Throughout 1995 and the beginning of 1996, the national political scene was dominated by the continuing decline in the fortunes of Prime Minister John Major's Conservative government, mainly because of internal divisions over relations with the European Union. This decline was in stark contrast to the growing popularity of the “new” Labor Party led by Tony Blair. The divisions within the Tory party over Europe were compounded by the resignation in June 1995 of pro-Europe foreign secretary Douglas Hurd. He was replaced by former defense secretary Malcolm Rifkind (who strongly identifies as a Jew but views his Judaism as “supremely irrelevant” to his political duties). The reduction in the November budget of the standard rate of income tax from 25 percent to 24 percent did little to help the government, nor did the December reduction of 0.25 percent to 6.5 percent in interest rates.

The government’s relative unpopularity was demonstrated in the polls, which in December showed the Labor Party leading the Tories by 30 points. This position was not maintained into the spring of 1996—the Tories gaining some benefit from the return of the “feel good” factor, decline in unemployment, and minimal inflation. Even so, the loss in April of a by-election in Staffordshire by a near-record swing of votes from Tory to Labor of 22 percent showed how insubstantial was even the marginal recovery in progovernment sympathy.

Labor was the main beneficiary of the Tory malaise and on most issues enjoyed a greater degree of confidence than did the Tories. In personal terms Labor leader Tony Blair consistently had a higher rating than Prime Minister Major. The Labor success could be attributed to Blair’s capturing the political middle ground, reassuring the electorate that New Labor, if elected to office, had abandoned its alleged tradition of “tax and spend,” and to the party’s apparent unity, the result of Blair’s centralized control. The party’s image of unity and moderation was further confirmed by its rousing successes in the local elections in early May 1996, when less than half of the 1,092 Tory local councillors retained their seats.
Meanwhile, no harmony was visible between Euroskeptics and Europhiles; in fact, the government's policy of noncooperation with the European Community because of the latter's ban on British beef exports, imposed in March 1996, provided yet another focus for the display of Tory disunity.

**Israel and the Middle East**

In an eventful year, Britain consistently supported the peace process and condemned Arab suicide bombings and other acts of violence that threatened to undermine that process. Even the Labor Party underwent a change in attitude: in October 1995 its Brighton conference unanimously endorsed a motion on the peace process, proposed by the left-wing Zionist organization Poale Zion and seconded by the formerly anti-Israel Dundee East constituency. "We will rebuild the links between the Jewish community and Labour," said party leader Tony Blair.

Following the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November, Queen Elizabeth II, represented by the Prince of Wales at Rabin's Jerusalem funeral, sent a message to President Ezer Weizman expressing her horror. All political parties paid tribute to Rabin in the House of Commons and sent leading representatives to the funeral, including Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, who was starting a six-day Middle East visit to Lebanon, Syria, and Israel.

Queen Elizabeth and all British leaders, as well as some Muslim sources and the Council for Arab-British Understanding, condemned the suicide bombings in Israel in February and March 1996, described by Prime Minister Major as "evil acts" and "atrocities." At the same time, Britain continued to provide support for the independent Palestinian Authority. Following the antiterrorism summit at Sharm al-Sheikh in March, the government announced a further £2 million in aid to that body, bringing the total to £87 million over the next three years. A spokesperson for the government's Overseas Development Administration said, "Our assistance focuses on good government. . . . By improving living standards such aid can help maintain support for the peace process and reduce the discontent on which terrorism breeds."

Foreign Office minister Jeremy Hanley told Parliament that two senior police officers involved in the successful blockade of the City of London against terrorists after the 1993 IRA bombings would visit Israel to advise security officials on setting up ring-of-steel safety zones in city centers. Jerusalem and London, he said, were considering other ways of cooperating to fight terrorism. The government also condemned Iran for its support of terrorism.

Following the terrorist attacks in Israel in February, Assistant Secretary of State John Shepherd visited Palestinian leaders urging them to move against extremists. Special Branch officers and intelligence agents placed Hamas supporters in the United Kingdom under surveillance amid repeated Israeli claims that London was a main center for funding and supporting Hamas in Gaza and the West Bank. The allegations caused the Charity Commission to investigate Inter-
pal, a UK-based charity raising funds for Palestinian welfare projects. Their decision that all payments made by Interpal must be authorized by the commission was described by the Board of Deputies of British Jews as “a step forward.” Also, Home Secretary Michael Howard announced that the government was considering tougher legislation on terrorism, and an independent inquiry under former Appeal Court judge Lord Lloyd opened in London in March to look into methods of dealing with terrorism.

The Foreign Office initially described Israel’s attack on civilians in Lebanon in April—carried out during an escalating conflict with Hezbollah, which had been shooting rockets into northern Israeli towns—as “wholly disproportionate.” At the same time, Defense Secretary Michael Portillo, visiting Israel, said, “We condemn rocket and other terrorist attacks against Israel which have led to civilian casualties. . . . There can be no justification for Hezbollah’s actions. . . .” In May, however, Britain rejected U.S. and Israeli criticisms of the UN report condemning Israel’s bombing of Lebanese civilians. The report, Foreign Secretary Rifkind told Parliament, made “very disturbing reading,” and the matter needed to be “properly investigated.”

The investigation into the July 1994 bombings of London’s Israeli embassy and the Joint Israel Appeal headquarters made some headway in 1995. In July six people were charged; in September charges against two were dropped, but three of the accused—Jawed Botmeh, Samar Alami, and Mahmood Abu-Wardeh—were committed for trial at the Old Bailey.

The fate of Jerusalem remained a sensitive area. In June 1995 Foreign Office minister Douglas Hogg told Parliament that the city must be shared to achieve a lasting Middle East peace and criticized the expansion of Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and the West Bank as “illegal and serious obstacles to peace.” However, Palestinian attempts to start discussions of Jerusalem’s future were, he said, “an error and inconsistent with the declaration of principles” agreed upon by Israel and the PLO.

Explaining Britain’s decision in September 1995 to boycott Israel’s celebrations marking the 3000th anniversary of Jerusalem, a Foreign Office spokesperson said: “Britain, in common with the European Union, is concerned that the celebrations were aimed at emphasizing Jewish claims to the city.”

In January 1996, a controversial visit by Foreign Office minister Hanley to Orient House, PLO’s East Jerusalem headquarters, sparked Israeli concern that such visits could imply acceptance of Palestinian claims to East Jerusalem. Defending Hanley’s visit in the House of Lords, Lord Chesham reiterated British policy that the status of Jerusalem was a matter to be determined in the final status talks between Israel and the Palestinians, and that nothing should be done to preempt their outcome. In May Ambassador Moshe Raviv protested to the Foreign Office after Foreign Secretary Rifkind told supporters of Medical Aid for the Palestinians that Britain “considered Israel to be in military occupation of East Jerusalem and to have only de facto authority over West Jerusalem.”
Nazi War Criminals

In July 1995 Szymon Serafimowicz became the first man to face charges in an English court under the 1991 War Crimes Act. Serafimowicz, aged 84, came to Britain in 1947, worked as a carpenter, and most recently lived in Banstead, Surrey. He appeared at Epsom magistrates court, where he was charged with murdering four unnamed Jews in Nazi-occupied Byelorussia between 1941 and 1942. He was released on bail.

The slow progress of the case was explained in September when a Home Office spokesperson told the Jewish Chronicle that war-crimes prosecutions could be held up by a technical flaw in legislation. The rules allowing trials to skip the committal stage and go straight to the Central Criminal Court had not been enacted.

One of the four murder charges was dropped when Serafimowicz appeared at Dorking magistrates court in January 1996; proceedings were adjourned and bail renewed until February to allow witnesses to travel to Britain. In April, Serafimowicz, who declined to enter a plea on any of the charges, was sent for trial at London's Central Criminal Court and ordered to appear at the Old Bailey on May 10 for a preliminary hearing. The committal hearing at Dorking lasted for 22 days and took evidence from 17 witnesses from Israel and other countries. Serafimowicz was provided with legal aid, and bail was granted on condition he surrender his passport.

Scotland Yard's War Crimes squad was still investigating eight suspected war criminals living in Britain, Lord Chancellor Lord Mackay told the House of Lords in March 1996. Investigations into three other cases had been dropped over the previous four months, he said.

Anti-Semitism and Racism

According to the 1996 Antisemitism World Report, published by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (formerly the Institute of Jewish Affairs) and the American Jewish Committee, “The depth and scope of an international Islamist network continues to pose a security threat to British Jews.” Overall, however, Jews in Britain “do not experience the same levels of racial harassment and common prejudice suffered by other ethnic minorities. Continuing, but occasional, synagogue and cemetery desecrations and the distribution of hate literature provide an on-going but low level harassment of the community.”

The Board of Deputies of British Jews recorded 246 anti-Semitic incidents in 1995, a 26-percent drop from the previous year's 329 incidents. Serious damage was reported to Jewish cemeteries in Bournemouth, Hull, and East London, and the three cases showed signs of having been coordinated. In Manchester, three Jewish schools experienced arson attacks.

In July 1995 the National Front, once Britain's most powerful far-right orga-
nization, attempted to throw off undesirable elements and its skinhead image by changing its name to the National Democrats. The same month, Environment Secretary John Gummer endorsed Bexley Council's refusal to permit the far-right British National Party (BNP) to use a bookshop in Welling, South-East London as headquarters, giving BNP three months to cease this usage.

In October, the director of Public Prosecutions ruled on grounds of insufficient evidence against prosecuting the distributors of Tomorrow's Job, an anti-Semitic publication sent to senior police officers countrywide. The ruling fueled Board of Deputies' concern at the failure of law officials to enforce the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, which had come into force in February 1995. The law created a new offense of "causing intentional harassment," but did not specify racial motivation. In April 1996 Home Office minister Timothy Kirkhope told board leaders pleading for prosecutions of those inciting hatred against Jews that the government believed "we now possess the necessary legislation to deal with racially-motivated crimes." In May, amid general concern about the distribution of a far-right magazine containing hit lists including names of Jewish leaders, Special Branch detectives arrested three men in West London in connection with the production and distribution of "racially inflammatory" material.

For much of the year the Board of Deputies campaigned hard for the inclusion in the European Union's Rome Treaty of specific powers to combat racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism and urged the government to reconsider its stance after Home Secretary Howard vetoed the EU proposals. In February 1996, Prime Minister Major expressed government concern at the increasing "manifestations of racism, xenophobia and antisemitism" in Europe, but maintained that EU member states should individually frame antiracist laws designed to meet their "own particular needs." Britain, he said, was in discussion with its European partners over amendments to the initiative.

In March 1996, when Howard signed an agreement for European cooperation to fight racism but opted out of a declaration to make Holocaust denial a criminal offense, the Board of Deputies warned that this risked making Britain a refuge for Holocaust revisionists. Prime Minister Major responded to board president Eldred Tabachnik, also the current head of the European Jewish Congress, that Britain's laws against racism now "struck a balance between freedom of speech and the protection of citizens from abuse and insult." The EU agreement, Howard said, "complemented" British legislation against racism and required only one change in British law, whereas making Holocaust denial an offense would involve many.

Communal organizations, often in conjunction with black and Asian representatives, protested the government's Asylum and Immigration Bill passed by the House of Commons in December 1995. The bill, which was foreshadowed when Howard told the Conservative Party's Blackpool conference in October that "good race relations and firm immigration control go hand in hand," aimed to stem bogus asylum seekers by restricting their entitlement to housing and child
benefits and making employment of illegal immigrants an offense. In February
1996 Jewish organizations throughout the community launched a campaign to
help asylum seekers and refugees who they feared might be made destitute by the
new regulations. (The Federation of Synagogues refused to join the program be-
cause Progressive and Masorti—Reform and Conservative—institutions were
involved.)

The intimidation of Jewish students on university campuses by the Islamic ex-
tremist group Hizb ut-Tahrir intensified over the year. The first-year results of a
National Union of Students (NUS) Campus Watch scheme—a 24-hour student
telephone hotline set up in conjunction with the Union of Jewish Students (UJS)
and the antifascist organization Searchlight—published in October, showed that
271 of 381 calls received concerned Islamic extremist activity, the rest mainly in-
volving "extreme Right-wing and Fascist groups."

Hizb, which not only opposes Israel and Jews but is anti-feminist, anti-gay, anti-
Western, anti-democratic (and is banned in most Middle Eastern countries), con-
tinued to distribute propaganda and to threaten Jewish students. In August the
NUS demanded that Hizb be banned on campuses, instructing student unions to
deny it facilities for meetings; however, attempts by NUS and UJS to persuade
the authorities to stop a Hizb rally in London in August failed. In October
speeches at a Hizb-organized rally outside Guildhall University, London, con-
demned the NUS for "hiding under a cover of pro-Judaism." A leaflet promot-
ing the demonstration "opposing the conspiracy against Islam in British univer-
sities" alleged a hate campaign against Islam and Muslim students "orchestrated
almost exclusively by UJS and their lackeys in NUS." In October too it was re-
ported that Hizb activists harassed Jewish students at University College, Lon-
don. In the same month, Birmingham University became the first British cam-
pus to expel Hizb activists from its premises after student complaints.

In January 1996 Middlesex University and University College ejected Hizb
from their student unions after Jews, Hindus, and gays charged victimization and
the distribution of offensive literature; in March Leeds University denied Hizb
a platform on campus premises. Hizb supporters protested when the NUS's an-
nual conference in Blackpool in March called on students and college leaders to
adopt a national code of practice to curb extremists on campus. Relations with
other Muslim students were more cordial. Senior members of the UJS and the
General Union of Palestinian Students issued a joint statement stressing their
commitment to the peace process and condemning extremist action by both Jews
and Arabs.

Off campus, representatives of the Church of England and the Muslim com-
unity attended a service for peace in Bradford Reform Synagogue in June 1995
after a weekend of civil violence, when police attempted to control rioting by
youths in Bradford's predominantly Asian Manningham district. In March 1996
the Maimonides Foundation, an Anglo-Jewish charity set up to further Musli-
Jewish relations, organized an international conference in London, in conjunction with the School of Oriental and African Studies and Tel Aviv University, to discuss the historical impact of Jews and Muslims on each other.


In April planning permission was granted for a Holocaust Gallery at London's Imperial War Museum. This would be the first permanent Holocaust exhibition in a national museum in Europe.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The estimated number of Jews in Great Britain was 300,000.

An estimated total of 866 synagogue marriages were recorded in 1996, according to the Board of Deputies Community Research Unit. This represented a 5-percent drop from the 1994 total of 914, the largest decrease (28) being in marriages under Liberal auspices. The number of religious divorces completed in 1995 was 230, six lower than the previous year. Burials and cremations under Jewish religious auspices rose 1 percent to 4,233 in 1995 from an adjusted figure of 4,192 in 1994. The unit estimated, on the basis of totals for circumcisions, that 2,377 Jewish births took place in 1994 as compared with 2,847 in 1993.

Communal Affairs

Israel's peace moves aroused protest from some sectors of the Jewish community. In August 1995 some 60 right-wing communal activists held a protest vigil outside Israel's London embassy, organized by American rabbi Avi Weiss. The Zionist Federation (ZF) passed a resolution expressing "deep concern at the unseemly demonstration" and, though Britain's rabbis were split on the issue, Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote to the Jewish Chronicle supporting the peace accords.

All factions of the community united in shock and grief at the assassination of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in November. Memorial meetings were held in London's Albert Hall — organized by the Board of Deputies, the Joint Israel Appeal (JIA), the Zionist Federation, the National Zionist Council, and the Israeli embassy — and throughout the country by all branches of Judaism. A 40-
strong delegation of British Jewish leaders, organized by JIA, in conjunction with the Board of Deputies, traveled to Israel to offer support and sympathy.

In December 1995 the Board of Deputies moved to new Central London premises following the sale of Woburn House, the home of numerous major Jewish organizations for over 60 years.

Two trends were evident in the organized community in 1995–1996: the commissioning of efficiency studies by outside experts and mergers in which smaller bodies took shelter under larger groups with greater fund-raising clout.

In May 1996 the Board of Deputies voted unanimously to endorse in principle the proposals of a report by management consultant Stephen Chelms. The findings of the review, which were published in February 1996, highlighted the need to combine the board’s wide democratic representation with an effective system of decision-making, while also encouraging partnerships with other Jewish organizations. Recommendations included a cut in the executive from 25 to 11; the introduction of four divisional boards instead of ten committees; a reduced number of plenary sessions; and the creation of a foundation and a three-year plan. Many of the proposals would be debated again when constitutional changes were discussed, warned board chief executive Neville Nagler.

Norwood Child Care (Anglo-Jewry’s third-largest social-service agency) announced two mergers: in July 1995 with the Association of Jewish Youth, and in February 1996 with Ravenswood, which in December had reported a growing cash crisis, with income from fund-raising and legacies down and operating costs on the increase.

In November B’nai B’rith’s Stepney Clubs and Settlements, providing a daycare center, meals on wheels, and nursery and holiday-home facilities for some 1,000 Jewish people in the area, merged with Jewish Care, Anglo-Jewry’s largest domestic charity. In a document titled “Toward 2000,” published in April 1996, Care set out its future options in view of the decline in the number of Jews coupled with their greater longevity.

Efforts on behalf of foreign Jews concentrated on aid to the victims of hostilities in the Balkans. In June 1995 World Jewish Relief started a fund to aid the people of Sarajevo, and in July, in advance of a crisis meeting on Bosnia to be attended by world leaders, lobbied the Foreign Office calling for a 24-hour ceasefire to allow food and supplies into Sarajevo. July also saw the start-up of an emergency appeal for humanitarian aid to Bosnian war victims run by the newly formed Jewish Emergency Aid Coalition, an alliance of 16 organizations, including the Board of Deputies, B’nai B’rith, the Union of Jewish Students, and the Progressive and Masorti movements. In September World Jewish Relief collaborated with the coalition to provide aid for Serb refugees made homeless after the capture of the Krajina region by Croatia.

Help for Russian Jewry focused on Jews remaining in the former Soviet Union. In June, for example, Wimbledon Reform congregation, which was twinned with the 3,000-strong Jewish community in Cherkassy, some hundred miles south of
Kiev, sent medicines, money, and religious articles. In July World Jewish Relief launched a campaign to fund a number of "Jewish houses" (community centers) in Jewish areas of Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova. Through a partnership with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, staff for the centers would be trained in Britain or Israel. In April 1996 members of the Reform Synagogue youth organization (RSY-Netzer) set up a youth club in Kiev. In May JIA's Super Sunday telethon raised more than £200,000 for the rescue of Jews in Minsk and Moldova.

The campaign for the release of Israeli pilot Ron Arad, missing in action since 1986, continued. In October 1995 some thousand people joined a demonstration, organized by the Free Ron Arad Campaign, outside the Iranian embassy. The government pledged to use its influence to obtain Arad's release, instructing diplomats to raise his case at any talks with Middle East leaders and officials.

SURVEYS

The results of the most comprehensive survey ever made of the social and political attitudes of British Jewry were published in February 1996. The survey, aimed at producing a profile of the broad community as a basis for policy planning, was commissioned and published by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR), the new name of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, marking its change from a mainly academic research body to a policy-oriented think-tank, more actively involved in Anglo-Jewish affairs.

The survey was based on 2,180 postal questionnaires returned by British Jews between July and October 1995 and was conducted by Stephen Miller, dean of social sciences at London’s City University, and Marlena Schmool, director of the Board of Deputies’ Community Research Unit, under the overall direction of Antony Lerman, JPR executive director.

The key findings of the survey, as summarized by its authors, are as follows: More Jews support the Conservatives than Labor (45 percent against 41 percent), though Jewish professionals are more likely to vote left than their non-Jewish counterparts; a substantial majority favor continued membership in the European Union but do not regard it as a safeguard against anti-Semitism; more feel that racism in general has worsened in the last five years than that anti-Semitism has worsened; respondents are more radical on environmental issues and in their attitudes to authority and social norms than the general population, far more liberal on crime and punishment and sexual conduct, and less sympathetic on social welfare and support for the unemployed.

On Israel and Jewish matters: 42 percent feel strong attachment to Israel and 60 percent favor the Israeli government's approach to the Arab-Israel peace process; there are divisions between secular and Progressive Jews on the one hand, and Orthodox on the other, on both religious dogma and perceptions of the moral and social character of the Jewish community; one in three Jews does
not belong to a synagogue; most Jews regard religious observance as a means of identifying with the community rather than an expression of religious faith.

On marriage and intermarriage: one in three British Jews aged 20–49 does not live with a partner, though one in five is seeking one; the rate at which Jewish men under 40 marry non-Jewish women is 44 percent, but many Jews who marry out of the faith are actively involved in Jewish life and strongly identify as Jews. In general, the common assumption that intermarried or uninvolved or secular Jews hold negative attitudes toward Jewishness and the Jewish community is not borne out by the survey; at the same time, a growing proportion of British Jews feel securely rooted in British society.

On a smaller scale, North Manchester’s Jewish Youth Project surveyed more than 550 teenagers to gain information on their lifestyles, needs, and concerns as a basis for planning youth services. Its findings, published in November 1995 as “Through Their Eyes,” showed a strong sense of Jewish identity among the young people interviewed, aged 13–18, with 80 percent thinking it “very important” or “quite important” to be Jewish. The survey also disclosed an alarming level of drug use.

Religion

A more upbeat note sounded for the United Synagogue (US) in 1995, the 125th anniversary of the Act of Parliament that created the organization. In July a celebratory service was held at the Central Synagogue, London, last surviving synagogue of the original five which united to form the US. At an anniversary dinner at London’s Guildhall in September, Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks commended the US’s undeviating firmness on two nonnegotiable principles: openness to every Jew wishing to join it and fidelity to the Torah.

In June 1995 US co-treasurer Stephen Forman reported the first surplus in ten years in the general purposes and charitable account in 1994, though £6.7 million was still owed to banks. Of US’s constituent synagogues, 23 had generated surpluses and eight had broken even, while the US still supported seven communities with chronic deficits in older areas of Jewish settlement. In June the US and Jewish Israel Appeal agreed that synagogues could keep 30 percent of their Kol Nidre appeal collections, with JIA receiving 60 percent and 10 percent going to US’s central fund for its community development program. In December, the US, the Chief Rabbi’s Office, the Bet Din, and the kashrut division transferred from Woburn House to the Finchley, North-West London, premises occupied by the JIA.

In March 1996 Finchley Synagogue, taken under direct US management in 1993, returned to self-government. Its debt crisis was resolved, and the relationship with its breakaway alternative minyan restored, but the congregation was declining, with male membership down to 800.

Controversy still rumbled on. In October 1995 Chief Rabbi Sacks apologized
to Masorti head Rabbi Louis Jacobs for his attack the previous January on the Masorti movement, but Jacobs said, “What we are concerned about is that there should be a clear statement from his office that our marriages are in order — which they are.” In December, Chief Rabbi Sacks overruled Bet Din objections to attendance by Orthodox alongside non-Orthodox rabbis at the annual Limmud educational conference. Nevertheless, only one Orthodox rabbi, Michael Harris, participated in Limmud; the main Orthodox speaker, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, withdrew “for personal reasons.”

Women’s groups also voiced discontent at the lack of progress in implementing key recommendations of “Women in the Jewish Community,” a report published by the Chief Rabbi’s Office in 1994, particularly those concerning the plight of agunot (“chained women” whose husbands refuse them a religious divorce). In June 1995 the Jewish Women’s Network accused Sacks of “ignoring the plight of women,” and the Association of Jewish Women’s Organizations urged him to hold immediate talks with the appropriate rabbinic authorities and representatives of women’s groups. In July a regional steering committee to promote the initiatives suggested in “Women in the Jewish Community” was set up in Manchester by delegates from Leeds, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, and Sheffield. In October, two years after Sacks had announced his intention to introduce a Prenuptial Agreement (PNA) for all US marriages, women held an unprecedented protest vigil outside the Chief Rabbi’s Office in London. In November some 60 women demonstrated in Northwood, Middlesex, where Sacks was dedicating a new synagogue.

In December a new PNA was produced through the joint efforts of the Federation of Synagogues’ Dayan Berel Berkovits, the head of London’s Bet Din, and Sephardi, Manchester, and Leeds religious courts, in what Sacks called “a welcome example of communal collaboration.” The PNA committed couples considering divorce to attend a religious court and conferred arbitration powers on the Bet Din, enforceable by civil courts. The Sephardi Bet Din objected to the agreement on grounds of its enforceability, while Masorti rabbi Louis Jacobs said he would not offer the PNA to couples marrying in his synagogue, because it was “unsavory” to force them to think about divorce at their wedding.

In response to criticism of the arbitration clause, in February 1996 the Bet Din offered a choice between two versions of the PNA, one with, one without the clause. In March the US backed up the PNA with a battery of communal sanctions to demonstrate communal disapproval of recalcitrant spouses who refuse to give or receive a get, including withdrawal of synagogue privileges. By the end of April, Rabbi Julian Shindler, director of the Chief Rabbi’s Office, told the Jewish Chronicle that one-third of US couples signed the agreement, most opting for the nonarbitration version. Within the Federation, which offers only the PNA including the clause, one in five couples signed, according to Berkovits. “PNA is not a terribly effective instrument,” he said. Chief Rabbi Sacks pledged to review the entire process in the coming months.
Meanwhile, in March the House of Commons passed an amendment to the government’s Family Law Bill, proposed in the House of Lords the previous November and supported by former chief rabbi Sir Immanuel Jakobovits, which would allow courts to delay the granting of a civil divorce in cases where one partner was barred from remarrying. In April the bill was undergoing committee hearings in the Commons.

In June London’s West End Great Synagogue, home since 1941 of Central London’s last fully independent congregation, was sold. The congregation, founded in 1880, and with a current nominal membership of 1,800, including members of nine defunct East End synagogues, decided in March to share premises with Western-Marble Arch Synagogue.

In February 1996 Bloom’s Restaurant in London’s East End, a landmark for British Jewry for 75 years, closed due to heavy debts and problems with kosher. In March Bloom’s manufacturing enterprise was bought by North-West London butcher Bernard Greenspan.

The Assembly of Masorti Synagogues welcomed the New Whetstone Synagogue as its sixth member in October 1995. In February 1996 a Masorti group was formed in Hendon, North-West London, and in May the Leeds Masorti group, with some 60 families, celebrated its first anniversary.

In May the South-East Essex Reform Synagogue voted to merge with the 77-year-old Settlement Synagogue in Stepney, East London, where 75 percent of the membership was over 65. Also in May, Rabbi William Wolff became chairman of the Council of Reform and Liberal Rabbis.

**Education**

"An undertaking fraught with controversy" was how Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks described Jewish Continuity, the national fund-raising program to boost Jewish education begun in 1993. It was, he said, "the greatest risk of my Chief Rabbinate." He announced his decision to withdraw from direct involvement in Continuity after a report issued in March 1996 concluded that the best way to advance the program was through a cross-community planning and development agency that would encompass different religious groups.

The program review was ordered in October 1995 by Continuity’s trustees in conjunction with the Joint Israel Appeal (JIA), which raises Continuity’s funds, and was chaired by former United Synagogue (US) vice-president Leslie Wagner, head of Continuity’s Allocation Board. It came in the wake of criticism and confusion as to whether Continuity was intended as an Orthodox-controlled or cross-community body and the impact of this on its fund-raising potential. (Symptomatic of the dissent dogging Continuity was the fact that in the second year of its national Hebrew-reading campaign, none of the 25 venues was under Progressive auspices.) Only £1 million of the £3 million from JIA funds guaranteed to Continuity for 1995 by a 1994 fund-raising agreement had materialized, and
JIA attributed the shortfall to the chief rabbi's attack on the Masorti movement. To reflect its involvement in Jewish education, in October JIA started a new fund-raising campaign with a new slogan—"Saving Jewish Life"—which, said marketing director Anthony Wagerman, encompassed all that JIA offered, from rescuing endangered Jews abroad to support for Continuity.

Forced to launch its own fund-raising drive, Continuity was able in February to fund a new round of grants, postponed from December, some 52 percent going to Orthodox organizations, 8 percent to Progressive, 3 percent to Masorti, and 37 percent to nondenominational groups. In May 1996 it was reported unofficially that Wagner had been approached to be Continuity's next chairman and Sir Trevor Chinn, JIA president, to be chairman of its trustees, both positions occupied by Dr. Michael Sinclair since the program's inception in 1993.

Continuity funding enabled the appointment in June 1995 of a Jewish student chaplain at Cambridge University, with responsibilities for universities in East Anglia and Essex. Also funded were a pilot scheme for the inspection of Jewish studies in schools and publication of the first national curriculum for Jewish studies and modern Hebrew by the Zionist schools' network, affecting over 3,000 children aged 5–16.

Acute financial difficulties at Jews' College were made public in June 1995, raising fears of closure. The college, said council chairman David Pomson, was operating on a monthly deficit of some £20,000. However, a council decision to sell off books from the college library as a short-term measure was withdrawn after public outcry. Reporting that 150 students had enrolled for the next academic year, principal Daniel Sinclair announced new initiatives including a program for preparing undergraduates with at least two years of yeshivah training for rabbinic ordination. Fostering a cadre of rabbinically qualified, academically trained graduates was a vital task for Anglo-Jewry as it prepared to enter the 21st century, he said. "Resources are becoming more limited and the trend is moving away from full-time rabbis in the traditional style."

There were a number of developments in institutions of higher education. An M.A. course in Sephardic studies was launched at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies in July 1995, to be run in cooperation with the West London Sephardi Centre. In September Bristol University announced the creation of a lectureship in Jewish studies; in December a new center for Jewish studies opened at Leeds University; and in January 1996 a lectureship in modern Hebrew was endowed at Cambridge.

In November 1995 David Cesarani was appointed professor of modern Judaism at Manchester University, joining Prof. Philip Alexander at Manchester's new Centre for Jewish Studies, which officially opened in March 1996. However, in May Cesarani announced that he would leave Manchester to return to London's Wiener Library as director, combining that post with a new Parkes-Wiener chair in 20th-century European Jewish history and culture at Southampton University.

In March 1996 the Corob Trust endowed a senior fellowship in Yiddish liter-
nature and culture at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. In May Bernard Wasserstein became president of the center, taking over from acting president Martin Goodman, who had replaced Philip Alexander the previous September.

**Publications**

The 1996 Jewish Quarterly Prize for nonfiction went to Theo Richmond for *Konin—A Quest*, tracing the history of a Polish shtetl. The fiction award was given to *The Prince of West End Avenue* by Alan Isler, who also published *Kraven Images*.

New works of fiction included *Old Scores* by Frederic Raphael; *Lady Chatterley’s Confession* by Elaine Feinstein; *Incidents in the Rue Laugier* by Anita Brookner; and *Victoria* by Israeli author Sami Michael.

Books on religious subjects were *Till Faith Us Do Part* by Jonathan A. Romain, addressing the problem of mixed marriage; *Passover* by David Mamet; *Gevurot Yitzchak: Insights into the Parshiot of Sefer Bereishit* by Rabbi Isaac Bernstein; *1,001 Questions and Answers on Pesach* by Jeffrey M. Cohen; *The Jewish Religion: A Companion* by Rabbi Louis Jacobs; and *The Jewish Guide to Adultery* by Shmuel Boteach. New prayer books included *The Chief Rabbi’s Children’s Siddur* and a new Reform festivals prayer book that completed a trilogy comprising daily and Shabbat prayer books, edited by Rabbis Jonathan Magonet and Lionel Blue.

Works on local history included two books on the London borough of Hackney, *Hackney at War* by Jennifer Golden and *The Hackney Crucible* by Morris Beckman; *The Jewish Burial Ground at Jewbury* by J.M. Lilley, G. Stroud, D.R. Brothwell, and M.H. Williamson; *The History of Leeds’ Beth Hamedrash Hagadol Synagogue* by Isadore Pear; *They Came from the Haim*, the story of the Jewish community of Greater Manchester from 1867; and *The History of the Colchester Jewish Community*.

Biographies and autobiographies were *Knocking Down Ginger*, an autobiography by John Gorman; *Simon Wiesenthal: A Life in Search of Justice* by Hella Pick; *Envoy Extraordinary* by Horace Philips; *My Mother’s Daughter* by actress Edith Ruddick; *The Winawer Saga*, edited by H.M. Winawer; and *Yitzhak Rabin: Soldier of Peace* by the Jerusalem Report staff, edited by David Horovitz.

The long list of books on the Holocaust was augmented by *Inherit the Truth* by Anita Lasker-Wallfisch; *Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* by Eva Fogelman; *The Hidden Children* by Jane Marks; *Witness to Evil* by Isaac Levy; *Cirla’s Story* by Cirla Lewis; *Voices in the Night* by Marianne Elsley; *No Longer Strangers* by Helga Wolff; *Stalin’s Little Guest* and *Surviving with Uncle* by Janka Goldberger; *Voices from the Past* by Herbert Levy; *When Heaven’s Vault Cracked: Zagreb Memories* by Zdenka Novak; *Master Race: The Lebensborn Experiments* by Catrinee Clay and Michael Leapman; *Between Life and Death: History of Jewish Life in Wartime Poland, 1939–1944* by Ben A.
Sofier; The Buchenwald Report by David A. Hackett; and The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion by Norman Cohn. Publisher Vallentine Mitchell added two titles to its Library of Holocaust Testimonies: A Child Alone by Martha Blend; and I Light a Candle by Gina Turgel. Alone in the Forest by Mala Kacenberg was added to CIS's Holocaust Diaries Collection.

New works on Israeli history and diplomacy included Jerusalem in the Twentieth Century by Martin Gilbert, who also published The Day the War Ended; Syria and Israel by Moshe Ma'oz; The Stern Gang: Ideology, Politics and Terror, 1940–1949 by Joseph Heller; Blood in Zion by Saul Zadka; Agents of Empire: Anglo-Zionist Intelligence Operations, 1915–1919. Brigadier Walter Gribbon, Aaron Aaronsohn and the Nili Ring, edited by Anthony Verrier; Israel, Likud and the Zionist Dream by Colin Shindler; and Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli Security, edited by Efraim Karsh.

Israel: Splendors of the Holy Land by Sarah Kochav and Home Thoughts from Abroad: Distant Visions of Israel in Contemporary Hebrew Fiction by Risa Domb were more general works.

New poetry included The Dybbuk of Delight: An Anthology of Jewish Women's Poetry, edited by Sonja Lyndon and Sylvia Paskin; and Holocaust Poetry, edited by Hilda Schiff. The Stove by Jakov Lind and No Passion Spent by George Steiner were essay collections.

Studies of contemporary Jewry were Lost Jews: The Struggle for Identity Today by Emma Klein; On Being Jewish by Julia Neuberger; A Club Called Brady by Michael Lazarus; Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914 by David Feldman; and The Jew in the Text, edited by Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb. Community of Faith by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks explored the roots and principles of the United Synagogue in celebration of its 125th anniversary.

Two new reference works were An English Hebrew Dictionary of Common Usage, compiled under the aegis of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies and edited by the late Nakdimon Doniach and American classics professor Ahuvia Kahane; and The Jewish Year Book, a centenary edition, edited by Stephen W. Massil and including six essays.

Personalia

Peerages were awarded to medical pioneer and Labor Party activist Prof. Robert Winston; former Labor MP Helene Hayman; and top Conservative Sir Basil Feldman. Knighthoods went to Ian Gainsford, dean of King's College, London University's school of medicine and dentistry, for services to medical and dental education; Martin Gilbert, official biographer of Winston Churchill, for services to British history and international affairs; Sidney Samuelson, head of the British Film Commission since 1991, for services in the promotion of British filmmak-
ing; Dixon Group executive chairman Stanley Kalms for services to electrical retailing; and Birmingham Conservative stalwart Bernard Zissman. Conductor André Previn received an honorary knighthood in recognition of his contributions to Anglo-American cultural relations and the musical life of Britain.

British Jews who died between June and December 1995 included Leslie Donn, Manchester communal leader, in June, in Manchester, aged 75; Stephen Roth, director of the Institute of Jewish Affairs for 22 years and leading communal personality, in July, in London, aged 79; Harold, Lord Lever of Manchester, Labor Party politician and communal figure, in August, in London, aged 80; Philip Goldman, secretary-administrator of the Jews' Temporary Shelter, 1976–93, in September, in London, aged 76; Conant Shack, communal worker and co-founder of the Federation of Synagogues' Kosher Luncheon Club, in September, in Ilford, Essex, aged 73; Abraham Frankel, pillar of the strictly Orthodox community, in October, in London, aged 83; Sir Peter Lazarus, stalwart of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue and of various charities, in October, in London, aged 69; Werner Rosenstock, a founder and mainstay of the Association of Jewish Refugees, in October, in London, aged 87; Maurice Caplan, stalwart of the Federation of Synagogues, in November, in London, aged 90; Julius Isaac Lindsey, member of the United Synagogue staff, 1957–87, in November, in London, aged 72; Rabbi Dr. Sidney Leperer, senior lecturer in Jewish history and Talmud at Jews College, in December, in London, aged 73; Phineas May, communal civil servant and cartoonist, in December, in London, aged 89.


Miriam & Lionel Kochan
France

National Affairs

On May 7, 1995, Jacques Chirac was elected president of France, succeeding François Mitterrand, who had held the post for two consecutive seven-year terms. Not only did a politician of the left, leader of the Socialist Party, give way to a politician of the right, leader of the neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR), but the election also marked the end of an era. Notwithstanding two intervals during which Mitterrand was forced to work with right-wing majorities in the National Assembly and name prime ministers from the RPR (Chirac from 1986 to 1988 and Édouard Balladur beginning in 1993), French political life in the previous 14 years had mostly been shaped by the strong personality of the Socialist president.

Paradoxically, it was under a president of the left that social problems took on worrying proportions, allowing the extreme right to gain a substantial political presence in France for the first time in two generations. The left’s credibility as a force for political and social change was now seriously damaged, and the new leader of the Socialist Party, Lionel Jospin, wasted no time in criticizing Mitterrand’s record on a few issues.

The new right-wing government faced the same internal handicaps and difficult international situation as its predecessor. The serious social problems the country had been facing for several years now included an unemployment rate of about 12 percent, obstacles in the way of young people trying to integrate into the workforce, homelessness that had become a fixture of the urban landscape, instability in some suburbs of major urban centers, and xenophobic overtones, if not overt racism, surrounding the integration of immigrant workers, most of whom came from Africa. These images were all the more shocking because they were previously unknown in France, which since World War II had enjoyed a climate of economic and social stability. To be sure, the situation for most French people was far from alarming, and a significant portion of the population experienced these problems only on their television screens. But after years of prosperity and clear skies, the average French person’s basic interests suddenly seemed threatened—by economic globalization that had taken away jobs from local industries, changes in the structure of the European community that stripped French governing bodies of some of their autonomy, and the growth of various “communities” (notably Muslims) that upset people’s perception of national co-
hesion. This psychological sense of insecurity persisted, despite significant indicators suggesting a healthy economy: flourishing foreign trade, a stable currency, a vibrant business community, and a continuing rise in the gross national product and standard of living, although at a slower rate than in the past.

The National Front (FN), the far-right party led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, based its message on the presumption that unemployment was connected to immigration. It called for "national preference" in employment matters, essentially a code phrase for discrimination against foreign workers. The Front's spokespeople linked immigration to urban crime, and the party appealed to traditional values based on a "French identity" while denouncing the dangers of "cosmopolitanism." The party's anti-Semitism was no less real for being mostly veiled, if only to avoid legal proceedings or to avoid a backlash in public opinion. However, this anti-Semitism seemed to be more deeply rooted in the leaders and party policymakers than in the people who voted for the party. President Chirac and his prime minister, Alain Juppé, denounced the National Front in no uncertain terms, and three-quarters of the French population considered it "a danger to democracy." Still, there could be no doubt that more than the 15 percent of the electorate who actually voted for the Front accepted some elements of its philosophy, notably those relating directly to current social problems. In June 1995, three cities in the south of France—Toulon, Orange, and Marignane—elected National Front mayors, eliciting a lively reaction.

Aware that persistent social malaise could enable the National Front to remain an actor on the national political stage, the Jewish community maintained an attitude of vigilance toward the party; however, it would not allow itself to be drawn into a direct confrontation that could lead people to see as a "Jewish problem" what was actually a problem of French society as a whole.

In general, the Jewish community stayed away from political controversies. Judaism and Israel had genuine friends in all the parties (except of course the National Front), and apart from certain Israel-related issues, there were no matters on the table requiring the Jewish community as such to intervene directly. The only real source of tension between the Jewish community and the national political leadership was of a more personal nature: a controversy about Mitterrand's past and his long-term friendship with a high-ranking leader of the Vichy regime (see below, "Holocaust-Related Matters").

Israel and the Middle East

Although initially skeptical about the first signs of the peace process begun in Oslo and ratified in September 1993 in Washington, French diplomats adapted themselves to the new reality. They viewed the choice of Paris in April 1994 as the venue for negotiations on economic issues and Israeli-Palestinian normalization as symbolic of a new possibility for French—or European—participation in the future development of the region.
The establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, under the presidency of Yasir Arafat, aroused considerable interest in a country that had always hoped to maintain a special relationship with the Arab world. One state television station helped to set up a Palestinian television station in Gaza, various charitable organizations aimed to bring material aid to the Palestinian people, and a number of businesses expressed interest in participating as well. Business interest was illustrated by the publication of a “Palestinian Economic Letter,” supported by a Jewish businessman and co-edited by a Palestinian journalist and a Jewish journalist. Because of the lack of administrative stability and economic openness within the Palestinian Authority and the political uncertainty associated with the peace process, these possibilities were not fully translated into reality. Nevertheless, the creation of a Palestinian state was considered an established fact both within the government and among the general public.

The changes that took place after the negotiations in Oslo and the accords reached in Washington also benefited the image of Israel. Because France had always kept strong ties with its former colonies in North Africa, the gradual normalization of Israel’s relations with Morocco and Tunisia had as much impact in France as Israel's peace with Jordan, its reconciliation with the Gulf states, and its September 1995 interim accords with the Palestinians. On the economic level, the prospect of a general peace between Israel and all the Arab states made Israel a likely focal point for future development in the region. The government expressed its approval of this process, and public opinion, generally favorable toward Israel anyway, was completely supportive.

Other events—the uncertainties of Israeli-Syrian negotiations, the assassination of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995, the wave of attacks by Muslim fundamentalists that plunged Israel into mourning in February and March 1996, the opposition of a segment of the Israeli public toward certain aspects of the Oslo accords (if not the entire principle underlying the accords), and the election of Benjamin Netanyahu over Shimon Peres in May 1996—were met with a combination of confusion and concern. However, they did not shake France’s fundamentally favorable attitude toward Israel. In such a climate, the Jewish community—which had long been accustomed to finding itself out of step with French authorities on Middle Eastern questions—enjoyed a period of relative calm in the media, broken only by echoes of the internal debate about the peace process.

In years past, François Mitterrand’s support for a Palestinian state, assistance to Yasir Arafat during the 1982 Israeli siege of Beirut, and an invitation to Arafat to come to Paris had all raised concerns within the Jewish community. But the impact of these contentious actions was largely overridden by Mitterrand’s long-standing friendship for Israel—best symbolized by his official visit to that country in 1982, the first by a French president—and the Rabin-Arafat handshake of September 1993, which offered a kind of post facto justification for Mitterrand’s meeting with Arafat.
There had also been some concern among Jews about Jacques Chirac’s close relations within the Arab world. Most disturbing were his ties with Iraq when he was prime minister between 1986 and 1988. Jews had also worried that Chirac might wish to carry on the legacy of the Gaullist “Arab policy,” which could be incompatible with the interests of Israel. However, Chirac’s deep friendship with the Jewish people and his support for Israel’s fundamental rights were amply recognized, so that the Jewish community did not express any reservations about him.

France’s ability to understand Israeli fears about fundamentalist Islamic terrorism was clearly strengthened by the violence that took place in France itself. A series of attacks began in July 1995, leaving several people dead and dozens of others wounded. One of the incidents took place at the Jewish school in Lyons on September 7, 1995, where a car bomb placed outside the school exploded a few minutes before the students came out, leaving 15 wounded but no one killed. This series of attacks ended with the discovery of a ring led by a young man of Algerian origin, Khaled Kelkal, who was killed during a confrontation with law-enforcement officials. However, in a context that included Islamic fundamentalism mixed with fallout from the Algerian political crisis, a new series of attacks was always possible.

L’Oréal Affair

On the fringes of the international political scene, a story involving politics, business, Israel, France, and Jews intermittently caught the attention of France’s Jewish community and, to some extent, the French public in general. This was the “L’Oréal affair.” In 1990 a Franco-Israeli businessman named Jean Frydman leveled serious accusations at L’Oréal, the international cosmetics firm. Frydman, who was closely associated with L’Oréal until he came into conflict with it, made public his discovery that several French citizens who held top-level positions within the company had actively collaborated with the Nazis. In addition, Frydman charged, the company had cooperated with the trade boycott of Israel. With respect to the boycott, L’Oréal pleaded not guilty, and Frydman, bending to political pressure, agreed to drop his charges. In 1993, a report by Prof. David Ruzié reactivated the boycott issue; L’Oréal, to avoid further controversy, began to invest in Israel in May 1994. With respect to the existence of a Nazi “old boys’ club” within the company’s top echelon, the last executive involved who was still in office resigned in December 1994 as a result of the revelations made by Jean Frydman and his brother David. This was André Bettencourt, the company’s vice-president, whose wife, Liliane, the daughter of L’Oréal’s founder, is the company’s main stockholder. Bettencourt admitted that, as a young man, during the German occupation, he had written anti-Semitic articles in a collaborationist newspaper. He expressed remorse and said he had changed sides as early as 1942. Bettencourt was succeeded as vice-president by his Jewish son-in-law, Jean-Pierre Meyers, whose grandfather, Rabbi Robert Meyers, was murdered in Auschwitz.
together with his wife. This was seen as a fitting symbolic ending to a troubling chapter in the annals of the French-Jewish love-hate relationship.

Anti-Semitism and Racism

Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Dreyfus affair began in 1994. This may have been slightly premature, for while Captain Alfred Dreyfus was indeed arrested in October 1894 and found guilty of high treason two months later, it was only in 1896 that proof of his innocence appeared, and Émile Zola's famous essay "J'accuse" was published in January 1898.

During the Dreyfus affair, France's left-wing intelligentsia mobilized to defend the Jewish army officer in the face of an unusually virulent anti-Semitic campaign waged by nationalist and Catholic circles. To commemorate the anniversary, television specials, magazine articles, films, and books all contributed to educating the French public about this episode in French history and about France's anti-Semitic legacy. Hardly anyone, even on the far right, dared to maintain publicly that Dreyfus was guilty. The director of a French army historical service that published a brief note leaving open the question of Dreyfus's guilt was immediately asked to resign by the minister of defense. While anti-Semitism might still be a factor in individuals' attitudes in France, a national consensus had developed that deemed it unacceptable in the public domain. A poll conducted by the CSA Institute, published in January 1994, indicated that for 68 percent of the French population, "the lessons of the Dreyfus Affair" (understanding the dangers and political dimensions of anti-Semitism) were "still relevant." Seventy-six percent of young people aged 18 to 24 felt that they "had not learned enough about Dreyfus at school." According to the same survey, 81 percent of French adults said that they would be prepared to vote for a Jewish candidate for president. In spite of the relatively high number of Jews active in French politics, this was, for the time being, not a realistic prospect. Judging by popularity polls, the only people under consideration would be, on the right, the former minister Simone Veil, and on the left, former prime minister Laurent Fabius, who, despite his parents' conversion to Catholicism, publicly defined himself as a Jew, and the former minister Jack Lang, whose father is Jewish.

Still, as one recent episode in particular made evident, the Jewish question continued to plague modern-day France. In early 1996, Roger Garaudy published, at his own expense, a violently anti-Zionist book called Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne (The Founding Myths of Israeli Policy). In the book, Garaudy concurs that Jews were persecuted by the Nazis but refuses to acknowledge the full extent of the Holocaust. Since this public denial of the Nazi genocide put him in violation of the law, Garaudy—a 82-year-old philosopher who had been a leader of the French Communist Party, became a Catholic, and then converted to Islam—now faced criminal prosecution for "questioning crimes against humanity."
Next, a man called Abbé Pierre (his real name is Henri Grouès), a priest who for all French people symbolized the defense of the poor and oppressed, aligned himself with his “friend Roger Garaudy” and declared that he could vouch for Garaudy’s intellectual honesty. This aroused general discomfort because of the priest’s advanced age and the prestige he enjoyed in the country (polls regularly named him “the most popular man in France”). It turned out that the priest had not actually read the incriminating book; however, while he condemned anti-Semitism and Holocaust revisionism, he explained his position using language drawn from traditional Christian anti-Jewish sentiment. The controversy continued into the summer of 1996, when, after being repudiated by his superiors and stripped of his honorary position with LICRA (the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism), of which he had been a member for many years, Abbé Pierre retreated into silence.

There were new developments in the Carpentras cemetery incident, the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Carpentras—which has one of the oldest Jewish communities in the country—on May 10, 1990. In addition to overturning 34 gravestones, the desecraters removed the body of a man from the grave in which it had recently been buried and set it up as if it were impaled. When the incident was discovered, it aroused shock and horror all over France. Large demonstrations of Jews and non-Jews together took place around the country, most notably in Paris, where the demonstration was led by then-president Mitterrand.

Accusations were immediately made against the leader of the National Front, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who had given speeches tinged with anti-Semitism just a short time before. But the police investigation came to a standoff, and local rumors (later proven untrue) attributed the incident to bored young people in Carpentras who had simply participated in a gruesome game, devoid of racist overtones. Meanwhile, the National Front repeatedly denounced the “political provocation” that it said amounted to a deliberate attempt to discredit it. On November 11, 1995, the National Front held a demonstration at Carpentras, led by Le Pen, to demand “apologies” for the “slander” to which he had been subjected. In the summer of 1996, the truth was finally uncovered. One of the participants, overcome by remorse, confessed to the crime and gave the names of his accomplices. While not members of the National Front, all of the perpetrators were followers of the far right.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

In September 1994 the Mitterrand-Bousquet affair came to light. A book written by journalist Pierre Péan revealed that François Mitterrand (who at that time was still in office as president although he was quite ill) had participated in far-right activities in his youth (although it must be noted that he never gave evidence of outright anti-Semitism). According to the book, up until 1942 Mitterrand remained loyal to Philippe Pétain’s collaborationist regime; after that time, al-
though he unquestionably took part in the resistance against the German occupation, he never renounced his friendship with René Bousquet, general secretary of the French police under the occupation.

Bousquet had stood trial for collaboration after the war and been dismissed with a slap on the wrist. After long delays—clearly related to the general reluctance of officials and the public to confront the full extent of French participation in Nazi crimes—in 1989 he was brought up on new charges of “crimes against humanity” (on which there is no statute of limitations), specifically, with having organized the Vel d’Hiv roundup of July 16, 1942. During this operation, the Paris police and constabulary, at the request of the Germans, arrested 13,152 Jews, including more than 4,000 children, brought them to the Winter Vélodrome stadium in Paris, and then kept them interned in French camps before turning them over to the Germans to be sent to Auschwitz. Indicted for these crimes in March 1991, Bousquet had still not come to trial in 1993 when he was shot to death in his Paris apartment. The killer, who was not Jewish, was judged mentally unbalanced.

The revelation that François Mitterrand had had lunch on a regular basis with Bousquet, who became an important symbol of France’s participation in the Holocaust, shocked many French non-Jews as well as Jews. Mitterrand went on television to try to explain the relationship, but did not succeed in dispelling the public’s sense of unease, which persisted even after his death at the age of 79 on January 8, 1996. Nevertheless, the former Socialist president was hailed by Shimon Peres as “a true friend of Israel” and by the former president of the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France (CRIF), Théo Klein, as being “the French political leader who knew the Jews the best.” The chief rabbi of France, Joseph Sitruk, declared that Mitterrand’s interactions with the Jewish community “were always marked by profound consideration and a will to achieve true understanding,” and that with respect to anti-Semitism, “he maintained unfailing vigilance.”

These tributes, while justified, served to further highlight the ambiguities in France’s recent history in relation to the Jews. The period from the summer of 1994 to the spring of 1995 was marked by commemoration ceremonies: 50 years since the liberation of the country, then 50 years since the return from the death camps. In the daily newspaper *Le Monde*, personal notices announcing the anniversary of an individual’s family members being deported to the camps appeared on a regular basis. Often these would include the notation “Arrested by the French police.” Up to this point, the only major legal proceeding related to the Holocaust that had taken place in France was the trial of Klaus Barbie in 1987 (he died in prison in 1991). That case had an enormous impact on public opinion, but because the accused was German it did not result in much soul-searching, despite widespread feelings of compassion for the victims.

In March-April 1994, Paul Touvier, an official of the supplementary police force in Lyons during the Vichy regime, was sentenced for “complicity in crimes
against humanity." The case stemmed from his participation in the murder of seven Jewish hostages in June 1944. Touvier tried to argue that he had simply followed the Germans' orders. His defense put the question of French responsibility squarely before the public for debate. In the end Touvier was sentenced to life in prison; he died in prison in 1996.

The role of the Vichy regime was highlighted again with the charges brought against 85-year-old Maurice Papon, who as a high official in the Bordeaux prefecture participated in the deportation of 1,660 Jews, including 223 children. He too argued that he was only following orders. The case drew quite a bit of attention, however, because Papon had actually been an official of the French government and not simply a member of the supplementary police, and because after the war he began a brilliant political career that led him all the way to the cabinet. Following court proceedings lasting more than 15 years, the court of criminal appeal in Bordeaux decided on March 6, 1996, that Papon should be tried for "complicity in crimes against humanity." This decision was confirmed by the French supreme court.

These cases were followed with great interest by the French public. Quite apart from the guilt or innocence of the individuals involved, they effectively put major French institutions—and therefore the country as a whole—on trial. For half a century, the official position had been that the Vichy regime was illegitimate, and that the French Republic was not implicated in its acts. François Mitterrand held fast to this position until his death. It was Mitterrand who established July 16 as an official day of remembrance to commemorate the "Vel d'Hiv roundup"; yet in 1994 he declared, "I will not apologize in the name of France. The Republic had nothing to do with it. In my estimation, France is not responsible."

It was therefore striking when Jacques Chirac, participating in the ceremony as president for the first time a year later, remarked, "Yes, the crazed criminal behavior of the occupiers was assisted by French people and the French state. . . . France, a country of enlightenment and human rights, a welcoming ground for those who need asylum, France at that time inflicted irreparable damage. Having forsaken its commitment, it delivered those within its protection up to their executioners. . . . By recognizing the mistakes of the past and the wrongs committed by the state, by hiding nothing of the dark hours of our history, we are merely defending the idea of humanity and the right to individual liberty and dignity." Chirac's declaration was immediately hailed by Henri Hajdenberg, the president of CRIF, as "the speech that we no longer expected to hear." The writer Elie Wiesel stated that Chirac's "words reflect an ethical approach that brings honor both to him and to France."

This chapter was not yet over, however. Some historians of this period, like Henry Rousso, argued that a "Judeo-centric" approach to the collaboration and the Vichy regime was erroneous, and that the Jewish question played a much smaller role for the people involved at the time than it did when viewed from a contemporary vantage point. Others, without necessarily disagreeing with this,
maintained that many aspects of both the anti-Jewish bias of the Vichy regime and the assistance that French collaborators gave to the Nazi extermination effort (the two are not necessarily connected) were still being ignored. For example, only recently had the actions of French lawyers and judges of the day come under serious scrutiny. And the question of Jewish property that was wrongfully taken by French citizens had only begun to be subjected to official inquiry.

All in all, questions of persecution of the Jews during World War II are particularly complex within the French context. It is an unquestioned fact that three-quarters of the more than 300,000 Jews who lived in France during the war survived the German persecution (if French Jews alone are considered, and not Jews from other countries who were living in France, the proportion of survivors is much higher). There is also no doubt that the high survival rate was due in large part to help from French non-Jews who, often risking their lives, hid Jews or otherwise shielded them from discovery by the Nazis.

But it is also true that the Vichy regime, which administered France from 1940 to 1944 under close German supervision, bore all the appearances of a legal, if not legitimate, government, and that this government passed anti-Jewish laws and put its police at the service of the Nazis. Imposed by France's defeat and the German occupation, the Vichy regime drew various levels of public administration and a good part of French society as a whole into the enterprise of collaboration. France was not able to face this reality — and the guilt, albeit passive, that it implied — as long as most of the individuals involved were still alive. Only now had the true work of revisiting the past begun.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

Estimates of the number of Jews in France usually vary between 600,000 and 700,000, about half of whom are in the Paris area. But these figures must be viewed as imperfect for two reasons. First, only a small proportion of the Jewish population (generally estimated at 20 percent at most) have regular contact with the organized community. This makes it difficult to update the numbers. French law severely limits the collection of information related to individuals' religion or origin unless it is based on membership in an organization. As a result, there is no reliable data base on Jews in France. Second, surveys are even more problematic; a growing number of people are only half Jewish, in a country where Orthodox Judaism, which recognizes Jewish heritage only through the maternal line, is the dominant tendency, and where conversions are difficult and unusual. In such a situation, whether or not one views oneself or is viewed by others as Jewish can vary according to the time and place.

Still, it is reasonable to claim that Jews represent approximately 1 percent of
the French population, and any figure between 400,000 and 900,000 can be de-
fended, depending on one's frame of reference. If a more precise figure is required,
the arithmetic mean of the two numbers mentioned above — 650,000 people—
has the advantage of being very close to the generally accepted estimate. It is
worth noting that the enumeration of other groups within the French population
is hardly more precise. According to a recent survey, 67 percent of French peo-
ple consider themselves "Catholics" (with a wide range of variation in belief and
practice included within this group). Another 25 percent declared themselves of
"no religion." Among minority groups, the largest is undoubtedly the Muslim
community, consisting mostly of recent immigrants. Estimates put this group at
somewhere between three and five million. Protestants, who experience some of
the same reporting difficulties as Jews, count for a little under a million. Bud-
dhists, with 600,000 adherents (120,000 are recent converts), have become sig-
nificant as well, equalling or possibly even surpassing the Jews in number.

Communal Affairs

During the period under review, new presidents took office in two of France's
major Jewish organizations: the Central Consistory and CRIF, the Representa
tive Council of Jewish Institutions of France (Conseil Représentatif des Institu
tions Juives de France). The Central Consistory —established by Napoleon in
1808 — is the main national Jewish religious body, even though it does not include
non-Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox communities. CRIF, founded in 1944, repre
sents the views of the organized Jewish community to public authorities and pub-
lic opinion. Over the years, its activities have included support for the State of
Israel, support for Jews in the Soviet Union, opposing anti-Semitism, and main-
taining solidarity with victims of the fighting in the former Yugoslavia.

Officially the Consistory is part of CRIF and had traditionally been one of
CRIF's three major components, along with FSJU, the United Jewish Philan
thropic Fund (Fonds Social Juif Unifié), and FOSF, the Federation of Zionist
Organizations (Fédération des Organisations Sionistes de France). As a result of
persistent disagreements, however, the Consistory withdrew from CRIF in 1987,
although an "empty chair" was kept for it at the CRIF table. Recently, the con
flict between the two organizations crystallized in open conflict between their re
spective presidents, Jean-Pierre Bansard of the Consistory and Jean Kahn of
CRIF.

In June 1994, after being subjected to severe criticism for his management of
the Central Consistory, Bansard resigned as president of the organization. The
office remained vacant for a few months; then in January 1995 the Central Con
sistory elected a new president — none other than Jean Kahn. Kahn had not yet
completed his second and final term as president of CRIF, an office he had held
since 1989. As a result, CRIF and the Central Consistory shared a president for
a few months. In May 1995, CRIF named its new president, Henri Hajdenberg.
a 48-year-old lawyer and the first leader of the organization born after the Holocaust. Moïse Cohen, Marcel Goldstein, and Emmanuel Weintraub were named vice-presidents, with Roger Benarrosh as treasurer. The executive director of CRIF, Jacqueline Keller, retired in January 1996 and was replaced by Haim Musisant. Jean Kahn was reelected president of the Central Consistory in July 1996, with Joseph Zauberman as treasurer. Léon Masliah stayed on as executive director of the organization. In addition, the FSJU, the umbrella organization for Jewish community services, held elections in April 1994. David de Rothschild was reelected president, with Nicole Goldmann and Marcel Goldstein as vice-presidents, Claude Chouraqui as treasurer, and David Saada as executive director. Also during the period 1994-96, Francis Kalifat became president of the Zionist federation, the FOSF, while Simon Midal became president of B'nai B'rith France.


Israel-Related Activity

After initially being thrown into disarray by an Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement that contradicted the official line long upheld by Jewish leaders, virtually all Jewish organizations in France applauded the positive developments that took place in the Middle East peace process. On one level, this was traditional "legitimist" behavior by community institutions, which had always supported the policies of successive Israeli governments, of the right or of the left. On another level, however, it also may have expressed the relief that Jewish leaders felt at finally being in agreement on Middle East issues with French political circles and public opinion.

Likud supporters, who resisted the tide and maintained their opposition to the "abandonment of Eretz Yisrael," represented only a small minority within the leadership of the Jewish community, although they were somewhat more active in synagogues and the Jewish rank and file. While the rabbinate as a whole took the same position as community leaders, at least in public, the Lubavitch movement clearly aligned itself with the nationalist opposition. The dissidents' voice was strengthened by calls from a small group of religious intellectuals of French origin in Jerusalem, led by Benjamin Gross and Léon Askenazi, who maintained that the Rabin government's policies were endangering the State of Israel. Because of the difficulties noted above (see "Demography"), if for no other reason, there were no reliable surveys indicating how most French Jews felt about the Middle East peace process. However, there is no reason to believe that the opinion of the "silent majority" of Jews on this question was significantly different from the opinion of the French population as a whole, which was clearly favorable to the peace process. While Jews undoubtedly had particular concerns about security
guarantees that Israel needed to have and about the future of Jerusalem, in this generally optimistic climate, political debate faded into the background. The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin on November 4, 1995, shocked the Jews of France. While there were some discordant views expressed by the most implacable opponents of the Israeli prime minister, the community as a whole was plunged into mourning. But political passions had not disappeared. On January 31, 1996, a public meeting in Paris organized by CRIF, featuring Yossi Beilin, an Israeli cabinet minister and one of the architects of the Oslo agreements, was disrupted by activists associated with Likud who prevented Beilin from speaking. The Israeli election campaign in May was followed with interest but with a degree of detachment. Local Likud supporters celebrated Benjamin Netanyahu's victory, while most community leaders, who had supported the peace process, reacted calmly and only wondered how the new prime minister would implement his commitment to continue the process.

Religion

Some 250 rabbis and “rabbinic delegates” worked in the religious communities that fell under the Central Consistory. It was estimated that about ten new rabbis had to be trained each year to meet the needs of these communities. Rabbis were traditionally educated at the rabbinical seminary on the Rue Vauquelin in Paris. Renamed the “Institut Européen d’Études Hébraïques” (European Institute of Hebraic Studies), this seminary planned to prepare both rabbis and lay community leaders and to serve other countries—especially the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe—in addition to France.

The chief rabbi of France, Joseph Sitruk, completed his term in 1994. Sitruk sought reelection to this position, but Rabbi Gilles Bernheim also announced his candidacy, marking the first open contest for the chief rabbinate. The former chief rabbi, René Samuel Sirat, supported Bernheim. Since both candidates were strictly Orthodox, the election appeared to come down largely to differences in personality between Sitruk, a former congregational rabbi and consummate diplomat with a talent for speaking to the community at large, and Bernheim, a teacher with a background in philosophy who knew his way around university and intellectual circles. Behind the personality difference, however, was a latent conflict between Bernheim’s “open” stance and Sitruk’s more “unbending” approach. While decorum generally prevented the two rabbis from being explicit about what really separated them, the very fact that the election for the chief rabbinate of France was contested attracted the attention of the national press. There were also some personal attacks, which indicated that feelings were running high and that important issues were at stake. On June 19, 1994, by a large majority, the general assembly of the Central Consistory reelected Joseph Sitruk chief rabbi of France for another seven-year term.
At the same time, the chief rabbi of Paris, Alain Goldmann, also sought re-election but fell one vote short. He was replaced by David Messas.

Another contest for power focused on the presidency of the Paris Consistory. The two candidates—former president Benny Cohen, unbending yet populist in his approach, and Moïse Cohen, who favored a policy of openness and cooperation with other Jewish organizations—waged a long struggle that required the intervention of the civil courts. When it ended in March 1994, Moïse Cohen emerged victorious, with a secure hold on the presidency of the institution. Roger Pinto was elected vice-president and Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, secretary-rapporteur.

These personality clashes and ideological conflicts were indications that Jewish religion in France was going through a stormy period. Opponents of Chief Rabbi Sitruk accused him of leading Consistorial Judaism toward ultra-Orthodoxy and turning it into a sect divorced from modernity. In his book Un exil sans retour? (An Exile with No Return?), which appeared early in 1996, sociologist Shmuel Trigano examined what he saw as a crisis in French Judaism. “Chief Rabbi Sitruk and a section of the rabbinate,” wrote Trigano, himself a traditional Jew, “have risked taking the community to the brink of schism and division.” Sitruk’s standard defense of his position was that there were many bâalei teshuvah—Jews returning to religious practice—in all walks of life, that Jewish schools and kosher restaurants were growing significantly in number, and that synagogues had never been so full. Meanwhile, “non-Consistorial” communities were also growing—liberal synagogues of various kinds including the Masorti movement on one hand, and on the other the Lubavitchers, other hassidic groups, and “Lithuanian”-oriented haredim. But how much contact religious Judaism had with the mass of French Jews remained an open question.

An ongoing debate about conversion to Judaism reflected the underlying issues and tensions. The best recent summary of the arguments was a symposium organized by the Gesher group and published in the September 1994 issue of the monthly magazine L’Arche. However, there were no concrete changes as a result of the symposium or follow-up position papers that appeared in the course of 1995 and 1996.

Representatives of the majority Orthodox tendency took a hard-line position. Thus, according to Chief Rabbi Michel Gugenheim, head of the École rabbinique de France, “The procedure established by halacha consists of testing the sincerity and examining the validity of the commitment of the person seeking conversion.” The Paris Bet Din (rabbinic court), which Consistorial institutions recognized as sovereign in this area for all of France and even for neighboring countries, did not generally recognize marriage to a Jewish spouse as a sufficient condition for conversion. It insisted on verifying the candidate’s observance of the “fundamental laws”: kashrut, Sabbath, and family purity. By contrast, supporters of a more open position quoted a passage from the Talmud: “God brought Israel
into exile only so that converts would come into its midst." As things stood, the Paris Bet Din heard fewer than 1,500 conversion cases a year, including some that ended up being withdrawn or turned down. Since this involved only a fraction of the number of mixed marriages that took place in France each year, the debate on conversion directly affected only a small number of people. The real issue in the debate was how religious Judaism saw itself in relation to the society around it. As Josy Eisenberg, a Consistorial rabbi, wrote in the September 1994 issue of L'Arche, "We are essentially immigrants who have been accepted in modern societies. We, in turn, form a society that "immigrants" would like to enter, and we are asking ourselves whether they have the right to do so. This question goes well beyond the problem of conversion. It represents a very fundamental challenge to our conception of our relationship with others." Eisenberg was not making a case for mixed marriage; he was simply arguing that, contrary to current practice, Judaism should be more open and welcoming.

The Multiculturalism Debate

Communal affairs were increasingly affected by the wider debate going on in France over the relationship between the individual and society, over group versus national identity. The approach articulated by Count Clermont-Tonnerre in 1789 during the first debate on the emancipation of the Jews still maintained its force in France: "We must deny everything to the Jews as a nation in the sense of an established group, and give everything to the Jews as individuals.... They must not create within the state a body politic, nor an order. They must be individual citizens."

This restrictive approach, by no means limited to Jews, is reflected in the French legal system and also at the level of popular attitudes and culture. The general absence of any organized discrimination against minorities goes hand in hand with a lack of recognition of those minorities as "established groups," to use Clermont-Tonnerre's expression. To refer to someone as "Jewish-French" or "Armenian-French" is alien to the French mind; there are only French people who come from Jewish or Armenian backgrounds. Only religions have the right to some semblance of special status, but it is clear that religious identity is a matter of personal concern only. In general, people are strongly encouraged to integrate fully into the larger society.

The prevalence of this approach helps to explain why, despite some painful periods, French Jews continued to identify with the mainstream culture. In recent years, however, the French model confronted a new challenge: the presence of immigrant communities numbering several million people and the relationship of their cultures to the national French culture. The possible emergence of "multiculturalism" elicited lively debate in France, reviving old fears about maintaining a national identity in a world dominated by Anglo-Saxon culture and in a Eu-
rope where Germany plays a predominant role. It was a natural target for attacks from the far right.

A study published by the National Institute for Demographic Studies, according to which 25 percent of the French have at least one foreign or immigrant grandparent, was often cited as proof that France continued to be a welcoming country, and that those who came from other parts of the world contributed greatly to its development. But according to the same study, the "demographic trail" of immigrants was quickly lost through a vigorous "mixing of populations." The desire to integrate immigrants into the national collectivity thus goes hand in hand with their disappearance as distinct groups.

This debate primarily concerned recent immigrants whose characteristics clash strongly with the French environment. Although the situation of the Jews is certainly different, the debate on multiculturalism existed in the Jewish context as well. Did multiculturalism offer an opportunity to have the national collectivity recognize a "right to be different" that most Jews had already renounced? Or, might not visible expressions of Jewish identity provoke among some French people the same hostility that was directed at minorities who were much less assimilated? Would the majority of Jews who had no regular ties to the organized Jewish community be attracted to a community that actively displayed its distinctiveness— or would they be scared off?

The effect of the trend toward freer group expression was already noticeable in Jewish life. Thus, external signs of Jewish customs, including those of the ultra-Orthodox, were displayed more openly than before, and Jewish study circles were springing up in areas where quiet assimilation had long been the rule. At the same time, some Jews urged that they should avoid the trap of withdrawal into their own community and instead become more visible as Jews in areas such as ethics and social action.

**Community Relations**

The presence in France of large communities originating in other countries had led to considerable unrest in which social problems, straightforward racism, and fear that "multiculturalism" would threaten French national identity all played a part. One issue contributing to the unrest, which was in the news throughout the 1994-96 period, was that of the *hijab* or "Islamic head-covering," with which some Muslim girls cover their hair in public.

The controversy began in 1989 when four veiled students were expelled from school in Creil, not far from Paris, on the ground that the ostentatious wearing of a religious symbol violated the principle of secularism, but it soon became broader than this particular case. One side argued that the principle of secularism should respect all beliefs, that the head covering was the legitimate expression of a religious identity, that there were no Koranic schools for girls and hence secular schools represented their only opportunity to obtain an education, and
that expelling these girls from school meant depriving them of the possibility of integrating into French society. The other side countered that wearing the head covering was not an obligation intrinsic to Islam, that it was part of a system that oppressed women, that it was imposed on girls by their families and their environment, that it was a proselytizing tool, that it contributed to establishing Islamic extremism in France, and that secularism required absolute neutrality within the school.

Faced with these opposing arguments, officials responsible for making decisions—from school principals to cabinet ministers, from the courts to the National Assembly—searched long and hard for compromise solutions. But as wearing the hijab became more common in schools, from a few isolated cases in 1989 to several thousand five years later, positions hardened. People now feared that in neighborhoods with large Muslim populations, wearing the head covering would become a social requirement. Nor was the hijab the only issue. New situations arose, such as students refusing to participate in gymnastics sessions, or sometimes even biology classes.

The minister of national education, François Bayrou, initially favored a conciliatory policy. However, in his book Le droit au sens (The Right to Sense), which appeared in late 1996, Bayrou wrote, “How can we reconcile the respect we owe the Muslim religion, the inclusive and warm attitude we need to have toward people who practice Islam and are faithful to it, with French society’s legitimate refusal to see an Islamic society established on our soil, within our nation? There is only one answer: respectfully but firmly, we must assert our secularism.”

But if such an “assertion” was not to be discriminatory, the Islamic head covering could not be its only target, it had to address all signs of belonging to a religion or community. Thus, in an official circular issued in September 1994, the minister authorized “the wearing by students of discreet symbols indicating their attachment to particular convictions, notably religious ones” but forbade “ostentatious signs that in themselves constitute proselytizing or discriminatory elements.” This ruling did not completely end the controversy, however, as the families of the girls involved continued to have recourse to the courts. In these circumstances, in late 1996 some people proposed that the wearing of all religious symbols inside schools be outlawed, with no exceptions.

This controversy clearly had implications for French Jews. From the beginning, prominent Jewish intellectuals, including Élisabeth Badinter, Alain Finkielkraut, and Élisabeth de Fontenay, were among the most intransigent defenders of secularism. In Jewish religious circles some, such as Chief Rabbi Sitruk, defended the Islamic head covering in the name of solidarity among religions, while others, such as Rabbi Bernheim, protested against this association, which they saw as dangerous. The banning of “ostentatious symbols” highlighted the immediacy of the question for the Jewish community. Everybody was asking, “Why the veil and not the kippah?” Education Minister Bayrou himself addressed this question in his book: “I know that a detailed symbolic analysis of what the kippah
represents and of what the veil represents could lead to different conclusions. The kippah could be seen as a purely religious symbol and not at all discriminatory. However, it would be impossible to explain to adolescents why one would be allowed and the other would be forbidden. Exactly the same considerations would apply to a Catholic nun's veil."

In practice, as long as only "ostentatious symbols" were banned, and not all religious symbols, school principals would have room to exercise their judgment. However, other situations leading to conflict could arise in the future. In any case, Judaism in France would inevitably have to come to terms with the question of secularism.

**Jewish-Christian Relations**

An issue that had an impact on interreligious dialogue in France involved the Christian Community Bible (Bible des Communautés chrétiennes, or BCC), which was published in France in May 1994. It was the French version of a Latin American Bible initially published in Spanish in 1973 by a French priest who was then living in Latin America.

In late 1994, attentive readers of the BCC discovered numerous passages with strong anti-Jewish connotations, both in the translation of certain terms and in the commentaries accompanying the biblical text. A Belgian researcher, Menahem Macina, endeavored to alert Jewish and Christian circles to this circumstance. In February 1995 Bishop Thomas of Versailles, who a few months earlier had given the imprimatur to the BCC, issued a statement in which he asked forgiveness from "the Jewish community that has been injured." However, it took months of pressure—including a representation to the Vatican by Central Consistory president Jean Kahn and legal proceedings undertaken in Paris by LICRA, the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism—before the SOBICAL-Médiaspaul publishing group, which published the Bible containing the incriminating texts, announced in September 1995 that it was withdrawing the book from distribution.

Two figures who played a prominent role in Jewish-Christian dialogue in France died during this period: Jacob Kaplan (see "Personalia," below) and Albert Decourtray. Decourtray, the cardinal-archbishop of Lyons and a major voice of the French church, died in September 1994. In a book of interviews that appeared after his death, he described how shocked he was by a visit to Auschwitz which he made with the cardinal-archbishop of Paris, Jean-Marie Lustiger, a Jew by birth whose mother died in Auschwitz.

**Education**

Over the past generation, Jewish schools in France had grown at an unprecedented rate. Some 24,000 children (approximately 20 percent of Jewish children
aged 3-19) were enrolled in Jewish day schools, from kindergarten through high school. (No figures were available for enrollment in afternoon, supplementary schools.)

A number of factors contributed to the high demand for Jewish education: the natural increase of the strictly Orthodox population, the ongoing "return to Judaism" movement, a more diffuse sense of identity related to the growth of multiculturalism in France, and concerns that some parents had about public schools in areas with a large immigrant population. The financing of schools was made possible by contracts with the national education ministry, which provided funding for teaching secular subjects. While many schools could pull together the necessary funds to pay the additional cost of teaching Jewish subjects, published reports indicated that some strictly Orthodox schools were experiencing financial difficulties. In addition, recent budget cutbacks throughout the education system as a whole led to a freeze on hiring new teachers that affected Jewish schools as well as other institutions. A major development was the establishment in 1994 of the André Neher Institute, under the auspices of the FSJU, with a mandate to train Jewish studies teachers, kindergarten teachers, and Jewish school principals, and so increase the professional level of the faculties of Jewish schools.

In the public schools, the increased insistence on secularism noted above had implications for Jewish Sabbath observance. For a long time, there had been an unwritten law allowing Jewish students in public schools not to attend classes on Saturday. However, excessive zeal on the part of the rabbinate led to the question being raised in a civil court as a matter of principle in relation to a Jewish student in a public school in Nice. The State Council, the supreme judicial authority in this area, issued a clear decision on April 14, 1995, to the effect that, while French law did not forbid dispensation from attending classes on Saturday, this "was not an absolute right."

The many young Jews who attended Jewish schools were not affected by this problem. However, serious difficulties could face young people living in cities and towns where there are no Jewish schools, especially those who want to be in select classes that prepare students for the entrance examinations for postsecondary institutions. The impossibility of adjusting the schedule in these classes to accommodate the Jewish Sabbath had already forced a few young religious Jews to pursue their studies outside France. Meanwhile, the national education ministry made laudable efforts to insure that major examinations were not scheduled for the Jewish Sabbath or holidays.

Culture

The 1950s and 1960s were the glory days of the Jewish presence in French culture—in literature and memoirs (André Schwarz-Bart, Anna Langfus, Elie Wiesel), in the visual reconstruction of a lost past (Marc Chagall), and in reflection on Jewish identity (Albert Memmi, Robert Misrahi). The 1980s were another
period of strong Jewish presence, led by two young philosophers, Alain Finkielkraut and Bernard-Henri Lévy, who combined intellectual studies with militant social involvement. The 1990s, now coming to a close, would end up being a much poorer period in this regard. Jewish writers such as Finkielkraut and Lévy continued to produce new work and to play a major role in French cultural life. However, without in any way renouncing their Jewish specificity, they chose to place greater emphasis on the universal dimension of their work. It is significant that Christian Boltanski, an artist who used the Holocaust as the subject of a number of his “installations,” was not generally perceived as Jewish. In interviews, Boltanski himself spoke of either his Jewish father or his Corsican mother, depending on the audience he was addressing. Being Jewish and being Corsican were apparently two ways of standing outside the French mainstream. Many other Jewish artists were active in all areas of culture, and while they sometimes referred openly to their Jewish origins, specifically Jewish content was at most only implied in their works. Jewish culture in France could be said to be engaged in a struggle to redefine its relationship with the majority culture — seeking authenticity, often through a return to sources, while avoiding the danger of becoming enclosed within the confines of the Jewish community.

In this context, one figure became the symbol of an almost miraculous symbiosis: the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas, who died in Paris on December 25, 1995. Through most of his life, Lévinas was active in both the world of the Talmud and the world of modern philosophy. Born in Kovno, Lithuania, in 1905, he arrived in France at the age of 18. He studied philosophy in Strasbourg and, after taking courses in Germany under Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, became one of the first people to introduce phenomenology to France. After the war, he headed the Alliance Israélite Universelle school in Paris, regularly gave Talmud lessons that were a highlight of conferences of Jewish intellectuals, and wrote books that established his reputation as a leading philosopher, especially *Totalité et infini* (Totality and Infinity), published in 1961. While continuing his specifically Jewish activities, he also began an academic career in 1963, eventually becoming a professor at the Sorbonne. His original thought in the area of ethics had a determining influence on a generation of philosophers.

When he died, his friend Jacques Derrida said that “the impact of his thought has changed the course of philosophical reflection in our time.” The Catholic philosopher Jean-Luc Marion, the current occupant of the chair of philosophy at the Sorbonne once held by Lévinas, wrote in the February 1996 issue of *L’Arche*, “If a great philosopher is defined as someone without whom philosophy would not have been what it is, there have been two great philosophers in France in the 20th century: Bergson and Lévinas. . . . For the question of Being, he substituted the question of the person. As well, he achieved an extraordinary balance between the world of philosophical discourse and Jewish specificity.” It should be noted, however, that Lévinas himself was very skeptical of the possi-
bility of "syncretism" between his reflection on Jewish subjects and his philosoph-ophical work. Any meeting between these two facets of his thought existed more in the minds of his readers and students than in his writings, all of which could be fairly clearly identified with one category or the other.

In a very different cultural domain, the last two surviving Yiddish daily newspapers in Paris ceased publication: first the Communist-leaning *Di Naye Presse* and then the Zionist-oriented *Unzer Wort*. These two papers had survived only with great difficulty, and their frequency had been reduced to three times a week. Their closing marked the end of an era during which Yiddish-speaking immigrants had given new life to French Jewry before themselves being supplanted by immigrants from North Africa.

But if Yiddish had died as a spoken language, it remained alive as a cultural instrument. There had in fact been a revival of interest in Yiddish in recent years, in the context of university-level Yiddish studies and of AEDCY, the Association for the Study and Development of Yiddish Culture. Another sign of this revival was in the area of film, with several Yiddish-language films already released or in production.

Hebrew had not been neglected either. France was home to an increasing number of talented Hebrew scholars, both in universities and in the broader Jewish community. Several universities in Paris and other centers had high-quality Hebrew studies departments. The European conference of Brit Ivrit Olamit, the World Union for Hebrew Language and Culture, held in Strasbourg from June 30 to July 4, 1996, was an indication of the ongoing activity in this field.

Efforts to establish a new Jewish art museum in Paris continued to move slowly. There had been a Jewish art museum in Paris for some time, chaired by Claude-Gérard Marcus and headed by Sophie Rosenberg, but it was housed in cramped quarters, and the need for a larger establishment was widely recognized. In 1980 the city of Paris donated the Hôtel de Saint-Aignan — built in the 17th century and one of the most elegant private residences in the historic Marais neighborhood — for the purpose. The national government undertook to pay half of the expenses involved, but the agreement was frozen for many years, partly because of political (right-left) differences. Laurence Sigal was put in charge of a team working to establish the new museum, which was given the name "Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme" (Museum of the Art and History of Judaism). Again renovation of the Hôtel de Saint-Aignan was delayed, this time primarily because of its status as a historic monument, which meant that any changes to its interior had to be approved by the proper authorities. As a result, the building would not be ready before 1998.

Films of Jewish interest released in France between 1994 and 1996 included Claude Lanzmann's *Tsahal*, about the Israeli army; Marek Halter's *Tzedek*, about the "righteous Gentiles" who saved Jews during the war; Emmanuel Finkiel's *Madame Jacques sur la Croisette*, a short with some Yiddish dialogue about the life of retired Jews; Abraham Ségal's *Enquête sur Abraham*, interpretations of the
life of the patriarch Abraham; and Martine Dugowson's *Mina Tannenbaum*, about two young Jewish women in Paris. In addition, first prize at the 1996 Festival du Cinéma du Réel at the Centre Pompidou in Paris went to *Shtetl*, directed by Polish-Jewish-American filmmaker Marian Marzynski.

Notable theatrical productions in this period included Yasmina Reza's *Art*, *Vie et destin d'Anna Semionovna*, based on a work by Vasily Grossman; a staging of *Romeo and Juliet* partly in Hebrew and partly in Arabic by a mixed Israeli-Palestinian company; and translations of works by Israeli playwrights Hanoch Levin and Yehoshua Sobol. Arnold Schoenberg's opera *Moses and Aaron* was staged at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, while the Avignon Festival presented Nguyen-Tieu Dao's opera-oratorio *Les enfants d'Izieu*, which deals with the deportation of a group of Jewish children during the German occupation.

In the plastic arts, notable events included a tribute to Max Jacob at the Musée Picasso in Paris and a Chagall exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

**Publications**

A bibliography of works on Jewish themes published in France between 1989 and 1995 was recently brought out by the Stavit publishing house under the direction of Mickaël Pariente. (An updated and expanded edition is planned for the future.) This data base shows an average of about 300 books on Jewish themes appearing each year in France. Literary works (including books translated from English, Hebrew, Yiddish, and other languages) are the largest subgroup, with an average of 115 books a year. Then comes religion with 60 titles, history with 40 (almost half of them dealing with modern history), philosophy and politics with 25 each, sociology with 15, the arts with 10, and finally a miscellaneous category that includes psychology and everyday life, also with 10. The most common themes are the Holocaust and the history of the Jews in France, followed by the Bible and Jewish religion and then Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The list of selected new publications that follows includes primarily works published originally in French; it is meant to convey a sense of the diversity of French publishing on Jewish themes, with no claim to being exhaustive.

Noteworthy novels included Patrick Modiano's *Un chien de printemps* (Bloody Springtime), Luba Jurgenson's *Éducation nocturne* (Nocturnal Education), Edgar Reichmann's *Nous n'irons plus à Sils Maria* (We Will No Longer Go to Sils Maria), Marc Petit's *La grande cabale des Juifs de Plotzk* (The Great Conspiracy of the Jews of Plotzk), and Éliette Abécassis's *Qumran*. In addition, the collected works of the great writer Albert Cohen appeared posthumously as part of the prestigious "La Pléiade" series.

Jewish poets who brought out new works included Liliane Atlan, Claudine Helft, Emmanuel Moses, Bruno Durocher, Nicole Gdalia, Alain Suied, and Jacques Éladian.
There were a number of notable memoirs: Elie Wiesel's, under the dual title *Tous les fleuves vont à la mer...* and *...Et la mer n’est pas remplie* (All Rivers Run to the Sea...); the first volume of Pierre Vidal-Naquet's, entitled *La brisure et l’attente* (The Break and the Expectation); Claude Vigée’s *Un panier de houblon* (A Basket of Hops); Marcel Bénabou's *Jacob, Ménahem et Mimoun: une épopée familiale* (Jacob, Menahem and Mimoun: A Family Epic); Odette Abadi's *Terre de détresse* (Land of Distress); and Vivette Samuel's *Sauver les enfants* (Save the Children).

The following are some major historical studies published during the period: Colette Sirat’s *Du scribe au livre: les manuscrits hébreux au moyen âge* (From Scribe to Book: Hebrew Manuscripts in the Middle Ages); Maurice-Ruben Hayoun’s *Moïse Maimonide* (Moses Maimonides); Danièle and Carol Iancu’s *Les Juifs du Midi* (The Jews of the South of France); Daniel Friedmann’s *Les enfants de la Reine de Saba* (Children of the Queen of Sheba); Gérard Israël’s *Provences: Juifs, chrétiens et hérétiques* (Provences: Jews, Christians and Heretics); Haïm Zafrani’s *Juifs du Maroc et d’Andalousie* (Jews of Morocco and Andalusia); Henri Minczeles’s *Histoire générale du Bund* (General History of the Bund); Michel Drouin’s *L’Affaire Dreyfus de A à Z* (The Dreyfus Affair from A to Z); Pierre Hebey’s *Alger 1898* (Algiers 1898); Asher Cohen’s *Persécutions et sauvetages: Juifs et Français sous l’Occupation et sous Vichy* (Persecutions and Rescues: The Jews and the French Under the Occupation and Vichy); Renée Poznanski’s *Etre juif en France pendant la seconde guerre mondiale* (Being Jewish in France During World War II); Miriam Rouveyre’s *Les enfants de Buchenwald* (The Children of Buchenwald); Anne Grynberg’s *La Shoah, l’impossible oubli* (The Holocaust: The Impossibility of Forgetting); Pierre Birnbaum’s *Destins juifs, de la Révolution française à Carpentras* (Jewish Destinies from the French Revolution to Carpentras); Jacques Derogy and Hesi Carmel’s *Le siècle d’Israël* (The Century of Israel); Marc Hillel’s *La maison du Juif: l’histoire extraordinaire de Tel-Aviv* (The Jew’s House: The Extraordinary History of Tel Aviv); a history of postwar anti-Semitism, *Histoire de l’antisémitisme* (1945-1993), edited by Léon Poliakov; a collection edited by Esther Benbassa, *Mémoires juives d’Espagne et du Portugal* (Jewish Memoirs of Spain and Portugal); and another collection, *Mille ans de cultures ashkénazes* (A Thousand Years of Ashkenazi Cultures). In addition, Simon Dubnow’s modern history of the Jews was reissued in French under the title *Histoire moderne du peuple juif* (1789-1938).

Notable nonfiction published during the period included: Raphaël Draï’s *Identité juive, identité humaine* (Jewish Identity, Human Identity); Marc-Alain Ouaknin’s *Bibliothérapié* (Bibliotherapy); Shmuel Trigano’s *Un exil sans retour?* (An Exile with No Return?); Armand Abécassis’s *La mystique du Talmud* (The Mystique of the Talmud); Josy Eisenberg and Benjamin Gross’s *Le testament de Moïse* (The Testament of Moses); a collection of Jacob Gordin’s writings; Jacques Hassoun’s *Le passage des étrangers* (Foreigners Passing Through); Jeanne Brody’s *Rue des Rosiers: une manière d’être juif* (Rue des Rosiers: A Way of Being Jew-
ish); Olivier Cohen-Steiner’s *Le regard de l’autre—le Juif dans le roman anglais, 1800-1900* (The Other’s Gaze: The Jew in the English Novel, 1800-1900); Sylvie Courtine-Denamy’s *Hannah Arendt*; Philippe de Saint Cheron’s *Elie Wiesel*; Jean-Pierre Faye and Anne-Marie de Vilaine’s *La déraison antisémite et son langage* (Anti-Semitic Irrationality and Its Language); Henri Meschonnic’s *Politique du rythme* (Politics of Rhythm); two collections of essays, one by Manès Sperber entitled *Être juif* (Being Jewish) and one by Albert Memmi entitled *Le Juif et l’autre* (The Jew and the Other); and a volume entitled *L’idée d’humanité* (The Idea of Humanity) in the series “Colloques des intellectuels juifs.”

There were also two major publishing projects of Jewish interest during this period: André Chouraqui’s translation of and commentary on the books of the Bible, and the beginnings of a French edition of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz’s translation of and commentary on the Talmud.

**Personalia**

Liliane Klein-Liber, president of Coopération féminine (Women’s Cooperation), Marcel Goldstein, vice-president of the FSJU and vice-president of CRIF, and Alain Goldmann, former chief rabbi of Paris, were named knights of the Legion of Honor, while Henry Bulawko, vice-president of CRIF, was named an officer of the legion. David Saada, executive director of the FSJU, was named a knight of the Order of Merit, and René Samuel Sirat, former chief rabbi of France, and Jean Kahn, president of the Central Consistory, were named commanders of the order.

Former chief rabbi Jacob Kaplan died in December 1994, just after his 99th birthday. After serving as chief rabbi of Paris, Kaplan was chief rabbi of France from 1955 until his retirement in 1981. Chief Rabbi René Samuel Sirat, who succeeded Kaplan as leader of the French rabbinate, summed up his work: “He took it as his essential task to bring together and unite all the components of French Judaism in one large community in which it would be good to live.”

Other prominent French Jews who died during the period included Roger Berg, former secretary-general of the Central Consistory, in June 1994, aged 84; film director Alex Joffé, in April 1995, aged 77; historian Annie Kriegel, in August 1995, aged 69; actor Charles Denner, in September 1995, aged 69; Émile Touati, former president of the Paris Consistory, in October 1995, aged 68; philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas (see above, under “Culture”), in December 1995, aged 89; businessman and philanthropist Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet, in April 1996, aged 89; and poets Bruno Durocher and Moshé Waldmann, in July 1996, aged 77 and 86, respectively.

**Meir Waintrater**
The Netherlands

National Affairs

During the period under review—mid-1995 to mid-1996—the unusual coalition government formed in 1994 of Labor (PvdA), the center-right Liberals (VVD), and the center-left Democrats 1966 (D'66) functioned smoothly, due both to the pragmatic leadership of Premier Willem Kok (Labor) and to the fact that several cabinet members were experts in their fields—such as law, public health, and transport—rather than mainly politicians. An exception was Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo, who, in addition to holding this position and being one of the two vice-premiers, remained the leader of his D'66 party.

The major problems confronting the country were the need to cut government expenditure to reduce the national debt (some $300 billion), the drug problem, growing criminality, unemployment, and the reorganization of the armed forces.

In the summer of 1995, attention focused on a Dutch infantry battalion serving as part of the UN forces in Bosnia. The unit of less than 400 men was stationed in the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica, which the UN had declared to be a "safe area." On July 15, the heavily armed Bosnian Serbs who occupied the hills around Srebrenica overran the UN enclave. The Dutch commander in the enclave had twice in vain asked the UN and NATO heads in Zagreb for air support, which was not forthcoming, and the lightly armed Dutch were no match for the Serb forces. When it was learned that several thousand Muslim men had been marched away by the Serbs and hundreds of them murdered, there was considerable criticism of the Dutch, both in Holland and abroad, for having left the Srebrenica men to their fate. However, it seemed clear that the real cause of the disaster was the flawed system under which the UN was operating.

In August Holland observed the 50th anniversary of the end of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, then the Dutch East Indies, in World War II. Queen Beatrix and Prince-Consort Claus made a ten-day official visit to Indonesia—which achieved its independence from the Netherlands in 1951—but President Suharto, who was angry over Dutch criticism of human-rights violations by his regime, received the Dutch queen coolly and not too politely.

Compulsory army service was abolished on April 1, 1996, owing to the relaxation of tension between East and West. One of the main tasks of the new all-volunteer army was to participate in peacekeeping operations abroad, though there were concerns about morale and efficiency in the restructured armed forces.

The economy developed favorably, with growth at 2.4 percent and inflation less than 2 percent. The National Railways (N.S.) and the Postal and Telephone Ser-
vices (PTT) were largely privatized. The Dutch guilder remained one of the hardest currencies in the world, and unemployment was more or less stable, at some 450,000, primarily unskilled persons and recent immigrants from Third World countries (allochthones). As a partial solution to their plight, long-term unemployed were allowed to work at jobs specially created for them while retaining their unemployment payments.

The number of those seeking political asylum in Holland decreased, from some 55,000 in 1994 to 30,000 in 1995 and was expected to drop to 25,000 in 1996. This was partly the result of stricter control at the Belgian and German frontiers and at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, where those with no chance at all of being recognized as political refugees were not admitted.

Israel and the Middle East

The assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel on November 4, 1995, shocked and grieved the people of the Netherlands, Jews and non-Jews alike. Prime Minister Willem Kok and Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo attended the funeral in Jerusalem, together with Queen Beatrix, at her own request.

On November 5, representatives of nearly all Jewish organizations in the Netherlands gathered at the Israeli embassy in The Hague to express their condolences. On Thursday evening, November 9, a public gathering took place in the Large Hall of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, which was filled to capacity, with many would-be participants turned away for lack of room. Among those attending were Crown Prince Willem Alexander, Premier Kok, several members of the Dutch cabinet, and the ambassadors of some 20 countries. The speakers included Kok, Israeli ambassador Yossi Gal, Mayor of Amsterdam Schelto Patijn, Chairman of the Second Chamber of Parliament Willem Deetman, and Dr. Emanuel M. Wikler, the former president of the NIK, the main Jewish communal body, on behalf of the Jewish community in Holland. Stringent security measures were in place, and the ceremony proceeded without incident.

Thousands of trees were planted by residents of Holland, both Jews and non-Jews, in the JNF Rabin Forest in Israel, in tribute to the slain leader.

The Middle East policy of the Dutch government continued in accordance with that of the European Union (EU)—even-handedness, with special sympathy for Israel but considerable financial and material aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA). Efforts to promote Dutch industrial and commercial interests in the area continued. The Netherlands government disapproved of Israel's celebration of the 3,000th anniversary of Jerusalem and refused to take part in it in any way.

A parliamentary delegation headed by former minister of agriculture Piet Bukman visited Israel, the occupied areas, and Egypt in September 1995.

Yasir Arafat paid brief visits to Holland on several occasions. In November 1995, during a tour of a number of other European countries, he addressed the opening session of a Global Panel Conference in The Hague of politicians and
industrialists, where he asked for financial help. He also met with Premier Kok, Foreign Minister Van Mierlo, and the parliamentary Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

In January 1996 Premier Kok and Foreign Minister Van Mierlo, accompanied by a 20-member industrial delegation, visited Syria, Jordan, Jericho, Israel, and the Gaza Strip. Prior to the visit there was some commotion when it became known that Van Mierlo intended to visit Orient House, the PLO's headquarters in East Jerusalem, during his stay in Jerusalem. Parliamentary questions were asked about this, and the Jewish community protested, but Van Mierlo pointed out that EU guidelines approved such visits.

In Syria, Kok was received coolly by President Hafez al-Assad, after the latter had postponed the meeting for several hours. In Amman, Van Mierlo presided over a symbolic opening of a Dutch embassy, a move King Hussein had insisted on. Up to then, the Dutch ambassador in Damascus technically held the same post in Amman, though as a practical matter, a local honorary consul had represented Dutch interests in Jordan for the past 36 years.

In Jerusalem, Kok placed a wreath on Rabin's grave. At an official dinner hosted by Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Kok stressed the need to end the great political, economic, and social inequality between the various peoples in the area and expressed Holland's willingness to contribute to this. There were talks inter alia on Dutch help in expanding Israel railways and on the construction of a subway system in Tel Aviv. Unofficially, Kok and Van Mierlo visited the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Wailing Wall. At Orient House, Van Mierlo was received by a large delegation headed by PLO official Faisal Husseini.

In Gaza, where they were the guests of Yasir Arafat, Van Mierlo and Kok dug the first spadeful of sand for the planned harbor to which Holland had promised to contribute Fl. 40 million (about $20 million) and which was to be constructed by the Dutch firm Ballast-Nedam. In addition to the Fl. 40 million for the Gaza harbor, Holland was contributing some Fl. 50 million for other projects in the autonomous areas. At a press conference in Tel Aviv at the end of the visit, Kok called his reception in Israel heartwarming, but criticized the sealing of the borders to Palestinian workers.

Minister for Development Cooperation Jan Pronk visited the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, February 12–16. He donated two Fokker Friendship aircraft to the Palestinian Authority, which Arafat had requested, valued at Fl. 35 million or $17 million. He and the undersecretary for export of the Ministry for Economic Affairs also visited Egypt. Pronk had also visited the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Israel in November. Nineteen Palestinian police officers who received training in Holland in riot control, at the expense of the Ministry for Development Cooperation, completed their course and returned to Gaza.

Suha Arafat, the PLO leader's wife, paid a three-day visit to Holland in April, mainly to address an economic and financial conference.
In June the Association of Dutch Industrialists (VNO) organized a seminar in The Hague on investment possibilities in the Middle East. Also in June, Ed van Thijn, the Jewish former mayor of Amsterdam, chaired a confidential meeting on the economic development of the autonomous areas, attended by Israelis (among them Yossi Beilin and Yair Hirschfeld), Palestinians (among them Faisal Husseini), and representatives of Jordan and Egypt.

Two anti-Israel demonstrations took place in The Hague, attended by pro-Hezbollah Muslims from Holland and also from Germany and Belgium, on February 16—the last Friday of Ramadan—and on April 26. The thousand or so participants, including women and children, marched, accompanied by the police, to the American and Israeli embassies carrying anti-Israel banners and shouting anti-Israel slogans. One of the banners showed an octopus with its tentacles around the Al Aqsa mosque.

After the suicide bombings in Israel on March 6–7, Jewish adult and youth organizations arranged a solidarity-with-Israel vigil in Amsterdam, at the statue of the Stevedore, at which lights were kindled and kept burning for 24 hours. The opening of the demonstration was attended by the Israeli ambassador, the mayor of Amsterdam, an undersecretary of the Dutch government, the Roman Catholic bishop of the Amsterdam region, and other officials.

The Jewish students and young people's Ijar society organized a "Shalom Salaam" festival in May in Utrecht and Amsterdam to promote Israeli-Palestinian peace. The program included singer Aviv Geffen and films by Gila Almagor and Uri Sivan. Most sessions were sold out, but very few Palestinians attended.

The book was still not closed on the crash of an El Al Boeing 747 freight aircraft over the Bijlmer district in the southern tip of Amsterdam on October 4, 1992, in which 43 persons lost their lives. Boeing took full responsibility and paid damages to 600 claimants, most of them recent immigrants from Third World countries who lived in the crash area. Despite the conclusion of the Netherlands Aviation Council on February 24, 1995, that the main cause of the crash was the breaking off of engine number 3, which in turn dragged with it engine number 4, certain circles, led by Labor parliamentarian Rob van Gijzel, chairman of the Parliamentary Transport Committee, wanted another inquiry, alleging that El Al's responsibility was greater than assumed. Supported by the Green Left and parliamentarians of D'66, he claimed that El Al, with the connivance of the Dutch authorities, had willfully concealed certain information, for instance that the cargo may have contained arms or poisonous material damaging to the health of the residents of the area and that of the rescue workers. By mid-1996 the matter had still not been concluded.

At the end of July 1995 Michael N. Bawly left Holland, where he had been Israel's ambassador for nearly five years, to return to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem. He was succeeded by 44-year-old Yossi Gal, a Foreign Ministry official who played a leading role in the peace negotiations with the PLO.
1996 Akiva Tor, who had been the Israeli attaché in The Hague for four years, was transferred to Taiwan to head an Israeli commercial office there. He was succeeded by Dutch-born Iddo Moëd.

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

On February 24, 1996, members of the far-right Centrum Democrats (CD)—which had three members in the 150-member Second Chamber of Parliament—and the Centrum Party '86 (CP '86), an offshoot of the CD, which had no seats—held a demonstration in Zwolle, the capital of the province of Overijssel, with slogans such as “One’s own people first” and “The Netherlands White.” It was followed in the afternoon by a much larger counterdemonstration. The mayor of Zwolle had allowed the first demonstration as a test case, hoping to force the government to reconsider the penal code, which does not allow banning demonstrations in advance based on a group’s ideology.

The CP '86, a much more extreme group than the CD, more than once provoked clashes with the police, in particular in Rotterdam, where it originally had two seats on the municipal council but gained two more from CD defections. Its leader, Martin Freling, was known to have close contacts with neo-Nazis in Germany and Denmark. At a demonstration led by the American neo-Nazi Gary Lauck in Hamburg, 25 neo-Nazis from Holland were present.

There were few cases of overt anti-Semitism. The CIDI-Center for Information and Documentation on Israel, which is also concerned with combating anti-Semitism, reported a decrease, and STIBA, the Foundation for Combating Anti-Semitism, almost ceased its activities.

Siegfried Verbeke of Belgium’s Free Historical Research Organization, which distributed material denying the Holocaust in Holland, including to schools and libraries, was sentenced to a fine of Fl. 5,000 (about $3,000) and six months probation after his case was heard on appeal by The Hague higher district court. (See 1994 AJYB, p. 287.)

Jewish Community

Demography

The number of Jews was estimated at between 25,000 and 30,000, of whom only about one-third were members of any organized Jewish community—Ashkenazic, Sephardic, or Liberal. To these must be added an estimated 10,000 Israelis living in Holland. (More about these below.)

The Netherlands Ashkenazic community (NIK) reported its membership at the end of 1995 at 5,503, against 5,620 at the end of 1994. Two-thirds, or 2,985, lived in the Amsterdam area, 360 in the Hague area, and 353 in the Rotterdam area.
The membership of the Sephardic community, largely based in Amsterdam, was about five hundred, including recent immigrants from Morocco and the Middle East, and the Liberal Jewish community (LJG) had 2,500 members in six congregations.

Communal Affairs

A study of Israelis in Holland showed a high proportion — three-quarters — intending to remain in the country. The results of the study, conducted by Christian Kooymans and Yossi Almagor and based on a sample of 1,353 persons, were issued in November 1995, and a detailed report in English appeared in March 1996. Of the respondents, about half had settled in Holland because of a Dutch spouse; 42 percent had no contact with the local Jewish community at all, and 23 percent only minimal contact. Nearly half the respondents never attended synagogue. The Jewish Social Welfare Foundation (Joods Maatschappelijk Werk, JMW), which sponsored the study, believed that efforts should be made to integrate Israelis into the Jewish community and that JMW had a role to play in this.

In the NIK, the long-awaited change in the "chief rabbinate" of the Netherlands was at last finalized on June 16, 1996, by a decision of the NIK central council. In reality, the institution of chief rabbinate had not functioned for many years, and its functions were now split between two bodies: the Va'ad Harabbonim, for interdepartmental consultations between the several Orthodox rabbis in Holland, and the Organization for the Supervision of Kashruth for Export, or IRO, still headed by the former chief rabbi of Amsterdam, Meir Just. The future of ritual slaughter (shehitah) in Amsterdam was in fact in jeopardy, as many of those still consuming kosher meat preferred meat imported from Israel or Antwerp.

The NIK was responsible for monthly 15-minute Jewish radio programs as well as Jewish television programs. In September 1995 the government increased the NIK's TV time allotment from one and a half hours to three hours a year. The three hours would be divided into four 30-minute programs and three 20-minute programs.

The Sephardic community suffered a heavy loss in the death of Dr. Jacques Z. Baruch, who had been its president for many years and was also active in many other areas. (See "Personalia," below.)

In May 1996, in the Liberal Jewish community in Amsterdam, four members of the board resigned in a conflict with Rabbi David L. Lilienthal over what they viewed as his too liberal admission of converts, which in their view was changing the character of the congregation, and his permitting women to wear a tallit during services. Still, the congregation celebrated enthusiastically his 25th anniversary as a Liberal rabbi in Amsterdam. Lilienthal was born in Sweden and studied at the Leo Baeck Institute in London.

Ruben Bar Ephraim (originally Van der Sluis) was installed in September 1995
as second communal rabbi of the Liberal Jewish community of The Hague, to assist Avraham Soetendorp. Bar Ephraim, who was born 37 years earlier in Amsterdam of parents who were already members of the LJG, had lived in Israel for the past 17 years, most recently as rabbi in Nahariyah. In addition to the post of second rabbi of The Hague, he served as Liberal rabbi of the province of North Brabant, with its synagogue in Tilburg, and as chaplain for Jewish detainees in prison, mostly Israelis.

In Rotterdam, the LJG, which had been meeting in rented premises, inaugurated its own synagogue in March 1996, in a former school building that had been sold to the LJG by the Rotterdam municipality for the symbolic sum of one guilder. Official guests at the dedication included the deputy mayor of Rotterdam, the Roman Catholic bishop of Rotterdam, and the Israeli ambassador.

In Amsterdam a new group, Beth Hachiddush, whose members included young American Jews living in Holland, organized “alternative” services on Friday nights and Jewish holidays.

The Netherlands Israelite Rabbinical and Teachers Seminary in Amsterdam—which had ordained only one rabbi since 1945—had an enrollment of 120 students, of all ages, in its part-time courses. Its director, Rabbi Raphael Evers, was also a rabbi of the NIK, but not connected with a specific congregation. New courses were offered to train cantors and Torah readers, for which there was a great need in Holland.

The Jewish old-age home in Bussum, some 20 kilometers east of Amsterdam, was finally closed in August 1995. Most of its remaining residents were transferred to the Beth Shalom old-age home in Amsterdam. At the Mr. L.E. Visser Home in Scheveningen near The Hague, which was opened last year, only 33 of the 45 rooms were occupied.

In April 1996, Agudath Israel organized a European “Siyum Mishnayoth” in Amsterdam, with the participation of some 500 boys between the ages of 8 and 16.

The Jewish kosher restaurant at De Lairessestraat 13 in Amsterdam was closed. Kosher meals could still be obtained at the Beth Shalom old-age home in the Amsterdam-Buitenveldert suburb and at the Carmel vegetarian restaurant.

The reorganized Federation of Netherlands Zionists (FNZ) continued to have financial and other problems and to experience a decline in membership. In December 1995 Flory Neter-Polak (of the Poale Zion) resigned as chairwoman and was replaced by Rob Wurms, a psychologist and a member of ARZA, the organization of Liberal Jewish Zionists, who assumed the position with great energy, announcing plans to increase the number of activities. The Zionist periodical De Joodse Wachter, which had existed for some 90 years, and which recently had appeared only at infrequent intervals, ceased to publish altogether, though it was not officially closed down. Koemi Ori, the periodical of the Poale Zion, a smaller paper, appeared only rarely. Max Kleerekoper, the chairman of ARZA, told the group’s annual meeting in May 1996 that a large majority of the members of the
Liberal Jewish community showed no interest in joining ARZA, and that Israel was not a priority for most Liberal Jewish young people.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

By mid-1996, some 700 persons had been interviewed by Steven Spielberg's "Survival of the Shoah Visual History Project." The target was one thousand, but it was not likely to be reached because of the reluctance of many survivors to talk about their experiences. The 80 interviewers were mostly non-Jewish and born after 1945.

The Jewish Social Welfare Organization again organized several conferences and meetings with first- and second-generation survivors. It also produced a rather amateurish short play, *Premiere*, shown up and down the country, in which members of the second and even third generation ask members of the first generation about their experiences, and in which the audience is asked to participate.

Yad Vashem continued to present awards to Righteous Gentiles in Holland. A remarkable recipient was 90-year-old Frits J. Philips, the former president-director of the Philips Electrical Equipment Factories in Eindhoven. He had saved the lives of hundreds of his Jewish employees and their families by having them work in a special section of his factories and claiming to the Germans that their work was essential. In the end he could not prevent their deportation to the east, but even there they were not killed but were put to work in a special department. Of the original 496 Jews saved by him, 382 survived the war. The award was at first opposed by some who pointed out that the Philips company had worked for the Nazis, even if Philips had no other choice, but eventually the award was given. The ceremony took place on January 11, 1996, at the residence of the Israeli ambassador in The Hague, in the presence of invited guests only.

A Dutch translation of the controversial book by Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, was published in the spring of 1996, several months before the German translation appeared. It was criticized as superficial and biased by all responsible Dutch historians, such as H.W. von der Dunk of the University of Utrecht, J.C.H. Blom of the University of Amsterdam, and David Barnouw of the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation (RIOD). Still, it was one of the top ten bestsellers in Holland for several weeks.

A conference on "The Return of Book Collections Looted by the Nazis: An Unfinished Chapter" took place in April 1996 in Amsterdam. Organized by Frits Hoogewoud, keeper of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana of the Amsterdam University Library, the conference dealt with not only Jewish libraries but also those of Freemasons and others from many countries, all of which were stored by the Nazis in storerooms in the vicinity of Frankfurt-on-Main and in Silesia. At the time of the German defeat in 1945, part of these collections happened to be in the American zone and part in the Russian zone. Col. (retired) S.J. Pomrenze, of New York, who headed the Judaica depot at Offenbach, near Frankfurt, in 1946,
told the symposium of his efforts to restore the collections to their rightful owners in the former Nazi-occupied countries, among which were the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana of the Amsterdam University Library and the Etz Haim Library of the Sephardic community in Amsterdam. The books stored in Silesia were taken by the Russians as war booty to Moscow, where they remained. The librarian of the Pushkin Library, who was a participant, made it clear that there could be no question of the books and archives ever being returned to the West. Those interested in studying them should come to Moscow, she said.

As in previous years, a number of memorials for local Jews were unveiled. In Rotterdam plaques were affixed at nine places that were of Jewish importance before World War II. In The Hague, a model of the prewar Jewish neighborhood—"The Neighborhood That Vanished"—was placed in the atrium of the new municipality building. In the Resistance Museum in Leeuwarden, the capital of the province of Friesland, a wall was unveiled with the names of all the Jews of that province who perished at the hands of the Nazis. In the provincial town of Tiel, a monument was erected on which were inscribed the names of all the Jews of that town who perished. In the townlet of Leek in western Groninguen province, a memorial tablet was placed in the former Jewish school, a building that now served as an information center about anti-Semitism and discrimination. In Bois-le-Duc, the capital of the province of North Brabant, a monument was erected to the Jewish schoolchildren who perished. At Gorinchem, a 15-meter-long memorial wall for the local Jews was repaired. In Zutphen a memorial tablet was affixed to the synagogue, which was still in use.

In other places former synagogues were turned into cultural centers, but in a way that preserved their original character. In Amsterdam the former Uilenburgerstreet Synagogue, dating from the 18th century and for many years an atelier for the restoration of historic stone tablets from buildings that had been demolished, was itself tastefully restored to serve as a venue for concerts and other cultural events. In Deventer, where Etty Hillesum lived until the age of 18, the Etty Hillesum Cultural Center was opened in the former synagogue. In Zutphen where, as just mentioned, the synagogue was still in use, the Green Keppel (Yarmulke) Foundation was opened in part of it, as a Jewish museum and documentation center. This was also a tribute to Meir Groen on his 80th birthday, the man who since 1945 had made great efforts to preserve and revive Jewish life in this town and in the entire province of Gelderland. In Zaltbommel—where hardly any Jews now lived—a recently discovered mikveh was restored along with the neighboring houses, and the complex was opened as a permanent exhibition about the town's former Jewish residents.

In Delft, south of The Hague, the former synagogue was bought for Fl. 250,000 (some $125,000) by a foundation established to preserve the building, which was to become a cultural center. Similarly, in the townlet of Weesp, east of Amsterdam, a foundation bought the former synagogue to make it into a cultural cen-
Jewish-Christian Relations

In November 1995 the Dutch Roman Catholic Episcopate issued a statement about relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Jews that went beyond the encyclical "Nostra Aetate." The statement, titled "Living from One and the Same Root," stated inter alia that the attitude of the Church toward the Jews and Judaism should be one not of condemnation or vilification but of respect and modesty. The NIK considered the statement an important step forward. A month earlier, Rabbi Raphael Evers had taken part in an exchange of views on the text of the statement with the Episcopate.

Roman Catholic historian Ton van Schaik, in a book on the wartime Roman Catholic archbishop Jan de Jong, disclosed that in May 1943 the Dutch prelate had urged Pope Pius XII to protest against the persecution of the Jews but that he never received a response.

Culture

The Amsterdam Synagogue Choir, which consisted of male singers only, celebrated its tenth anniversary in this period. The Lewandowski Choir, of some 40 singers, both male and female, led by Liberal Jewish cantor Avery Tracht, gave many performances. Klezmer music remained popular, in particular with Jewish audiences, and was sometimes performed by entirely non-Jewish musicians, such as the very popular group Di Gojim.

The Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam organized a number of exhibitions in the period under review. Particularly noteworthy was "That Is the Little Man," on Jewish contributions to the entertainment world, from 1840 to 1940. The title was derived from a popular song by Louis Davids, a cabaret artist of Jewish origin. An extremely well-produced catalogue was edited by Hetty Berg. Another significant exhibition was "Jerusalem Through the Centuries—in Judaism, Christianity and Islam."

Smaller exhibitions on Jerusalem, and in particular its meaning for Christianity, were mounted by the Protestant Biblical Museum in Amsterdam, the Roman Catholic St. Catherina Convent in Utrecht, and the Biblical Open Air Museum in Utrecht.

To mark the 200th anniversary of the decree on the Civil Equality of Jews by the National Assembly of the Batavian Republic on September 2, 1796, on June 6 the Jewish Historical Museum opened the exhibition "De Gelijkstaat der Joden" (Civil Rights for the Jews), which would be on view for several months. It too was accompanied by a fine illustrated catalogue, edited by Hetty Berg.
Other exhibitions of note were: “Laughing in the Dark,” in the Memorial Center at the former transit camp for Jews at Westerbork, about the cabaret performances given there weekly in 1943 by Jewish performers who were inmates of the camp, several of them originally well-known Berlin artists; “Three Centuries of Jewish Life in Friesland,” in Leeuwarden; and “Jewish Life in the Region,” in the Resistance Museum in Gouda.

A play with a Jewish theme was Rijgdraad (Basting Thread) by Jewish author and poet Judith Herzberg. She had been commissioned to write this play by the May Fourth and Fifth Memorial Committee (not Jewish) as part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands from the Nazis, but the play was not finished until the autumn of 1995. It is a sequel to her play Leedvermaak, produced in 1982, about the impact of their wartime experiences on a group of first- and second-generation survivors in a wealthy Jewish business milieu. The new play, which takes place ten years later, includes members of the third generation and deals with ever more complex relationship problems. In contrast to Leedvermaak, which was highly praised at the time and even made into a film, the new work was generally considered “made to order.”

The Symposium on the History of Dutch Jewry, held every two years, alternating between Amsterdam and Jerusalem and organized by the Netherlands Institute for the History of Dutch Jewry and its sister institute in Jerusalem, took place in Amsterdam, November 19–21, 1995. The theme was the emancipation of the Jews in the Netherlands, marking the forthcoming bicentenary of the declaration of the National Assembly of the Batavian Republic on September 2, 1796, on the civil equality of the Jews in its territory. Seventeen papers were read, about half of them by non-Jews. There were over 200 participants, the most the hall could contain, so that many requests for admission had to be refused. The texts of the papers were later published in a special double issue of the Studia Rosenthaliana in 1996.

A Yiddish Study Day was organized in Amsterdam in March 1996, to mark the retirement of Rena G. Fuks-Mansfeld after three years as professor extraordinary (adjunct) of Jewish history and Yiddish at the University of Amsterdam. The papers, by both Jewish and non-Jewish scholars, were mainly on Yiddish. Mrs. Fuks was to be succeeded by Dr. Wout van Bekkum, of the University of Groningen, where his specialization was Jewish liturgical poetry.

The Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad (NIW), the only Jewish weekly in the Netherlands, in March started a regular supplement of several pages in Hebrew, with a view to attracting Israeli readers, and in April a monthly supplement called “Anyway” for youth, with an editorial committee composed of 15 young people between the ages of 17 and 25.

The Eighth European Maccabiah was held in Amsterdam, in the southern suburb of Buitenveldert, July 9–13, 1995, with some 1,300 participants from 26 countries, including Israel, the United States, and various East European countries. The preparation of the event, by a committee of volunteers headed by Joop
de Jong, took three years, with cooperation from the Amsterdam municipality and from the borough council of Buitenveldert. At the opening ceremony, the flame was kindled by 23-year-old Anouk Spitzer, the daughter of Andre Spitzer, the Israeli fencing coach who was one of the 11 Israeli athletes killed at the 1972 Olympic games in Munich in a Palestinian terrorist attack.

The annual Yom Havoetbal in June, also in Amsterdam-Buitenveldert, attracted about a thousand Jewish soccer players, both junior and adult, primarily from Holland but also from Belgium, France, and Great Britain, and some 3,000 relatives and other spectators and was again an important social event.

Publications

A number of important works of nonfiction were published in this period. In Memoriam—Lezechter contains an alphabetical listing with place and date of birth and place and date of death of 102,000 Jews from Holland who perished in 1940–1945 at the hands of the Nazis. Other works include Geschiedenins van de Joden in Nederland (History of the Jews in the Netherlands), by ten historians, each a specialist in his own period, edited by J.C.H. Blom and others; Joseph Michman's Dutch Jewry During the Emancipation Period (in English); Aspects of Jewish Life in the Netherlands (in English), edited by Rena G. Fuks, a selection from the writings of her late husband, Leo Fuks; and three books by Chaya Brasz: Removing the Yellow Badge: The Struggle for the Jewish Community in the Post-war Netherlands, 1944–1946 (in English), Transport 222: Bergen Belsen to Palestine in July 1944, and The History of the Irgun Olei Holland.

Also published in this period were Two Hundred Years of Jewish Emancipation in the Netherlands: Expectation and Confirmation, edited by A.E. Offenberg, a double issue of the Studia Rosenthaliana containing texts of symposium papers (in English); and a second edition of Treasures of Jewish Booklore in the Possessions of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana. Other works of interest were Hans Jansen's The Madagascar Plan; Godert C. Cohen's history of the Jewish National Fund in the Netherlands; J.B. van Creveld's history of the rabbis in The Hague and their influence; F.J. van Zuylen's Palestine Pioneers in Twente, 1938–1941; A.E. Spijker's history of the Jews in Zandvoort; Philo Bregstein's Terug near Litouwen (Back to Lithuania), a pilgrimage by the author and a recently discovered relative from Siberia to the village in Lithuania where his grandfather was born; and several monographs on the history of Jewish communities in small places in the Netherlands. A new work of fiction was Leon de Winter's Zionoco, a rather improbable story set in Amsterdam, New York, and Paramaribo (Suriname, former Dutch Guyana).

A large number of translations of books with Jewish themes or by Jewish authors appeared, among them Pearl Abraham and Chaim Potok, and Israelis David Grossman, Meir Shalev, Amos Oz, and others.
Personalia

Prof. Dr. Hans Bloemendal, chief cantor of the Amsterdam Ashkenazic community, received one of the six Silver Carnations awarded annually by the Prince Bernhard Fund to persons who have made valuable contributions in the field of culture. Bloemendal received the award for his studies on hazzanut, cantorial music. Literary prizes were awarded to Hanny Michaelis (the Anne Bijns Prize) for her poetry; Ida Vos, the Sydney Taylor Award, for her book about a Jewish child during World War II; Carl Friedman, the Van Witsen Prize; and Leo Vroman (who had been living in New York for nearly 50 years), the VSB Prize.

Judith Frishman — the wife of Edward van Voolen, a part-time Liberal rabbi and part-time curator at the Jewish museum in Amsterdam — was appointed professor extraordinary of Christian-Jewish relations at the University of Leyden. Dr. Hans Keilson, a German-born psychiatrist who settled in Holland in 1935, was appointed to the Franz Rosenzweig Chair at the University of Kassel, Germany. Protestant clergyman Simon Schoon, who from 1973 to 1981 served as minister at the Christian settlement Nes Ammim in Israel, and who after returning to Holland became chairman of OJEC, was appointed professor extraordinary of Jewish-Christian relations at the Protestant Theological Academy in Kampen.

Among prominent Dutch Jews who died between mid-1995 and mid-1996 were Dr. Jacques Z. Baruch, until his death president of the Sephardic community in Amsterdam, active in other Jewish fields, a Labor municipal councillor, and a member of the Second Chamber of Parliament for some years, whose efforts helped to win passage of the WUV, the Law on Payments to War Victims, aged 79; Perla van Rijk-Keller, born in Galicia, who came to Holland in 1938 from Berlin and was for 25 years chairwoman of the Dutch Friends of Youth Aliyah, aged 82; George Hirsch, born in Berlin, who came to Holland in the 1930s and was one of the founding members of the Liberal Jewish community of Amsterdam and a General Zionist, aged 94; Oscar van Leer, chairman of the European Office of the Anti-Defamation League, honorary citizen of Jerusalem, and president of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, which his father founded, aged 81; author Gerhard L. Durlacher, aged 67; Sylvain Wijnberg, sociologist and demographer of the Jews of Holland, aged 68; Max Cahen, engineer, veteran Zionist, and author of a work on the history of Jewish graveyards in the province of North Brabant, aged 88. Two former Dutch Jews who died in Israel were Yaakov Arnon (formerly Jacob van Amerongen), chairman of the Netherlands Zionist Organization, 1945–47, aged 80; and Avraham Yinnon (De Jong), who played an instrumental part in rescuing Jewish war orphans for the Jewish community after 1944, aged 83.

Henriette Boas
Italy

National Affairs

The non-elected government of "technocrats"—chosen for expertise rather than for political affiliation and headed by Prime Minister Lamberto Dini—continued in office through the end of 1995 and into the spring of 1996. Dini's government had been appointed in January 1995 to replace the center-right coalition headed by media magnate Silvio Berlusconi, which fell in December 1994. Dini, who had said his government would remain in office only until several specific economic and reform measures were passed, resigned on January 11, 1996, declaring that his government's objectives had been met. He remained in office in a caretaker role until the April elections.

These elections marked the first time in Italy's postwar history that there was a clear choice between two opposing political blocs: the center-left Olive Tree Alliance, made up primarily of the former Communist Party (now called the Democratic Party of the Left, or PDS), and the center-right Freedom Alliance, made up primarily of Berlusconi's Forza Italia party and the right-wing National Alliance (AN), whose roots were in neofascism.

The Olive Tree won the elections, bringing leftists to power in Italy for the first time since World War II. Economist Romano Prodi, a centrist Roman Catholic, was named prime minister of Italy's 55th government since 1948. With a clear majority in the Senate and a relative majority in the Chamber of Deputies, hopes were raised that the new government would usher in a period of political stability and remain in office for the entire five years of the parliamentary mandate.

Most Italian Jews were believed to have voted for the Olive Tree Alliance and were relieved that the right-wing National Alliance fared worse than expected.

Jews remained somewhat skeptical of efforts by National Alliance leaders to distance themselves from their neofascist past. In October 1995, Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, issued a statement expressing hope that a visit by AN representatives to Auschwitz would be accompanied by concrete actions on their part at home. She noted, for example, that "violently anti-Jewish material" had been disseminated at a National Alliance meeting in Milan. And on the eve of the election, the union's council issued a statement that essentially urged Jews not to vote for AN candidates. It recalled "the special responsibility of Italian Judaism for its specific historical memory in the current historical-political context. This memory requires us to always direct our choices toward a consolidation of the principles of freedom and democracy that were reconquered 50 years ago at the price of suffering and struggle."
In February 1996, Italy was embarrassed by the escape of Youssef Magied al-Molqi, a Palestinian convicted of the 1985 hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship and the murder of wheelchair-bound passenger Leon Klinghoffer. Molqi, 33, fled Italy on February 28 while on a 12-day good-conduct leave from prison, where he was serving a 30-year sentence. He was recaptured three weeks later in Spain. The United States had offered a $2-million reward for Molqi's recapture and had put severe pressure on Italy.

**Israel and the Middle East**

At the beginning of September 1995, Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat met informally in Cernobbio, in northern Italy, where both were attending a private conference for business and political leaders. During the 50-minute meeting, they reached tentative agreement on a timetable for talks on extending Palestinian self-rule beyond Gaza and Jericho. At a news conference in Cernobbio, Peres revealed that Israeli and Palestinian delegations had held secret negotiations in Italy in June.

Italian leaders and Pope John Paul II joined Italy's Jewish community in expressing pain, sorrow, and anger at the assassination of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in November. They also expressed concern that the assassination could hamper the peace process. Jewish communities in Italy held memorial services for Rabin at their synagogues. Italian president Oscar Luigi Scalfaro flew to Israel for a visit of just a few hours to pay his respects, and Prime Minister Dini and Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli represented Italy at the funeral.

In December, Rabin's widow, Leah, met in Rome with the pope for a half-hour private audience and with the Rome Jewish community. She was guest of honor at a concert at Rome's opera house in memory of Rabin that was attended by Italy's highest dignitaries. During the memorial ceremony, parts of which were televised nationwide, President Scalfaro read a poem, "I Painted Peace," by a 13-year-old Israeli girl. After hearing the poem on TV, the directors of a music and arts academy in Naples launched a competition to set the poem to music, a "Universal Hymn of Peace." In Rome, a park was dedicated in February 1996 in Rabin's honor at a ceremony attended by Israeli ambassador Yehuda Millo (who had replaced Avi Pazner in that position), the Palestinian representative, local dignitaries, and Jewish leaders. Mrs. Rabin returned to Italy in April 1996, when she received the international Primo Levi Prize in Genoa and also accepted a posthumous award to her husband in Florence.

Foreign Minister Agnelli went to Israel in January 1996 as head of a European Union (EU) delegation, during which she met with Prime Minister Peres and with Arafat, who had just been elected president of the Palestinian Authority. In March President Scalfaro spoke at a demonstration at Rome's main synagogue to protest terrorist bombings in Israel and expressed his support for Israel.
Vatican-Israel Relations

Pope John Paul II met at his summer residence near Rome with Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat in early September 1995. Arafat thanked the pope for the Vatican's support for the Palestinian cause and discussed other topics, including the peace process and the status of Jerusalem.

John Paul reiterated condemnations of anti-Semitism on various occasions and also continued to express hope for Middle East peace. Before and during a five-day trip to Israel in December 1995, the Vatican's foreign minister, Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, reaffirmed the Vatican position that Jerusalem should be an international holy city for Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The pope also reaffirmed that position on several occasions. During Tauran's visit he met with Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert, who said he hoped that the pope would visit Jerusalem before the year 2000.

In January 1996, addressing ambassadors and representatives from more than 160 countries, the pope said he rejoiced that both the Israeli ambassador and a Palestinian representative were in attendance. He said he hoped Israelis and Palestinians would live "from now on side by side, with one another, in peace, mutual esteem and sincere cooperation." But, he said, such hope could prove "ephemeral" if a "just and adequate solution" was not found to the "particular problem of Jerusalem." He continued: "The religious and universal dimension of the holy city demands a commitment on the part of the whole international community, in order to insure that the city preserves its uniqueness and retains its living character."

Also in January, the pope met at the Vatican with Israeli minister of religious affairs Shimon Shetreet. In February he sharply condemned the suicide terrorist bombs in Israel. In April the Vatican's secretariat of state strongly condemned the Israeli shelling of a UN peacekeeping base in Lebanon, which killed more than 100 civilian refugees, and demanded that fighting in the Middle East cease. In June an olive tree brought from Israel was planted near the pope's summer residence at Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome, at a ceremony attended by Vatican, Jewish, and local dignitaries as well as Israeli representatives.

Nazi War Criminals

The Erich Priebke case was a major focus of attention in this period. Priebke, a former SS captain, was extradited to Italy in November 1995 from Argentina to face war-crimes charges relating to his involvement in the March 24, 1944, massacre of 335 civilians, including about 75 Jews. The mass execution in the Ardeatine Caves south of Rome was ordered by the Nazis in reprisal for the killing by partisans of 33 German soldiers the day before and is considered Italy's worst World War II Nazi atrocity. Priebke had escaped from a prisoner-of-war camp in
Italy after World War II and lived openly in Argentina for nearly 50 years until he was discovered there by an American TV crew in May 1994.

The 82-year-old former Nazi went on trial before a military court in Rome on May 8, 1996. In April, before the trial opened, Rome chief rabbi Elio Toaff was quoted in the Italian press as saying that, if convicted, Priebke should be put under house arrest rather than in jail. "We await a sentence that carries out justice," said Toaff, "but we don't want to act pitilessly toward a man in his 80s...." His remarks sparked controversy, including a protest by two dozen young Jews outside Toaff's home in Rome.

Priebke's trial was marked by drama and controversy. One witness for the prosecution, Karl Hass, a former SS major found to be living near Milan, tried to escape having to testify by fleeing from his hotel. He fell from a hotel balcony and broke his pelvis, and his testimony was heard from a hospital bed. During the trial, the prosecutors and lawyers for the Jewish community attempted to have the judges dismissed and the case heard before another court because of what they said was evidence of bias toward Priebke on the part of the presiding judge, Agostino Quistelli, and another member of the three-judge bench. Both attempts were rejected by an appeals court.

Anti-Semitism, Racism, Fascist Rehabilitation

The period saw continuing sporadic acts of violence and prejudice, mostly directed against Third World immigrants and Roma (Gypsies), though a 1993 law tightening controls on skinheads and racism contributed to a decrease in violent skinhead activity. There were few direct anti-Semitic incidents.

In January 1996, in an incident apparently related to the Erich Priebke case, right-wing extremists publicly honored World War II victims of antifascist resistance fighters. They placed a plaque on the very street in Rome where a partisan bomb killed 33 German soldiers on March 23, 1944, an attack the Nazis used as their pretext to massacre 335 Roman civilians the next day at the Ardeatine Caves. Skinheads and extremists also put up posters demanding freedom for Priebke.

In February militant soccer fans of the Rome team Lazio waved anti-Semitic banners at a match between Lazio and its rival AS Roma. Lazio president Dino Zoff apologized to the Rome Jewish community, saying he was "ashamed" of such behavior among fans of his team.

In a public-opinion survey issued in December 1995, 53 percent of the respondents said they would be offended if they were called a black; 47 percent would be offended to be called a Jew, and 44 percent would be offended to be called gay. Nearly 12 percent of respondents said they thought of Jews as "unpleasant." The survey was commissioned by the Italian Federation of Psychologists on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the synagogue in the northern Italian city of Casale. It included 1,050 Italians between the ages of 14 and 60.

Aside from sporadic manifestations of prejudice, Jews were also concerned
about a growing trend to reevaluate the Fascist era in a revisionist way. A researcher at the Milan-based Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation, which keeps close files on anti-Semitism and racist trends, described this process, which had been going on for several years, as the "erosion of some cultural and political taboos regarding the Fascist regime of 1922-45," in which "events, personalities and intellectuals linked to that period are increasingly being regarded in a more 'neutral' manner, even by those cultural and political forces which had previously stood in direct opposition to Fascism." This phenomenon was described as making Fascism an object of "curiosity, not simply contempt."

There were numerous indications of this, both in debate in the media and in the cultural sphere, as well as in the political arena, often linked to the activities of the right-wing National Alliance party and its drive for mainstream acceptance. In August 1995 two left-wing MPs from Mussolini's hometown of Predappio, in north-central Italy, supported by the town's left-wing mayor, presented a motion that would allocate $11 million for the restoration of Mussolini's birthplace and other sites associated with his life as tourist attractions. Predappio had long been a place of pilgrimage for right-wingers, particularly on the anniversaries of Mussolini's birth and death. The officials, however, said the plan to restore the buildings was not aimed simply at right-wing Italians nostalgic for the Fascist era, but at a broader public interested in contemporary history in general.

In September furor broke out over Rome mayor Francesco Rutelli's proposal to name a street after Giuseppe Bottai, education minister under Mussolini, who supported and co-signed the Fascist regime's 1938 anti-Semitic laws and who applied discriminatory anti-Semitic measures in schools and universities even before that legislation was officially enacted. Rutelli—who generally had excellent relations with the Jewish community—shelved the plan after sharp protests led by Rome's Jews. In a similar but less contested move, the Italian Air Force in June 1996 commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Italo Balbo, an early backer of Mussolini and air force minister from 1929 to 1933. An exhibition was held in his honor, and a bust of Balbo was unveiled outside the ministry.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

**Demography**

About 35,000 Jews lived in Italy, most of them in the country's two main cities—Rome, with 15,000 Jews, and Milan, with about 10,000. The rest were in a score of other organized communities with membership ranging from a few to just over 1,000. Only one of these communities, Naples, was south of Rome. A number of Jews lived in scattered towns and cities where there were no organized communities. About half of Italy's Jews were born in Italy; about half were immigrants who came to Italy in the past few decades, mainly from Libya and else-
where in North Africa. There were a number of Iranian Jews concentrated in Milan. The intermarriage rate was believed to be around 50 percent.

**Communal Affairs**

Italy’s Jewish communities were linked under the Rome-based umbrella organization, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI), whose leaders represented Italian Jewry on the political level. The UCEI's president, Tullia Zevi, was one of the most prominent women in Italy.

There was an increasing interest in Jewish clubs, courses, and social activities to expand Jewish knowledge. In Rome, the Jewish Community Center II Pitigliani offered a particularly wide range of activities. At the end of April 1996 the Cultural Assistance Department of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities held “Moked,” its third annual spring convention focusing on Jewish culture and education. The four-day meeting featured sessions on religious observance, Talmud, Halakham, and other topics, as well as on navigating Jewish Internet sites, aspects of Jewish history, and social issues. Some 675 people attended a one-day seminar on “Jews and Society” held as part of Moked, and there was plenty of time for social activities, sports, and strictly kosher dining.

Numerous Jewish organizations of all types operated. These included WIZO, ORT, Hashomer Hatzair, Keren Hayesod-Hamagbith, Keren Kayemeth L’Israel, the Union of Young Zionists, the Italian Jewish Youth Federation, the Italian Sephardic Federation, and the Martin Buber—Jews for Peace group, a politically active organization of mainly young adults.

Italian Jewish communities were increasingly active in international and interregional activities linking Italian Jews with Jews in other countries in Europe as well as with Israel. Many of these activities were coordinated through the European Council of Jewish Communities (ECJC), which served as a clearinghouse for information. The Jewish communities of Rome and Milan were part of an ECJC Mediterranean Region cooperation group, which linked communities in France, Greece, Spain, Morocco, and Portugal as well as Italy. The Milan and Venice communities also were part of the ECJC's Central European cooperation group linking communities in Bratislava, Budapest, Milan, Munich, Prague, Venice, Vienna, Zagreb, and Zurich. Among cooperation-group events organized in Italy were a singles week in Florence the first week of September, a seminar of Jewish school principals in Milan in May, and a car rally from Barcelona to Rome in July. Jews from Italy traveled to other communities in their cooperation groups for other events, including a regional senior-citizens meeting in Cannes at the beginning of December, at which older Jews spent a week sightseeing, socializing, and visiting local Jewish communities.

Fifteen senior lay leaders (presidents and vice-presidents) from 11 Jewish communities held a seminar in Venice at the end of January, organized by the European Center for Jewish Leadership, Le’atid Europe. This pan-European agency
for Jewish voluntary and professional leaders provides targeted training to encourage strategic planning for the future of Jewish communities and creativity and innovation in communal management.

A more militant Jewish identity appeared to be emerging, noticeably among younger members. Younger Jews, particularly in Rome, took an increasingly open stand on issues, organizing several demonstrations. In April 1996 the Union of Young Jews in Italy, an umbrella group representing Jewish youth organizations, organized a demonstration outside the Polish embassy to protest a march by skinheads at Auschwitz. The demonstration took place less than a day after unknown assailants attempted to firebomb the Polish embassy's commercial offices. Young Jews from Italy traveled frequently to Albania to help in the revival of the tiny Jewish community there after half a century of suppression.

Religion

The religious orientation of Italian Jews is Orthodox, though most are not strictly observant. Three types of rites are celebrated: Sephardic, Ashkenazic, and Italian—the latter a local rite that evolved from the Jewish community that lived in Italy before the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Chabad Hassidim had a presence in Italy, most visibly in Milan, but Italy had few ultra-Orthodox among its Jews. Nonetheless, Jews in cities as diverse as Rome, Milan, and Venice described a growing trend toward more strict observance among members of their communities.

In Florence, Rabbi Mordechai Goldstein, a haredi who was born in Italy but educated in Israel, alienated the community when he tried to introduce ultra-Orthodox practice, including the separation of boys and girls in Hebrew school and Jewish youth club activities. Goldstein took up the post of Florence rabbi in May 1995 and by November had come into such conflict with the community that he abruptly quit. The last straw in the conflict was his refusal to take part in a memorial gathering for Yitzhak Rabin. Goldstein said it was "not right" to speak out and refused to reply to criticism of his attitude.

Jewish-Catholic and Jewish-Muslim Relations

On his four-day trip to the United States in October 1995, the pope met with two dozen Jewish leaders at the home of John Cardinal O'Connor in New York. Various conferences and meetings on religious dialogue took place during the year, such as a gathering in Rome in December 1995 called "The Voices of the Heart: Different Religions for a Common Peace," in which Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and representatives of other faiths took part. In addition, a Jewish choir and a gospel choir performed, and there was a performance of Jewish and Hindu dancing. The same month, a conference on "Monotheism and Conflict: Ways to Prevent and Resolve Conflicts Among the Monotheistic Reli-
gions of the Mediterranean” took place in Naples, bringing together Italian and international scholars of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. A delegation of B'nai B'rith International, headed by the organization’s president, Tommy Baer, visited Italy March 10–11, 1996, and had an audience with the pope. In April Chief Rabbi Toaff and other Jewish representatives met with the pope at the Vatican in a ceremony celebrating the tenth anniversary of the pope’s historic visit to Rome’s main synagogue. The pope hailed a “new spirit of friendship” between Jews and Roman Catholics.

Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Jewish Communities in Italy, also held the post of vice-president of the World Jewish Congress, dealing with relations with other religions. In this capacity, she had numerous meetings with Christian and Muslim representatives in Italy and elsewhere. At the end of April, she accompanied 400 students from private Catholic high schools in Italy on a pilgrimage to Auschwitz — the first such initiative to take place among Italian Catholic students.

Culture

There were numerous exhibitions, conferences, seminars, and other cultural events on Jewish themes and of Jewish interest throughout this period in Rome, Milan, Turin, and smaller towns and cities all over Italy. This reflected a growing interest in Jewish culture, traditions, and history among Jews and non-Jews alike. In particular, great interest was shown in Yiddish and other aspects of East-European Jewish life. What follows is only a sample showing the diversity of the offerings.


An exhibition on “The Art of Freedom” opened in Genoa in November, presenting 300 paintings, sculptures, and drawings showing how artists between 1925 and 1945 expressed their opposition to Fascism and Nazism. In Rome, in December, there were two conferences of interest: one on “Wine in the Three Great Monotheistic Cultures”; the other to mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ernesto Nathan, a Jew who was mayor of Rome from 1907 to 1914.

A major exhibition entitled “La menzogna della razza” (The Race Lie) opened March 1, 1996, in Rome’s Museum of Folklore. It presented Fascist-era documents and images of racism and anti-Semitism, including posters, comic strips, books, postcards, photographs, diaries, film clips, and sound recordings. Rome mayor Rutelli and Jewish leaders attended the opening. On the same day, Rutelli and Jewish leaders attended a ceremony at Rome’s city hall, the Campidoglio, to unveil a plaque commemorating city-hall workers who were fired because of the
Fascist anti-Semitic laws. From February 19 to March 2, the Braidense Library in Milan hosted an exhibit on Yiddish in Italy—a collection of rare manuscripts and printed works in Yiddish produced in Italy in the 16th and 17th centuries.

In February the Israeli embassy sponsored a lecture by Hebrew University scholar Ahuva Passov on “The Relationship Between Jewish Heritage and Christian Culture in Figurative Art.” In April a conference on “Shoah, Deportations and Ethnic Cleansing” took place in Turin, and another conference on “After Auschwitz: Didactics of Deportation and Extermination” took place in Rome.

The Hungarian Academy, the Polish Cultural Institute, and the Israeli embassy organized an international conference on “The Jewish Question in Post-Communist Europe,” held at the Hungarian Academy in Rome in May 1996. It was inspired by the book Ebrei invisibili (Invisible Jews), by Italian writers Gabriele Eschkenazi and Gabriele Nissim. The conference participants included scholars and researchers from Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Israel. A panel discussion on the book was also sponsored by the Jewish Culture Center in Rome in February. Also in May, representatives from various European countries took part in a conference on “Jewish Museums in Europe: Orientation and Perspectives,” held in Bologna.

In Rome, the Jewish Community Center and Jewish Culture Center sponsored various cultural events each month, including concerts, plays, and exhibits, and there were cultural programs on Jewish themes in other venues as well. Moni Ovadia, a Bulgarian-born performer who was raised in Milan, had great success in the fall of 1995 with his stage presentation Dybbuk, based on the play by S. Ansky and the poem “Cry of the Murdered Jewish People” by Itzhak Katzenelson. The play, much of which was performed in Yiddish, drew rave reviews and thousands of spectators in theaters all around Italy. Ovadia performed Dybbuk and a one-man show, “Why Not?” in November 1995 at the first Festival of Jewish Culture to be presented in Venice. The weeklong festival featured a mix of film, performance, lectures, and exhibits and drew standing-room audiences to most of its major events.

In April 1996 the Polish embassy in Rome sponsored a concert of Yiddish songs by Golda Tencer, an actress at the Yiddish Theater in Warsaw. The same month, the New York-based Klezmatics drew enthusiastic audiences with their first full tour of Italy. (The group had performed one or two isolated concerts in the past.) The tour was believed to be the first full Italian tour by a well-known klezmer group. In Florence, the Klezmatics were joined onstage by a local klezmer group, the Klezmer Clowns, which was playing its first concert. A klezmer group called the Roym Klezmorim was also newly formed in Rome.

**Publications**

Principal Jewish periodicals included Shalom, the monthly magazine of the Rome Jewish community; the Bollettino of the Milan Jewish community; Ha Ke-
hillah, the newsletter of the Turin Jewish community; and Rassegna Mensile d'Israele, an intellectual and literary monthly published in Rome. Mainstream newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals in Italy also published articles on Jewish topics throughout the year, particularly on aspects of Jewish culture. Radio and television regularly broadcast programs of Jewish interest and on Jewish themes.

Well over 100 books of Jewish interest were published in Italy in 1995–96. Notable new works included L'identità salvata: Gli ebrei di Roma tra fede e nazione 1870–1938 (Rescued Identity: The Jews of Rome Between Faith and Nation 1870–1938) by S. Caviglia; La yidishe mame (The Yiddishe Mamma) by Rachel Monika Herweg; Hannah Arendt e Martin Heidegger by Elzbieta Ettinger; Quattrocento domande a un vecchio ebreo triestino (Four Hundred Questions to an Old Jew from Trieste) by Giorgio Voghera and Renzo Cigoi; Gli Occhi Colore del Tempo (Eyes the Color of Time) by Sergio Astrologo; Israel: una pace in guerra (Israel: A Peace in War) by Fiamma Nirenstein; Atlante storico del popolo ebraico (Historical Atlas of the Jewish People), edited by Eli Barnavi; La Mia Haggada, a haggadah for children, edited by Lolita Guakil and illustrated by Lia Frassineti.

**Personalia**

Fiamma Nirenstein, well-known journalist and former director of the Italian Culture Center in Israel, in December 1995 won the Premiolino Journalism Award for her articles in the newspaper La Stampa.

In March 1996 Israeli ambassador Yehudah Millo awarded the Righteous Gentile medal posthumously to Rev. Antonio Dressino, the priest of a church in Rome who hid Jews during World War II in a secret space under the roof of the church. The award was also granted to Pietro Lestini and his daughter Giuliana, Catholic activists who founded a resistance organization that hid Jews during the Nazi occupation of Rome.

Several prominent Italian Jews died in the period under review. Ugo Stille, a leading journalist and former editor of the newspaper Corriere della Sera, died in June 1995. Stille was a Russian Jew who first sought refuge in Italy, then emigrated to the United States because of the Italian Fascist-era anti-Semitic laws, and later returned to Italy. Adriana Pincherle, a painter and sister of the late writer Alberto Moravia, died in Florence in January 1996 at the age of 90. Her father came from a noted Jewish family, but her mother was not Jewish. The chief rabbi of Ancona, Rabbi Tagliacozzo, died in April. A non-Jewish scholar, Renzo de Felice, a leading Italian historian of the Fascist era and of Jewish history, died in Rome in May.