated on organizing congregations. Synagogues were reclaimed by Jewish communities in Chmelnitsky (Ukraine) and Omsk (Siberia). On Rosh Hashanah, a representative of the Russian government, Abdullah Mikitayev, spoke in the Choral Synagogue in Moscow and complimented Jews on contributing to Russia's economy and culture. A large matzah bakery was opened in Moscow and produced 25 metric tons for Passover 1996.

Education and Culture

In 1995 a second Jewish elementary school and a Jewish People's University were opened in Chisinau, capital of Moldova. At the beginning of the 1995–96 academic year the following institutions of higher academic Jewish studies were operating in Moscow: Jewish University (170 students, 75 of them new); Project Judaica in the Russian State University for the Humanities (48 students); Maimonides State Jewish Academy (370 students, 70 in Judaic studies), and Moscow Touro College (70 students). In June 1996 the first 17 Judaic studies majors were awarded their diplomas by the Russian State University for the Humanities. Several of them were going to study for advanced degrees in Judaic studies at the Hebrew University, Brandeis University, NYU, and Oxford, and several in Moscow.

Many foreign religious organizations—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform—sponsored summer camps and Jewish schools.

The Hebrew University and the Vernadsky Library of the Ukrainian Academy

of Sciences agreed on the use of the Archive of East European Jewish Folklore which had disappeared in 1949 and was rediscovered by a Hebrew University researcher in 1994. It contains material going back before World War I on Jewish folk and cantorial music and has recordings of the voices of Sholem Aleichem and Shlomo Mikhoels, among others.

About 60 local Jewish newspapers, mostly in Russian, were being published in the FSU. The *Birobidzhaner Shtern*, a Yiddish newspaper published since the 1930s in the "Jewish Autonomous Region," was said to have ceased publication on May 21, 1995. The first volume of a Russian translation of the Babylonian Talmud, edited by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, a pioneer in Jewish studies in the FSU, appeared in February 1996. The Israeli scholar founded a yeshivah in Moscow in 1989.

The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture held its fifth Nahum Goldmann Fellowship seminar outside Moscow in August 1995. Sixty fellows came from 23 countries. In the same month, the foundation cooperated with the Jewish community of Latvia and the Latvian Academy of Sciences to sponsor a conference in Riga on "Jews in a Changing World." The purpose was to raise the Jewish consciousness of the Jewish cultural elites in the Baltic states. In the previous month, 80 undergraduate and graduate students participated in the first Student Conference on Judaic Studies in Moscow. It was organized by Sefer (Moscow Center for University Teaching of Judaica), Hillel, JDC, and others.

Zvi GITELMAN

The Rebirth of Jewish Scholarship in Russia

DURING THE PAST SEVEN years, Jewish studies has emerged as a lively scholarly field in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union. Anyone who can remember the “bad old days” of the 1970s, when Judaica seminars and Hebrew courses were held underground, and literature on Jewish history and culture was circulated secretly, in typed *samizdat* form, must be impressed by the unfolding of Judaica in Russia in recent years.

Noteworthy Developments

Three programs in Jewish higher education exist in Moscow alone: the Jewish University of Moscow; Project Judaica—a joint program of Russian State University for the Humanities with the Jewish Theological Seminary and YIVO Institute; and the Maimonides State Academy. All were founded in 1991, the year of the fall of the Soviet Union, and have since grown in size and scope. The Jewish University of St. Petersburg is likewise a significant center of Judaica instruction.

Numerous public academic conferences of Judaica have been held. The first such gathering, convened in Moscow in December 1989 and entitled “The Historical Destiny of the Jews in Russia and the USSR,” was held in conjunction with the founding congress of the “Va’ad”—the Confederation of Jewish Organizations and Communities of the USSR. A second major conference was held in April 1993, but under the very different auspices of Tel Aviv University and the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Since then, such events have become frequent, even routine.

Agencies for the advancement of Jewish studies are in active operation: the Institute of Judaic Studies in Kiev, an affiliate of the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine, and the Moscow Center for the University Instruction of Jewish Civilization (informally referred to as “Sefer”), which is a branch of the Jerusalem-based International Center for the University Instruction of Jewish Civilization.

In 1991, the 16-volume *Evreiskaia Entsiklopediia* (originally published 1906–1911), the greatest monument of prerevolutionary Russian-Jewish scholarship, was reissued in Moscow by a commercial publishing house. Without the support of foreign grants or sponsors, it has gone through several press runs.

Two academic serials in the field of Judaica currently appear in Russia: (1) *Vestnik evreiskogo universiteta v moskve* (The Herald of the Jewish University in Moscow) began publication in 1992; 12 issues have appeared to date, each roughly 200 pages long. (2) *Trudy po iudaike* (Studies in Judaica), published by the Jew-

ish University of St. Petersburg. Four volumes, each approximately 200 pages long, have appeared to date.¹

Taken together, these and many other developments indicate a veritable renaissance of Judaica in Russia, a discipline that was taboo in the postwar Soviet Union and whose very existence was denied by Soviet academia. The purpose of this article is to survey the new Russian-Jewish scholarship that has appeared since 1990 and to evaluate it both as a cultural phenomenon and as a contribution to knowledge in the field.² The author's comments are based, in part, upon continuous firsthand observation of the field since 1990, in his capacity as director of Project Judaica.

General Scope and Trends

Developing a field of scholarly inquiry from a state of virtual nonexistence, massive ignorance, and some hostility toward the field itself is not a simple matter. And the progress made in the last seven years has been unevenly distributed among the various sub-fields of Judaica. There has been virtually no scholarly activity in the area of rabbinic literature or medieval Jewish history, literature, and thought. On the other hand, ancient Jewish history of the Second Temple period has attracted some interest: works by Josephus and Philo have appeared in Russian translation (both new translations and reissues of old ones), and an extensive monograph on the Dead Sea sect has been published.³ This is largely thanks to the fact that the Jewish component of "oriental" studies continued to be studied under the Soviets, at the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg. As a field of inquiry, it was never totally eliminated.

Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of newly published work has focused on the history and culture of the Jews in tsarist Russia (1772–1917) and the Soviet Union (1917–1991). Indeed, the two serials mentioned above are devoted almost exclusively to this field. The intense interest in "local" Jewish history in Russia is far from surprising. It is analogous to the prominence which American-Jewish history, literature, and sociology occupy in Jewish studies in the United States, and the occupation with the history of the Yishuv and State of Israel at Israeli universities.

The emergence of circles of researchers in the field of Russian-Jewish history

¹English tables of contents and synopses are provided in both serials.

²Not included in this essay is the Russian-language Judaica composed and published in Israel, mainly for consumption by Russian immigrants but also for Jews in Russia, such as the Russian translation of the Talmud, edited by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz.

³Igor R. Tantlevskii, *Istoriia i ideologiia kumranskoi obshchiny* (The History and Ideology of the Qumran Community), Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 1994.

in *Russia proper* represents a major step forward in this area. For more than a half-century, from the mid 1930s until 1989 or 1990, virtually no scholarship was produced on Russian-Jewish history in Russia; that is, in the country in which the history itself transpired. All the scholars working and publishing in the field were based in Israel and the West.⁴ The treatment of the Jews as a subject was virtually taboo in Soviet historiography since World War II. Most histories of the USSR, of its constituent republics (such as Belarus), or of individual cities (such as Odessa), did not even mention the word "Jews." Today, on the other hand, the serious Western student of Russian-Jewish history and culture has colleagues in Moscow and St. Petersburg and must follow the literature being published there.

At the same time, a second, even more momentous, transformation of the field has transpired: the opening of the Soviet archives. Before 1990, Western scholars had no choice but to conduct their research on Russian and Soviet Jewry based on printed sources (books, pamphlets, the press), on archival sources published by earlier generations of scholars (especially between 1917 and 1929), or on archival collections that had in one way or another found their way to American or Israeli repositories (such as the Jewish National and University Library, or YIVO Institute for Jewish Research). But since 1991, the former Soviet archives have been open for use by students of Jewish history, making available a tremendous volume of new material—according to one recent survey, over 1,000 archival collections on Jewish history.⁵ The most active readers of the newly available materials have been local scholars, who are in close proximity to them and are familiar with the structure and procedures of Soviet archives.

In short, the field of Russian-Jewish history has undergone a process of normalization and is now similar to fields such as Spanish-Jewish or Anglo-Jewish history. The latter have for decades had local researchers and scholarly journals, open archival collections, and so forth. But in the case of Russian-Jewish history, this normalization has been quite sudden, dramatic, and vast in its implications. Not only are we speaking of a field that suffered from more than 50 years of archival deprivation, but it happens also to be the field concerned with what was the largest Jewish community in the world during the 19th and early 20th centuries. There has been an explosion of available information—one that will take a long time to absorb—and a simultaneous marked increase in the number of researchers.

⁴To name but a few: in Israel—Shmuel Ettinger, Yehuda Slutsky, Chone Shmeruk, Mordechai Altshuler, Jonathan Frankel; in the West—Isaiah Trunk, Chimen Abramsky, Zvi Gitelman, David Roskies, Michael Stanislawski.

⁵*Jewish Documentary Sources in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus: A Preliminary List*, edited by Dorit Sallis and Marek Web, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, 1996.

A Portrait of the New Researchers

Who are the new Judaica scholars in Russia? Firstly, the new Russian-Jewish historiography is produced overwhelmingly by Jews. Very few ethnic Russians are engaged in this field, and one can say that Russian academia at large is not particularly interested in the Jewish topic. This is in marked contrast to contemporary Poland, where a large number of Poles are studying aspects of the Jewish past in their country, and where centers for Jewish studies in Cracow, Warsaw, and Lublin are staffed mainly by Poles.

To some extent, this contrast between Russia and Poland may be attributed to the fact that there are a large number of Jewish academics in Russia who have filled this intellectual void, whereas in Poland, with so few Jews, it has been filled by interested Poles. But the explanation for this contrast undoubtedly goes much deeper. Whereas Polish-Jewish relations are viewed by many Polish scholars as an important topic in their history (and as a complex and morally sensitive one), Russian scholars do not consider Russian-Jewish relations to be central or crucial to their history. The Jewish topic is seen as small, even parochial, a minor theme in the history of tsarism or Stalinism. To frame their attitude in emotional rather than intellectual terms: there is much less of a sense of historical guilt toward the Jews among Russian intellectuals and scholars than among Polish ones. After all, the various Russian regimes of the 19th and 20th centuries were extremely brutal toward millions of ethnic Russians, not only toward Jews and minorities.

Another obvious but nonetheless defining fact of Judaica in Russia: Virtually all of the scholars who have entered the field during the past seven years were trained in other fields of the humanities and social sciences. None of them received any systematic training in Judaica. They have shifted their focus of research from Russian history to Jewish history, from Soviet sociology to sociology of the Jewish community, or from Ukrainian folk music and folk art to Jewish folk music or folk art. The large number of academics who have made such shifts (usually partial shifts) is in itself a convincing indicator that there has been a reawakening among the Jewish academic intelligentsia in Russia, with Jewish academics probing and exploring their Jewish identity using the tools of scholarly research.⁶ They have not, however, experimented with Jewish religious observance or engaged in participation in Jewish communal organizations to the same extent.

⁶There are exceptions. One or two contemporary scholars first published their work in the official Soviet Yiddish journal *Sovetish Heymland* between the 1960s and 1980s (e.g., Chaim Beider). And a few scholars began their academic activity in the underground (or unofficial) Jewish movement (Mikhail Chlenov, Mark Kupovetski, Rashid Kaplanov). But the vast majority of Judaica scholars are of recent, post-perestroika and post-Soviet, vintage.

Finally, the Russian Judaica scholars are, like Russian Jewry itself, in a state of geographic flux. The wave of Jewish emigration from the former Soviet Union since 1989 has affected scholarship as well. Many of the scholars who appeared on the scene in the early 1990s, including several of the editors of *Vestnik* and *Trudy po iudaike*, have since emigrated to Israel and the West. Interestingly, some of the ex-patriots have continued to write for these journals from their new homes, and some even visit Russia to conduct their academic research. Add to this the fact that earlier émigrés from the former Soviet Union, who left the country in the 1970s, have begun to publish articles in *Vestnik* and *Trudy* in the past few years. As a result, these journals have become the scholarly organs of an international community of Russian-Jewish scholars, scattered across the new Russian-Jewish diaspora.

Subject Matter

The subject that has attracted the greatest attention in the new Russian-Jewish historiography has been tsarist and Soviet policy toward the Jews, i.e., the history of the "Jewish question" in Russia. Of the few book-length monographs published to date, two have dealt with aspects of this subject. Arlen Blium's *Evreiskii vopros pod sovetskoi tsenzuroi, 1917–1991* (The Jewish Question Under Soviet Censorship, 1917–1991; St. Petersburg, 1996) is based upon the records of the Soviet Glavlit censorship administration. It examines the censors' treatment of Jewish books and themes, choosing two or three incidents from each era of Soviet history to reflect broader state policies on Jewish matters. A much more ambitious documentary study is Gennadi Kostyrchenko's *V plenu u krasnogo faraona* (In the Captivity of the Red Pharaoh; Moscow, 1994), recently published in English translation as *Out of the Red Shadows: Anti-Semitism in Stalin's Russia* (Buffalo, 1996). The latter is an in-depth examination of anti-Jewish trials and public campaigns in the USSR between 1943 and 1953, from the Erlich-Alter affair to the trial against the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee to the campaign against "rootless cosmopolitans" and the Doctors' Plot. Although the basic contours of these events were previously well known, Kostyrchenko has utilized a vast array of state archival materials to introduce a plethora of new facts and details.⁷

Policies toward the Jews by the tsarist and Soviet authorities and the attitudes of various Russian and Ukrainian political movements toward the Jews have been the most frequent subjects of articles in the Moscow *Vestnik*. *Vestnik* has included studies on the policy of Jewish quotas in Russian higher education, the debates on the Jewish question in the late imperial administration and in the Russian Duma (parliament) between 1906 and 1917, tsarist policy toward the Zion-

⁷See the review by Robert Conquest in the *New York Review of Books*, July 11, 1996, pp. 46–49.

ist movement, and so on. Two book-length collections of documents soon to be published are devoted to the 1903 Kishinev pogrom and the 1911–1913 ritual-murder trial of Mendl Beilis.

This area is the most promising one for future contributions as well. The authors of these studies have extensive expertise in the Russian and Soviet history of the periods they study and are able to place policies or measures toward the Jews in the context of their times. The authors are also in proximity to the most important sources for dealing with their subject—the archival collections of various governmental (or political) bodies. As we shall see, Russian-Jewish scholars do not possess this combination of expertise, proximity, and access to materials in other areas of Russian-Jewish history.

Scholarly interest in the Holocaust is strong, but quite unevenly distributed. Although a Center for the Study of the Holocaust exists in Moscow, which has sponsored conferences and assisted in the preparation of source-books published in Israel, there is not a single scholar in Moscow or St. Petersburg who has written or published in this field. On the other hand, there is intensive academic work on the Holocaust in Belarus and Ukraine; that is, in those regions of the former Soviet Union in which the mass extermination of Jews took place. Of the eight contributors to the Holocaust issue of the *Vestnik* (no. 9, 1995), four are from Minsk (Belarus) and three from Jerusalem (one of whom is an émigré from Belarus); none are from Moscow or St. Petersburg.

Another indicator of the priority given to the Holocaust period in Belarus: Emanuel Yoffe's recent survey of Belarussian-Jewish history, *Stranitsy istorii evreev belarusi* (Pages from the History of the Jews of Belarus; Minsk, 1996), contains a 28-page chapter on the tsarist period of 1772–1917 and a 54-page chapter on the Holocaust years, 1941–1945.

As for study of Jewish social history, literature, and culture in Russia, a few topics have attracted considerable interest. One is the Jewish historiography that flourished in Russia in the late tsarist and early Soviet years—the antecedent to today's Russian Judaica. The more self-conscious contemporary scholars see their enterprise as a revival of the "St. Petersburg school" of Jewish historiography, which was based around the Jewish Historical-Ethnographic Society and its journal *Evreiskaia Starina* (Jewish Antiquities; 1908–1929), and whose main luminaries were Shimon Dubnow, Israel Zinberg, and S. An-Ski (Shloyme Zanvl Rapaport). One of the strengths and moral assets of today's Russian-Jewish historiography is its sense of continuity with a great tradition, which was cut short by Stalinism.

Viktor Kelner, a librarian at the St. Petersburg Public Library and one of the most productive scholars in the field, has published an extensive study on "The Problems of the Historiography of the Jews in Russia: Second Half of the Nineteenth Century to the First Quarter of the Twentieth Century" in the volume *Evrei v rossii: istoriograficheskie ocherki* (Jews in Russia: Historiographic Studies; Moscow, 1994). Kelner devotes the bulk of his attention to Dubnow and the

Historical-Ethnographic Society. Benjamin Lukin, formerly a leader of the St. Petersburg Jewish University and now an archivist at the Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem, has published articles on the Historical-Ethnographic Society (in *Trudy*, vol. 1, 1993 and elsewhere) and is currently writing a doctoral dissertation on S. An-Ski, the father of Jewish folkloristics in Russia. Galina Eliasberg, an instructor of Jewish literature at Project Judaica in Moscow, is currently completing a doctoral dissertation on Israel Zinberg. An anthology of essential papers by Dubnow, Zinberg, An-Ski, and some of their contemporaries was published in Moscow in 1995.⁸

In one noteworthy respect, the new Russian-Jewish scholarship does resemble its early-20th-century antecedent: A significant proportion of its work has been devoted to Jewish ethnography, material culture, and art. The St. Petersburg Jewish University has conducted several ethnographic expeditions to Ukraine (reminiscent of the An-Ski expedition on the eve of World War I) and has published studies on Jewish architecture (of synagogues and homes), the engravings and inscriptions on Jewish tombstones, and other findings from the expeditions.⁹ A three-volume set of albums of "Masterpieces of Jewish Art" (*Shedevri evreiskogo iskusstva*, undated), under the general editorship of Alexander Kantsedikas, formerly of Moscow (now in Israel), was published in Moscow under commercial auspices. Two volumes are devoted to ceremonial art and one to the paintings of "Artists from Vitebsk: Yehuda Pen and His Pupils."

There is also a considerable level of interest in various types of Jewish music. An impressive anthology of Yiddish folk songs with transliterations, Russian translations, and musical annotations was issued in St. Petersburg in 1994,¹⁰ and a volume of selected writings by the late Jewish musicologist Moishe Beregovskii was published in Moscow in 1994.¹¹ It includes the complete texts and musical notes of two traditional Yiddish Purim-*shpiln*. Modern musical compositions based on Jewish themes and the role of Jews in Russian and Soviet music have also been the focus of a number of studies in the *Vestnik*.

The subjects of art, music, and material culture occupy a much more prominent—and quantitatively larger—position in Jewish studies in Russia than in America or Israel. One of the reasons for this disproportionate interest goes to the very roots of contemporary Russian-Jewish identity. Russian Jews regard

⁸*Evrei v rossiiskoi imperii XVIII–XIX vekov: sbornik trudov evreiskikh istorikov* (Jews in the Russian Empire in the 18th and 19th Centuries: Anthology of Works by Jewish Historians), ed. Alexander Lokshin.

⁹See vol. 2 of *Trudy po iudaïke*, entitled *Istoria evreev na ukrainie i v belorussia: ekspeditsii, pamiatniki, nakhodki* (History of the Jews in Ukraine and Byelorussia: Expeditions, Monuments, Discoveries), St. Petersburg, 1994.

¹⁰*Evreiskaya narodnaya piesnia: antologia* (Jewish Folk Song: An Anthology), comp. and ed. M. Goldin and I. Zemtsovskii.

¹¹*Arfi na verkhakh: prizvanie in sud'ba Moiseïia Beregovskogo* (Harps in the Heavens: The Calling and Destiny of Moishe Beregovskii).

themselves as a “national,” i.e., ethnic, group, along the lines of Russians, Ukrainians, Georgians, and Lithuanians, rather than as primarily a religious group. This secular ethnic self-conception, which is more than a century old among Russian Jews, defines “authentic Jewishness” in cultural terms. The artistic folk creativity of premodern Jewish communities in Eastern Europe and its utilization in the works of modern artists (such as Chagall) are therefore of enormous interest to many Jews and Jewish academics in the former Soviet Union, just as analogous subjects are of great interest to Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, and Lithuanian scholars.

Methodological Limitations

As mentioned above, the new Russian-Jewish historiography is produced primarily by relative beginners in the field. Unlike their prerevolutionary predecessors (Dubnow, Zinberg, et al.), the new scholars do not have fluency in Hebrew and Yiddish, and this severely limits their ability to study the history of Jewish society and culture in Eastern Europe. Much of the written record of Russian and early Soviet Jewry—the periodical press, religious, political, and artistic literature, as well as communal records and private correspondence—is inaccessible to today’s scholars due to their linguistic limitations. Many of the archival collections now open for use lie virtually untouched for this reason.

The Russian-Jewish past which the new historians are investigating—and constructing for themselves and their readers—is therefore highly skewed. Much more is being written on Russian-Jewish literature (from the works of Lev Levanda in the 1860s to those of Isaac Babel in the 1920s) than on Yiddish or Hebrew literature, although voluminous new archival materials on the latter have become available. Kelner’s useful and insightful study of Jewish historiography in Russia also suffers from this shortcoming: it examines the Russian-language historiography, but not the Hebrew journal *He-avar* (1917–1918) or the extensive Soviet-Yiddish historiography of the 1920s.

Equally understandable, but lamentable, is the new Russian-Jewish scholars’ frequent lack of familiarity with the historiography that has accumulated overseas (in interwar Poland, in the United States, and Israel) since the 1920s. Even basic English-language literature is unknown to many of those now working in this field. To cite but one example, a number of articles have appeared in the *Vestnik* on the Jewish Social-Democratic party, the Bund, whose authors are unaware of the works of Henry Tobias, Ezra Mendelsohn, and Jonathan Frankel, leading scholars in this area. This ignorance is not necessarily due to the language barrier; it is often due to the inaccessibility of the literature and the social isolation of the scholars at work—especially those living outside Moscow or St. Petersburg. But the result is that the new work simply repeats well-known information or fails to engage the questions raised by previous scholars.

The more rigorous Russian-Jewish scholars are mindful of their linguistic lim-

itations and have carefully chosen areas of research in which knowledge of Hebrew and/or Yiddish is not essential, such as the above-mentioned work on tsarist and Soviet policy toward the Jews. To cite another example, Mark Kupovetski has done some thorough and innovative work on the historical demography of Russian and Soviet Jewry. Using sophisticated statistical techniques, he has, for instance, recalculated the extent of Soviet Jewish losses during the Holocaust (in an article in volume 9 of *Vestnik*). And among the emerging younger scholars, the problem of the language barrier is not as acute, since most of them have studied Hebrew and/or Yiddish in university-level programs of Judaica in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Thus, among the 17 masters' theses written by Project Judaica students in 1996, nine were based primarily upon Hebrew and Yiddish sources.

One sign that the field as a whole is still in its infancy is the general paucity of book-length monographs. Journal articles and collaborative volumes have instead been the norm. This reflects the fact that the new scholars in this field have simply not been working long enough to produce book-length works. A related phenomenon is the preponderance of publications of archival sources, with introductions and notes. This too is a reflection of the fragmentary nature of much of the work done to date.

The publication of sources, rather than of synthetic studies, is in fact indicative of deeper trends in contemporary Russian historiography, including the new Russian-Jewish historiography. Historians are interested in presenting bare, unadorned, and incontrovertible facts, in the form of archival documents, leaving unexplored the broader meaning of the historical facts and their relationship to each other. This reluctance—even aversion—to engage in conceptualization and interpretation is largely a reaction against the abuses and excesses of Soviet historiography, in which history was subservient to Marxist-Leninist theory and was required to prove the latter's correctness. Today's historians are suspicious of social theory and of interpretations of historical events that go beyond the explicitly documentable. As a result, many of the recently published articles read like digests of the archival files on which they are based, which makes for some rather dry historical reading.

This narrow factological approach to the writing of history may be even more prevalent among Jewish historians than among others in Russia today. In part, it derives from the paradox of scholars engaging in archival research without having become familiar with the basic literature. The scholars do not have a conceptual or comparative framework in which to process their material. The large issues debated in Jewish historiography (Emancipation, assimilation, anti-Semitism, Zionism, the rise of Jewish socialism, etc.) are simply unknown to them.

In light of the above, it comes as no surprise that some of the most useful contributions made by Russian-Jewish scholars have been bibliographies and indexes. *Literatura o evreakh na russkom yazike, 1890–1947* (Literature on the Jews in Russian, 1890–1947), compiled by Viktor Kelner and Dmitry Eliashevich (St. Petersburg, 1995), is a truly monumental bibliographic achievement, listing books,

pamphlets, and select articles from the periodical press, according to topics (Judaism, Zionism, Russian-Jewish History, Jews in the Russian revolutionary movement, Jewish education, etc.).¹² The volume lists more than 6,000 bibliographic entries and is accompanied by indexes of authors, publishers, and places of publication. A bibliography of recent books and articles of Jewish interest in Ukraine (*Current Judaica Ucrainica*, 1995) and digests of Jewish documents in certain Russian archival repositories have been published by the Moscow-based Jewish Heritage Society.

Conclusion

This survey of recent Jewish scholarship in Russia has attempted to present basic trends and issues, rather than an exhaustive bibliography of all the publications in the field.

The very existence of such a body of literature in Russia is extremely heartening. Perhaps it is unfair to judge the new Russian-Jewish historiography according to the professional standards developed over many decades in the West. At this stage, the new Russian-Jewish historiography should be considered primarily as an indicator of the revival of Jewish intellectual life in Russia and a sign of the revival of Jewish identity among the academic intelligentsia. In addition, this body of scholarship is serving an important educational and cultural function. Russian Jews are becoming increasingly aware of their past and of the fact that their community is heir to one of the great Jewish communities of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The new scholarship is helping to consolidate a new communal consciousness and identity.

In strictly scholarly terms, the new Russian-Jewish historiography is a beginning—with all the promise and uncertainty that beginnings hold. The degree to which it will mature and grow is one of the many imponderables of Russian-Jewish life today.

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¹²Kelner and Eliashevich's volume is a sequel to L. Bramson and Y. Brutskus, *Sistematičeskii ukazatel literaturi o evreakh na ruskome yazike, 1708–1889*, St. Petersburg, 1892.