In January, Peter Mandelson, Prime Minister Tony Blair's friend and political mentor, resigned for the second time, again because he concealed his dealings with a wealthy man. Despite predictions of trouble for a Labor government facing an imminent election, the party and the government emerged virtually unscathed.

Chancellor Gordon Brown's budget, presented in March, which proposed modest tax cuts and increased spending for such purposes as the National Health Service, public transportation, and education, created a favorable atmosphere: the chancellor earned higher approval ratings than any of his postwar predecessors, and half the electorate thought Labor the party most able to cope with economic difficulties (the opposition Conservatives scored only 31 percent on the economy).

The general election, held in May, confirmed this assessment. Labor once again won overwhelmingly, with 413 seats against 166 for the Conservatives and 52 for the Liberal Democrats. Despite its victory, Labor was not as popular as the bare election results suggested, as the two leading opposition parties attracted 50 percent of the votes cast, as against 40.8 percent for Labor. Only the vagaries of the voting system secured Labor its large overall majority of seats. An immediate result of the election was the resignation of Tory leader William Hague, precipitating an election for new party leadership that brought the relatively unknown Iain Duncan Smith to office as head of the opposition. At the end of the year neither the new Conservative leader nor his shadow cabinet had made much of an impact.

Labor received credit for the performance of the economy. Inflation hovered around the targeted level of 2.5 percent; interest rates were down to 4 percent; and consumption was up. Economic growth was forecast at
2.25 percent—the lowest since the government took office, but still the highest among the Group of Seven. This success, however, only reinforced the government's persistent dilemma over setting the date for a referendum on entry into the single-currency system. Labor itself was divided on the matter, and the electorate was hostile.

**Israel and the Middle East**

Great Britain remained committed to the Middle East peace process. In February, after President George Bush took office in the U.S. and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in Israel, a Downing Street spokesman said that Prime Minister Blair was ready to work with all concerned parties. In October, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw spoke against any separate British or European initiative, insisting that it was essential for the European Union to work closely with Washington.

As violence escalated in the Middle East, Britain urged the Palestinians to do everything possible to halt extremism and curb violence, Israel to refrain from escalating matters and to keep its response to Palestinian attacks proportionate, and both sides to exercise restraint. But as the year wore on, and especially in September and October, British condemnation of Israeli retaliation grew harsher. By year's end, however, the British had veered back again to follow the American lead, placing most of the blame for the situation on the Palestinians.

In April, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook called on Israelis and Palestinians to resume security cooperation: the Israeli government should ease restrictions on the occupied territories, "which only fuel bitterness and resentment." That same month Cook endorsed U.S. criticism of Israel's response to Palestinian mortar fire from Gaza. Whitehall understood Israel's anger, Cook told Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres, but was "disappointed and concerned" about the demolition of Palestinian homes and the departure from Sharon's initial determination to hit only military installations. Then in May, Blair and Cook expressed concern at Israel's use of F-16 aircraft to hit back at the Palestinians for a suicide bombing in Netanya, and also called on the Palestinians to stop such violence. The situation, said Blair in a radio interview, was "more worrying than for some years."

The July appointments of Jack Straw as foreign secretary, Ben Bradshaw as Middle East minister, and Phyllis Starkey—chair of the all-party British-Palestinian parliamentary group—as parliamentary private secretary heralded a harder line toward Israel. In July, Straw accused
Israel of acting “provocatively” by destroying Palestinian homes in Jerusalem and Rafah in Gaza. He disappointed Israelis by failing to mention, at the same time, Palestinian violations of the cease-fire, though Straw did agree that month to a three-day mission by Blair’s special envoy Lord Levy to impress on Israeli and Palestinian leaders the need to do everything possible to consolidate the cease-fire. Also in July, Bradshaw described Israel’s missile attack on Nablus, which killed six senior Hamas members and two boys, as “wrong and illegal under international law.” Britain, he went on, could not accept “targeted assassination of Palestinian militants.” Returning from a Middle East fact-finding mission in August, Bradshaw said that Israel must stop insisting on a total cessation of violence before agreeing to negotiations, and suggested that Britain would seriously consider contributing personnel to an international observer force. Condemning the suicide bomb that killed 15 Israelis in the crowded Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem the same month, Bradshaw angered Israelis and British Jews with his comment that the tragedy underlined “the futility of the course on which the parties were headed.” “It is witheringly pathetic,” Israeli embassy spokesman D.J. Schneeweiss told the Jewish Chronicle, “that the Foreign Office cannot bring itself in public to acknowledge who are the perpetrators, who the victims.”

In August, too, Straw described Israel’s incursion into the West Bank village of Beit Jala, from which Palestinian gunmen bombarded Jerusalem’s Gilo neighborhood, as “excessive, disproportionate, and threatening to stoke the cycle of violence.” He demanded an immediate Israeli withdrawal. At the same time, Straw called on Israel to freeze all settlements, including the “natural growth” of existing settlements. In September, after Israeli tanks rolled into Jenin and Jericho on the West Bank following the shooting of an Israeli woman, Britain demanded that Israel withdraw its forces.

Following the events of September 11, Straw acknowledged that Israel was suffering the “most terrible terrorism” by extremist groups, and Blair called on the Muslim and Arab world to make “defeating this barbarism” a common cause. It was, he said, more important than ever to keep the Middle East peace process alive. However, the Iranian press quoted Straw, visiting there at the time, as suggesting that Israeli policy toward the Palestinians helped breed terrorism, and this angered Israelis. When Straw arrived in Israel, Prime Minister Sharon canceled a scheduled meeting with him, and only Blair’s intervention made Sharon change his mind. Plans for a state dinner in Straw’s honor, hosted by Foreign Minister Peres, were dropped. In Great Britain, Labor Friends of Israel (LFI)
called for an urgent meeting with Straw over the apparent “shift in policy”; “it seems the Arabists are in full control of the Foreign Office,” an LFI spokesman commented.

Blair quickly assumed a pivotal role in organizing the war against terrorism. He held largely fruitless discussions in Damascus, where he urged Syria’s president Bashar al-Assad to cease supporting terrorist groups, before proceeding to Saudi Arabia and Israel. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Straw said that the violence in Israel and the territories had the effect of weakening Islamic support for the battle against Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. In answer to questions in the House of Commons, he demanded “a 100 percent effort” from Arafat to halt violence by Palestinian militants, while calling on Israel to halt its West Bank incursions, stop “extrajudicial killings,” and “exercise proper respect for human rights.”

Jewish political and communal figures voiced concern that British Jewry and Israel could become isolated as the government courted British Muslims to ensure their support for the Afghanistan war. However, a ten-member delegation of leading Jews that met with Blair in Downing Street was completely satisfied with the prime minister’s assurance that his government remained supportive of both Israeli and Jewish community concerns. But certain elements outside the government took a “blame Israel” stand. Two influential newspapers, the Guardian and the Evening Standard, gave considerable space to critics of the Jewish state. In October, the Leicester National Union of Teachers distributed leaflets calling for a boycott of Israeli goods. Then, during Christmas shopping season, Selfridges, a top department store, bowed to demonstrators from the Boycott Israeli Goods campaign and stopped selling products manufactured in the West Bank, the Golan, and Gaza, purportedly so as to prevent anti-Israel leafleting and picketing from inconveniencing customers. The store reversed course and allowed the sales of such items again, with an apology, on January 2, 2002.

In October, Straw in the House of Commons and Blair at the Labor Party’s conference reiterated Britain’s commitment to an independent “viable Palestinian state” living peacefully alongside Israel. Blair told Yasir Arafat in London that month that the murder of Israeli cabinet minister Rehavam Ze’evi “refocuses the need to get the peace process moving again.” The theme was reiterated at the Lord Mayor’s banquet in London’s Guildhall in November, where Blair said that after the Palestinian Authority acted against suspected terrorists and Israel withdrew from areas ceded to Palestinian control under previous accords, the international community should resume “proper negotiations” toward a
Palestinian state side-by-side with a State of Israel that was accepted fully by its Arab neighbors.

By the end of the year, British policy had come full circle. Blair and Straw joined President Bush in condemning the suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Haifa, barely criticizing Israeli retaliation. Straw reported to the Commons that he had told Arafat it was “imperative” for the Palestinian Authority to take action against people connected with organizations like Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which claimed responsibility for the attacks. Arafat, he said, should not just arrest and release them, but detain them securely.

In December, Blair said that ties between Britain and Iran would not progress unless Iran ceased supporting terrorism. Officials in Tehran called his remarks “irresponsible” and registered an official protest to the British embassy. Also in December, Britain’s ambassador in Lebanon called on Hezballah to halt its terrorist activities.

The British Jewish community was hardly monolithic in its support of Israel. On November 1, a predominantly Jewish audience in London, assembled under the banner of “Just Peace,” applauded the remarks of pro-Palestinian speakers, among them actress Vanessa Redgrave and the Palestinian envoy to Great Britain. In December, Rabbi David Goldberg of St. John’s Wood Liberal Synagogue joined Christian and Muslim colleagues in a public letter accusing Israel of practicing a system that “resembles apartheid.”

Anti-Semitism and Racism

The number of reported anti-Semitic incidents rose steeply, from 270 in 1999 to 405 in 2000, according to the Community Security Trust (CST) annual report published in January 2001. While most of the cases involved abusive behavior and damage to property, 51 were physical attacks, including two attempted murders. The figures were “clearly worrying,” said CST spokesman Mike Whine, who suggested that they represented a spillover effect of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. As in 1999, about 30 percent of the incidents took place in Manchester.

The CST report noted a drop in cases of distribution of anti-Semitic literature, reflecting both the death of Lady Birdwood, a leading publisher of such material, as well as the success of legal prosecutions. In March 2001, more than 100 people suspected of hate crimes were arrested in dawn raids across London as part of the metropolitan police’s “march against hate” initiative. Muslims picketed Brent Town Hall in April, when
Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks was conducting a celebration of Israeli Independence Day there; police refused to take action when called to the scene, saying, "they'll go away in an hour." In October, the director of public prosecutions decided not to press charges against five men arrested a year earlier for allegedly distributing anti-Semitic literature in Stamford Hill, North London. When the Board of Deputies of British Jews asked the attorney general for an explanation, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) responded that the material was unlikely to cause civil unrest since it was distributed only in one neighborhood and targeted only the Jewish community. In December, the Board of Deputies condemned the CPS's failure to enforce the laws against race hatred, vice president Henry Greenwood charging: "There were clear cases of incitement to racial hatred investigated by the police but not prosecuted."

In a spring by-election for the local council in Newham, East London, the extreme right-wing British National Party (BNP) gained 17 percent of the vote on a low turnout, pushing the Conservatives into third place. Prior to the general election in June, the leaders of Britain's five main political parties signed a pledge to keep racism out of their campaigns. The BNP and the National Front (NF), which had not signed the pledge, contested 42 seats and won a total 50,211 votes—3.34 percent of the poll, their highest percentage since 1974. To use the previous national election as a basis for comparison, in 1997, though fighting twice as many constituencies, they had together polled only 49,750 votes.

A particularly sensitive area was Oldham (Lancashire). In March, police banned a planned NF demonstration there after protests by the Black/Jewish Forum and Oldham Action Against Racism; then in June, Asian and white groups clashed in serious riots. BNP chairman Nick Griffin, candidate for Oldham West and Royton, received 6,552 votes, or 16 percent, beating out the Liberal Democrat for third place. The successful Labor candidate, Minister of the Environment Michael Meacher, called for an independent investigation into the BNP's high vote. In Ilford South, pro-Israel Labor MP Mike Gapes retained his seat, but police had to be called twice on election day when groups of youths menaced his supporters. After the election, Special Branch detectives investigated the role of Islamic extremists in organizing the anti-Gapes activities. An electoral commission was formed in September to investigate a claim that the BNP received illegal funds from the American Friends of BNP.

According to the provisions of antiterrorism legislation adopted in February, British-based organizations that incited and supported terror-
ism abroad were liable to prosecution. The government, said Foreign Secretary Straw, was determined to insure that Great Britain was “not used as a base for the perpetration and planning of terrorism overseas.” A draft list of 21 terrorist groups the Home Office wanted to ban, subject to parliamentary approval, included Islamic Jihad, the military wing of Hezballah, the Armed Islamic Group, and the Abu Nidal organization. Straw cautioned that although these organizations had Islamic or Palestinian connections, the list should not be construed as an attack on the Muslim community.

In February, the Oxford Union, the famed debating society, voted 190-186 “that Israel’s problems are of its own making.” In May, pressure from dons and students persuaded the union to cancel an invitation to Holocaust denier David Irving, who was scheduled to participate in a debate on freedom of speech. There was more bad news for Irving in July, when three Appeal Court judges rejected his appeal against the verdict of his failed libel action against historian Deborah Lipstadt and her book Denying the Holocaust (see AJYB 2001, p. 310).

During the summer, the Board of Deputies spearheaded an extensive campaign to prevent the UN’s Durban conference on racism from becoming a platform for attacking Israel and Zionism (see above, pp. 85–111). Chief Rabbi Sacks participated in London talks organized by Jordan’s Prince Hassan aimed at amending the conference’s draft declaration. “If it goes ahead in its present form,” said Sacks—who did not attend the conference because of “grave concern” about language relating to Israel—“it will injure the fight against racism and damage the moral authority of the UN.”

In October, Home Secretary David Blunkett stated that the government would seek permission to appeal a High Court decision to lift the ban on U.S. black separatist Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, who had been refused entry to Britain since 1986 because of his outspoken attacks on Jews and other groups.

That same month, Blunkett announced new measures for asylum seekers, including phasing out the controversial system whereby the newcomers received benefits in the form of vouchers for the purchase of specific items, rather than cash. He advocated building new facilities for accommodating the newcomers, and giving them lessons in English and citizenship. In December, Edie Friedman, director of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality, welcomed new legislation in the area of race relations that required public authorities to monitor the ethnic background
of employees and to publish detailed programs for achieving racial equal-
ity on their staffs.

On September 23, more than 2,000 people gathered at a mass rally in
the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in central London, organized by most of
the major Jewish communal bodies to show solidarity with the United
States and Israel in the wake of September 11. Expressions of horror and
condolence came from virtually all sectors of British society. The Mus-
lim Council of Britain condemned the attacks, and the principal of the
Muslim College stood together with the chief rabbi and Christian lead-
ers on the steps of Lambeth Palace, where the archbishop of Canterbury
read a joint statement of outrage.

As early as July, Scotland Yard's head of special operations had warned
the Jewish community that it faced threats both from far-right groups and
Islamic fundamentalists, particularly young Muslim radicals, and after
September 11 the authorities treated a series of assaults in London and
Manchester as racist attacks. The CST reported 39 anti-Jewish incidents
in September alone, 50 percent more than in September 2000. In Octo-
ber, swastikas were daubed on 65 gravestones in the Birmingham Jewish
cemetery, and "C18," the abbreviation of the name of a neo-Nazi group,
was written on the wall of the cemetery prayer hall. Four Jewish institu-
tions had to be evacuated due to anthrax hoaxes.

The Union of Jewish Students campaign officer reported increased
anti-Israel activity on campuses. The government instructed the police to
conduct a "wide-ranging" investigation into the activities of the anti-
Israel and anti-Western organization Al-Muhajiroun and its London-
based leader Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed; the National Union of Stu-
dents, in pursuance of its "no platform for racism" policy, had already
banned the group from campuses in March. On November 4, Chief Rabbi
Sacks publicly warned that Islamic extremists could very well reawaken
the kind of anti-Semitism that led to the Holocaust. Both he and the
Board of Deputies refused to sign a pledge of tolerance to mark Islam
Awareness Week, and two rabbis who did sign the pledge later regretted
it when the sponsoring organization, the Islamic Society of Britain, was
discovered to have distributed anti-Israel leaflets. In December, the Char-
ity Commission was looking into the activities of eight charities sus-
pected of having terrorist links.

Legislation introducing a range of new policies to combat terrorism,
including allowing the government to detain suspected terrorists without
trial, became law in December after the House of Lords forced the gov-
ernment to drop a clause extending the law on inciting racial hatred to include religious hatred as well.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

Almost 2,000 people attended Britain's main Holocaust Memorial Day event at Westminster's Central Hall in January. They included Prince Charles, leaders of the three main political parties, Holocaust survivors, prominent clergy, diplomats, and representatives of the Jewish and general communities. The Muslim Council of Britain turned down an invitation to attend because of what it called "genocide" in Israel and the Palestinian territories. In February, the extremist Muslim group Al-Muhajiroun issued a statement claiming that Holocaust Memorial Day was part of a Zionist campaign "to ensure the myth of the Holocaust was kept alive."

In July, the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded non-Jewish brothers, Drs. James and Stephen Smith, a grant of £314,000 to help meet the growing demand for the educational services of their Beth Shalom Holocaust Center.

There were a number of developments in regard to Holocaust-era looted artworks. In January, the Department of Culture's spoliation advisory panel recommended that the government pay £125,000 to compensate a London family for the painting *View of Hampton Court* by Jan Griffier the Elder. Sold for a pittance by a women hiding from the Nazis, it was later brought to Britain and had been displayed at the Tate Gallery since 1961. In April, drawings by Max Klinger taken by the Nazis from the family of a German Jewish art collector brought his heirs more than £360,000 at a Sotheby's auction. And through the efforts of the World Jewish Congress Commission for Art Recovery, the Kirstein collection was reclaimed from a Leipzig museum. Art collector and painter Gustav Kirstein died in Germany in 1934, his wife committed suicide when the Nazis would not let her leave the country in 1939, and his daughters fled to Great Britain.

Home Office minister Barbara Roche informed the House of Commons in January that the metropolitan police were investigating claims that Ukrainian members of the Galitzian Waffen-SS division, involved in the murder of thousands of Jews and others in Eastern Europe, were living in Britain. In March, Home Secretary Jack Straw released to Scotland Yard the individual records of these men, waiving the usual 100-year confidentiality rule.
Anton Gecas, an 85-year-old Edinburgh guest-house owner and alleged Nazi war criminal, died in a Scottish hospital in September. Back in March, the Lithuanian government had handed the British embassy in Vilnius a warrant for Gecas’s extradition to face genocide charges, and in July the Scottish authorities issued a warrant for his arrest. But Gecas suffered a stroke in May, and by August was already gravely ill

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The number of marriages under Jewish religious auspices declined from 1,017 in 1999 to 907 in 2000, according to statistics issued by the community research unit of the Board of Deputies. The Sephardi and Liberal sectors registered small gains, but Orthodox marriages were down by 57 and Reform by 40. The number of gittin (religious divorces) completed in 2000 rose to 268 from 259 in 1999.

Statistics based on figures for circumcision showed Jewish births in 1999 at 2,509, down from 2,673 in 1998, while burials and cremations under Jewish religious auspices rose from 3,772 in 1999 to 3,791 in 2000. Seven out of ten burials and cremations in 2000 were in Greater London, and three-quarters were Orthodox.

The religious courts of the Reform Synagogue of Great Britain (RSGB) reported accepting 112 proselytes in 2001 as compared with 97 in 2000.

Communal Affairs

Jewish Care, Anglo-Jewry’s largest social-services organization, announced plans in February to set up support groups for families of young Jews with drug or alcohol problems. This was in response to a report, based on 1994 British addiction figures, that estimated some 14,000 Jewish addicts in Great Britain. Previously it had been assumed that the Jewish community was immune to such problems. In April, Jewish Care added a twelfth residential home for the elderly, Rosetrees, with 55 beds.

In March, the Heritage Lottery Fund granted Norwood-Ravenswood, the largest Jewish family-services organization, more than £15,000 to help preserve historic records dating back over three centuries. In August, Norwood-Ravenswood was selected over eight other voluntary adoption
services to run a new adoption register for England and Wales, designed to match adoptees with suitable parents. Norwood-Ravenswood was “flexible and dynamic in its approach,” said Health Minister Jacqui Smith, and was therefore “the most cost-effective and efficient organization to run the register for us.”

Ignoring protests and rejecting an offer of £150,000 from an anonymous donor, the Board of Deputies offered for auction a manuscript suppressed for nearly a century for fear of sparking anti-Semitism: “Human Sacrifice among the Sephardim or Eastern Jews,” completed in 1877 by Sir Richard Burton, orientalist, explorer, and diplomat. But it failed to meet the £150,000 reserve price at Christie’s July auction, and it was subsequently sold to an unidentified buyer.

In October, with the rent on its Holborn premises having quadrupled, the Board of Deputies bought new premises, a Georgian house in London’s Bloomsbury Square, once home to Benjamin Disraeli’s father.

Religion

The year ended unhappily for the United Synagogue (US) when the trial of three US cemetery employees accused of conspiring to defraud it of some £1.7 million collapsed in November. Judge George Bathurst-Norman told the jury at Southwark Crown Court, South London, that the US had “shown an approach to the prosecution of its former employees so casual as to offend the very name of justice,” citing the US’s alleged failure to provide certain documents. The accused, along with seven other individuals, were charged with submitting false or inflated invoices purporting to cover the cost of goods and services at Waltham Abbey and East Ham cemeteries between December 1994 and October 1998. The alleged fraud was discovered after a financial review by the accounting firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers revealed that the cost of running Waltham Abbey in 1997 was seven times higher than that of the larger Bushey cemetery. While in April 2001, before the trial, the Charity Commission said it was satisfied that the US had set up the tighter financial controls the accountants recommended to prevent such losses, in December the commission decided on a further investigation focusing on Judge Bathurst-Norman’s comments. In December, too, former Waltham Abbey cemetery attendant Paul Nathan, found not guilty on the direction of the judge, stated that he was suing the US for racial discrimination, malicious process, malicious prosecution, and intimidation.
The year 2001 had seemed to promise better things for the US. In March, the sale of returned books stolen from the Bet Din library by former dayan (religious judge) Rabbi Casriel Kaplin netted the US some £75,000. Buyers included the library of Leo Baeck College, which, in October, held an exhibition of rare volumes acquired from the Bet Din. Sales of books and other assets over the previous five years enabled the US to solve its decade-long pension dispute by paying £2.55 million into the pension plan prior to winding it up, an arrangement which the High Court approved in March. “We have removed an albatross from around our necks,” US president Peter Sheldon told the Jewish Chronicle. In July, Sheldon reported steady progress toward eliminating a “crippling deficit,” but a major campaign was launched in November to raise funds to support core US activities, including educational and welfare services that could not be funded from membership fees alone. That same month the US launched a “Kehillah Community” project, with a £500,000 budget, for young people in Wembley.

In February, US bylaws were changed to allow women to serve as vice chairs and financial representatives of synagogues, so long as men remained the majority on the executive. In May, 36-year-old Rabbi Yonason Abraham was appointed a full dayan on the London Bet Din. In July, Rabbi Saul Zneimer became chief executive of the US. In September, Hammersmith and West Kensington synagogue, founded more than a century before, closed due to rapidly falling membership. In November, the US announced that a new community in Shenley, Hertfordshire, would become its 65th congregation in January 2002.

Activity on behalf of agunot, women whose husbands refused to give them religious divorces, continued throughout the year. In January, the Federation of Zionist Youth launched a campaign to raise the profile of this issue, which, it said, “bothers Jewish youth.” Indicating that some progress had been made, in June the Agunah Campaign wound down its support group, Agunot Anonymous, since many of the women in the group had managed to obtain their religious divorces. In July, the Jewish Marriage Council launched “Get Information Advice,” an educational pilot project to complement its existing advisory service. The same month, a demonstration, organized by the Agunah Campaign and endorsed by the Bet Din, took place outside the Golders Green home of a man who had denied his wife a Jewish divorce for more than 40 years. Parliamentary activity continued as well. Although a private member’s bill permitting judges to withhold a civil divorce in the absence of a religious divorce
was blocked in the House of Commons in February, a new bill to the same effect proposed in July raised hopes when it passed the committee stage of the House of Commons in November.

Alan Finlay, the new president of the Federation of Synagogues—which is more strictly Orthodox than the US—announced in June that three new synagogues had joined over the previous two years, including Beth Midrash Netzach Israel in Golders Green, North-West London, the federation’s first Sephardi constituent member. Bevis Marks, Britain’s oldest surviving synagogue, celebrated its tercentenary in July with an exhibition at the Jewish Museum about Sephardi Jewry. In October, archaeologists discovered a 13th-century mikveh (ritual bath) in the City of London.

Britain’s Masorti movement (similar to Conservative Judaism in America) had nine congregations and 2,700 adult members in 2001, according to official estimates. In April, the oldest and most traditional Masorti congregation, the New London Synagogue, introduced alternative High Holy Day services with mixed seating and a greater role for women. In September, Edgware’s Kol Nefesh community, which broke away from Edgware Masorti in April 2000 so as to enhance the participation of women in the service, appointed its first part-time rabbi.

In August, Leo Baeck College, the seminary of Progressive Judaism, announced that new rabbinical students receiving scholarships would be asked to commit themselves to work for five years in the movement. This rule was apparently triggered by the decision of two recent graduates to take positions with Masorti congregations.

In January, the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain (RSGB), running a serious deficit, made cuts in its cultural program “Living Judaism,” which was aimed at boosting the profile of Reform and increasing participation in synagogue life. In April, however, the movement launched its first national adult-education project, “A Community of Learners.” In June, Rabbi Jacqueline Tabbick became RSGB’s first woman vice president. In October, the chief rabbi recommended the appointment of Rabbi Dr. Albert Friedlander as the first Progressive Jewish president of the Council of Christians and Jews, which had five Christian and one Jewish president.

Education

The government showed considerable interest in Jewish day schools. In March, Education Secretary David Blunkett expressed government sup-
port for Jewish schools, noting that since Labor came to power five of the schools had become state-aided. In May, in the run-up to the general election, both Labor and the Conservatives pledged support for state-aided Jewish schools. "Our recent proposals for the reform of secondary education emphasized the proven benefits of faith-based schools," Prime Minister Blair told the Jewish Chronicle. However in December, a Home Office-sponsored report on the summer race riots in Bradford and Oldham suggested that religiously affiliated schools posed "a significant problem" in already divided communities. Jewish educators and the government both rejected its recommendation that 25 percent of places in these schools be offered to children of different faiths.

Within the community, two publications studied the phenomenon of burgeoning enrollments at Jewish day schools at a time of declining Jewish population — 51 percent of Anglo-Jewry's children aged 5–17 attended such schools in 1999, as compared to 30 percent in 1992. In July, the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) published The Future of Jewish Schooling in the United Kingdom: A strategic assessment of faith-based provision of primary and secondary school education by Oliver Valins, Barry Kosmin, and Jacqueline Goldberg, the fourth part of JPR's "Long-Term Planning for British Jewry" project. In October, the Board of Deputies Community Research Unit produced Jewish Education at the Crossroads by Rona Hart, Marlena Schmool, and Frances Cohen.

In March, the United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA) published The Next Horizon, a three-year plan for Jewish renewal in Britain, including suggestions for helping young people save toward the cost of trips to Israel, scholarships for students taking degrees in Jewish studies, developing arts and cultural programs, and education for lay leadership. In all, the report set more than 100 practical targets. "Whereas Jewish Continuity [UJIA's predecessor] had focused on the crisis of assimilation when it was launched eight years ago," said UJIA renewal department chairman Michael Goldstein, "there is now an 'upbeat culture' in British Jewry. We're tabling a challenge, not trumpeting a crisis."

In May, UJIA announced plans to contribute "substantial funds" toward expanding the scope of Leo Baeck College, which would move beyond the training of rabbis to offer teaching and other professional training for Progressive Judaism, as well as adult education, degree studies, and synagogue consultancies. In October, in a first step toward such expansion, Leo Baeck merged with its Centre for Jewish Education to form LBC-CJE, with Rabbi Jonathan Magonet as principal. In October, eight students enrolled for Britain's first M.A. in Jewish education, a two-year
part-time course run by LBC-CJE, sponsored by UJIA, and validated by the University of North London.

In November, UJIA’s chief executive, Jonathan Kestenbaum, reported an increase in donations in 2000 that yielded an income of nearly £14 million, £550,000 above 1999. Spending on Anglo-Jewish youth and education rose to £4.3 million in 2000 from £4.1 million in 1999, while spending in Israel—mainly to support new immigrants—rose to £7.1 million in 2000 from £6.9 million in 1999.

In April, Balliol College, Oxford, established a program of lectures in memory of Leonard Stein, author of the standard work on the Balfour Declaration. In May, JPR in London and the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris jointly formed the European Association for Jewish Culture to promote Jewish art and culture. In June, it was announced that, through its partnership with the London School of Jewish Studies (formerly Jews’ College) the London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) would launch an M.A. in Israeli and Jewish studies. In June too, Dr. Jonathan Webber was appointed to a UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) chair at Birmingham University with responsibility for building a new center for Jewish studies, focusing primarily on contemporary Jewry. In September, the Association for Jewish Refugees announced its sponsorship of a research post at Manchester University’s Center for Jewish Studies that would study the impact of refugees on Manchester. In December, Sir Martin Gilbert gave his inaugural address as president of the new Center for Israeli Studies launched at University College, London.

**Overseas Aid**

In January, London-based UK Jewish Aid and International Development (UKJAID) launched a relief fund for victims of the earthquake in India and worked closely with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) to ensure supplies went where most needed. In April, it was reported that UKJAID was largely funding a water purification plant in Boene, Mozambique.

Work for East European Jewry continued. In January, the Jewish Chernobyl Children’s Committee launched a fund to provide medicine and medical equipment for people still suffering from the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. In May, the Jewish charity One-to-One held a Jewish heritage walk through Lithuania, which helped raise some £4,000 for impoverished Jewish communities, with most of the money going to Vilnius.
Local British communities pursued individual projects. South London's Catford and Bromley Synagogue ladies' society sent clothing through World Jewish Relief (WJR) to Tbilisi, Georgia. In September, a group from Hampstead Garden Suburb, North London, delivered a Torah scroll to the Jewish community of Lviv (formerly Lvov) in Ukraine; in November, members of Radlett and Bushey Reform Synagogue visited their twin congregation in Grodno, Belarus. In October, WJR sent a medical mission to the Jewish community of Minsk, Belarus, to provide eye surgery.

In March, at a House of Commons rally of pro-Israel parliamentarians, a 4,000-signature petition calling for the release of Iranian Jews and Muslims imprisoned on charges of spying for Israel and the United States was presented to Foreign Office minister Brian Watson.

In May, the families of four of the Israelis captured by Hezbollah met with Foreign Secretary Robin Cook in London as part of an international campaign for their release. The Foreign Office and an all-party parliamentary group were reportedly putting pressure on Syria, Lebanon, and the Red Cross to discover where they were held. In July, United Synagogue president Peter Sheldon launched a cross-community initiative to highlight the plight of eight Israelis held by Hezbollah.

**Publications**

The 2001 Jewish Quarterly-Wingate literary prizes were awarded to Mona Yahia for her first novel *When the Grey Beetles Took Over Baghdad*, and to Mark Rosman for *The Past in Hiding*, based on the experiences of Holocaust survivor Marianne Ellenbogen.

The first Jewish Chronicle Festival of Jewish Arts and Culture opened in November, funded largely by the Kessler Foundation, a charitable trust established by former Jewish Chronicle proprietor and chairman David Kessler. The monthlong festival, which aimed to raise the profile of Jewish culture in Britain, offered an extensive program built on the existing Jewish music and film festivals, Jewish book week, and the exhibits at London's Jewish Museum.

*Jewish Renaissance*, a quarterly dedicated to arts and culture, was launched in October.

Works of autobiography and biography published during the year included *Uncle Tungsten: Memories of a Chemical Boyhood* by Oliver Sacks; *Goodbye, Twentieth Century: An Autobiography* by Danny Abse, who also published *Encounters*, a collection of nine poems; *The Manager* by
Richard Burns, an autobiography in verse; *Who Are You Mr. Grymek*, the memoirs of Natan Gross; *Where Do You Come From?* by Carl F. Flesch, about being a refugee in Britain; *Ritual Slaughter: Growing up Jewish in America* by Liberal rabbi Sidney Brichto, who also published *The Genius of Paul*, a new translation of the apostle's letters; *Ted Hughes: The Life of a Poet* by Elaine Feinstein; *The Lost Messiah* by John Freely; *A Double Thread* by literary critic John Gross; *A Life*, literary critic Gabriel Josipovici's biography of his mother, poet and translator Sacha Rabinyanovitch; *Mark Rothko, 1903–1970* by Diane Waldman; *The Chasing Shadows* by Rabbi Hugo Gryn; *Freud Ego*, Clement Freud's autobiography; and *Beside Myself* by Antony Sher.

Books on religious subjects included *Radical Then, Radical Now* by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks; Joanna Weinberg's translation of a classic 16th-century Italian-Jewish work, *Meor Einayim* by Azariah de Rossi, an investigation into aspects of Jewish history including the calendar; *Jewish Philosophy Reader*, edited by Daniel Frank, Oliver Leaman, and Charles Manekin; *For Heaven's Sake* by Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris of South Africa; and *From Autumn to Summer*, a collection of pieces by Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Magonet originally broadcast on German radio.

Studies of local history were *The "Jewish" Schools of Leeds 1880–1930* by Murray Friedman, and a pocket-sized history of Bevis Marks Synagogue by Sharman Kadish, published by English Heritage to mark the synagogue's 300th anniversary.

Collections of essays included *Feeding Frenzy*, short pieces by Will Self, who also published *Self Abuse*, a memoir; and *Snake Oil and Other Preoccupations* by journalist John Diamond.

Works of fiction were *Our Weddings* by Dorit Rabinyan; *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant, a fictionalized version of the story of Dinah; *Distant Music* by Lee Langley; *The Secret* by Eva Hoffman; *Wolfy and the Strudelbakers* by Zvi Jagendorf; *Clerical Errors* by Alan Isler; *The Procedure* by Harry Mulisch; *Milwaukee* by Bernice Rubens; *The Wild* by Esther Freud; *The Bay of Angels* by Anita Brookner; *The Nose* by Elena Lappin; *Wittgenstein's Poker* by David Edmonds and John Eidinow—a mixture of fiction and philosophy; and *Ashes and Other Stories* by Naomi Shepherd.

Two books of literary criticism were *Post-War Jewish Fiction: Ambivalence, Self-Explanation and Transatlantic Connections* by David Brauner, and *Writers and Their Work: Muriel Spark* by Bryan Cheyette.

The Holocaust continued to yield a quantity of publications, including *The Battle for Auschwitz: Catholic-Jewish Relations under Strain* by
Emma Klein; *Unshed Tears* by Edith Hofman, a fictionalized autobiography of a camp survivor; *Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust* edited by Robert Rozett and Shmuel Spector; *Into the Light*, 34 short stories and poems written by 14 Holocaust survivors; *The Holocaust on Trial* by D.D. Guttenplan, describing the David Irving trial; *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933–2001* by Harold Marcuse; *An Englishman in Auschwitz* by Leon Greenman; *My Child is Back* by Ursula Pawel; *The Uncharted Voyage* by Gitta Ogg; *Eventful Journeys: The Story of Leah and Sigo Weber*, as told to Elizabeth Winkler; *A Life Sentence of Memories* by Issy Hahn; *My Lucky Star* by Zdenka Fantlova; *The Inextinguishable Symphony: A True Story of Music and Love in Nazi Germany* by Martin Goldsmith; and a three-volume publication, *Remembering for the Future*, with John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell as editors-in-chief.

Publications about World War II included *Into the Arms of Strangers* by Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, a book accompanying the film by the same name about the Kindertransport; *Hitler’s Loss: What Britain and America Gained from Europe’s Cultural Exiles* by Tom Ambrose; and *The Avengers: A Jewish War Story* by Rich Cohen.

Poetry published during the year included *The Phantom Lane* by Lot-tie Kramer; *Insisting on Yellow: New and Selected Poems* by Myra Schneider, who also, along with Dilys Wood, edited *Parents: An Anthology of Poems by Women Writers*; *Femenismo* by Joanne Limburg; *POP!,* an anthology edited by Michael Horovitz and Inge Elsa Laird; *Passionate Renewal: Jewish Poetry in Britain since 1945* edited by Peter Lawson; and *Russian Poet, Soviet Jew* by Maxim D. Shraier, about Eduard Bagritskii.

Two books concerning art were *Idolizing Pictures* by Anthony Julius and *Legacies of Silence: The Visual Arts and Holocaust Memory* by Glen Sujo, written to accompany an exhibition at the Imperial War Museum.

Books about Israel and the Middle East included *Holy Land Unholy War, Israelis and Palestinians* by Anton La Guardia; *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* by Oz Almog; *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City* by Bernard Wasserstein; *House of Windows: Portraits from a Jerusalem Neighbourhood* by Adina Hoffman; and *Ethiopian Jewish Immigrants: The Homeland Postponed* by Tanya Schwarz.

*Crypto-Judaism and the Spanish Inquisition* by Michael Alpert was a work of general history, while *The Forgotten Millions*, edited by Malka Hillel Shulewitz, dealt with Jews who had to leave their homes in Arab lands.
Honors conferred on British Jews in 2001 included a peerage for retiring MP Robert Sheldon, Labor Party stalwart, in the dissolution of Parliament honors list, while Sir Claus Moser, chancellor of Keele University and of Israel's Open University, was one of 15 newly chosen peers. Ruth Deech, chair of the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority, law don, and St. Anne's College principal, was appointed a pro-vice-chancellor of Oxford University.

Prominent British Jews who died in 2001 included Alfred Cohen, artist, in Kings Lynn, Norfolk, in January, aged 80; Nat Basso, for 36 years chairman, British Boxing Board of Control, in January, aged 84; Sir Denys Lasdun, architect, in London, in January, aged 86; Fay Pomerance, artist, in Bristol, in January, aged 88; Jeffrey Green, lawyer and communal figure, in Zermatt, Switzerland, in January, aged 67; Leo Marks, code-breaker and filmmaker, in London, in January, aged 80; Ilse Wolff, publisher and Wiener Library personality, in London, in January, aged 92; Irwin Bellow, Lord Bellwin, Leeds businessman and politician, in Leeds, in February, aged 78; John Diamond, journalist, in London, in March, aged 47; Rabbi Shammai Zahn, founder of Sunderland Talmudical College, in Sunderland, in March, aged 80; Rabbi Joseph Shaw, Palmers Green and Southgate Synagogue minister, in London, in March, aged 78; Michael Leifer, pioneer of Southeast Asian academic studies in Britain, in London, in March, aged 67; Alexander Flinder, architect and pioneer of underwater archaeology, in London, in March, aged 80; William Rawlinson, jurist and European law expert, in London, in March, aged 84; David Nathan, Jewish Chronicle deputy editor 1978–1991 and theater critic for 28 years, in London, in March, aged 74; Nathan Science, grand old man of Newcastle Jewry, in Newcastle upon Tyne, in April, aged 90; George Willman, United Synagogue chief executive, in London, in April, aged 60; Professor Julius Carlebach, Jewish scholar and sociologist, in Brighton, in April, aged 78; Abner Cohen, social anthropologist, in Oxford, in May, aged 79; Alan Symons, author, in Trieste, in May, aged 72; Sir Sidney Hamburger, acknowledged leader of Manchester Jewry, in Salford, in June, aged 86; Ray Rosenberg, man of the theater, in Birmingham, in June, aged 48; William Margolis, agricultural economist, in London, in June, aged 87; Sonia Glasman, founding member of the Colchester, Essex, Jewish community, in Colchester, in June, aged 91; Ansel Harris, UKJ AID chairman, in London, in July, aged 75; Irene Bloomfield, founding member and first clinical director
of the Raphael Center, in London, in July, aged 82; Tom Phillips, who ran the Jewish Board of Guardians for 21 years, in London, in July, aged 96; Emmanuel Fisher, musician and conductor of London’s Jewish male choir for 21 years, in Poole, Dorset, in July, aged 80; David Massel, Board of Deputies administrator for 35 years, in London, in July, aged 74; Stephanie Barnett, chair, Jewish Women’s Aid, in Welwyn Garden City, in August, aged 58; Lord Paul Hamlyn, publisher and philanthropist, in London, in August, aged 75; Elana Rosenblatt, cofounder of the outreach organization Aish UK, in London, in August, aged 30; Larry Adler, internationally renowned harmonica player, in London, in August, aged 87; Greta Hyman, first woman organizing secretary of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues (ULPS), in London, in August, aged 88; Max Kochmann, mainstay of German-Jewish institutions, in London, in September, aged 80; Harold Feigen, founding member of the Licensed Taxi Drivers’ Association, in London, in October, aged 81; Jack Rothstein, violinist, in London, in November, aged 75; Raphael Sommer, internationally known cellist, in Tel Aviv, in November, aged 64; Professor Sir Ernst Gombrich, art historian, in London, in November, aged 92; Morris Lederman, Federation of Synagogues president 1951–1989, in London, in December, aged 93; Tommy Gould, Britain’s only World War II recipient of the Victoria Cross who was Jewish, in Peterborough, in December, aged 86.

Miriam & Lionel Kochan
France

National Affairs

As far back as 2000, France had already fallen under the shadow of the presidential election scheduled for 2002, which was to pit the incumbent, Jacques Chirac, of the political right, against the Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin. During 2001, anticipation of this event reached fever pitch. Everything done—or not done—by both men related directly to their positions in the upcoming election. Under the French system, the president retains a limited role, while the prime minister, as head of government, controls the policy of the country, and thus the preelection mania was particularly evident in Jospin’s case.

Jospin and his friends had become convinced that the presidential election would be decided on the record: that is, according to the results of past actions rather than any plan for the future. His record was not bad, especially with respect to the economy, as France had seen a reduction in unemployment and a smooth transition into the European Union. Thus, the Socialist leaders reasoned that their best strategy was to show their achievements in their best light and refrain from undertaking any new initiatives that might risk dividing the left majority or give fodder for criticism from the right. In concrete terms, this translated into an almost complete freeze on all government action. The social measures that the leftist majority was taking credit for had already been implemented, most notably the highly controversial 35-hour work week. The sole substantive innovation undertaken in 2001 was a constitutional change: the presidential term was reduced from seven years to five.

The Jospin government also passed a law changing the sequence of the 2002 elections, scheduling the presidential election just before the legislative election, and not, as a straightforward application of the calendar would have dictated, immediately after. With this change, Jospin hoped to accomplish two things. First, he hoped that the Communist Party and the Greens—the Socialists’ often troublesome allies—would feel constrained to rally behind the main left-wing candidate, namely himself. Second, he counted on a dynamic in which success would breed success: after being elected president (which the polls predicted), he would obtain a parliamentary majority to support his platform.
For his part, Chirac was counting on being reelected, paradoxically, as a new man on the scene. Although he had been president since 1995, he had hardly participated in major decisions since 1997, when the National Assembly came under the control of a left-wing majority. Chirac was forced to leave the bulk of the political action to Jospin, while he concentrated on his responsibility as guarantor of state institutions and his joint responsibility for foreign affairs and national defense—largely symbolic functions. This unequal power sharing, the source of so much frustration for the right and its leader since 1997, would suddenly become, during an election, a source of strength. Chirac could claim his part in common successes, notably at the European level, while denouncing the "mistakes of the Socialist government."

As the electoral deadline of spring 2002 approached, this face-off between left and right increasingly monopolized political debate. Chirac and Jospin avoided getting involved personally so as to maintain their images as statesmen, but all around them it was the only issue, as each side focused on the weaknesses of the other. The press was called on extensively to echo the themes deemed most helpful. This process did not contribute to raising the moral standard of political life in France.

Chirac's weakness lay in his past role as party leader. When he was mayor of Paris, he transformed that position into a power base for himself and his party, the Rally for the Republic (RPR). According to evidence from various sources that came to light in recent years, Chirac's friends had used illegal financing methods, especially kickbacks on contracts with a variety of firms that were handled through the mayor's office. Nothing about these revelations was really surprising, especially given the context of the time during which these events occurred. However, some of the testimony related directly to Chirac himself, who, although denying having been aware of these practices, chose to hide behind his presidential status and refused to answer questions posed by judges investigating the matter. The president's entourage accused the Socialists of manipulating the justice system for political gain. The controversy bounced back and forth, occupying all of 2001.

Jospin had his weaknesses too, which his adversaries did not hesitate to exploit. As with Chirac, there were questions concerning his past. Newspaper articles and books revealed what had been whispered for years without ever being proved: Jospin had for a number of years been a Trotskyite "mole" within the Socialist Party. If it had been only a matter of youthful activism, the prime minister would not have stood out from a good number of other politically engaged people of his genera-
tion. But his involvement had been clandestine, and had continued over the years. To make matters worse, Jospin had always denied the allegations, claiming that people were confusing him with his brother, a leader in the same Trotskyite organization. Only in the wake of mounting proof did he finally concede the truth, and his image suffered significant damage. No one actually suspected him of still being a follower of Trotskyism. Indeed, it appeared certain that although he had initially joined the Socialist Party under orders from his Trotskyite leaders, Jospin had been gradually converted to social-democratic values. Nevertheless, the accusations of lying that Jospin’s supporters had hurled at Chirac were turned against the prime minister.

Another weakness on Jospin’s side became clear during the course of the year. It can be summed up in a word that had become one of the key terms in French public life: insecurity. The phenomenon itself was not new. For years, people had complained about the rise in violence and theft, and had called on elected officials to take steps to ensure security in the streets and cities. But exploitation of the problem by the far right, which laid the blame squarely on North African immigrants, had often led political leaders to treat the issue as racist fantasy. In 2001 it became clear, however, that the problem was real and that denial was unacceptable to a growing proportion of voters—especially since the most disadvantaged social groups suffered the most from the situation.

The attacks of September 11 on the U.S. reinforced this change in attitude. Some translated the legitimacy of resolute action against terrorism, as exemplified by the behavior of the United States, to the French situation, even though the social and ideological background was completely different. Attacks against French Jews, which had increased since the onset of the Palestinian intifada in September 2000 and then eased off during the first half of 2001, returned stronger than ever after September 11, further convincing many French non-Jews that tolerance was no longer in fashion. The French police were doing their part on the ground, but there was no firm message coming from the highest political levels. On this subject, Jospin was hostage to the dogmatic position taken by his political allies in Communist and Green circles, and largely accepted within his own Socialist Party: nothing must be said that could be interpreted as an accusation against the residents of “difficult neighborhoods,” generally immigrants and children of immigrants. In this way, fear of playing into the hands of the far right led to a lack of political action that itself would eventually play into the hands of the far right.
Meanwhile, the far right, led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, president of the National Front (FN), attracted popular support without having to invest any effort. All the factors noted here played in its favor. The theme of insecurity, which had been its hobbyhorse for years, gradually slipped out of the moral ghetto where it had been kept for fear of its racist origins. The revelations about Jospin’s Trotskyite past and Chirac’s political financing seemed to echo the far right’s old slogans denouncing the communist threat on the one hand and democratic corruption on the other.

In essence, five years of cohabitation between a right-wing president and a left-wing prime minister (coming soon after two two-year periods, 1986–88 and 1993–95, when left-wing president François Mitterrand had cohabitated with right-wing prime ministers Jacques Chirac and Édouard Balladur) had convinced many citizens that the right and the left did not differ much from each other, and that if one really wanted to change “the system,” one should vote elsewhere.

Would Jean-Marie Le Pen, who, according to polls taken since the preceding election, had barely 15 percent of the vote, have any real chance of success? It seemed highly unlikely. But the internal split that had occurred in the National Front when Le Pen’s second-in-command, Bruno Mégret, quit the party to form the National Republican Movement (MNR), had not proven fatal. Quite the contrary: although Mégret, like the Italian neofascists, sought to put together a large right-wing bloc including nationalist elements, he brought with him to the MNR the strongest ideologues, whose ideas, reminiscent of the pagan enthusiasms of some of the early Nazis, were the most disturbing to public opinion.

As a result, the National Front developed a less odious, more populist image after the split. The fascist, racist, and anti-Semitic tendencies that remained firmly established at the party’s core were no longer exposed for all to see. The majority of Le Pen sympathizers, like the majority of potential FN voters, were not motivated by a desire to do away with democracy or persecute minorities, but by the sense that their voices were not heard by people in power, a desire to protest the lack of security, a reflexive fear for their identity in the face of open borders, and resistance to the new European framework, symbolized by the abandonment of the French franc and its replacement by the euro on December 31, 2001. On all of these points, Jean-Marie Le Pen was able to run an extremely low-cost campaign: By their words, the other candidates—and occasionally the newspapers—did his work for him.

Another political force also began to emerge over the course of 2001. Bringing together various forms of dissatisfaction with the current sys-
tern, but situating itself—at least in appearance—at the exact opposite end of the spectrum from the far right, a new extreme left began to carve out a place for itself. A checkered mix of unrepentant Trotskyites, Christian supporters of the Third World, communists in search of an alternative, activists from the antiglobalization movement, and environmentalists of various stripes, this new far left appealed both to those who felt let down by the traditional left and to young people looking for political involvement. Many came together to support the Palestinian cause without any knowledge of Middle Eastern realities, in blind solidarity with those presented as the ultimate victims in today's world. Heading this coalition were cynics and fanatics, manipulators and the pure of heart. The new far left offered a message of generosity, but because—in the absence of galvanizing issues—the Israeli-Palestinian conflict played an increasingly important role on its agenda, it was susceptible to anti-Semitic rhetoric of the basest kind. This was not a strictly French phenomenon, and much of the literature making the rounds in these circles had been translated from English.

In an overview of French politics in 2001, one particular group needs to be mentioned: the Arab-Muslim community. This term actually describes an entity with shifting boundaries. Of the roughly 3–5 million Muslims living in France, about 2 million had French citizenship. In the absence of actual census data (collecting information based on religion or ethnic origin is illegal), these figures were far from exact, but the trends were clear. The Arab-Muslim community represented a growing force. Although not yet heavily involved on the political scene, this group certainly represented a reservoir of votes, and possibly of activism, for future elections. It might take another decade before this group realized its potential, but at that point it would represent close to 10 percent of the electorate, enough to tip the balance in elections.

In France in 2001, the main issues for this group were the social injustices of which they were victims and recognition of their particular cultural and religious identity. International politics also heavily influenced their agenda. Although black Africans made up a large proportion of the group, the tone was set primarily by people with origins in North Africa—especially Algeria and Morocco—for whom the Palestinian cause struck a strong chord. The political class in France took note. The Communist Party, which had suffered electoral setbacks for years and feared losing its last municipal bastions, threw itself into a militant pro-Palestinian stance designed to rally the Arab-Muslim community. But the
communists were not the only ones setting their sights in that direction (see "The 'Boniface Affair' " below).

Israel and the Middle East

At the beginning of 2001, President Clinton's proposals for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict greatly interested the French people and provoked considerable debate within the Jewish community. While the daily Le Monde called on Yasir Arafat to accept Clinton's proposals, a petition circulating among Jews called on Ehud Barak not to divide Jerusalem. These issues, however, quickly disappeared from the agenda in the face of a breakdown in negotiations, a resurgence of violence, and the election of Ariel Sharon as prime minister of Israel. French public opinion had turned increasingly anti-Israel after September 30, 2000, when France 2, the public television station, broadcast images of the death of a 12-year-old boy who was caught with his father in a gun battle between Israelis and Palestinians at an intersection in Netzarim. With the breakdown of peace talks, anti-Israeli feeling spread with remarkable speed to every corner of French society.

In April 2001, the French public learned that, in a school in Boulogne-Billancourt, near Paris, students were given the following as part of an English test: "Change the following sentences to passive voice: (1) The Palestinian Imad family had buried Wael. (2) Israeli soldiers shot him in the head. (3) His friends took him to hospital immediately. (4) Teenagers' deaths keep Doctor Abdel Masri busy every night. (5) Israeli soldiers will again kill Palestinian children." When challenged by parents at the school, the teacher replied that she found nothing inappropriate in the exam questions, noting, "These were excerpts from the American press." This was no doubt an extreme case, but it illustrated the demonization of Israel, notably through images of slain Palestinian children.

There was a subtext to the anti-Israel frenzy. For many in France, denunciation of Israel may well have constituted a largely unconscious way of escaping a sense of guilt related to the memory of the Holocaust. Coming after a period marked by public acts of repentance toward the Jews (President Chirac in 1995, France's bishops in 1997), high-profile trials of French collaborators with the Nazis (Paul Touvier followed by Maurice Papon), and revelations about the confiscation of Jewish goods under the Vichy regime (see "Restitution" below), denunciation of the Jewish state seemed to "prove" that yesterday's victims could be today's perse-
The Jews, however, were far from being totally isolated. Proof came with the state visit of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad on June 25–26, 2001. This was just after Pope John Paul II’s visit to Syria, during which Assad attacked Israel using overtly anti-Semitic language. In addition, the recent trial of Alois Brunner (see “Holocaust-Related Matters” below) reminded the French of how Brunner had enjoyed Syrian hospitality for decades. In sum, there were a host of reasons not to welcome the Syrian president. Nevertheless, both Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin received Assad with all the honors reserved for a head of state. The new Socialist mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, took a different approach. Required by protocol to receive President Assad at City Hall, Delanoë kept the formalities to a strict minimum, receiving his visitor from the top of the large staircase instead of making the polite gesture of coming down to meet him. In his remarks to the guests, the mayor condemned anti-Semitism and terrorism in the strongest terms. To reinforce the message even more, some city council members held up signs saying, “Assad is an anti-Semite.” At the same time, a demonstration organized by CRIF, the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France (Conseil Réprésentatif des Institutions Juives de France) brought out 8,000 people in Paris to protest the Syrian president’s visit; similar demonstrations also took place in other parts of the country, notably Lyon, Nice, Marseille, and Strasbourg.

A few days later, on July 5 and 6, Ariel Sharon visited Paris. During his brief stay, the Israeli prime minister also met with Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin, as well as a substantial delegation from CRIF. A demonstration against Sharon’s visit drew very few people.

In November 2001, the French polling company Sofres published the results of a survey tracking “French opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” The survey, commissioned by the Israeli embassy in France, was conducted September 10–14, but Sofres did not detect any significant connection between the survey results and the events that occurred in the United States at that time.

On the whole, the analysts at Sofres found “a slightly more pro-Israeli than pro-Palestinian sentiment in public opinion.” The predominant feeling, however, seemed to be indifference. Thus, when asked, “In the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, with whom do you sympathize more?” 26 percent said Israel, 19 percent said the Palestinians, 11 percent responded “both the same,” 35 percent chose “neither one,” and 9 per-
cent had no opinion. In another question, people were asked if they felt “sympathy or no sympathy” for each country listed; 44 percent said they had sympathy for Israel and 43 percent did not (13 percent had no opinion). The “sympathy index” for Israel (the difference between those for and those against) was thus +1. The same index was strongly negative for “Palestine”—32 percent for and 55 percent against, yielding a difference of -23. By way of comparison, the sympathy index was +60 for the United States, +44 for Egypt, and +14 for Russia; the most negative indices were for Syria (-38) and Iran (-62).

A sympathy index for selected individuals was calculated in the same way. Ariel Sharon had a strongly negative index (-43, made up of 18 percent who sympathized compared with 61 percent who did not), worse even than that of Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat (-37, from 25 percent for and 62 percent against). But the Israeli foreign minister, Shimon Peres, had a strong +22, while American president George Bush proved clearly unpopular at -17, and Russian president Vladimir Putin was even more unpopular at -26.

Regarding the basis of the conflict, 83 percent of the French public thought that the region should have “an Israeli state and a Palestinian state” (3 percent said “only an Israeli state” and 1 percent said “only a Palestinian state”). People surveyed had the impression that, in the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the French government had acted more favorably towards Israel (34 percent, compared to 13 percent who judged it more favorable to the Palestinians, while the rest thought it was neutral or had no opinion). However, a large majority (61 percent) considered French policy “balanced,” with only 12 percent stating that the government supported Israel too much and 6 percent that it supported the Palestinians too much.

**The “Boniface Affair”**

In April 2001, French academic Pascal Boniface, director of the Institute of International and Strategic Relations (IRIS), sent an internal memo to the leaders of the Socialist Party. Titled “The Middle East, Socialists, International Fairness, Electoral Effectiveness,” the note recommended a change in the French government’s attitude toward Israel. After condemning Israeli policy with respect to the Palestinians, Boniface accused “the Jewish community” of “cashing in on its electoral clout to allow the Israeli government to act with impunity.”

This was a very serious accusation. In French political culture, it is con-
sidered unacceptable for a minority (ethnic, religious, or other) to try to influence government policy (internal or international) that relates to national sovereignty. Furthermore, anyone who knew anything about the Jewish community in France was aware that this accusation was baseless. The electoral weight of French Jews was less than 1 percent, and they had no lever, financial or otherwise, that would allow them to influence the country’s policies in any significant way.

Oddly, after criticizing the Jews for pro-Israeli activity, Boniface advocated a strategy cast in the same mold, except this time in favor of Israel’s adversaries. “I am struck,” he wrote in his note, “by the number of young beurs [a recent expression, referring to French of ethnic Arab origin], of French Muslims of all ages, who describe themselves as leftists but who, because of the situation in the Middle East, do not want to vote for Jospin in the presidential election. An unbalanced approach to the Middle East— and of course, according to them, once again to the disadvantage of the Arabs— confirms their feeling that the Socialist family does not take the Arab-Muslim community into consideration or even rejects it.” As a result, Boniface explained to the Socialist leaders that their party must “abandon a position that, in trying to find balance between the Israeli government and the Palestinians, becomes, because of the reality, more and more abnormal.” According to him, such a change in France’s foreign policy would improve Lionel Jospin’s chances of winning the upcoming election. Finally, he posed a rhetorical question: “Is supporting Sharon worth losing in 2002?”

Boniface did have one thing right: Palestinian supporters and those who, more generally, identified as “Arab-Muslims,” found Jacques Chirac closer to their views than Lionel Jospin. Two images summed up the situation. During his last trip to Israel in 2001, Chirac was openly angry with his Israeli bodyguards, whom he suspected of wanting to keep him from making physical contact with Palestinians in the streets of Jerusalem. This unpleasantness caused a minor diplomatic incident. In contrast, Jospin, on his subsequent trip to Israel, called the Lebanese Hezbollah a “terrorist” group. These words, which earned an immediate rebuke from President Chirac, made him a target for stone-throwing the next day during a visit to a Palestinian university. Quite likely because of this difference in perception, a high proportion of “Arab-Muslims,” given a choice between the right and the Socialist Party, would vote for the right. Nevertheless, the boorish tone in which Boniface called on his Socialist friends for a policy change, and the explicit connection that he
made with "electoral effectiveness"—that is, the relative political weight of the two communities in France—was very disturbing.

Pascal Boniface's note, distributed in April 2001 to a small number of Socialist leaders, did not stay secret for long. However, because of the particularly sensitive nature of the subject, none of the people privy to its contents, including some Jews, was willing to publicize it. At a time of unprecedented violent anti-Jewish attacks perpetrated by the group Boniface called "the Arab-Muslim community," it was important to avoid adding oil to this fire. As it turned out, the author of the note himself brought the matter to the public's attention. In an article called "Letter to an Israeli Friend" published in Le Monde on August 4, he repeated the first part of his note, denouncing the Israeli government's policy toward the Palestinians ("unjust, if not odious") and warned the Jewish community in France that by supporting this policy it risked "isolating itself."

Israel's ambassador to France, Elie Barnavi, immediately responded in the same newspaper, emphasizing that the "honeyed" tone Boniface used in the article contrasted with the more virulent style that he had employed for internal use. In his reply to Barnavi published in late August, Boniface pleaded his good intentions ("Must I repeat that, for me, Israel's right to exist in peace and security, within pre-1967 recognized borders, is absolute?") but acknowledged the existence of the internal memo, thus bringing it into the public sphere.

Under the title "Doctor Pascal and Mister Boniface," the Jewish monthly L'Arche later published an article (Nov. 2001) protesting the "double discourse" involved in associating a critique of Israeli policy (certainly legitimate) with a discriminatory (and therefore illegitimate) charge directed at French Jews. This L'Arche article reproduced the part of the original memo that had not been printed in Le Monde, in which the author recommended a change in government policy for the sake of electoral gain. In its next issue, L'Arche published a response from Boniface. After defending himself against the reproach that he had issued an accusation against the Jews, he wrote, "I believe that everyone should question whether it is normal that the Middle East should be the only subject about which many leaders do not dare to speak their minds publicly for fear of the reactions that their words might unleash." Opposite this letter, L'Arche published a letter from Serge Weinberg, chair of the board of the institute where Boniface served as director, in which he personally vouched for Boniface's "constant commitment against racism and anti-Semitism."
Beyond its personal implications and the light it shed on the factors influencing France’s Middle East policy, the “Boniface affair” demonstrated something about the self-image of Jews in France. While a small number of Jews, generally with no ties to the Jewish community, condemned Israel in particularly strong terms, the most widespread sentiment among French Jews was that charges against the State of Israel were roughly equivalent to charges against the Jews themselves, at a time when anti-Jewish attacks were stronger than ever.

Anti-Semitism and Racism

On January 12, 2001, the Palestinian journalist Raymonda Hawa-Tawill (whose daughter, Souha Arafat, was married to the president of the Palestinian Authority), spoke live on the public radio station France Culture, attacking the “racism of the Jews of France” and the “influence of the Jewish lobby.” This incident highlighted a fact that had become entrenched in French political reality: the predominance of the Middle Eastern factor in anti-Jewish attacks. While there were only sporadic incidents of far-right anti-Semitism, and Jean-Marie Le Pen spared no effort to make people forget his “slips of the tongue” of years past, Arab sources incited hostility toward Jews. A Paris-based radio station, Radio-Orient, was sued after it broadcast, live from Mecca, an Arabic-language sermon containing violently anti-Semitic passages in October 2000. The trial took place on May 30, 2001, and on June 27 the court fined the people in charge of Radio-Orient and ordered them to issue a correction in French and Arabic. The conviction was not appealed.

In early November 2001, a pamphlet entitled Le sionisme, image véritable du diable sur terre (Zionism, the True Image of the Devil on Earth) was distributed in Paris-area mosques. According to the pamphlet, “From America, [the Jews] have infiltrated other countries in every possible way. They have created a racist system, Zionism, which has shown their true diabolical face. They lit the fire of the Second World War in Europe and divided the peoples of that continent. They have done the same thing for the Muslim peoples.” Readers of the pamphlet also learned that genocide was a Jewish invention, that Jews were the real perpetrators of the September 11 attacks, and similar notions. Such ideas appeared to be widespread among Muslims, and some Muslim authorities in France called on their coreligionists not to fall into the trap of anti-Semitism.

It was not only a question of literature. The year 2000 was marked by an unprecedented eruption of anti-Jewish violence in France (see AJYB
2001, p. 325). Ranging from minor local incidents of aggression to the burning of synagogues and Jewish schools, this violence was carried out almost exclusively by "Arab-Muslims." Perpetrators arrested by the police usually had a history of petty delinquency, and there was no evidence linking them to Islamist groups or other networks. The violence appeared to involve mostly an exacerbation of neighborhood conflicts against a background of identification with the Palestinian struggle. It let up in early 2001, primarily because of the deterrent effect of arrests. But the violence never stopped completely, and it gained strength again immediately after September 11.

While the total number of attacks in 2001 did not break the record that had been set in 2000, anti-Semitism appeared to have become more deeply entrenched in the "Arab-Muslim" population, with an "ideological" message picking up where the spontaneous reaction that coincided with the early weeks of the intifada left off. By all indications, the French public was broadly aware of this phenomenon and disapproved of the anti-Jewish violence. Thus, in the Sofres survey commissioned by the Israeli embassy (see "Israel and the Middle East" above), respondents were asked to react to "attacks on synagogues in France." Offered a choice between two responses, 78 percent chose, "It's scandalous, the government should punish the guilty parties very severely," while only 10 percent preferred, "If Jews in France didn't support Israel so much, these attacks wouldn't have happened."

Welcoming Prime Minister Lionel Jospin at the annual CRIF dinner on December 1, CRIF president Roger Cukierman gave a very strong speech criticizing the demonization of the State of Israel, noting its effects on the physical security of some Jews and on the peace of mind of most of them. However, even though the prime minister had been considered a friend of the Jews and of Israel, he avoided saying anything too clear on the subject in a preelection period. He devoted his speech primarily to the lessons learned from the study of the plundering of Jewish property during the Second World War, and the need to pass on the memory of the Holocaust.

Holocaust-Related Matters

In early 2001, American writer Norman Finkelstein's book *The Holocaust Industry* was published in France under the title *L'Industrie de l'Holocauste*. This book, which accused Jewish organizations of extorting funds from Swiss banks and explained the attention devoted to the
Holocaust in recent years as a result of coordinated maneuvers by American imperialism and the Zionist state, had initially appeared in translation on the Internet site of the French Holocaust deniers. Éric Hazan and Rony Brauman arranged for the publication of a new translation by a small far-left publishing house. Finkelstein’s book was welcomed in anti-Zionist circles, where it confirmed longstanding conspiracy theories. But it was the subject of a scathing editorial in *Le Monde* on February 16, which said that “the rhetoric employed here is close to that of Holocaust denial.” The paper explained its decision to pay attention to the book by noting the need to be “on guard against the misleading alibis of a new anti-Semitism” (see “The Assault on Holocaust Memory,” AJYB 2001, pp. 3–20).

In February and March, a major exhibition, *Mémoires des camps, photographies des camps de concentration et d’extermination nazis (1933–1999)* (Memories of the Camps: Photographs of Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps, 1933–1999), was held in Paris. It consisted of photographs taken in the camps during the Nazi regime, at the time of liberation, and in the decades that followed. Filmmaker Claude Lanzmann (who made the film *Shoah*) strongly criticized the exhibition, accusing it of perpetuating the confusion between concentration camps and extermination camps, mixing photographs of victims with those of perpetrators without distinguishing between them, and wallowing in an aestheticism that was indecent in light of the context. The exhibition’s commissioner, Clément Chéroux, defended it, saying that his objective was to provide “not a history of the camps but a history of photography of the camps.” Chéroux also noted that to avoid any tendency toward aestheticism he had made sure that a “cultural mediator” would be available on site to accompany visitors and explain the significance of the images.

On March 2, 2001, the trial in absentia of Aloïs Brunner, a Nazi war criminal who was responsible for the murder of 120,000 Jews in Austria, Germany, Greece, Slovakia, and France, took place in Paris. In 1943–44, Brunner was head of the camp at Drancy near Paris from which tens of thousands of Jews were sent to Auschwitz. Brunner, who fled to Syria after the war where successive leaders of that country protected him, did not respond to the call of French justice. The court sentenced him to life in prison.

Also in early 2001, plans were announced for an international conference on “historical revisionism”—that is, Holocaust denial. Cosponsored by an American organization, the Institute for Historical Review, and a Swiss organization, Vérité et Justice (Truth and Justice), whose di-
rector had taken refuge in Iran, the conference was supposed to take place in Beirut. In *Le Monde* on March 16, a group of Arab intellectuals published a forceful protest along with a call to cancel the conference. The Lebanese government finally yielded to international pressure and prevented the conference from convening. A lively controversy erupted in the Arab world, some saying that the signers of the *Le Monde* protest had made a pact with Zionism. One of the signers of the protest, the Palestinian-American Columbia University professor Edward Said, made it known that his signature had been extorted from him, and that, in the name of freedom of expression, he never would have supported a call to cancel the conference.

In 2001, lawyers for Maurice Papon continued a campaign, begun the year before, to free their client. Papon, who was a sub-prefect in Bordeaux under the German occupation and then had a brilliant administrative and political career in postwar France, had been sentenced to ten years in prison for "complicity in crimes against humanity." His lawyers, citing his advanced age (over 90) and poor health, had launched proceedings in the European Court of Human Rights, demanding that it censure France for "inhuman and degrading treatment." In January 2001, the appeal to free Papon received the unexpected support of a leading French Jew, Robert Badinter, who, as minister of justice in a previous government, had sponsored legislation abolishing capital punishment. "People say, 'crime against humanity,'” Badinter declared. “I say there is a time when the humanity has to prevail over the crime.” Another well-known Jew expressed similar views: Gilles Bernheim, chief rabbi of the Synagogue de la Victoire in Paris, argued in a regional newspaper that Papon’s "déchéance"—his physical deterioration as well as the obsolescence of what he symbolically represented—made it pointless to keep him incarcerated.

There was strong reaction to these statements within the Jewish community. Lawyer and historian Serge Klarsfeld, one of the originators of the legal action against Papon, came out against any clemency. The chief rabbi of France, Joseph Sitruk, argued that Papon’s early release was not justified since he had “tried to escape justice for 18 years” and “had never repented” of his actions. Rabbi Bernheim said he would not express himself further on the subject because he feared that his position would be misinterpreted—especially since it appeared that Papon’s lawyers had tried to make people believe that Bernheim and Papon had exchanged correspondence, which was untrue. Finally, on June 8, 2001, the European Court of Human Rights rejected the request for Papon’s early release. A request for mercy presented to President Chirac was no more successful.
At the end of 2001, Papon was still in prison, where, it was noted, he was better treated than the elderly Jews he had interned 60 years earlier.

Restitution

The FMS, the Foundation for the Remembrance of the Holocaust (Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah), started operation at the beginning of 2001. The foundation had been officially established on December 26, 2000, by a decree of the French government, following research into the plundering of the property of French Jews during the German occupation. A study commission appointed by the government in 1997 had presented a detailed report in April 2000 (see AJYB 2001, p. 334). It noted that restitution had been made for the vast majority of the plundered goods after the war, but a certain amount had remained heirless under government management, and in public and private financial institutions. The commission had recommended that the current cumulative value of these goods be assigned to a foundation, and the government implemented this recommendation by establishing the FMS.

The FMS began its work with a figure of the first rank as its president—Simone Veil, former cabinet minister and former president of the European Parliament, who herself had been deported to Auschwitz—and an endowment of 393 million euros, which made it the best-endowed foundation in France. Legally established as a private foundation but recognized by the government, it was run by a board of 25 members: ten representatives of France’s Jewish institutions, eight representatives of public agencies, and seven “qualified figures” coopted by the other board members (the initial “qualified figures” were Christine Albanel, Claude Lanzmann, Samuel Pisar, Israel Singer, Saul Friedländer, Simone Veil, and Elie Wiesel). Income from the endowment, estimated at 14 million euros a year, was to be used to support activities in a number of predetermined areas: the history of anti-Semitic persecution and the Holocaust, education and transmission, commemoration and communication, solidarity with former victims and the Righteous Gentiles, and development of Jewish culture.

The French government also continued to deal with the other problems that had appeared during the study of the plundering of French Jewry, such as compensation for individuals, pensions for Jewish orphans, claims against banks and insurance companies, tracking looted paintings and objetos d’art, and French government activities to remember the Holocaust. These efforts were coordinated by civil servants in the prime minister’s of-
office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working in close cooperation with other government departments and with French and international Jewish organizations. These civil servants felt—with considerable justification, in the opinion of French Jews—that their government had done everything possible to assume France's debt, both moral and material. In private conversations, the French officials expressed their irritation at seeing their country become the object of accusations in international bodies, often from nationals of countries that, it seemed to them, had not put forth a comparable effort to come to grips with their own past.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Communal Affairs

In January 2001, Zvi Ammar took office as president of the Marseille Consistory. Ammar had been elected in December 1999, but the result was challenged and the dispute was taken to the courts, so that it took 13 months for the legitimacy of the new officers to be recognized. To make up for the long wait, Ammar’s inauguration was a festive occasion, with the chief rabbi of France in attendance along with all the regional authorities: the mayor of Marseille, the president of the regional council, the prefect, and others. This event served as the kickoff for the year 2001, an election year in the Jewish community.

The calmest election was the one to choose a new president of CRIF to succeed lawyer Henri Hajdenberg, who, after serving two three-year terms, was not allowed to run for a third. There were two candidates, banker Roger Cukierman and chartered accountant Roger Benarrosh. Since there was no fundamental difference between their platforms, the campaign was based primarily on personal relationships. On May 13, Cukierman was elected by 84 votes to 71.

Two other elections also took place without incident: Edwige Elkaim was elected president of B’nai Brith of France on June 24, and Patrick Klugman was elected president of the Union of Jewish Students of France on July 1.

By contrast, the election for chief rabbi of France took place only after a controversy that spilled over into the public arena. The statutes of the Central Consistory provided for the chief rabbi to be named by an electoral college in which rabbis could make up only 10 percent of the membership. In November 2000, a rabbinic congress presented a proposal
to revise the statutes that would have led to a substantial increase in the proportion of rabbis in the electoral college. The incumbent chief rabbi, Joseph Sitruk, supported this proposal. However, the Paris Consistory was firmly opposed, and for a while events teetered on the edge of crisis.

In the end, the election took place on June 17 under the existing statutes. Sitruk was reelected for a third seven-year term, with 179 votes to 82 for his only opponent, the chief rabbi of Nice, Marc Bensoussan. Meanwhile, on May 30, the chief rabbi of Paris, David Messas, was also reelected, receiving all 43 votes cast even though he faced an opponent. The final election of the year within religious Judaism took place on November 25, and involved the leadership of the Paris Consistory. Moïse Cohen was reelected president, and a notable feature of the new leadership team was the presence of seven women. The "feminization" of the Consistory, which had begun with the previous election, was now an established fact.

On December 5, Chief Rabbi Sitruk suffered a stroke while speaking at a wedding. His treatment required a lengthy hospital stay.

Religion

The most notable event of the year in the area of religion concerned a subject that had long provided nourishment (in all senses of the word) for the ongoing saga of French Judaism: kashrut. In France, in the absence of rich endowments for synagogues and generous donors for organizations, the main source of income for religious Judaism was a tax on kosher meat. As a result, conflicts about kashrut quickly turned into existential questions. Another peculiarity of the French situation was that warnings relating to meat quality (mad cow disease, foot-and-mouth disease) thus affected not only the supply of safe meat and continued consumption by the general public, but, because of the tax, the very survival of Jewish institutions. Supervising kashrut, then, involved significant responsibility.

In theory, at least, the Paris Consistory had a virtual monopoly on the certification of kosher meat, which it exercised through its Bet Din (see AJYB 2001, p. 338). In practice, peaceful-coexistence agreements had been established, for example with the Lubavitch movement, which imported meat from Argentina under its own kosher label with the approval of the Consistory. But when Emsellem, one of the three major suppliers of kosher meat, announced its intention to import kosher meat from Uruguay, this represented a casus belli. All the necessary guarantees of kashrut were provided, and the slaughtering was being carried out in
Uruguay by Israeli ritual slaughterers under the supervision of the chief rabbinate of Israel. But the Paris Bet Din—supported by the chief rabbi of Paris, David Messas, and the president of the Paris Consistory, Moïse Cohen— balked at providing its label, on the grounds that it would be turned into nothing more than a rubber stamp.

At this point, the Central Consistory entered the fray and offered to provide its own kosher label to Emsellem for the Uruguayan meat. At the Paris Consistory, people saw red. Emsellem made it clear that meat imported in this way would be sold only through a special distribution network and not in stores bearing the Paris Bet Din symbol, but it was no use. The Paris Consistory accused the president of the Central Consistory, Jean Kahn, and Chief Rabbi Sitruk of paving the way for the introduction of a “Central” kosher label that would compete with the Bet Din’s label.

From Rabbi Sitruk’s corner came denials that the chief rabbi had been directly involved in the certification of Uruguayan meat. It was acknowledged, however, that he had given his approval in principle, and that the idea of a kosher “super-label” under the authority of the Central Consistory was under study. The reply from Jean Kahn was that if the Paris Consistory did not want competition for its kosher label, it should begin by paying the back dues it owed to the Central Consistory. While in theory the Central Consistory was the “head office” for all the regional consistories, in fact it was financially dependent on the Paris Consistory, and disputes over payments between the two bodies had been common coin for some time.

To avoid a crisis, the Paris Consistory reversed its previous decision and agreed to place its kosher label on the meat imported from Uruguay, even though it had been slaughtered without Bet Din supervision. It was doing this, it said, “in an exceptional manner, because of the supply problems that threaten to harm Jews who eat kosher in France.” And so, at the last minute, the Central Consistory’s kosher label on the Uruguayan meat was replaced by the Paris Consistory’s label. But the underlying problems remained, and eventual resumption of the kosher-meat wars was a virtual certainty.

Publications

Among the books of Jewish interest published in France in 2001 were: Liliane Atlan’s *Petites bibles pour mauvais temps* (Small Bibles for Bad Times); Henry Raczymow’s *L’homme qui tua René Bousquet* (The Man
Who Killed René Bousquet); Henri Lewi’s *Isaac Bashevis Singer. La génération du déluge* (Isaac Bashevis Singer: The Generation of the Flood); Évelyne Dress’s *Les tournesols de Jérusalem* (The Sunflowers of Jerusalem); Madeleine Kahn’s *L’écharde* (The Splinter); Albert Grunberg’s *Journal d’un coiffeur juif à Paris sous l’Occupation* (Journal of a Jewish Hairdresser in Paris Under the Occupation); Lysette Hassine-Mamane’s *Le Piyut de David Hassine* (David Hassine’s Piyut); *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris (1242–1244)* (The Burning of the Talmud in Paris, 1242–1244), edited by Gilbert Dahan; Henri Meschonnic’s *L’utopie du Juif* (The Jew’s Utopia); Laurent Rucker’s *Staline, Israël et les Juifs* (Stalin, Israel and the Jews); *Le judéo-christianisme dans tous ses états* (Judeo-Christianity in All Its Aspects), edited by Simon C. Mimouni; François Blanchetièrè’s *Enquête sur les racines juives du mouvement chrétien (30–135)* (Inquiry into the Jewish Roots of the Christian Movement, 30–135); Eliette Abécassis’s *Le trésor du temple* (The Temple’s Treasure); Rabbi Pauline Bebe’s *Isha. Dictionnaire des femmes et du judaïsme* (Isha: Dictionary of Women and Judaism); Georges Nataf’s *Les sources païennes de l’antisémitisme* (The Pagan Sources of Anti-Semitism); Gérard Israël’s *Jérusalem, la sainte* (Jerusalem, the Holy); Michaël Prazan and Tristan Mendès France’s *La Maladie n° 9* (Illness No. 9); Édouard Valdman’s *La Blessure* (The Wound); Cyrille Fleischman’s *Un slow des années 50* (A Fifties Slow Dance); Gérard Silvain’s *Sépharades et Juifs d’ailleurs* (Sephardim and Jews From Elsewhere); Michel Gurfinkel’s *La cuisson du homard* (Cooking Lobster); Marc-André Charguéraud’s *Silences meurtriers. Les Alliés, les Neutres et l’Holocauste, 1940–1945* (Murderous Silences: The Allies, the Neutrals and the Holocaust, 1940–45); Paul Webster’s *Le crime de Pétain* (Pétain’s Crime); Laurent Joly’s *Xavier Vallat. Du nationalisme chrétien à l’antisémitisme d’État* (Xavier Vallat: From Christian Nationalism to State Anti-Semitism); Patrick Petit-Ohayon’s *L’éveilleur des esprits* (The One Who Roused Spirits); Sarah Taïeb-Carlen’s *Les Juifs d’Afrique du Nord* (The Jews of North Africa); Dominique Laury’s *Les chaises du Luxembourg* (The Chairs of Luxembourg); Gilles Rozier’s *Moïse fiction* (Moses Fiction); Pierre Hazan’s *La guerre des Six Jours* (The Six-Day War); and Serge Klarsfeld’s *La Shoah en France* (The Holocaust in France).

**Personalia**

On January 15, 2001, an esplanade in the 15th arrondissement of Paris was given the name of Max Guedj, belatedly honoring one of France’s
most glorious fighters in World War II. Born in 1913 in Sousse, Tunisia, to a Jewish family of French nationality, Max Guedj grew up in Casablanca, Morocco. The son of a lawyer, he obtained a doctor of laws degree before working in his father’s office. But the war changed the course of his life: in September 1940, he secretly went to London, where he was one of the first to join the Royal Air Force. He took part in many battles and stood out for his courage and operational skill. Wing Commander Max Guedj was killed in action on January 15, 1945.

Among Jewish figures who died in 2001, two names stood out: Gilbert Trigano, founder of Club Méditerranée, who died in early February at the age of 80, and Charles Liché, the “rabbi of the deportees,” who died in July, also at the age of 80.

Professor Ady Steg, president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, received the insignia of a grand officer of the Legion of Honor from President Jacques Chirac at the Élysée Palace on February 26. He marked the occasion with a speech that received considerable attention and was widely quoted: while speaking of his homage and gratitude to France, he criticized the “perverse development” of a “delegitimization” of the State of Israel.

On May 15, it was the turn of Jean Kahn, president of the Central Consistory, to receive the insignia of a grand officer of the Legion of Honor from President Chirac at the Élysée Palace.

Meir Rosenne, former Israeli ambassador to France, was promoted to the rank of commander of the Legion of Honor. Chief Rabbi Sitruk, Professor Haïm Zafrani, Bernard Kanovitch, Joseph Roubache, and Jean Meyer were promoted to the rank of officer of the Legion of Honor. Chief Rabbi Michel Guggenheim, Professor André Kaspi, Professor Michel Revel (Israel), Nadine de Rothschild, Annette Wieviorka, Michel Zaouï, Patrick Gaubert, David Fuchs, and Richard Prasquier were named knights of the Legion of Honor.

Meir Waintrater
Belgium

National Affairs

Belgium had a population of 10.3 million in 2001, with an annual growth rate of 0.2 percent. Its population density of 336 inhabitants per square kilometer made it one of the most densely populated countries in Europe. The fertility index was low, only 1.61 children per woman of childbearing age. The long life expectancy (78 years) and the consequent aging of the population were characteristic of an industrialized country with extensive modern hospital facilities and health care.

The two major groups in Belgium were the Flemings, who spoke Dutch and various Dutch dialects, and the Walloons, who spoke French, Picard, and Walloon dialects. Flanders corresponds to the northern half of the country and Wallonia to the southern half. The populations of the eastern cantons of Eupen and Malmedy, near the German border, were German-speaking.

Achieving independence in 1830, the country developed its current federal structure quite recently as a result of reforms passed in 1970, 1980, 1988/89, and 1993. Article 1 of the Belgian constitution now stated (for the first time), “Belgium is a Federal State composed of communities and regions.” Policy decisions were no longer made entirely by the central government but rather by a variety of bodies that wielded independent powers in the specific areas assigned to them.

The distribution of powers followed two major axes, the first connected to language and culture, and the second to geography and economic aspirations. “Communities” denoted groups united by language and cultural ties: the Dutch Community, the French-speaking Community (which was renamed the “Wallonia-Brussels Community”), and the German-speaking Community. Dutch, French, and German were all official languages. The three “Regions” of the country were roughly comparable to the states in the U.S., though they also enjoyed some degree of economic autonomy. They were the Flemish Region, Brussels-Capital Region, and Walloon Region. The country was also subdivided into ten provinces and 589 municipalities.

The federal government retained powers in many areas, such as foreign affairs (including relations with NATO and the European Union), na-
tional defense, justice, finance, social security, and large parts of public health and domestic affairs (through the Department of the Interior). The Communities and Regions were nevertheless empowered to establish relations with foreign states in matters over which they had jurisdiction.

Federal legislative power was in the hands of a Parliament composed of two chambers, the House of Representatives and Senate. Proposed legislation had to be approved by both chambers and signed by the king's ministers (the cabinet had to contain an equal number of French- and Dutch-speaking ministers). While the House of Representatives was elected by universal suffrage, virtually the entire Senate was chosen by a complicated system of proportional representation for the different Communities.

The elections of 1999 marked an upheaval in Belgian political life as voters demonstrated their dissatisfaction with scandals and corruption cases over the years; the depredations of organized crime; the apparently lax handling of the case of Marc Dutroux, who, in 1996, kidnapped, raped, and killed several young girls and adolescents; and the long time it took for the ministries of health and agriculture to bring the "mad cow" epidemic under control.

Since then, Belgium was governed by a so-called "rainbow majority" composed of the two traditional large secular parties, Socialists (PS) and Liberals (VLD), and the recently founded Ecolo, a green party made up of defectors from the Communist Party (itself now practically nonexistent) and left-wing Christians.

On the regional and local levels in Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels, power was in the hands of similar alliances of "greens" (Ecolo), "reds" (Socialists), and "blues" (Liberals). In Flanders, the government also included a party created on a Flemish-language platform, the Volksunie. As was the case on the national level, the two Christian parties—the CVP in Flanders and the PSC in Wallonia and Brussels—were in the opposition. What is more, the PSC underwent a partial split with the birth of the MCC (Mouvement du Changement Citoyen, or Civic Change Movement), which has joined forces with the FDF (Front des Francophones) and Liberal Party to form a united political front in some local election districts.

The far-right National Front, which had practically disappeared in Wallonia and Brussels, enjoyed a new lease on life in Flanders, especially Antwerp Province, under the banner of the Vlaamse Blok, a Flemish nationalist party. This party, itself a radical offshoot of the Volksunie that was in the Flemish government, made spectacular gains, winning 10 per-
cent of the vote in 1999, and 15 seats in the House of Representatives. Indeed, in towns such as Antwerp and Mechelen, up to 20 percent of the voters supported the Flemish far right. While this trend certainly reflected a xenophobic reaction to rising immigration, it also indicated heightened concern about personal safety, especially a rise in the number of attacks on elderly people.

Belgium—whose capital Brussels was the headquarters of the European Commission, the administrative heart of the European Union—occupied the presidency of the EU during the second half of 2001, when the exceptional events surrounding September 11 took place. Under Belgium’s presidency, the EU prepared for the introduction of the “euro,” intended to replace the national currencies of 12 of the 15 member states (Great Britain, Denmark, and Sweden remained outside the Euro Zone for the time being).

The Middle East and Anti-Semitism

Israel’s image in Europe, Belgium in particular, deteriorated in the 1980s, and the downturn accelerated after the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000. This often spilled over into antagonism toward Jews, and the word “Judeophobia” was sometimes used to describe the atmosphere.

Over the course of 2001 the overwhelming majority of the media hounded Israel, sometimes in vulgar fashion. Both the press and the electronic media tended to ignore the broader context of events in the Middle East, displaying scenes of violence and Palestinian suffering that could readily lead to one-sided and partial judgments. This was due not just to anti-Semitism in Europe and Belgium, but also to the phenomenon of schadenfreude, the enjoyment of others’ moral distress: the Jew, a constant victim throughout history, had now allegedly become a bloodthirsty oppressor. Emphasizing the flaws of Jews more than those of other people—a form of anti-Semitism—was encouraged in Belgium by the Arabic press and virulent sermons in mosques and Muslim schools. In contrast to France, however, actual anti-Semitic incidents were infrequent in Belgium (see below).

A task force created by the Jewish community published a “blue paper” reporting on the anti-Semitic and anti-Israel remarks that appeared in the Belgian press. It singled out Le Soir, one of the major French dailies, for its consistent pro-Palestinian bias, such as comparing the West Bank to the Nazi camps and the Gaza Strip to the Warsaw Ghetto. The “blue
paper” found that even respectable, mainstream journalists—both Flemish and French-speaking—who denounced anti-Semitic incidents, would, in the same article or section, equate Ariel Sharon with Saddam Hussein, or Israel’s defensive actions with the September 11 attacks. An example was De Standaard, considered one of the kingdom’s two or three best papers, which barely differed in this respect from the sensationalistic P Magazine, a mass-circulation Antwerp weekly that published articles calling Sharon a criminal and accused Jews of genocide.

Equally frightening, politicians on both the left and the right—and not just the extremists—mouthed similar anti-Israel sentiments. Many in the Jewish community feared that the lessons of Auschwitz had been forgotten and that raw anti-Semitism was about to explode again.

In June, suits were filed in Brussels against Ariel Sharon for allegedly allowing the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982, when Lebanese Christian militias allied with Israel killed some 800 Palestinians. Belgium had enacted a law in 1993 giving Belgian courts jurisdiction over war crimes committed anywhere in the world, and just a few weeks before the Sharon case came up Belgian courts had convicted four Rwandans under that law. A spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commented that the suits against Sharon caused “diplomatic embarrassment” for Belgium, making it more difficult for the country to play an evenhanded role in the Middle East. The Belgian attorney that Israel hired to handle the case argued that Belgian courts had no jurisdiction. As the year ended it was considered highly unlikely that the case would ever come to trial.

**The Terrorist Threat**

Pro-Palestinian terrorism became a problem for Western Europe in the 1980s. Belgium—the capital of Europe and seat of the European Commission and Parliament—was a prime target, as was its Jewish community. There were two attacks against Jews in Antwerp in 1981 and another in 1982. In 1988, the chairman of the Coordinating Committee of Belgium’s Jewish Organizations (CCOJB), Dr. Jo Wybran, an outstanding researcher in the field of immunology, was mysteriously assassinated coming out of his hospital. The murderer was never found.

In 2001, the Jewish community continued to benefit from a collaborative relationship with the police and gendarmerie (paramilitary federal police) that had been in place for over two decades to provide heightened surveillance for the country’s Jewish institutions and their buildings.
These law-enforcement officials worked in tandem with the Jewish community’s own security service, set up by the Central Consistory, which had a staff of paid professionals assisted by several dozen young volunteers trained in self-defense and antiterrorism tactics. As the Israeli-Palestinian situation deteriorated with the breakdown of the Camp David talks in 2000, the Belgian Jewish community beefed up its security service.

In 2001, graffiti were scrawled on synagogues, the National Memorial to the Jewish Martyrs of Belgium, and Jewish schools. A number of pro-Palestinian demonstrations resulted in the looting of downtown stores owned by Jews, but each time the police took control of the situation and damage was kept to a minimum.

The private Jewish security service was reinforced once again following September 11, and the government gave synagogues and the buildings of certain important Jewish institutions special antiterrorist protection such as that afforded the embassies of Israel and the U.S. Largely due to the two-tiered protection provided by the police and the security service, the day-to-day functioning of the community and its institutions was not affected. The only significant post-September-11 incident occurred in December, when some Orthodox Jews, including Albert Guigui, chief rabbi of Brussels, were attacked and roughed up by young men of Moroccan descent.

Investigations of the international networks of Islamic extremists revealed that Brussels was a true terrorist hub, harboring organizations that maintained contact with networks close to Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. The few suspects who were actually arrested were young Belgians of Turkish or Moroccan descent who adhered to fundamentalist Islam.

Holocaust Restitution

The 1995 commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the country’s liberation and the end of the war triggered a new awareness of the Holocaust. It also coincided with the opening of government archives that had remained closed for 50 years under the laws governing the declassification of official documents.

Belgium voluntarily contributed the equivalent of $1 million to the compensation fund set up in the aftermath of the conference on gold stolen by the Nazis that took place in London in December 1997. This sum was subsequently paid out to the Jewish community and divided between the country’s two Jewish museums, the Jewish Museum in Brussels and the Museum of the Deportation and Resistance in Mechelen. The
Belgian Jewish community and the Belgian government participated in several subsequent international conferences on the Holocaust.

On July 6, 1997 the Belgian government, following the precedent set by France and the Netherlands, created a National Study Commission to determine what happened to Jewish-owned assets during the Holocaust era. It was chaired first by Jean Godeaux, a former governor of the National Bank of Belgium, and then by Lucien Buysse, a former grand marshal of the king’s court (and thus is often referred to as the Buysse Commission). It consisted of five senior civil servants representing government ministries; representatives of the country’s war victims; a retired judge; two historians; and four representatives of Belgium’s Jewish organizations—Professor Georges Schnek, then president of the Central Consistory; Elie Ringer, representing the Forum of Antwerp’s Jewish Institutions; Henig Apfelbaum, president of Antwerp’s Central Administration of Jewish Welfare Organizations; and David Susskind, former president of the Coordinating Committee of Belgium’s Jewish Organizations. In 1999, the government provided the commission with a research staff.

The final report, submitted in July 2001, detailed the role played by the country’s banks, insurance companies, and government officials in the disposal of the assets, and the approximate worth of what was taken by each sector. This document was expected to serve as a basis for restitution claims.

To implement the final report, the government proposed a bill providing for the restitution of the stolen assets to the victims and their heirs in the Jewish community. It called for the creation of a new commission to examine the validity of all submitted claims and the conditions for returning assets or paying out compensation. A portion of the sums collected from banks, insurance companies, and the Belgian state would go toward the creation of a foundation managed jointly by representatives of the country’s Jewish institutions and government appointees. The foundation was to use the interest generated by its endowment to finance social, cultural, and educational projects of Belgium’s Jewish community.

This legislation was debated in the House and Senate and adopted in November 2001. All parties within Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt’s coalition government supported it. The exact amount of the endowment was not yet known, but the Belgian Jewish community’s National Commission for Restitution was already meeting regularly in preparation for the foundation’s creation, and negotiating with banks, insurance companies, and government bodies.

Some of the experts working for the Buysse Commission intended
eventually to turn their attention to tracking down missing cultural assets such as artworks. These, unlike bank deposits, insurance policies, and property nationalized by the government, would require a global hunt.

According to a law passed in December 1998, Jews living in Belgium during World War II who were not Belgian nationals could henceforth claim the status of political prisoners, a designation with moral but not financial implications. The Jewish community had earlier secured government recognition of this status for hidden children, hidden adults, and the orphans of deportees. In 2001, however, the community demanded compensation for the Jewish orphans as well as for other children and adults who lived in hiding during the war. The number of surviving Jews who had lived in Belgium at some time between 1940 and 1945 was not expected to exceed 5,000, including 300 deportees and 3,000 hidden children (1,800 of them orphaned). France and the Netherlands already provided such compensation.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish population of Belgium was estimated at around 31,700, somewhat lower than the number found in the 1974 survey conducted by the National Center of Jewish Studies under its director, Professor Willy Bok. While the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the communist regimes stimulated Jewish immigration from the East, this influx was more than offset by the emigration of young people to North America and Israel and by the low birthrate. The rate of intermarriage was estimated at around 50 percent.

As Jewish activities came increasingly to be concentrated in the large urban centers of Brussels and Antwerp, each home to about 15,000 Jews, smaller Jewish communities such as those of Liège and Charleroi grew smaller. The community was rapidly aging overall, though more so in Brussels than in Antwerp, where the large Orthodox presence included many young families.

The Consistory

The Belgian constitution guarantees freedom of religion and provides for government financial support to all recognized faiths. Even before Bel-
gian independence in 1830, when the country was under the control of
Napoleonic France, Jewish communities were organized under the con-
sistorial system that had been established for French Jews in 1808. That
framework, the Jewish Central Consistory of Belgium, comprised 16
communities in 2001, two of them Sephardi (one in Brussels, the other
in Antwerp) and the rest Ashkenazi. The latest communities to gain of-
official recognition were that of Waterloo, which brought together all of the
Jews in the southern part of Walloon Brabant Province (CIWABS), and
the flourishing community in Knokke, on the Belgian coast, in Western
Flanders Province. Consistorial policy was set by an assembly whose 40
delegates were elected democratically by their respective communities.

The Central Consistory was the uncontested religious and moral au-
thority of Belgian Jewry, and not only because it was the oldest Jewish
institution in the country. By encompassing all of Belgium it brought to-
gether in one federation all Jewish communities despite their varied ide-
ological currents—from Orthodoxy to moderate religious liberalism —
and thus included the vast majority of the Jewish population. The Central
Consistory also personified the model of Jewish integration into modern
Western society; when it celebrated its 175th and 190th anniversaries
with pomp and circumstance, the kingdom's highest authorities were
there. As the representative institution of Judaism in Belgium, it engaged
in dialogue with other religions. It now also helps sponsor projects to help
integrate recently arrived religious minorities, notably Muslims.

The Consistory's activities in the area of education were vital for the
internal strength of the community. Two of its appointees, rabbis who
held the title of "religious inspectors," supervised the teaching of Jewish
religion to Jewish students in the nation's public schools. These classes
were voluntary. Approximately 60 percent of public-school children from
Jewish families in Brussels and 30 percent in Antwerp attended them. In
addition, the Central Consistory largely funded, either directly or indi-
rectly, the three large Jewish schools in Brussels (attended by some 2,000
children) and all of the Jewish schools in Antwerp (attended by some
5,000 children).

Besides its role, mentioned above, in arranging security for Jewish in-
stitutions, the Consistory was behind the creation of two Jewish muse-
ums, the Deportation and Resistance Museum in Mechelen and the Jew-
ish Museum of Belgium in Brussels. The Consistory also acquired a
building, conveniently located near the main campus of Brussels Free
University (ULB), to house the Union of Jewish Students of Belgium
(UEJB) and the European Jewish Students' Union. It also joined with the
C COJB and FJO (respectively the French-speaking and Flemish coordinating committees of Jewish organizations) in arranging the special commemoration of important events. Like the representative institutions of all the recognized faiths, the Consistory was given radio and television slots for broadcasts in French and Dutch.

Under the presidency of Baron Jean Bloch (1978–82) the Consistory set up an academic council, consisting of the chief rabbi and a prestigious group of Jewish university professors, to consider new issues raised by scientific and medical advances. Professor Georges Schnek was the Consistory's president from 1982 until October 2000, when Professor Julien Klener took the post. Klener was the first person from a Flemish Jewish family to head that body.

Religion

The last official chief rabbi of Belgium retired in 1980. To help fill the rabbinical vacuum, the Consistory prevailed upon the Justice Ministry in 1996 to create the position of regional chief rabbi. In 2001 there were four such governmentally recognized rabbis, two in Brussels—one for the general community and the other for the strictly Orthodox—and two in Antwerp, one for each of the main Orthodox communities. In addition, Rabbi Albert Guigui, rabbi of the Brussels general community since 1983 and thus one of the regional rabbis, was appointed rabbinic advisor to the Consistory, making him, in effect, a de facto chief rabbi.

Brussels

The Great Synagogue, built in 1878, was the center of religious life for the Jewish Community of Brussels (JCB). Recognized by the government as a national historic landmark, the synagogue was also the site for major communal ceremonies. Even though it was Orthodox, it had traditionally featured organ music on Sabbath and holidays, as well as a mixed male-female choir. Albert Guigi, however, the present rabbi, eliminated both practices, arguing the need to bring the JCB into line with other Orthodox Jewish communities.

Rabbi Israël Chaikin, the other “regional rabbi” in Brussels, led the Orthodox communities of the boroughs of Saint Gilles and Schaerbeek, and presided over Beth Israel Synagogue. In addition, the Maale community had become attractive to a number of young Jewish academics who were
sympathetic to the Orthodox tradition. The Sephardi Synagogue of Brussels was noted for taking the initiative in meeting with Muslims. In 1999, the Sephardi chief rabbi of Israel came to Brussels to install Rabbi Chalom Benizri as the city's Sephardi chief rabbi.

The borough of Forest had the greatest concentration of Orthodox Jews. There were two relatively new shtieblach (prayer rooms) run by Orthodox Sephardi Jews, one sponsored by Chabad. An ultramodern mikveh (ritual bath) was located in this borough, installed in the headquarters of the Brussels Bet Din (religious court), which supervised it. There was also a Sephardi Community Center set up primarily for educating Jewish children living in the area.

The Liberal Jewish community in Brussels, whose synagogue, Beth Hillel, was also in Forest, grew gradually after World War II at the initiative of a group of American Jews, and most of the current officers were formerly affiliated with the Great Synagogue in the city. Though the Ministry of Justice recognized this community, thus putting it on a par with the Orthodox communities, it was not accredited by the Consistory. Nevertheless, its activities that were not of a religious nature were represented within the Coordinating Committee of Belgian Jewish Organizations (CCOJB).

ANTWERP

Three Antwerp communities were represented within the Consistory, all labeled "Orthodox." The largest was Shomre Hadass, which supervised important religious activities as well as the Tachkemoni School. Machsike Hadass was a federation of all the city's Hassidic groups and considered itself more strictly Orthodox than Shomre Hadass. It had its own kashrut certification system. The "Portuguese" community, smaller that the other two, was supported by many Sephardi Jews.

Jewish Education

An extremely high percentage of Belgian Jewish children attended Jewish schools (the ratio in Antwerp outstripped that in Brussels), and it was probably the highest of any European Jewish community. In addition, as noted above, Belgian law guaranteed children of Jewish families in the public schools the right to attend religion classes that were provided by the Consistory.
Brussels had three Jewish schools attended by more than 2,000 children. The Maimonides Athenaeum, the most religiously traditional of the three, had a large nursery school, a primary school, and a secondary school. The Ganenou Athenaeum, which had grown exponentially over the previous few years, had started primarily to service the children of Israelis living in the country. It now had a secondary school offering excellent preparation for university study. The third and newest school, Beth Aviv, consisted of a nursery school and a primary school. While Jewish studies were taught in all three, Maimonides had the most intensive Jewish program.

In Antwerp more than 3,000 children attend the city’s two main Jewish schools, Tachkemoni and Yesode Hatora. The latter was for the children of Orthodox families only, and boys and girls were taught separately. Both institutions had secondary schools, and Yesode Hatora also had a program for training future elementary-school teachers. Yavne, a third large Jewish school in Antwerp, was run by Modern Orthodox Jews, and included the teaching of Zionism. The Hassidic Jews of the Belz and Satmar movements had their own schools in Antwerp, attended by nearly 800 kindergarten and primary-school pupils. The Jewish community also supported Tikvatenu, a school and center for children with mental and physical disabilities servicing more than 100 children.

There was an Orthodox yeshivah in the Brussels borough of Forest that had been functioning for over 20 years. In Antwerp there were two such yeshivahs, attended primarily by Hassidic youths, as well as a weekly kolel (intensive seminar) that brought together erudite adult scholars for the study of Jewish texts.

The Jewish Studies Institute (originally known as the Martin Buber Institute), the first school of its kind to be established in Europe, operated under the auspices of Brussels Free University (ULB), and some of its academic courses were eventually recognized as part of the regular curriculum of the university. Besides the regular two-year curriculum leading to a degree, the institute held seminars on Jewish topics for secondary-school teachers and summer classes in Yiddish. The institute’s Dutch section, originally located at the ULB’s sister institution, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), was moved to Antwerp’s university center (Instituut voor Joodse Studies at the UIA) and was expected to become gradually more independent from the Brussels section.

In addition, almost all of the Belgian universities had programs in Jewish studies.
Communal Institutions

The Coordinating Committee of Belgian Jewish Organizations (CCOJB) had 41 affiliates in 2001. It was recognized, along with the Central Consistory, as a representative voice for Belgium's Jewish community in dealings of a political nature with Belgian and foreign official bodies, such as, for example, on the question of Holocaust restitution.

Most of Antwerp's Jewish institutions, however, stayed out of the CCOJB and founded the Forum der Joodse Organisaties (Forum of Jewish Organizations) in 1994 to represent Dutch-speaking Jews to the authorities of the Flemish Community. Both it and the CCOJB participated in the Central Consistory.

In the area of social welfare, the Brussels-based Centrale des Oeuvres Sociales Juives (Central Administration of Jewish Welfare Organizations) was primarily a fund-raising body, much like the federation system in the U.S. The money raised went to the Jewish Social Service (equivalent to Jewish family and children's services in the U.S. and open to all, regardless of religion), an old people's home, the three Jewish schools in Brussels, two cultural centers, an athletic center, summer camps, and an education loan fund, all of which also sought to raise money on their own. The Central Administration published a cultural magazine, La Centrale.

A similar coordinating role in Antwerp, where bad economic conditions and the 1996 collapse of the Fischer Bank had greatly increased the number of people needing assistance, was played by the Central Beheer van Joodse Weldadigheid en Maatscheppelijk Hulpbetton (Central Administration for Social Welfare Organizations). Its most recent achievement was the creation of the Queen Elisabeth Residence, consisting of studio apartments for elderly persons who want to continue to live relatively independent lives.

The Belgisch Israëlitisch Weekblad (BIW) was the only regular Jewish newspaper in the country. A weekly, it was published in Antwerp by Louis Davids, who was also the head of an association to promote the Flemish language in the Jewish community. The paper reported on Jewish life in Antwerp and avidly defended Israel.

The Cercle Ben Gurion (Ben-Gurion Circle) was founded in 1977 by socialist Zionists in Brussels to counteract anti-Israel propaganda. Among its activities were a youth center with seminars, festivals, tournaments, Hebrew and Bible classes, Sabbath dinners, and trips. In 1987, it began publishing a monthly on Jewish issues. Most important, the cir-
cle created the first Jewish community radio station in Europe, Radio Judaica, on March 11, 1980, and it quickly became a force to reckon with in Belgium and elsewhere in Europe. It broadcast on matters of interest to the Jewish community, providing a forum for the expression of diverse points of view, round the clock Sunday through Friday. In a sense, Radio Judaica became the voice of Belgium's Jewish community.

A number of other pro-Israel organizations operated in Belgium. The Centre d'Information et de Documentation (Center for Information and Documentation, or CID), created in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, promoted understanding of Israel and its security concerns, especially in the media. Since the start of the second intifada, Solidarité avec Israël (Solidarity with Israel) had collected funds for Israeli projects. L'Aide médicale à Israël, an association of doctors and members of the allied paramedical professions, created in 1967 and now working under the aegis of Solidarité avec Israël, raised money for Israel's hospitals and health-care projects. There were also groups allied with specific Israeli educational and social institutions, and with the different Israeli political parties. Finally, the Maccabis, the country's oldest Jewish athletic association, organized in a Brussels section and an Antwerp section, promoted sports in the Jewish community and participated regularly in the international Maccabiahs in Israel.

The Jewish Secular Community Center (CCLJ), founded by former communists, was the most important voice of secular Judaism, and its headquarters was one of the most active meeting places for Brussels Jewry. The CCLJ organized lectures, colloquia, and seminars on ethnic, historical, and cultural topics outside the traditional religious structure, as well as Yiddish and Hebrew courses. Its members tended to be political leftists, favoring a negotiated peace in the Middle East and the creation of a Palestinian State. The CCLJ prepared children for a "secular bar mitzvah" at age 13 and published the magazine Regards, the most widely read Jewish magazine in the community.

The Union of Jewish Progressives of Belgium (Union des Progressistes Juifs de Belgique, or UPJB) was situated even farther to the left than the CCLJ and had a much smaller following, most of whom belong to the Ecolo and Socialist parties. The organization was not only pro-Palestinian, but openly supportive of the PLO. Like the CCLJ, it sponsored activities centered on Jewish history and culture, and the Yiddish language. Its monthly, Points Critiques (Critical Points), and its quarterly, Entre Points Critiques (Between Critical Points), had very limited circu-
lation. The Jewish community of Belgium excluded the UPJB from federative institutions such as the CCOJB.

L'Union des Etudiants Juifs de Belgique (UEJB, Jewish Students' Union of Belgium) was created in the wake of World War II to bring the Jewish students of the entire country under one organizational structure. Most of the current leaders of the community had been active in the UEJB when they were students. In 2001 it had several hundred members from the country's main universities, and constituted a chapter of the World Union of Jewish Students.

The Conseil des Femmes Juives (Jewish Women's Council), an affiliate of the International Council of Jewish Women, defended the rights of Jewish women, particularly in regard to the problem of the agunot (women whose husbands refused to give them a Jewish divorce).

The Jewish Museum of Belgium, initiated by leaders of the Consistory in 1980 to display the art and history of the Belgian Jewish community, teach visitors something about the Jewish religion, and demonstrate the Jewish contribution to Belgian life, was now run by a nonprofit organization, Pro Museo Judaico. The museum was expected to move very soon to a beautiful building in the Sablon museum district in Brussels that the government offered to the Jewish community.

The Fondation de la Mémoire Contemporaine (Contemporary Memory Foundation), created in 1994, collected documentation, including oral histories, on the role Jews have played in Belgian life. It published an annual, Cahiers de la Mémoire Contemporaine.

Holocaust Commemoration

There were several organizations dedicated to memorializing the Holocaust. The Belgian Union of Jewish Deportees (Union Belge des Déportés Juifs et Filles et Fils de la Déportation/Verenigen van Joodse Weggevoerd in België, Dochters en Zonen der Deportatie) was created upon the country's liberation from Nazi rule by former deportees and survivors of concentration and death camps. It held yearly pilgrimages to Auschwitz, recorded the testimony of survivors, and arranged with school principals for these survivors to speak to students and teachers about their experiences. The organization's new name, Belgian Union of Jewish Deportees and Daughters and Sons of Deportees, reflected the decision to include the second generation in its activities.

The union provided the inspiration for the creation of the National
Memorial for Belgium's Jewish Martyrs in 1970, with the names of the deportees engraved on its stone walls, and the Jewish Museum of the Deportation and Resistance, officially inaugurated by the king in 1995. This museum was located on the very site in Mechelen where more than 25,000 men, women, and children were herded and deported, under unspeakable conditions, to suffering and death (only 2,335 returned). While depicting some aspects of Jewish life in Belgium before World War II, the museum focused on the Nazi era and stressed the role of Jews in the Belgian resistance.

The Auschwitz Foundation organized annual study trips to Auschwitz, maintained a center for study and documentation with a specialized library of more than 7,000 volumes, provided study kits in Flemish and French, and sponsored an essay contest as well as an annual prize for doctoral dissertations on the Holocaust. As an officially recognized body, it had standing to bring legal action against Holocaust deniers.

Interreligious Relations

Christians

The Central Consistory remained deeply involved in relations with Belgian Christians, especially the Roman Catholic Church, which claimed the allegiance of some 90 percent of the population. The Consistorial Commission for Pluralistic Relations had conducted these activities for more than a quarter-century.

There was another organization, Organe de Concertation entre Juifs et Chrétiens (OCJB), a consensus-building body for Jews and Christians. It promoted regular "summit meetings" among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews to review issues facing them, especially on educational matters and on major international events. An ongoing aim of the Belgian Jewish community was to ensure that schoolbooks did not include negative Christian stereotypes about Jews. The OCJB worked with the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) in Europe and globally to carry on dialogue between Jews and Christians.

Jewish-Catholic dialogue groups existed in the main cities of Belgium where Jews lived. Seminars, colloquia, and other meetings were held regularly in a climate of mutual respect. The Brussels chapter of B'nai B'rith also organized a number of Jewish-Christian dialogue groups in coordination with the Consistory.
MUSLIMS

After World War II, Belgium brought in immigrant workers from North Africa and Turkey to work in its mines, steel mills, and other heavy industries. By 2001 there were close to 450,000 practicing Muslims in the country, making Islam Belgium's second religion. Two-thirds of this group were of Moroccan descent; the remaining third were primarily Turkish nationals, but also some Algerians, Tunisians, Pakistanis, Albanians, and others.

There were some 300 mosques in Belgium. Although the government recognized Islam as an official religion, it did not consider the mosques to be official "houses of worship" under the law. However, it was expected that this would change for about 50 of them in 2002. The Executive of Muslims of Belgium (EMB), the Muslim equivalent of the Central Consistory of the Jews, was created in 1998. It was the official representative, to the government and to the Jewish community, of all those claiming the Islamic faith, with the right to recognize mosques and certify the credentials of imams and religious teachers. There was also a Federation of Unions of Mosques, made up of eight associations of mosques totaling 140 individual mosques in Belgium. It represented only North African, mostly Moroccan, mosques. There was a separate federation of Kurdish and Turkish mosques.

Relations between the Muslim and Jewish communities and institutions were generally proper and peaceful. Personal relations between the rabbis (who were often themselves of Moroccan descent and spoke Arabic fluently) and the imams were courteous. One or another imam at the Great Mosque of Brussels had received representatives of the Jewish community on several occasions, just as Jewish leaders received representatives of the EMB at the Consistory. However, in some Brussels neighborhoods, Muslim immigrants living near certain synagogues sometimes hampered ingress and egress. Each time an incident occurred, such as the attack on Rabbi Guigui in December 2001, the president of the Consistory and the president of the Muslim Executive issued a statement calling for calm and mutual respect.

Personalia

King Baudouin elevated Georges Schneek, emeritus professor at ULB, former Consistory president, and president of the Jewish Museum of Belgium, to the rank of baron in July.
Important Belgian Jews who passed away in 2001 were: Ruth Sosnowski, Brussels businesswoman, former president of B’nai Brith, and member of B’nai Brith Europe’s presidium, October; Rabbi Marc Kahlenberg of Brussels, October; Chief Rabbi Chaïm Kreiswirth of the Machsike Hadass community, Antwerp, December. (Salomon Klagsbald, diamond merchant and president of Machsike Hadass, had passed away in September 2000.)

Georges Schnek
Thomas Gergely
The Netherlands

National Affairs

The Netherlands remained the most densely populated country in Europe. Though its population reached 16 million at the beginning of the year, the rate of population growth was down slightly because of a reduction in immigration. An estimated 38,000 asylum-seekers entered the country during 2001 as compared to 43,000 in 2000, and a new immigration law, passed at the end of 2000, requiring quick decisions in such cases ensured the prompt expulsion of many who were turned down. Meanwhile, there were still thousands of would-be immigrants whose cases were already in the pipeline before the new law was passed, and their applications proceeded under the old, more cumbersome, procedure. The minister of justice, however, was determined to resolve these cases expeditiously, and thus many more were expelled than in previous years. Over the course of 2001 it became increasingly more acceptable to object to the presence of immigrants "with different customs"—that is, non-Western ones—a trend that intensified after September 11.

The tragic events of that day deeply affected the Netherlands. Many ordinary Dutch citizens, horrified by the attacks on innocent Americans, attended memorial ceremonies for the victims that were held throughout the country. The largest such event took place on the Dam, the main square of Amsterdam and the spot where national events commemorating the victims of World War II were regularly held. At noon on September 12 the whole of Amsterdam fell still for three minutes of silence (one more than the customary two minutes observed for the wartime dead). Cars and buses stood in the streets while workers in shops, offices, and factories stopped working and stood together in little groups. Other Dutch towns witnessed similar scenes. Prime Minister Willem Kok, together with all the cabinet ministers and their deputies, walked on foot from the houses of Parliament to the American embassy where a large crowd had gathered and the gates were covered with flowers. Kok placed a wreath and observed the three minutes of silence there.

Most Islamic organizations in the country denounced the acts of terror, but in the town of Ede, Moroccan youngsters celebrated in the streets. The attack itself and reports of what happened in Ede heightened an al-
ready existing mistrust of Muslims. Some mosques were vandalized, others had anti-Muslim slogans painted on them, and Muslims wearing traditional dress reported being threatened when walking down the street.

The Jewish community was also affected. Dutch Jews, with many ties to Israel, identified easily with the victims in New York and their families. Several Jewish institutions, including the only two Jewish day schools in Amsterdam, closed the day after the attack. While the national media explained this as an act of solidarity, in fact these Jewish institutions had been warned that it was unsafe to open their doors that day. A number of Jewish organizations wrote an open letter of protest against the Islamophobia that surfaced in the days after the attack. Meanwhile, verbal abuse by Muslim youths of "visible Jews" became more frequent, while local police were unwilling to act, for fear of escalating tensions and "further stigmatizing" the Muslim community.

On the national political scene, the Netherlands started to move towards the elections of May 2002. After a period of relative stability the major parties were coming under pressure both internally and through the rise of a new right-wing populist party. The government coalition, made up of Labor (PvdA), Conservative Liberals (VVD), and the small center-left Democrats 1966 (D'66), had begun its tenure in August 1998 under the leadership of Prime Minister Kok (PvdA). In August 2001, with elections less than a year away, Kok announced his resignation as leader of the PvdA after 15 years at its helm. He would remain in office as prime minister, he said, but would not lead his party in the elections. His successor, Ad Melkert, was much less popular than Kok, and some party members tried to sabotage his candidacy by leaking scandals about him. In September, Marnix van Rij, leader of the Christian Democrats, the largest opposition party, followed Kok's example, unexpectedly announcing his resignation as party chairman. After some infighting, Jan Peter Balkenende emerged as his replacement.

Meanwhile a new party appeared, "Livable Netherlands," headed by Pim Fortuyn. Seeking to cash in on the popularity of several local parties that went by the same name, it advocated such right-wing populist measures as greatly reducing the number of "bureaucrats," making government services such as the police force "work harder rather than pouring ever more money into them," freeing up prison cell space by locking up drug smugglers in large cages containing more than a hundred at a time, and forcing immigrants to pay for obligatory courses on assimilation into Dutch culture for spouses they imported from their countries of origin. Fortuyn particularly objected to Muslims, and that was clearly
the group he had in mind when he claimed that Holland was much too tolerant towards intolerant cultures. This fitted nicely with post-September 11 popular anger at Islam and resentment at the apparent reluctance of the police to do anything effective about abusive Muslim youngsters. The new party—which included a well-known Jew, David Pinto, within its ranks—performed well in opinion polls and by the end of the year it had the allegiance of an estimated 13 percent of the electorate. More than half of these had previously voted for the VVD. Pollsters predicted that the current coalition would lose its majority in the next election.

The Dutch economy slowed significantly in 2001 due to weaknesses in the international economic situation. The growth rate was only 1 percent as compared to as much as 4 percent in recent years. The main cause of this drop was a decline in exports. The economic blow was cushioned somewhat by increased public spending, which was made possible because the government was paying out less for social security and unemployment payments; the latter, however, though still going down, declined at a slower rate than in 2000. Employment growth was negative, in sharp contrast to the growth rate of nearly 3 percent in previous years. Unemployment among immigrants was down somewhat from 2000, but it remained much higher than in the general population.

Israel and the Middle East

When Israel’s new ambassador, Eitan Margalit, quietly presented his credentials just days after September 11, he referred to the “special relationships” between the two countries. While his assessment may have been true in regard to parts of the population, official Dutch-Israeli relationships in 2001 were far from “special.” The Netherlands maintained a high level of economic and political support for the Palestinian Authority, both unilaterally and through the European Union, and there was much criticism of Israeli policies.

Politicians reacted to the many Palestinian terror attacks during the year in a painstakingly “evenhanded” way. Foreign Minister Jozias van Aartsen and, with just a few notable exceptions, members of Parliament, generally took the line that “of course it is a terrible thing when civilians are killed on both sides,” always adding that “of course Israel’s occupation of the territories causes understandable Palestinian rage.” Some, particularly in the left-wing Green Party, blamed Israel outright for Palestinian terror. This became especially grating after the attack on the Sbarro
pizzeria in Jerusalem on August 9, which left the Jewish community in Holland feeling particularly bereaved by wiping out five of its members—both parents and three of the smaller children of the much-loved Schijveschuurder family. Even after settling in Israel, they had kept up close contacts with Dutch family and friends. As the Dutch Jewish community mourned the victims and raised funds to aid the five surviving orphans, one country after another sent condolences to the Israeli government—except Holland. The foreign minister only did so belatedly, and, it is said, after pressure from “a friendly” member of Israel’s Knesset.

September 11 brought a slight change, as the shock appeared to make the Dutch in general, including some politicians, more empathetic toward civilians struck by terrorism. One MP from the D’66 party who still walked the tightrope of evenhandedness even after Sbarro, wholeheartedly condemned the December 1–2 attacks in Jerusalem and Haifa, though he was still unprepared to denounce Arafat himself. Even while the Dutch showed more sympathy than usual for Israel after September 11, public opinion, paradoxically, also tended to agree with many of the local imams, who blamed “Israel’s aggression against the Palestinian people” for the attacks in New York. When the EU demanded the dismantling of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Foreign Minister Van Aartsen criticized the EU statement as too harsh and suggested that Israel should “find its way to negotiations as well.” Economically, the attacks had a devastating effect on the travel industry, and tourism to the Middle East, to Israel in particular, ground to a virtual standstill. Even at the end of the year traffic to Israel remained largely confined to people traveling to family occasions, and a small number of vacationers headed for Eilat.

Fear that unrest in the region might endanger their investments induced some Dutch firms and the government to cut back on economic relations with the Palestinians. Several projects that were in their initial stages—a new police academy, a training program for Palestinian Authority policemen, and the construction of a port in Gaza—were suspended in May, and the Gaza port plan was canceled in September. Debates on whether to demand financial compensation from Israel for damage to structures that had already been put up were still going on at the end of the year, just as they were in the EU in regard to projects that had been funded collectively by the member states.

Israeli security sources charged that tens of millions of dollars donated to the Palestinian Authority—presumably including funds from the roughly $15 million that Holland budgeted for direct aid to the PA—were going into Yasir Arafat’s personal account and were being used to buy
weapons. Eveline Herfkens, the minister for overseas development, was questioned about it in Parliament on November 19. Ten days later she responded that all EU support to the PA was paid into a separate account monitored by the International Monetary Fund and “cannot possibly be used to buy weapons.” The issue of anti-Semitism in Palestinian schoolbooks was a very sensitive one for the Dutch government since not only did an unknown amount of direct Dutch aid to the PA go toward their publication, but Holland was also an important contributor to the $17.5 million that the EU provided specifically to produce these books. The first editions of the texts, published in 1998 and found to contain blatantly anti-Semitic statements, gave special thanks to Holland for contributing to their publication. After some pressure from the EU, the PA had promised to remove anti-Semitic content from future editions. However the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace and other experts claimed that the new 2001 editions still contained offensive passages. After some pointed questioning by members of Parliament, the Dutch government promised on July 12 to review the texts, and repeated the promise in September. Though this review was to take a mere “few weeks,” nothing had been done as the year ended.

At the “anti-racism” conference in Durban, South Africa, which began in late August and quickly turned into an anti-Israel forum, members of the Dutch government delegation disagreed among themselves over whether to follow the lead of the U.S. and Israel and walk out, a dilemma made all the more difficult by the strong desire to develop a common EU position. In the end, all the EU states remained, and the closing statement refrained from naming Israel. Only five Dutch organizations refused to sign the closing statement of the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that ran parallel to the main proceedings in Durban, South Africa; the statement equated Zionism with racism. Afterwards, some delegates claimed they were unaware of the vote on this statement and had never seen the text. Representatives of Dutch NGOs confirmed this, saying: “The NGO conference was total chaos; there was no list of participating NGOs, it was unknown how many participated, and delegates were unaware which issues were voted where and when.” (See above, pp. 96–104.)

The Dutch Jewish community’s relations with Israel were not smooth sailing either. The group calling itself “A Different Jewish Voice,” founded in 2000 (see AJYB 2001, p. 344), published a full-page ad in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz (June 8) telling Israel to “Stop the bloodshed. Stop the occupation. The intifada is the result of 34 years of occupation.” This
greatly enraged the 10,000-strong community of Dutch-born Jews living in Israel, and strained relations between Israel and Dutch Jewry. In Holland, A Different Jewish Voice placed similar newspaper ads and sponsored meetings on the Middle East conflict that drew large audiences of fervent supporters as well as adversaries.

Then, in September, a new group organized, calling itself the Anti-Racism-Zionist Initiative (ARZI). According to its spokesman, media personality Ralph Inbar, this was a movement “against hate, prejudice, and the falsification of history, and for support to a democratic Israel and the Palestinian right to a state.” Unlike A Different Jewish Voice, which claimed that only its posture of opposition could generate a strong critique of its policy in the territories and that other Jewish groups were no more than apologists for the occupation, ARZI sought to stake out a middle ground by criticizing the occupation but at the same time supporting Israel. In December, CIDI, the Center for Information and Documentation on Israel, a pro-Israel organization, also appeared ready to criticize the Jewish state when it sent an open letter to Sharon asking him to review his veto on Yasir Arafat’s Christmas visit to Bethlehem.

The question of Dutch participation in the 16th Maccabiah games in Jerusalem was a painful episode that dragged on for months. After much discussion, Maccabi Netherlands announced in May that “for security reasons” it would not send a delegation, and forbade individual sportsmen to participate under the Dutch flag. Holland was to be the only country without representation. At the opening ceremony on July 15, however, one single Dutchman showed up and was paraded around the arena behind two Israeli beauties carrying the Dutch flag, while the announcer broadcast in Hebrew and English that this was Charles Nenner, “the only Dutchman who came to support Israel in spite of everything.” This was followed by a physical confrontation between board members of Maccabi Netherlands who were present at the opening (they called it “some pushing and shoving”), and Nenner (he called it “a beating”). Discussions continued in Holland long after the games were over, and Maccabi Netherlands eventually admitted that “it would have been better to send a delegation.”

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

There were several disturbing anti-Semitic incidents in 2001, starting with a dramatic series of graveyard desecrations around May 4, the Dutch
Remembrance Day for the victims of World War II, and May 5, Liberation Day.

The week before, Jews from the community of Breda went to the Jewish cemetery of Dorst for their annual remembrance ceremony. On arrival they discovered swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on more than 70 gravestones. Police reasoned that this must have been planned, since the cemetery was hard to find, the number of desecrated gravestones was large, and the wall around the graveyard had been destroyed, apparently to facilitate a quick getaway. The media covered the incident extensively, particularly when Prime Minister Kok denounced it in his opening speech to the International Remembrance Conference, hosted by the city of Amsterdam on May 2.

The next day, May 3, the CIDI published its yearly report on anti-Semitic incidents for the year 2000. For the first time in years, there had been a rise both in the number of incidents and their severity. (While the report for 2001 was not yet released at the end of the year, Haddassa Hirschfeld, the compiler, believed that the numbers for 2001 would be even higher.)

Two days after that, on May 5, Holland's Liberation Day, seven gravestones in the little Jewish cemetery of Zaltbommel were covered with swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans. Nanny Peerenboom, the mayor (and one of Holland's few Jewish mayors) seriously considered keeping the incident from the press for fear of copycat attacks. Instead, she organized a meeting at the graveyard: "I will not be ruled by fear," she said. Members of Parliament and representatives of the Jewish community who arrived for the meeting were greeted by yet another set of desecrations: swastikas had appeared all over the town of Zaltbommel. A police unit assigned to investigate concluded that these were indeed copycat incidents, and things quieted down. At the end of June three arrests were made, and all the suspects confessed to the desecrations in Dorst. The three were members of the Stormfront, a tiny splinter group that had broken away from the extreme right-wing Nederlandse Volks Unie party.

Despite the rising number of such incidents, experts agreed that organized racism was still negligible in the Netherlands. Extreme right-wing parties were estimated to have a mere 650 members, with a hard core of about 60 activists.

Another category of anti-Semitic incidents was the work of unorganized groups of bored youngsters—often, but not always, of Moroccan descent. Jewish inhabitants of ethnically mixed neighborhoods were often
the targets of verbal abuse, which usually went unreported. Even small Jewish children learned to take it in stride. Occasionally, however, verbal abuse escalated into outright harassment. In one case, congregants of a synagogue in Amsterdam had to remain inside the building until a group of aggressive youngsters outside had been dispersed by Jewish security personnel.

In November things got worse: six youngsters started shouting at three elderly Jews leaving a synagogue in a mixed Amsterdam neighborhood, and then threw stones. They shouted in Arabic, but the drift was clear enough from words such as “Palestinian,” “Bin Laden,” and “Jews.” The three phoned the police, but nobody came. When they went to the local station house they were told that the station was understaffed and could not even take their statements. Later, they took the incident to the press, and even this did not produce a reaction from the police. Local authorities, including Job Cohen, the Jewish mayor of Amsterdam, promised initiatives to improve Muslim-Jewish relations in the neighborhood, but there was no follow-up.

Racism on the Internet was on the rise. Though less physically threatening and easier to avoid than outright confrontation, it was particularly insidious because the perpetrators could hide their identity. In January, a local court in Apeldoorn fined an unnamed Dutchman nearly $600 for racism and anti-Semitism on the Internet. This was the first such conviction of an individual; the only other conviction, in 2000, was of an extreme right-wing party.

Holocaust Restitution

Many of the international and national restitution schemes that were set in motion in 2000 continued into 2001. In most cases, the process of restitution itself had become a routine matter.

The German fund for slave laborers was ready to start payments in 2001, and applications had to be submitted to the Claims Conference in Germany by August 11. The Jewish Social Welfare Board was flooded with requests for help from concentration camp survivors. One official described complaints from those who had come up against “unheard-of chaos, incompetence, lack of understanding and inability to implement a policy that did justice to the Claims Conference’s real solidarity with victims of war.”

The Ekkart Commission continued its investigations into the prove-
nance of some 4,000 works of art currently in Dutch museums (see AJYB 2001, p. 348). Its second report, released in January, covered some 460 paintings. It stated that the ownership of some was unclear, as was the role of the Foundation for Dutch Art Collection, which was supposed to have restored art recovered from Germany to the rightful owners after World War II. In July the Dutch Parliament, the Central Jewish Organization (CJO, which represented Dutch Jewry on restitution issues), the World Jewish Congress in New York, and commission chairman Rudi Ekkart all criticized the Dutch minister of arts for not following the Ekkart recommendations on the reopening of claims. In the end the government went along, announcing that any sales by Dutch Jews to non-Jews after May 1940 would be considered forced sales unless proven otherwise, and that former owners could once again present claims that had been rejected in the 1950s.

For most Dutch survivors, the main event of the year was the distribution of individual restitution monies put up by the government, banks, insurance companies, and the stock exchange in 2000 (see AJYB 2001, pp. 347–48). About $235 million was available, but no one knew how many legitimate claimants there were. The main reason for the uncertainty was a fear of registration. An unusually high number of Dutch Jews had perished during the war, more, both in absolute numbers (100,000) and on a percentage basis (75 percent), than in any other occupied country in Western Europe. One reason for this high death rate was that the community had been so well organized that its registration lists made it easy for the Germans to find and deport Jews; after the war, therefore, many shied away from anything resembling registration, and thus there were survivors unknown to the community. Adding to the uncertainty was the fact that there had not been a demographic survey of Dutch Jewry in 35 years.

The Maror Foundation, which had the responsibility of distributing the funds, estimated that there were some 50,000 Dutch survivors of the Holocaust, each of whom would receive $5,500 from the fund. In those cases where a survivor died after the war, the money would go to the surviving spouse or be divided among the children. Since so many of the survivors were elderly, the “Maror money” was to be dispensed as quickly as possible. To determine who qualified, the foundation sent out a fairly simple form, and the information supplied on it was entered into a computer and matched up with various databases to determine if the applicant was indeed a Jewish survivor who had lived in Holland during the
Holocaust. Many applicants received their money promptly and painlessly after sending in this form. Complications arose, however, when the information on the form did not match the databases. Then, a second, much more intrusive form had to be completed, and many found it upsetting. In some cases, one sibling received money immediately, while another child of the same parents was sent the infamous “pink form” and had to submit extra evidence.

Nevertheless, when the deadline for individual claims came, on December 31, most survivors or their children had received their money, or at least a decision. At the end of the year, with just 900 forms still to be processed, about 26,000 claims had been satisfied, far fewer than the anticipated 50,000 claimants. Clearly, not all survivors or their families had been reached. The next step for the foundation was to calculate how much of the money remained unclaimed. From 10 to 20 percent of that, depending on how much was unclaimed, would be distributed to Jewish institutions for communal purposes. Whatever was left thereafter would go to individuals who qualified in a “second round.”

One side effect of the recognition of communal ignorance about the number of survivors was that the Foundation for Jewish Social Work (JMW) was able to get individuals and organizations to cooperate on a demographic study—or, as some elderly survivors described it, “Jew counting.” It was carried out in conjunction with the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI). A preliminary report was published in 2000, and the final report in October 2001 (see below, p. 000). Since it included questions about Jewish affiliation and attitudes, the results were expected to be useful in drawing up a plan for the next stage of the distribution of restitution money, to the “Jewish infrastructure” that served Jewish needs and helped guarantee Jewish continuity.

The data showed that the religious congregations could hardly claim to represent the community: only about 26 percent of all Jews belonged to a synagogue. This finding encouraged other Jewish institutions to assert claims to the money, and they formed a new umbrella organization, Platform Infrastructure Netherlands (PIN). As the new group picked up steam, the religious bodies joined as well, and by the end of the year PIN was the largest Jewish umbrella organization ever seen in Holland. Still, it did not include the large percentage of Jews who were unaffiliated, and the committee formed to draw up a plan for the distribution of the communal money sought to make allowances for future organizations, particularly those catering to the unaffiliated.
Demography

The full results of the new demographic survey of the Jews in the Netherlands—the first in 35 years—were published in October, and they did not bode well for the future of the community. Based on a sample of 1,036 respondents, it estimated the Jewish population of the country at 44,000, or .275 percent of the total Dutch population of 16 million. The previous survey, done in 1966, found roughly the same number of Jews, but the data showed that the current community had maintained its numbers only because of Russian and Israeli immigration.

Fully 30 percent of the community in 2001 was not Jewish according to Halakhah, traditional Jewish law, because they were children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers. (Among the bona fide Jews, 24 percent had non-Jewish fathers.) And intermarriage was accelerating. Among younger married Jews, 76 percent of men and 68 percent of women had intermarried. Even of the roughly 46 percent who had two Jewish parents, fully half were themselves intermarried.

Another factor contributing to demographic pessimism was the low birthrate. First-time Jewish mothers in the Netherlands were, on average, 35 years old—seven years older than their non-Jewish counterparts—though religiously observant Jews tended to have children at a younger age. A third of all Jewish women born since 1955 had not had children by the time they reached the age of 40, and were therefore unlikely ever to have children, with the percentage of childless rising as more women reached that age each year. Women of the postwar generation who did start a family had, on average, 1.5 children, below the national average of 1.9 children per woman.

Over two-thirds of Dutch Jews were still unmarried at age 30, more than twice the rate among the general population. In some age brackets, the Jewish divorce rate was double the national average. (Those with two Jewish parents and/or a Jewish spouse showed lower divorce rates.) The percentage of Jewish family units consisting of couples with children fell from 44 percent in 1966 to 28 percent in 2001. Only about half of the Jewish over-35 group lived with a partner and children, as opposed to 61 percent among the general Dutch population. While only 23 percent of people under age 35 in the general population lived alone, 44 percent of Jews that age did.
Communal Affairs

The “Portuguese” Sephardi Congregation of The Hague discontinued its activities due to lack of members. The national Sephardi community, with less than 500 members, was now reduced to the “main” congregation in Amsterdam and a “secondary minyan” in nearby Amstelveen. The latter was the more viable of the two, with a growing number of young families and a lively program. Most of the congregants were of North African origin, only a few were paying members, and most were unfamiliar with the customs that Jewish immigrants from Portugal had brought to Amsterdam in the 17th century. These customs still reigned in the Esnoga, the historic Portuguese synagogue of Amsterdam, where a dwindling congregation staggered under the enormous costs of maintaining the monumental building. Sam Behar resigned as chairman of the Portuguese community of Amsterdam in May, just two months after being chosen for the office. “Problems within the community affected his health so badly that he received doctor’s orders to resign,” said Behar’s successor, Rudi Cortissos.

Membership in the Ashkenazi Jewish community of Amsterdam had remained constant for years at just under 2,900, but since there had been many more deaths than births, this was achieved by attracting new members. One project aimed at keeping membership up was offering those Jews in Ijar, the Jewish student union, free membership for one year, and then a special student membership for about $10 a year.

When the Jewish community of Amsterdam held elections for its board in March, the eligibility of women for membership in that body was a prominent issue. The results of the election kept the ruling coalition basically intact, but months passed before the formation of a new board. Meanwhile, Amsterdam seemed likely to remain the only Jewish community in the Netherlands that banned women from its board.

In other communal news, Motti Rosenzweig, the only kosher slaughterer in the whole of Holland, resigned and went back to Israel. Kosher meat prices immediately skyrocketed as the community had to fly a shohet (ritual slaughterer) in from Israel. The Jewish community of Arnhem raised several million dollars for the restoration of its 147-year-old synagogue. The Dutch government contributed generously, as did the province, the town of Arnhem, and individual sponsors. The building was due to reopen in 2003.
Publications

For a country with a small Jewish community, a remarkable number of "Jewish" books were published.

There were several works on World War II and its aftermath. Historian Martin Bossenbroek wrote *De Meelstreep* (The Line Drawn with Flour), the first in a projected series of works investigating Dutch attitudes toward postwar returnees. The Dutch government had commissioned SOTO, an institute employing a group of mostly young historians, to research the topic. Bossenbroek's book described the experiences of a wide range of returnees, from former concentration camp inmates to Dutchmen returning from (forced or unforced) labor in Germany, and concluded that while the reception of returnees may appear callous in hindsight, in the context of postwar Holland it was not. Other historians—notably Professor Ies Lipschitz, a specialist in postwar restitution of properties robbed from Jews—criticized his conclusions. A second volume in the series, *Mensenheugenis* (Living Memory), contained actual testimonies of returnees, edited by Hinke Piersma. Three more books were planned for 2002 and 2003.

Gerard Aalders of the National Institute for Wartime Documentation published *Berooid: De beroofde joden en het Nederlandse restitutiebeleid sinds 1945* (Destitute: Jews Robbed during the War and the Dutch Restitution Policies after 1945), presenting his view on the restitution process. Historian Dienke Hondius chronicled the story of the Jewish High School, which opened in 1941 when the Nazis barred Jewish students from Dutch schools, until 1943 when most of the pupils had been deported. The book was based on interviews with surviving students and teachers, and the publisher, Vassallucci, organized a reunion for the official release of the book, *Absent: Herinneringen aan het Joods Lyceum Amsterdam 1941–1943* (Absent: Memories of the Jewish High School Amsterdam, 1941–43).

Piet Klein, one of Holland's top economic historians, published a most unusual work, *Kaddisj voor Isaac Roet* (Kaddish for Isaac Roet). Klein worked for the National Institute of Wartime Documentation before becoming head researcher for one of the government commissions investigating postwar restitution policies. He resigned after a few months, shocked by the cold and bureaucratic attitude toward survivors that he uncovered, and especially by what he learned happened to Isaac Roet, an inventor of working-class origin who perished.

Journalist Daphne Meijer wrote *Onbekende kinderen: De laatste trein*
uit Westerbork (Unknown Children: The Last Train from Westerbork), the story of 50 Jewish toddlers who were caught without their parents and deported on the last train from Holland to Theresienstadt in 1944. Many were too young to know their own names; they were registered as “group of unknown children.” Those who survived were later placed with Dutch foster parents. Meijer spent years tracking them down and documenting their stories. Several had since kept in touch and become each other’s “family.”

Several Dutch translations of modern Israeli authors appeared in 2001, thanks largely to the small publishing house Vassallucci, which had made these works so popular in Holland that Dutch translations outnumbered those in English. Vassallucci also published translations of the great Yiddish authors.

Four Jewish academics resigned from the supervisory board of a new Dutch translation of the Bible in protest of a decision to translate the four-letter name of God as LORD. This left the 51-member board with only three Jews.

**Personalia**

Fred Ensel, who, among many other activities, was vice chairman of the Maror Foundation for the distribution of restitution monies, was named by Queen Beatrix to the National Committee May 4 and 5. This committee organizes National Remembrance Day (for all victims of World War II, May 4) and National Liberation Day (May 5).

Rob van der Heijden, the Jewish mayor of the seaside town of Zandvoort, became chairman of the Maror Foundation.

The Liberal rabbi Awraham Soetendorp was elected president of the European division of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

G. Philip Mok (Gerrie) discontinued his weekly column in the Dutch Jewish weekly *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad* (NIW) after more than 30 years, at the request of the paper’s new editor. Mok had made both friends and enemies with his forceful writings on Israel from a very right-wing point of view. Some readers canceled their subscriptions in protest of the move, while others wrote thank-you notes to the editor.

Author Ida Vos received two awards in 2001 — the Sidney Taylor Book Award from the American Union of Jewish Libraries for *The Key is Lost*, a translation of her children’s book *De sleutel is gebroken*, and Das Rote Tuch, a German award for books criticizing authoritarianism and neo-fascism, in recognition of all of her work.
Gerrit Zalm, the Dutch minister of finance, received the Scopus Award of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem for his "commitment in resolving restitution issues."

The death of Henriette Boas, 89, was commemorated in all of the Dutch dailies and in the Jerusalem Post, where she was a correspondent for years. Blessed with an independent mind and a cast-iron memory for the tiniest detail, this exceedingly frail historian was the scourge of any journalist who got his facts wrong, and bravely attacked views she considered off the mark. She continued to write—among other things, the entry on the Netherlands in the American Jewish Year Book—even when she was old and ill.

Other prominent Jews who died in 2001: Berry Biedermann, 49, just after resigning as secretary of the Amsterdam Jewish community for health reasons, leaving two young children; Annetje Fels-Kupferschmidt, 87, founding mother (in 1956), chairman, and honorary chairman of the Dutch Auschwitz Committee, whose activism gained recognition and financial support for Dutch victims of war, and who was at the forefront of the struggle against neofascism, racism, and anti-Semitism; Bob Levison, nearly 88, an active member of the Liberal Jewish Congregation in The Hague and who, in 1974, founded and headed the Center for Information and Documentation on Israel to counter EU-style "evenhandedness" then surfacing in the Netherlands under Arab economic pressure; Ab Rijksman, 82, the last living memory of the poorest Jewish neighborhood in Amsterdam, who built up a new life from scratch after his return from Auschwitz, and supported many others; Daan Stibbe, chairman of the Jewish Community of Zwolle and major fundraiser for the restoration of Zwolle's decrepit century-old synagogue; Otto Treuman, whose top quality graphic work gave face to many of Holland's Jewish organizations, and who also designed logos for KLM, El Al, and other major businesses; Sophie (Fieps) van Emde, 94, one of the founding mothers and later chairman of WIZO Netherlands, honorary life member of World WIZO, and first female chairman of the Dutch Zionist Union; and Louis van Veen, 96, former clerk of the district court of Amsterdam, secretary and mainstay of the Gerard Dou synagogue, dubbed the "Van Veen synagogue" after him.
Italy and the Vatican

National Affairs

A center-right alliance headed by billionaire media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi swept to power in the general elections in May, ousting the previous center-left government. Berlusconi took office as prime minister in June at the head of Italy’s 59th government since 1945. The cabinet included his own business-oriented Forza Italia party as well as the National Alliance (AN), which had its roots in neofascism, and the once separatist Northern League, which was known for its anti-immigrant policies.

The government came under fire soon after taking office for the way security forces handled the violence that marred the Group of Eight summit in Genoa in July. The government deployed 20,000 police and paramilitary carabinieri, but they proved unable to quell violent anti-globalization demonstrations. Police shot dead a 23-year-old demonstrator and were accused of brutality against other protestors. The riots caused millions of dollars of damage to Genoa.

Italian Jews were divided over the new government. On the one hand, Berlusconi’s administration was expected to be the most pro-Israel Italian government in years. But many Jews not only distrusted the Northern League, some of whose members had close ties with Jörg Haider’s Freedom Party in Austria, but also had particular qualms about the National Alliance, whose leader, Gianfranco Fini, was now deputy prime minister.

Fini had tried over the previous few years to distance himself from his party’s fascist roots and make the AN a mainstream rightist party, but many Italian Jews, including Amos Luzzatto, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, remained skeptical. In June, as part of his ongoing effort to ease Jewish fears, Fini made his first visit to the only World War II Nazi death camp in Italy, La Risiera di San Sabba near Trieste, now a memorial to the Shoah, where he laid a wreath.

Israel apparently no longer shared these concerns about Fini and his party. In the fall, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Ehud Gol, who had just replaced Yehuda Millo as Israel’s ambassador to Rome, indicated that Israel was willing to set aside longstanding objections and allow Fini to
visit the Jewish state. Such a visit was considered likely to go a long way toward legitimizing the AN’s transition. In local elections at the end of May, Franca Eckert Coen, a former director of Rome’s II Pitigliani JCC, was elected to the Rome city council and was given responsibility for multiethnic affairs. In the same elections, Guido Mussolini, 64, grandson of Italy’s wartime fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, ran for mayor of Rome as the candidate of the far-right fringe Forza Nuova movement, but received little electoral support.

Italian reaction to the September 11 attacks and the subsequent air strikes in Afghanistan revealed a mix of ambivalence, division, and insecurity in the face of new global and domestic challenges. Italy pledged troops, ships, and fighter jets, and Berlusconi sought to present himself as the responsible leader of a country fully committed to America’s war on terrorism. But the prime minister was forced to engage in extensive damage control after asserting, in September, that Western civilization was superior to Islam. Anti-immigrant sentiment, particularly directed against the growing population of Muslim immigrants, mushroomed after September 11, especially after the U.S. described Milan’s Islamic cultural center and mosque as “the main station house in Europe” for the Al Qaeda terrorist network.

Italian public opinion sympathized with the Americans as victims of terrorism, but many opposed the Afghan war and feared its effects. Much of the skepticism about the war grew out of Italy’s differences, over the years, with the U.S. on Middle East policy and its attempts to strengthen links with Iran and Libya, countries that Washington considered “rogue states.” An angry article by journalist Oriana Fallaci became a catalyst for debate. She lambasted Italians for their ambivalence toward the U.S. and their lack of ideals and moral principles. She warned that the current war was one of religion and culture in which Muslim immigrants represented a “secret invasion.”

In November, Rome was the site of two huge rival demonstrations. Tens of thousands attended a pro-America rally led by Berlusconi and his party, while at the same time a similar number of people protested against the Afghan war.

Israel and the Middle East

The continuing Israel-Palestinian conflict and other Middle East tensions were a major focus of Italy’s foreign policy throughout the year, both before and after the September 11 terrorist attacks.
Indeed, the threat of terrorism, often linked to the Middle East, hung over Italy even prior to September 11. In January, the U.S. embassy in Rome was shut down without warning for three days following what officials called a “very specific” terrorist threat. In April, a bomb damaged the building that housed an institute for Italian-American relations. That same month, in a raid coordinated with police forces elsewhere in Europe and in the United States, police in Milan arrested five suspected members of an Islamic guerrilla group believed linked to Osama bin Laden. In August, Italian police deactivated a rudimentary bomb near the U.S. consulate in Florence; close to the device police found an anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist leaflet that contained slogans backing the new Palestinian intifada.

Italy attempted to play the role of mediator in the Middle East. Both government policy and public sentiment favored the formation of an independent Palestinian state so long as Israel’s security was guaranteed. Senior Italian officials made numerous trips to the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world, both before and after Berlusconi’s government came to power. In February, before the national elections, Prime Minister Giuliano Amato visited Iran to show support for Mohammed Khatami, the reformist president, and to foster trade. That same week, a large, high-ranking Italian trade delegation also visited Iran.

Italian leaders held meetings in Rome throughout the year with Middle East leaders, including Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel, President Yasir Arafat of the Palestinian Authority, and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. During a 24-hour visit to Rome in July, Sharon characterized the atmosphere as the warmest he had experienced in a recent round of foreign trips. He said he “found a government that is friendly and a prime minister who is much more than a friend toward Israel.” During a one-day visit to Rome in October, Arafat won a promise from Berlusconi that Italy would back a major economic assistance package for a future independent Palestinian state. Berlusconi referred to this as a “Marshall plan for Palestine,” modeled on the U.S. aid program that helped rebuild Europe after World War II. He reiterated this idea in late November during a meeting with a B’nai B’rith International delegation headed by the organization’s president, Richard D. Heideman, and again in December at a meeting with Peres.

Italian public opinion was highly critical of Israel’s tough military policy against the Palestinians, and Italian Jews expressed alarm and concern throughout the year at what they perceived as a sharp anti-Israel and anti-Jewish bias in the print and broadcast media, including state-run
television. Jewish monitors, making use of Web sites set up for the purpose, analyzed the media’s performance and denounced instances of inaccuracy, misinformation, and prejudice regarding Israel. Jews feared that anti-Israel bias could foster anti-Semitism.

In particular, two high-profile cases ignited intense debate. One was the broadcast of a talk show on September 28 over the state-run television RAI. The guests, chosen by host Michele Santoro, a leftist journalist, were vehemently anti-Israel. In response, Leone Paserman, president of the Rome Jewish community, wrote a toughly worded letter to RAI’s president accusing Santoro of anti-Semitism and calling for his dismissal. He noted that Santoro appeared to be contributing to the creation of a climate of opinion that would allow Palestinian terrorists to think that “Italy was a suitable country in which to carry out their criminal terrorist attacks.” While some Jewish leaders in Rome applauded Paserman’s letter, others sharply criticized it as “excessive, impulsive and unwise.”

Another inflammatory media case was ignited in October, when La Stampa newspaper prominently featured an opinion piece by commentator Barbara Spinelli calling on the Jewish world to issue a collective mea culpa to “the peoples or individuals” who had paid in “blood or exile” so that Israel could exist. Spinelli charged that neither Israel nor the Jewish people as a whole had yet recognized how profoundly the world situation had changed as a result of the attacks of September 11. She accused Jews of acting as if they were the only people who had the divine right to “live in absolute freedom while the other mortals struggle forward under the harsh regime of necessity.” Spinelli called on Jews in the Diaspora—many of whom, she said, “live a double and contradictory loyalty, toward Israel and toward the states to which they belong and in which they vote”—to make public penance and press Israel to end its occupation of Palestinian territory. Jews in the West, she said, should line up with the West, rather than with Israel, choosing “electoral links” over “blood links.”

Italian Jewish leaders reacted immediately. They suggested that Spinelli’s attribution of the policies of the Israeli state to the Jewish people as a whole betrayed her ignorance of Judaism, Jewish history, and the relationship between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora, and smacked of anti-Semitism as well. But many Jews were quite upset and disappointed at how few non-Jewish voices publicly supported their protests against this article.

On February 8, Jewish arbor day (the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat), the Jewish National Fund joined with the Rome municipal
authorities in planting 100 trees in a section of historic woodland in an area on the coast near Rome that had been devastated by forest fires in 2000. Taking part in the ceremony were Italy’s agriculture minister, the Israeli ambassador, Italian Jewish leaders, and 200 pupils from the Jewish day school.

Vatican-Mideast Relations

Throughout the year, Pope John Paul II repeatedly called for peace in the Middle East and a return to the negotiating table, denounced terrorism, and expressed concern over the situation of Christians in the Holy Land. The tone was set on New Year’s Day, when the pope announced that he had sent personal messages to Israeli and Palestinian authorities asking them to “continue along the path of dialogue in order to reach a much-desired peace, which is the essential foundation for fruitful coexistence among all people on earth.” Two weeks later, in a “state of the world” address, the pope said that “Israelis and Palestinians can only think of their future together, and each party must respect the rights and traditions of the other.” He spoke of “the persistence of injustice, the contempt for international law, the marginalization of Holy Places and the requirements of the Christian communities.” Appearing more critical of the Israelis than the Palestinians, he said it was “time to return to the principles of international legality,” listing these as the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, the right to self-determination, and respect for UN resolutions.

As the year wore on, the pope repeated such sentiments with increasing urgency. In May, he sent two senior envoys to Jerusalem to try to broker a cease-fire and the resumption of peace talks, and during the year he also met at the Vatican with a number of officials from the Middle East, including Egyptian president Mubarak and Yaser Arafat.

Also in May, the pope made a historic but controversial three-day visit to Syria. He had three goals in mind: to walk in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul, to improve the Vatican’s ties with Islam, and to plead for Middle East peace. He ended up outraging Jews worldwide by refusing to rebut the anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli rhetoric that emanated from his hosts. In his public welcome to the pope, President Bashar al-Assad said that Israelis “attack sacred Christian and Muslim places in Palestine. . . . They try to kill the principle of religions in the same mentality in which they betrayed Jesus Christ and in the same way they tried to kill the Prophet Mohammed.” The next day, Syria’s grand mufti, Sheikh Ahmad
Kifitaro, asked “the Catholic Church all over the world, with His Holiness the Pope at its head, and all the Christian governments of the West, to stand in support of justice and put pressure on Israel by every means to curb its atrocious aggression.” He added, “This is the least Christianity, as proof of its allegiance to Jesus Christ, can offer the world.”

World attention focused on the words of the Syrian president. Israeli president Moshe Katzav called Assad an “anti-Semite and racist” for his comments. A U.S. State Department spokesman called the remarks “as regrettable as they are unacceptable,” and a long list of Jewish organizations outside Italy sharply criticized the pope for not having responded. The Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI) reacted with “pain and concern” to what happened in Syria. In a toughly worded statement that avoided mentioning the pope’s silence, the UCEI warned Italians to “be on guard against the renewed attempt to make Jews the scapegoat for everything and everyone.”

(Assad later told French television that his remarks had been misinterpreted. He said he respected Judaism. “I did not talk about racism. I talked about the principles of the three divine religions, that they call for justice, peace, love, and other basic principles. I tried to compare what is happening now in Palestine and what happened during the days of Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammed.”)

The pope focused even more sharply on the Middle East after September 11, repeatedly denouncing terrorism and condemning warfare conducted in the name of religion. A month-long synod of Roman Catholic bishops held at the Vatican in October expressed its “deepest sympathy” for the victims of the September 11 attacks. A closing statement strongly condemned all forms of terrorism, saying that nothing could justify it, although, it added, “some endemic evils, when they are too long ignored, can produce despair in entire populations.” On December 11, exactly three months after the attacks, the pope released his annual message for the church’s World Peace Day, which is marked on January 1. The theme was “no peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness.” While self-defense against terror was legitimate, the pope noted, perpetrators should be “correctly identified,” and entire nations, ethnic groups or religions must not be blamed. He also said that the global crisis prompted “a more intense call” for a resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The pontiff summoned Catholic religious leaders from the Middle East to the Vatican on December 13 to discuss the future of Christians in the Holy Land. In his opening speech to the group, he criticized both
Palestinians and Israelis for "disfiguring" the Holy Land with extremist violence. After the meeting, the Vatican issued a statement repeating its call for peace in the region that would include "security for Israel, the birth of a state for the Palestinian people, the evacuation from occupied territories, an internationally guaranteed special statute for the most sacred parts of Jerusalem, and a fair solution for Palestinian refugees." The statement also touched upon another issue that had vexed Vatican relations with Israel for several years, Israel's authorization of the construction of a mosque in Nazareth, next to the Basilica of the Annunciation. Such a move, the Vatican now stated, could be seen as "provocative" and displaying a "grave lack of respect for the feelings of Christians and for a place of prayer rich in profound significance for their faith" (see below, pp. 588–89).

Holocaust-Related Developments

Italy marked its first official Holocaust memorial day on January 27, 2001, with high-profile ceremonies, broadcasts, performances, and other public events throughout the country. There was special emphasis on educational programs, since recent surveys had shown that many Italians, particularly young people, were ignorant of Italy's wartime role in the Holocaust. A poll conducted by an Italian television network in connection with the commemoration showed that none of the 442 viewers interviewed knew the meaning of the word "Shoah," a term frequently used in Italy to denote the Holocaust. Nicolo Mancino, speaker of the Italian Senate, told one audience, "with the passing of time, the worry is becoming strong that a veil of forgetfulness may fall on what happened regarding European racism and the Holocaust." A theme often heard at the commemorations was the need to speak out against contemporary evils and atrocities. Luciano Violante, president of the Chamber of Deputies, spoke to students in Agrigento. Describing the slaughter in the Soviet gulags, in Africa, and in Cambodia, he said, "You have to know how to say no when you are asked to do something that is against democracy, against freedom, against civil and moral values."

Other events commemorating the Shoah took place at different times over the course of the year. In March, government and religious leaders took part in the annual commemoration of the mass execution of 335 men and boys at the Ardeatine Caves south of Rome, which the Germans carried out on March 24, 1944, in reprisal for the partisan slaying of 33 German soldiers. Some 75 of the Ardeatine Caves victims were Jews. The
site of the massacre is now Italy’s main monument to victims of the Nazis and fascists. In October, a series of events organized by the city of Rome and Jewish communal organizations marked the 58th anniversary of the Nazi deportation of Jews from Rome during World War II. Events included interfaith ceremonies, a theater performance, a public roundtable on aspects of Holocaust restitution, and a presentation of educational work about the Shoah.

In May, after more than two years of work, a government commission looking into Holocaust-era compensation claims issued a 540-page report urging compensation to Jews for the seizure of assets during the fascist regime up to the end of World War II. Originally commissioned by former prime minister Massimo D’Alema, the report noted that while Italy had already made some payments to survivors, these were insufficient. It recommended setting up a government commission on restitution and compensation claims that would “quickly compensate individual victims of seizures and thefts carried out between 1938 and 1945 during the persecution of the Jews.” It also suggested the creation of a second commission that would take steps to maintain an awareness of the history of the fascist period and perpetuate the memory of its victims.

During an official visit to Ukraine in June that had interreligious reconciliation as one of its themes, the pope paid homage to the tens of thousands of victims shot dead by the Nazis and thrown into a ravine at Babi Yar, near Kiev. With Yaakov Bleich, Kiev’s chief rabbi, standing at his side at the monument on the spot where the Nazis killed as many as 150,000 Jews and 50,000 others over the course of two years, the pope bowed his head and prayed in silence for five minutes. He then recited the Catholic de profundis prayer, as a wreath of red, white, and yellow flowers was placed on the monument. During a meeting with Ukrainian religious leaders he said that Babi Yar was “one of the most atrocious of the many crimes” of the 20th century, adding that the Jewish people “suffered injustices and persecutions for having remained faithful to the religion of their ancestors.” Jews found the Babi Yar commemoration particularly significant since it was the pope’s first participation in such a ceremony since his controversial trip to Syria.

Two initiatives surfaced during the year for the creation of Holocaust museums. In June, Italy’s new government appointed a committee to explore the idea of establishing such a museum in the northern city of Ferrara, which had played an important role in Italian Jewish history. Ferrara already had a Jewish museum run by the small Jewish community still living in the town. In the fall, the Milan Jewish community, along with
the Children of the Shoah Association and Milan's Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDEC), announced plans to establish a Holocaust museum in that city. In December, CDEC sponsored Holocaust-education events in Milan. On December 2–3, there was a seminar on the teaching of the Holocaust. On December 12, an educational CD-ROM called “Destination Auschwitz”—produced with funding from the European Commission—was released just prior to a conference on Holocaust transit camps.

**Anti-Semitism and Racism**

As noted above, Italian Jews worried throughout the year about anti-Israel and anti-Semitic bias in the mass media and its impact on public opinion. Concern deepened after the September 11 attacks, as anti-Semitic articles and cartoons appeared in the press. At one point the newspaper *La Repubblica* allowed the text of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to be posted on one of its online discussion forums dedicated to the war in Afghanistan. It was removed in October, following a complaint from the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

There were episodes of racial intolerance throughout 2001, mostly the work of skinheads and militant soccer fans. There were anti-Semitic slogans scrawled on walls, and one reported incident of anti-Semitic violence: on November 3, unknown persons attempted to set fire to the entrance of the synagogue in Siena. The fire, quickly extinguished, did little damage.

In February, police conducted a dawn raid in the town of Merano, near the border with Austria, and arrested 13 suspected members of the international neo-Nazi skinhead group “Blood and Honor.” The arrests were the fruit of an undercover operation that had lasted nearly a year. Police confiscated large amounts of Nazi material including banners, publications, and other racist propaganda. Those arrested were charged with violating a 1993 law banning the incitement of racial hatred. In April, on the 56th anniversary of liberation from fascist rule, neofascists and leftists clashed in Milan and Rome. In Rome, police used tear gas to prevent leftist protesters from attacking a group of neofascists commemorating Italian soldiers who died during World War II. In June, about 200 skinheads and others demonstrated against a gay pride march, and some tried to force police barricades. In August, neofascist material was found at the homes of suspects in the bombing of a Venice courthouse. In the autumn, a Rome court convicted Francesco Ciapanno, ed-
itor of a monthly photographic magazine, of defamation and inciting racial hatred for publishing vehemently anti-Semitic articles. He was sentenced to 13 months in prison.

In May, sports authorities penalized the Rome soccer team Lazio because some of its fans unfurled a huge banner with a racist and anti-Semitic slogan during a match with arch-rival Roma. In recent years militant Lazio fans had frequently come under fire for using similar objectionable slogans against opposing teams. In September, hoping to promote intergroup harmony, Lazio took part in a three-way tournament in Rome, called the “Shalom Cup,” along with Maccabi Haifa of Israel and Asec Mimosas of Ivory Coast. The tourney was marred by one disruption—a banner reading “Against Zionist racism for a true peace, Intifada until victory” was briefly unfurled in the stands. In another attempt to combat soccer hooliganism, a roundtable conference was held in Florence in the fall on the topic of sports and racism.

Another troubling trend was the ongoing fascination with, and nostalgia for, the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini. This took various forms, ranging from the sale of Mussolini memorabilia—including videos, books, and even a calendar—to attempts to name streets after him and other fascist figures. Mussolini’s hometown, Predappio, was an attraction for right-wing extremists and other nostalgic fascists. In the late spring, some young men began standing vigil at Mussolini’s tomb there. Dressed in black cloaks, they told reporters that they were members of a newly formed Benito Mussolini Honor Guard. Their action drew a sharp reprimand from Predappio’s mayor. At Rome fashion shows in July, Italian designer Francesco Barbaro’s use of the swastika motif in his latest clothing and accessories came in for heavy criticism. One British fashion writer called it a “sick attempt to court publicity on the back of millions of people’s deaths.” In the fall, protests forced the right-wing mayor of Tremestieri Etneo, a small Sicilian town, to withdraw his plan to name a local street for Mussolini.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

About 26,000 Jews were officially registered as members of Italian Jewish communities, but the actual number of Jews in the country was believed to be between 30,000 and 40,000. Three-quarters of Italy’s Jews
lived in two cities where there was a full infrastructure for an active Jewish life: Rome, with about 15,000 Jews, and Milan, with about 10,000. The rest of the country’s Jews were scattered in a score of other towns and cities—mostly in northern and central Italy—with few local Jewish resources, in communities ranging from a handful of Jews to a thousand or so people. About half of Italy’s Jews were native born, and the other half were immigrants who had come over the past few decades. Between one-third and one-half of Rome’s Jews were members of families that had emigrated from Libya following the Six-Day War of 1967. The Milan Jewish community included recent arrivals from more than two dozen countries. The largest contingent was Iranian, with most of the others coming from other Muslim states, and many maintained the traditions of their hometowns.

Communal Affairs

Orthodoxy was still the only officially recognized form of Judaism in Italy, encompassing three ritual traditions: Sephardi, Ashkenazi, and Italian, the latter a local rite that evolved from the Jewish community that lived in the country before the destruction of the Second Temple. Chabad-Lubavitch maintained its strong presence, particularly in Rome, Milan, and Venice, where the movement ran a yeshivah. Most Italian Jews, however, were not strictly observant, and even most of the observant Italian-born Jews were highly acculturated, with a strong Italian as well as Jewish identity. On the other hand, many of the Jewish immigrants from Muslim countries were very observant.

Preliminary results of a demographic survey of the Rome Jewish community were released in 2001. Conducted in 1996–98 under the direction of Professor Eugenio Sonnino of La Sapienza University in Rome, the survey studied a representative sample of 815 people. The respondents were highly educated, one-third of them having a university degree. Most owned their own homes and worked in the commercial sector. The data showed a strong sense of Jewish identity—most respondents said they observed the Sabbath and major holidays, and about half said they kept kosher. Younger people were more observant than the middle-aged generation. Nevertheless, there was widespread acceptance of intermarriage. Only 4 percent said it was essential for the non-Jewish partner to convert, 22 percent said it would be better to avoid mixed marriage, and just 10 percent—including some who were themselves intermarried—said such marriages were unacceptable.
The year saw an increase in Jewish “lifestyle infrastructure” in some places, including an expansion of kosher facilities in Rome. Several new kosher restaurants operated in the old ghetto, and a cheese manufacturer in Caserta announced in November that it would begin producing kosher mozzarella.

While Reform and Conservative streams did not officially exist in Italy, an independent liberal Jewish association called Lev Chadash was formally established in Milan in the spring. Many if not most of its members were gentiles seeking to convert to Judaism, or others who were not Jewish according to Halakah. In July this group officially affiliated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Lev Chadash had no rabbi and was not accepted as a member of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities. It received support, however, from the St. John’s Wood Liberal Synagogue in London, whose senior rabbi, David Goldberg, made regular visits to Milan to lead services and give lectures. In the summer, the London synagogue loaned a 250-year-old Torah scroll to Lev Chadash, which used it for the first time on Yom Kippur. At the end of the year another small liberal Jewish group was organized in Florence.

The Rome Jewish community went through an important rite of passage in 2001. In a surprise move, Elio Toaff retired as the community’s chief rabbi after holding the job—Italian Jewry’s most prominent religious position—for 50 years. (Italy has no national chief rabbi.) Later that month, officials of Rome awarded Toaff, 86, the city’s highest honor, “honorary citizen”—the equivalent of receiving the keys to the city—at an emotional ceremony attended by President Ciampi, Rome’s mayor, and other dignitaries. In November, Dr. Riccardo Di Segni, 52, was chosen to succeed Toaff. Di Segni had served as director of Italy’s Rabbinical College since 1999. A medical doctor as well as a rabbi, he was chief radiologist at a major Rome hospital and said he intended to keep his medical job.

Italian Jews had a well-organized though financially troubled infrastructure of schools (including the Rabbinical College), clubs, associations, youth organizations, and other services. The women’s organization ADEI-WIZO was active nationwide, sponsoring bazaars, lectures, meetings, and other social, cultural, and fund-raising events. Jewish community and culture centers in Milan and Rome also provided a full schedule of programs. A large Italian delegation attended the General Assembly of the European Council of Jewish Communities that was held in Madrid in May. Cobi Benatoff, from Milan, was president of the council. Italian Jewish leaders also took part in other international events, such
as the World Jewish Congress meeting in Jerusalem in November. In August, more than 400 young Jews from all over Europe met in northern Italy for the annual weeklong European Union of Jewish Students Summer University.

Given their traditionally strong links with Israel, Italian Jews followed the continuing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians with extreme concern. Jews were very worried by the negative portrayal of Israel in the mass media and the pro-Palestinian stance of many political parties and public figures. With the support of organizations such as the Italy-Israel Association (most of whose members are not Jewish), they staged several pro-Israel solidarity rallies. In December, Prime Minister Berlusconi, Mayor Walter Veltroni of Rome, and other senior officials joined hundreds of Rome Jews at the city’s main synagogue in a solidarity vigil for the victims of terrorist attacks in Israel. Earlier that same day, city officials turned off the lights of the Campidoglio city hall for 15 minutes and observed a minute of silence at noon.

Nevertheless, there were divisions within the Jewish community over Israel’s policies, and these tended to be linked to broader political loyalties. This was demonstrated most dramatically in the furor over an opinion piece that appeared in the Rome Jewish monthly Shalom, entitled “Stop the Madness,” that criticized Israel’s policy. The writer was Giorgio Gomel, a well-known left-wing Jewish peace activist who was also a member of the board of the Rome Jewish community. In early June, soon after the article appeared, Gomel was accosted by other Jews who shouted insults, called him a “friend of Arafat,” and tried to physically attack him as he walked toward the Israeli embassy to attend a vigil in support of Israel. Jewish community leaders condemned what was done to Gomel, but the incident prompted debate: a subsequent issue of Shalom contained a number of letters to the editor, some denying and others endorsing Gomel’s right to express public criticism of Israel.

Jewish-Catholic Relations

Official interactions between the two faiths were marked by several milestone events. Despite tensions and even acrimony over several issues regarding the Shoah, overall relations were generally positive.

In late February, Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, 76, retired after more than a decade as president of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. His successor was Cardinal Walter Kasper, a German theologian. One of Kasper’s first official functions, at the beginning of May,
was to attend a meeting in New York of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, which consisted of the Vatican commission and its primary formal partner in Vatican-Jewish dialogue, the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC).

That meeting resulted in a joint statement that, among other things, dealt with the commission of Catholic and Jewish scholars set up by the Liaison Committee in 1999 to examine the role of the Vatican and Pope Pius XII in World War II. The scholars had asked, in October 2000, for full access to the Holy See's secret wartime archives so as to resolve questions that still remained after the examination of documents previously released by the Vatican (see AJYB 2001, p. 362). The new joint statement appeared to endorse this request, saying: "While the opening of the Vatican archives will not definitely put this matter to rest, opening the archives will help remove the aura of suspicion and will contribute to a more mature level of understanding." Nonetheless, Kasper, in a letter dated June 21, informed the commission of scholars that the archives dated after 1923 were not accessible for "technical reasons." Church officials explained that the Vatican had only two archivists to catalog the documents, and that the material would be released as it became ready. In July, the commission of scholars suspended its work because it had been denied access to the archives. Relations between the Vatican and Jews deteriorated sharply over this issue, and there were acrimonious accusations on both sides.

IJCIC chairman Seymour Reich distributed a statement expressing "deep disappointment" with the Vatican and made public what he said the historians had conveyed in a letter to Kasper when they decided to suspend their work. Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, accused the Vatican of a "cover-up." But Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore, the senior American Catholic involved in Vatican-Jewish dialogue, charged that Reich had misrepresented the content of the historians' letter to Kasper.

In early August, Rev. Peter Gumpel, a German Jesuit who had been gathering material to support the beatification of Pius XII, denounced a "violent attack" and "defamatory campaign" conducted against the memory of the wartime pope. He said that Jewish scholars on the panel had leaked "distorted and tendentious" information to the media and "publicly spread the suspicion" that the Vatican was trying to hide documents that could embarrass it. He defended Pius XII and said that the archives would be opened "as soon as possible." Kasper issued a similar statement two weeks later, saying that the wish for access to the archives was "un-
derstandable and legitimate” and that the Holy See would grant access “as soon as the reorganizing and cataloging work is concluded.”

In November, however, two of the three Jewish scholars resigned from the commission, making it unlikely that the group would resume its work. Kasper, for his part, made it known that he would look for other scholars to continue the research.

Despite the apparent impasse over access to the secret archives, Vatican-Jewish dialogue proceeded in other areas. Kasper made clear that he wanted to identify areas on which Jews and Catholics could find common ground, and that he sought closer contacts with Israeli Jews. In November, during a visit to Jerusalem at the invitation of the Israeli government and with the blessing of the chief rabbinate, he laid out his priorities in a major policy speech on Jewish-Christian relations. He said, “We may not and we cannot forget the horrors of the Holocaust; we must remember them as a warning for the future.” But, he added, “our dialogue should not be merely past oriented, but future oriented... Our dialogue should more and more become a contribution for the solution of today’s and tomorrow’s spiritual and ethical problems and challenges.”

In his address, Kasper dwelt at some length on “Dabru Emet” (Hebrew for “Speak the Truth”), a Jewish theological statement on Christians and Christianity formulated by a group of Jewish scholars and published in September 2000 (see AJYB 2001, pp. 182–83). He, as well as other senior Catholic officials, pointed to this document as a basis for future discussions with world Jewry. Signed by scores of Jewish scholars and rabbis, “Dabru Emet” listed eight points where Jews and Christians found common ground and upon which they might build further dialogue. It also called on Jews to relinquish their fear and mistrust of Christianity and “learn about the efforts of Christians to honor Judaism.”

(Some prominent Jews had refused to sign the document because they felt it insufficiently emphasized Christianity’s connection to the Holocaust. It said, “Without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out. Too many Christians participated in, or were sympathetic to, Nazi atrocities against Jews. Other Christians did not protest sufficiently against these atrocities.” But, it said, “Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon,” and “Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity.”)

Shortly after his trip to Israel, Kasper attended a meeting at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, where Catholic and Jewish scholars discussed theological issues. This was the second meeting of
Kasper's Vatican commission with a new Jewish group, the Rabbinic Committee for Interreligious Dialogue, which had been set up as a partner for interreligious discussion of theological issues. (Opposition from IJCIC's Orthodox members prevented that body from engaging in such discussions.)

In Italy, numerous interfaith events took place during the year. On October 11, Chief Rabbi Toaff of Rome joined with a Roman Catholic cardinal, the imam of Rome's main mosque, a Protestant minister, and an Orthodox priest for an interfaith ceremony commemorating the victims of the terror attacks in the United States. Prayers were recited in Hebrew, Arabic, and English, and the representatives of the various faiths stood together and lit candles. The service took place at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome, and was attended by numerous dignitaries including Italy's president.

Three days later, on the evening of October 14, more than 1,000 people staged a candlelit procession through downtown Rome calling for world peace, an end to international terrorism, and remembrance of the Shoah. The silent march, culminating in a ceremony at the main synagogue, was the first of several events marking the 58th anniversary of the deportation of Jews from Rome, which occurred on October 16, 1943. It was organized jointly by the Catholic Sant'Egidio community and the Rome Jewish community. Participants included Toaff, Kasper, and the mayor of Rome. Later that night, hundreds of people, including Vatican, Jewish, and political VIPs, crowded the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri for a performance of the "Holocaust Requiem" by English composer Ronald Senator, an interfaith oratorio commemorating the 1.5 million children killed in the Shoah. This was the first time the oratorio was performed in a Roman Catholic church. Cardinal Keeler, who was the titular bishop of the basilica, told the audience that the performance aimed at building spiritual bridges between Christians and Jews.

**Culture**

As an indication of the priority that Jewish leaders gave to the promotion of Jewish culture, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities set up a new Department of Education and Culture, and, in the summer, appointed Rabbi Roberto Della Rocca, formerly the rabbi of Venice, as its director.

Italy was one of four countries with small Jewish populations chosen by the London-based Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) for a
“mapping of Jewish culture” survey. This was an attempt to chart all Jewish cultural events in Italy, Sweden, Belgium, and Poland during the twelve-month period from May 2000 through April 2001. Preliminary results, made public in July, indicated a total of more than 700 events in the four countries, including 99 individual events and 13 Jewish cultural festivals in Italy.

There were numerous Jewish cultural events throughout the year, some organized by Jewish communities, some by the Israeli embassy, some by private organizations or civic and state bodies, and some by a combination of sponsors.

Annual Jewish festivals included the summer festival of klezmer music in Ancona, the Nessiah music festival in Pisa in October, and the Pitigliano Jewish film festival in southern Tuscany in November. Numerous concerts of Jewish music took place, ranging from liturgical music to klezmer. In January, four cantors from Central European synagogues gave a concert of liturgical music in the synagogue of Trieste, in order to raise funds for the construction of a synagogue in Zagreb, Croatia. At the end of May, Florence was the site of a series of concerts by international performers of Yiddish, Sephardic, and Israeli Jewish music. Sponsoring this series were the Milan-based Yuval Center for the Study of Jewish Music, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Florence Jewish community, and the Israeli embassy. In October, the second European festival of Jewish choirs took place in Milan, with participants from France, England, Israel, and Italy.

Several notable theatrical productions were mounted during the year. The European premiere of Possession, a play by Israeli author A.B. Yehoshua, took place in Rome in February. Coinciding with the play's run, an exhibition of photographs, “Encounters in Jerusalem: People and the Divine,” was shown in the foyer of the theater. Another major production was the musical play Saccarina (Saccharine), set in the Lodz ghetto and wartime Rome, which was performed in several cities and also broadcast on radio. Singer/actor Moni Ovadia, Italy’s most prominent Jewish theatrical personality, toured with a new production, Yosl Rakover Talks to God.

There were also exhibitions, in several cities, of artwork by Jewish artists and on Jewish themes. The Tikkun bookstore in Milan was a leading venue for exhibits, readings, and other Jewish-themed cultural events. Meanwhile, work progressed slowly—for lack of funds—on the expansion and modernization of the Jewish museum in Rome.

Numerous conferences, seminars, and academic meetings on Jewish
themes took place. In February, there was a full-day conference at the State University in Milan on the significance of the jubilee year in Jewish tradition. At the same institution, Professor Alfredo Mordechai Rabbelo of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem taught a seminar course on Jewish and Israeli law in February and March, cosponsored by the university's law department and the Goren Goldstein Judaica Center. This was the first course in Jewish law to be offered at an Italian university. In March, there was a conference in Rome on the Yiddish theater and klezmer music. In May, a three-day conference on Jewish cultural heritage in Italy took place in Ravenna, organized by the University of Bologna and sponsored by a number of institutions, including the Israeli embassy, Israeli universities, and the Italian Jewish community. Among the topics discussed were plans to catalog centuries-old manuscripts held in the Jewish Bibliographic Center in Rome, and the possibility of restoring the city's Jewish catacombs. The year saw various initiatives toward restoring or repairing Jewish heritage sites, including the Jewish cemetery in Pesaro on the Adriatic. In November, an international conference and exhibit of illuminated Jewish manuscripts took place in Parma to mark the publication of a new catalog of Jewish manuscripts in the city's Palatina Library.

A number of films with Jewish themes made news. Concorrenza Sleale (Unfair Competition), by Italian director Ettore Scola and starring French actor Gerard Depardieu, was released in 2001. Set in Rome in 1938, the year that the fascist regime imposed strict anti-Semitic legislation, it told the story of these laws' effects on two neighboring families, one Jewish and one Catholic. Eden, a film by Israeli director Amos Gitai that was based on a novel by Arthur Miller, competed for the Golden Lion at the summer Venice Film Festival. La Vita e' Bella (Life is Beautiful), Roberto Benigni's Academy Award-winning film about the Holocaust, had its premiere showing on Italian television in October and grabbed a record share of the viewing audience. More than 16 million Italians—more than half of all viewers—watched it. In Rome, meanwhile, Greek director Constantin Costa-Gavras was shooting part of a new film on Pope Pius XII's role during the Shoah.

As usual, numerous books on Jewish topics or by Jewish authors were published, and there were book launches, readings, roundtables, and other literary events throughout the year. The political journal Limes devoted its first issue of 2001 to the theme of "Israel/Palestine: the Narrow Land," with 19 in-depth articles by well-known writers on aspects of the continuing conflict. In May, five noted Israeli authors—David Gross-
man, Meir Shalev, Etgar Keret, Batya Gur, and Dorit Rabinyan—came to Italy. They took part in a “week of Israeli literature” that coincided with the fifth annual Sefer Jewish book fair in Milan. The group also gave presentations in Rome, Bologna, and Turin. The Italian translation of *Barney’s Version*, by the Canadian writer Mordecai Richler, became a surprise best-seller and a literary sensation in Italy. Giuliano Ferrara, editor of the newspaper *Il Foglio*, even modeled a daily column on protagonist Barney Panofsky’s politically incorrect mode of sounding off about his adversaries. Richler’s death was mourned with lengthy obituaries in leading newspapers. In October, the historic Jewish publishing house and bookstore Salomone Belforte in Livorno, founded in 1834 and closed at the onset of World War II, marked its rebirth with a conference and art exhibit on Sephardic culture in the Mediterranean area.

Italy and Italians participated enthusiastically in the European Day of Jewish Culture on September 2. Held under the patronage of the president and the Ministry of Culture of Italy, there were events in 36 towns and cities, drawing a total of about 50,000 visitors. Sites on display included a number of Italy’s 70 magnificent synagogues, many of them no longer in use. Italy’s undersecretary for culture, Vittorio Sgarbi, and other senior officials took part in an official ceremony in Bologna. Though only about 200 Jews lived in the city, hundreds of people lined up to visit the Jewish museum and synagogue, tour the medieval ghetto, sample Jewish culinary specialties, or leaf through books displayed at an open-air Jewish book fair. Sgarbi said: “Even without being born Jewish or being of the Jewish religion, we all are or have been Jews in virtue of the dialogue that Jewish civilization has had with Italian civilization, interrupted only in moments of ferocity and barbarism.”

There were signs, however, that Italian attitudes toward the intifada and the September 11 attacks may have had a negative impact on participation in Jewish cultural events. At a number of conferences and roundtables, there was palpable tension between pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian participants. A bomb threat disrupted a performance by Moni Ovadia. The annual Pitigliano Jewish film festival in southern Tuscany had to be moved to a nearby town because of security concerns. There were also reports that a number of concerts of Jewish music had been canceled, including some by the Rome-based Jewish musician Adriano Mordenti.

**Personalia**

In February, Raimondo Di Neris—known as “Uncle Raimondo”—a Holocaust survivor and prominent figure in the Rome Jewish community,
died. Also in February, Roberto Jarach was elected the new president of the Milan Jewish community. He succeeded Emanuele Fiano, who resigned after three years as president to run for local office. Jewish publisher Mario Lattes died at the end of December, aged 78.

In March, in separate ceremonies, the late Giuseppina Gusmano of Casale Monferrato, and the late Antonio Mani and Bortola Bertoli of Lavenone, near Brescia, were recognized by Yad Vashem as "Righteous among the Nations" for saving Jews during the Holocaust.

Scientist Rita Levi Montalcini, 92, who fled prewar Italy to escape fascist anti-Semitism and went on to win a Nobel Prize for medicine in 1986, was, in August, named a Life Senator for honoring Italy with her scientific and social work. She thus became only the second woman to receive this title, one of the highest honors bestowed by Italy. In December, author Lia Levi was awarded two literary prizes: the Moravia Prize for her novel L'albero della magnolia (The Magnolia Tree), and the Grinzane Cavour Prize for Che cos'è l'antisemitismo? Per favore rispondete, a book on anti-Semitism written for young people.

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
Switzerland

National Affairs

The year was one of crisis and self-doubt for Switzerland. Swissair, the national airline that had been a paradigm of Swiss quality and a source of pride, filed for bankruptcy after September 11. Two tragedies weakened people's sense of security: a fire in the Gothard tunnel caused 11 deaths; and a psychotic killer emptied his rifle in the parliament of the canton of Zug killing 15, including members of the local government. And finally, the World Economic Forum announced it would host its 32nd annual meeting in New York City rather than the usual place, the ski resort of Davos.

Early in the year, Swiss voters showed they still preferred political isolation when, in a referendum on joining the European Union, 76 percent voted against membership. In light of the war on terrorism after September 11, Switzerland took steps to alter its banking secrecy laws so as to prevent Swiss banks from being used for money laundering and the financing of terror.

Israel and the Middle East

Swiss sentiment about the situation in the Middle East, whether expressed in the media, by politicians, or in everyday conversations with ordinary people, was overwhelmingly pro-Palestinian. Statements apparently meant to criticize specific Israeli policies often slipped into blanket condemnations of the Jewish state, showing no understanding of the broader context and no compassion for Israeli victims of terrorism. At times, anti-Semitism reared its head: "Jews" were accused of oppressing Palestinians, parallels were drawn between Gaza and the Warsaw Ghetto, and anti-Semitic incidents were explained away by blaming them on the behavior of Jews.

There were many public demonstrations in support of the Palestinian cause where one could read placards denouncing "the massacre of the Palestinian people" or "Israel's apartheid policy," and proclaiming Israel's share of responsibility for the September 11 attacks. Even the far-left demonstrations against the World Trade Organization and the World
Economic Forum—both symbolizing globalization and headquartered in Geneva—were tinged with anti-Semitism.

Pointing out Israel's flaws in public debate and letters-to-the-editor served an important psychological function for many Swiss. After Switzerland was criticized over issues of justice and morality in connection with its handling of Holocaust victims' assets in Swiss banks, the Middle East situation provided an opportunity to attack Israel on similar moral grounds for what it was supposedly doing to Palestinians. And in some circles the same reasoning was applied to America after September 11. One could hear Swiss saying that, having criticized Switzerland for its behavior during World War II, the U.S. had now gotten its comeuppance for the arrogant way it treated the rest of the world and its unconditional support of Israel.

The crisis in the Middle East triggered diplomatic tension between Israel and Switzerland that was not eased by the visit of Swiss foreign minister Joseph Deiss to Israel and the Palestinian territories in March. A particular point of controversy was the agreement of Switzerland, repository of the Geneva Conventions, to host a special session of the "high contracting parties" to examine Israel's alleged violations of the Fourth Convention—which dealt with treatment of civilian populations—in the territories. The session took place in December behind closed doors and without debate; the conclusion condemning Israel had been written in advance. Israel and the United States boycotted the conference.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), based in Switzerland, showed hostility toward Israel. In May, the Red Cross delegate to Israel, René Kosirnik, stated publicly that "population transfer or installation by an occupying power in occupied territories is considered illegal and is a major violation. Formally, it is a major violation, but in principle it is equivalent to war crimes." After U.S. Representative Eliot Engel (D., N.Y.) protested, ICRC president Jakob Kellenberger apologized and said that the reference was "inappropriate and will not be repeated." But later in the year Paul Grossrieder, the ICRC director, accused Israel of violating humanitarian law, particularly in its treatment of members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; Grossrieder was unsure whether they were "civilians" or "militants." He also sought to justify the continuing exclusion of the Magen David Adom, the State of Israel's equivalent of the Red Cross, from the international Red Cross movement.

The "special" treatment of Israel within the international organizations headquartered in Geneva, which had gone on for years, continued. This
was particularly blatant at the UN Commission for Human Rights, where Israel was the only country entered as a "special item" on the agenda, while all other countries (including human-rights violators such as Libya, Algeria, China, Syria, and Saudi Arabia) were examined globally, as one entity. With the U.S. voted off the commission for 2002, the situation for Israel was likely to worsen.

At the UN World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, the Swiss delegation kept a very low profile. It considered "unacceptable" some of the phrasing about Israel in the final resolution, but did not get involved in the working groups dealing with "difficult questions." The Forum Against Racism, a national federation of Swiss NGOs, attended the parallel NGO Forum at Durban. It stated its "satisfaction with the final documents" and considered the "NGO declaration and action program as an indispensable base to pursue [our] work." It did not comment on the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic elements in the document (see above, pp. 100-04).

Swiss Jews tried to keep a low profile in the public debate about the Middle East. But the media repeatedly questioned them about their support for Israel, often blaming them, after each Israeli act of retaliation against the Palestinians, for not criticizing or at least distancing themselves from Israeli policies. Swiss Muslims were never asked for their opinions after Palestinian suicide attacks or calls for jihad against Jews.

**Anti-Semitism and Extremism**

The Swiss parliament refused to lift the immunity of one of its members from Zurich, Christoph Blocher (Swiss People's Party), who had been sued for a 1997 speech in which he said that, with Jews, "it's always a matter of money." The protection afforded by his parliamentary immunity would make it impossible to convict him of violating the anti-racism law.

After a local Christian Democratic politician from Solothurn publicly accused Jews of being behind the events of September 11, the party expelled him.

On the popular level, the upsurge in anti-Semitism triggered by the onset of Palestinian violence in late 2000 intensified, as seen in leaflets, slogans, and banners at pro-Palestinian street rallies, and in the media. In a few cases, those responsible for such statements were reprimanded or even fired from their jobs. A number of anonymous anti-Semitic tracts, posters, and stickers turned up in schools and mailboxes, or were found
glued onto street poles. Some of these went so far as to blame Jews for the cost of health insurance and Swissair’s bankruptcy.

Abraham Grünbaum, an Israeli rabbi visiting Switzerland, was killed during the night of June 7 on a Zurich street. No one claimed responsibility and no clues were found.

Far-right groups found a new lease on life in the wake of the Palestinian intifada and September 11, both of which gave them the opportunity to revive anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. One such group was Vérité & Justice (Truth and Justice) based in Châtel-Saint-Denis near Fribourg. It reprinted old anti-Semitic books, such as \textit{The International Jew} that had originally been published by Henry Ford, and propagated for Holocaust denial. Affiliated with the Institute for Historical Review in California, Vérité & Justice was one of the organizers of a Holocaust-denial conference scheduled for March in Beirut, but the Lebanese government banned the event. The organization’s leaders were Jürgen Graf, Philippe Brennenstuhl, and René-Louis Berclaz. Graf fled to Iran in 2000 after being sentenced to a 15-month prison term for racial incitement, and the other two were expected to go on trial for the same crime in 2002.

Gaston-Armand Amaudruz, whose monthly \textit{Courrier du Continent} spewed racism and anti-Semitism, had received a one-year jail sentence under the racism law in 2001, which was subsequently cut back to three months. In 2001 the Federal Court rejected his appeal, and Amaudruz would begin serving his sentence in 2002.

Another far-right Swiss publication was the bulletin put out by the Amis de Robert Brasillach, which was headed by Geneva lawyer Pascal Junod, an activist who also ran three other similar groups: Thulé, Cercle Proudhon, and Synergies Européennes. Junod regularly invited extremists who had been convicted of racism in France, such as Guillaume Faye and Roger Garaudy, to address audiences in Switzerland.

Geneviève Aubry, a former member of parliament, published \textit{L'Atout}, which frequently used anti-Semitic and anti-American rhetoric to argue for a neutral and independent Switzerland. In Basel, Ernst Indlekofer distributed \textit{Recht und Freiheit} (Right and Freedom) along with a French version, \textit{Droit et Liberté}, charging that the UN was dominated by Jews and Masons. Far-right views were also spread by Claude and Mariette Paschoud’s \textit{Le Pamphlet}, distributed from Lausanne, and Max Wahl’s \textit{Notizen}. Extremists in Valais saw their Web site, romandit.ch, closed down by the Swiss authorities because of homophobic statements made on the site before a gay pride parade in July. Jeunesse Nationaliste Suisse et Européenne (Swiss and European Nationalist Youth), which had published
a monthly electronic newsletter on a French Canadian Web site, stopped its activity at the end of the year.

Federal police estimated that there were about 1,000 skinheads in Switzerland and that they held some 60 gatherings around the country during the year. At many of these events, which attracted sympathizers from all over Europe, racist books, videos, CDs, uniforms, and flags were on sale. To avoid prosecution under the laws against public manifestations of racism, the organizers called these gatherings “private.” Skinheads were now recruiting younger people (even 12–13-year-olds), and were increasingly likely to carry guns. A former skinhead, Marcel von Allmen, 19, was whipped to death in 2001 after he broke the skinhead law of silence and described some of his group’s activities. Another far-right extremist, Marcel Strebel, cofounder of the Patriotic Front, was killed in a private fight.

A key link between far-right circles and Islamic extremists—a relationship both highlighted and enhanced by the September 11 events—was Ahmed Huber. He was a Swiss Holocaust denier converted to Islam who worked for Al-Taqwa, a company in Lugano suspected of financing the attacks on the U.S. The offices of Al-Taqwa, which had changed its name to the Nada Management Organization, were searched by police after September 11. In November, Huber organized a meeting in Lucerne “against world Zionist domination and the American Satan,” and lectured before Roger Wüthrich’s neopagan Avalon group. To be sure, the far-right extremists shared little in common with Muslims beyond their common enemies, Jews and Americans, but they did express admiration for the attacks and aspired to divide the world between the swastika in the West and the crescent in the East. Wüthrich declared that “Muslims are the far-right’s only allies.” Racist Internet sites that had previously targeted Arabs or Muslims stopped doing so.

Ironically, Jews and Muslims found themselves on the same side against the extreme rightists at the end of 2001, when a national debate broke out over ritual slaughter. Earlier in the year, the government decided to lift the ban on ritual slaughter that had been in effect since 1873 and which had forced Jews and Muslims to import kosher or halal meat. But the liberalizing move aroused emotional opposition, including charges that Jews and/or Muslims, who, it was argued, only lived in the country as “guests,” were “barbaric” and followed “archaic principles” that they sought to “impose” on Switzerland. Samuel Debrot, president of the Vaud section of the Society for the Protection of Animals, declared that Jews and Muslims should “become vegetarian or leave the country.” An-
other opponent of ritual slaughter was Erwin Kessler, president of Verein gegen Tierfabrik (Association against Animal Factories). A far-right figure who maintained close contact with Holocaust deniers, Kessler had already been convicted of racial incitement for comparing Jewish kosher slaughter with Nazi treatment of Jews. He was given a nine-month suspended jail sentence, which he appealed. The anti-ritual-slaughter camp launched a petition campaign in the hope of collecting enough signatures to put the issue to a popular referendum. This would take place in 2003 at the earliest.

Outside the Jewish community there was little reaction to anti-Semitism. The great majority of political, social, religious, and public-policy organizations, whether they took the Palestinian side or kept their distance from the Middle East conflict, were silent about anti-Jewish manifestations. Programs for teaching tolerance in the schools depended almost entirely on funding from local NGOs, religious communities, and individuals. The Department of Foreign Affairs, which had been allocated 10 million Swiss francs (about $6 million) to combat racial discrimination, had not yet chosen how to spend the money as the year ended.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

With the publication of 12 new studies by the historical commission headed by Prof. Jean-François Bergier, the national debate about Switzerland's role during World War II seemed to be drawing to an end. These studies examined financial aspects of Switzerland's relations with Nazi Germany (for example, Swiss holdings in I.G. Farben, the export of electricity to Germany, and secret banking operations), as well as legal questions and other issues (looting of artworks, asylum policies). The public at large generally reacted to these publications with indifference. The final report of the commission was due in March 2002.

The Special Fund for needy Holocaust victims, headed by Rolf Bloch, distributed 298 million Swiss francs ($175 million) to beneficiaries around the world—Jews, political prisoners, Gypsies, homosexuals, handicapped people, Christians of Jewish descent, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Gentiles who had helped save Jews. The fund was to cease operations in May 2002.

The global settlement reached in 1998 between Swiss banks and the filers of class-action suits had still not brought an effective distribution of money to heirs of Holocaust victims who had held Swiss bank accounts. A third list of holders of dormant accounts was published containing the
names of about 21,000 people "with a possible link to victims of Nazism." This brought the total of names to 33,000. Brooklyn Federal Court in the U.S. ordered a new examination of 580,000 applications by Holocaust survivors or their heirs.

The Swiss Solidarity Foundation, proposed in 1997, was intended to use 7 billion Swiss francs (more than $4 billion) from the national gold reserves for humanitarian projects. The various political parties differed among themselves about how to use the money, but they did agree to lower the amount to one-third of the original sum. A referendum on the actual creation of the foundation was scheduled for 2002.

Two Swiss religious bodies issued studies about their activities during the Holocaust. The one produced by the Reformed Evangelical Church pointed to the excessive caution, if not indifference, of its leaders at the time, and denounced manifestations of anti-Semitism by some of them. It also paid tribute to several individuals who helped refugees. The study sponsored by the Roman Catholic Central Conference concluded that Swiss Catholics never explicitly condemned National Socialism or the persecution of Jews, and, despite the aid that certain individual Catholics gave Jews, Catholic authorities never protested the treatment of Jews seeking refuge in Switzerland.

Eight Swiss citizens were honored as "Righteous among the Nations" by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, bringing the total number of Swiss designees to 49.

JEWS H CO MMUNITY

The 2001 census showed an increase of 5.9 percent in the Swiss population, mostly due to immigration. But the number of Jews in Switzerland remained at about 17,500, mostly in urban areas. The Muslim population was now at 310,000, or 4.5 percent of the population.

Historian Jacques Picard, a specialist in the history of 20th-century Swiss Jews, was named the first professor to hold the chair in Jewish studies at the University of Basel.

Gerhart Riegner, former secretary general of the World Jewish Congress, died in Geneva at the age of 90. One of the first to receive information about the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jews in World War II, he attempted to alert the Allies and world Jewry. Reigner, trained as a lawyer, spent his life fighting anti-Semitism and defending human rights.

Two books of Jewish interest were published in 2001: Documents about
Refugees 1930–1950, a summary of what was available in Swiss archives; and The Righteous of Switzerland: Heroes of the Holocaust by Meir Wagner, stories of 37 Swiss men and women who saved Jews during World War II.

An old ring dating back to the 3rd century was found on the archaeological site of Augusta Raurica, between the cantons of Basel-Land and Argau. This bronze piece, engraved with images of four Jewish ritual objects—a menorah, a shofar, a lulav, and an etrog—was now the oldest testimony to the Jewish presence in Switzerland. Previously, the oldest Jewish remnants were graves and documents from the 13th century.

Brigitte Sion