Germany

National Affairs

War on Terror

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder had declared himself a committed partner with the United States in the war on terror after September 11, 2001, and Germany was second only to the U.S. in terms of the number of troops sent to Afghanistan. But after barely surviving a no-confidence vote in the Bundestag that November (see AJYB 2002, p. 406), Schröder switched his stance, and in 2002 opposed German military involvement in possible hostilities against Iraq.

Observers suggested that there was another reason beside political calculations for the shift in Schröder’s position—fear of terrorist attacks on German soil had subsided. To be sure, Germans were among the victims of the 9/11 attacks as well as attacks in Tunisia and Bali in 2002. The Tunisian incident received considerable press coverage: 15 people, including ten German tourists, were killed by terrorists in the historic La Ghriba synagogue in Jerba. The German media suggested that the attack brought terrorism home to Germans, some suggesting that Germany must play a larger role in trying to resolve the Mideast crisis because so long as the conflict continued the violence could spread into Europe. The danger to the tourist industry in Tunisia was another topic of discussion, since that country was a popular vacation destination for Europeans, and Jewish sites there drew many German visitors. Nevertheless, the German Foreign Ministry did not put out a travel advisory after the attack.

Despite the refusal to cooperate fully with American policy, Germany continued to share intelligence information about potential terrorism with U.S. agencies. Arrests and trials of suspected terrorists and banning of terrorist groups continued through the year. In April, Germany’s Fed-
eral Crime Bureau warned local bureaus about the possibility of attacks on Jewish venues in Germany, but details were not made public. Otto Schily, the federal interior minister, called on all states of Germany to check their security plans and strengthen them if necessary, but no concrete threats were reported. In August, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung claimed that German car dealers of Arabic background were helping Islamic fundamentalists launder money for the "war against Christians and Jews." The newspaper said it had received this information from the Federal Bureau of Criminal Investigation in Wiesbaden, but the bureau refused comment. Germany's Jewish communities had already increased security after the September 11 attacks in the U.S. Police with machine guns were posted outside most Jewish sites, some of which had been equipped with double metal barricades as well.

At the end of November 2002, the German Supreme Court renewed its year-old ban on the Islamic extremist group Calipha State, based in Cologne, which had about 1,100 members and was reportedly tied to Osama bin Laden. The ban had been made possible under a law passed at the end of 2001 that criminalized membership in, and support of, terrorist organizations abroad, and allowed the banning of religious groups that abused their legal protection and tax advantages by harboring terrorists or promoting extremism. The stated objectives of this particular group were to establish an Islamic state in Turkey and to promote Islamic world domination. Despite the ban, the group continued to broadcast its propaganda on a weekly German television show.

A group with similar goals, Hizb ut-Tahrir, grabbed headlines in October when it sponsored a lecture at Berlin's Technical University. The organization, founded in East Jerusalem in 1953, promoted a "struggle against Jews" in its Turkish-, German-, and Arabic-language magazine; it was outlawed in Muslim countries but had a functioning headquarters in London. The lecture drew leading figures of Germany's right-wing extremist scene, providing ample evidence of their shared attraction to anti-American, anti-Israel, and anti-Semitic rhetoric. German courts banned the group in January 2003.

Election 2002

Preparation for the September 22 national elections dominated German politics during much of 2002. Two long-standing taboos were broken during the campaign as the parties jockeyed to win public support—one against asserting German national pride, the other against injecting
anti-Semitism into politics. Both were previously off-limits to mainstream politicians because of their Nazi associations.

The first taboo was broken by Chancellor Schröder, leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), who linked the invocation of German national feeling to anti-U.S. sentiment, correctly calculating that the electorate would rally with him against cooperation in America’s anti-Iraq policy. Breaking the second taboo, Jürgen Möllemann, vice president of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), used anti-Semitic clichés and anti-Israel jibes, but the tactic failed and his party did not win enough votes to earn a position in the new coalition government.

As the year began, Schröder appeared to have lost the support of the “new middle” that had helped him win in 1998. He seemed vulnerable to his main challenger, Edmund Stoiber, governor of Bavaria, who headed the Christian Social Union (CSU), sister party of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Against the background of a faltering economy and fear of war with Iraq, Schröder opened his campaign with a public dialogue with controversial author Martin Walser on the themes of patriotism and national identity. It took place on May 8, the anniversary of the end of World War II. The invitation to this event read, in part, “We in Germany want renewal and we want to stick together. And we want to fulfill our role in a changed in Europe and the world as a normal nation.” Jewish leaders and others protested angrily not only at the choice of subject but also at the identity of the chancellor’s discussion partner. They noted that Walser, in a 1998 speech, had called Auschwitz a “moral cudgel” used against Germany (see AJYB 1999, p. 345), and, furthermore, that the scheduled moderator of the dialogue, journalist Christoph Dieckmann, had written in Die Zeit that “Israel’s arrogant belief in its chosenness is a curse.”

During the discussion, Schröder said that some of Germany’s greatest patriots were those who “resisted the murderous Nazi regime.” He defined modern Germany’s national identity in terms of its role within Europe, its reintegration of east and west, and its self-definition in terms of values rather than place. Walser, for his part, asserted that national identity was a feeling that largely defied rational definition. He suggested that Hitler might never have come to power had heavy reparations not been demanded of Germany after World War I, and that without Hitler there would have been no Auschwitz. This theory of indirect Allied responsibility for Nazi war crimes was hardly novel—it was, in fact, a common theme among conservative historians in Germany. In the end, the discussion between the 58-year-old Schröder and the 75-year-old Walser re-
revealed how difficult it remained for Germany to define itself, 57 years after the downfall of the Nazi regime.

As the election approached, Germany's major Jewish newspaper, the *Jüdische Allgemeine Zeitung*, asked the leading candidates to answer several questions of Jewish concern. The fact that they responded even though the Jewish vote represented only .05 percent of the electorate indicated that politicians remained sensitive to how they were perceived by the Jewish community. The candidates' replies, however, were predictable. Across the board, from the conservatives to the communists, all condemned anti-Semitism, pledged to help integrate Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, and declared their commitment to the survival of Israel, while at the same time supporting the Palestinians' right to a homeland. Both Stoiber of the CSU and Guido Westerwelle of the FDP stated that it must be permissible to criticize Israel without being accused of anti-Semitism. In fact, mainstream German politicians and journalists regularly criticized Israeli policies. While Schröder raised the possibility of German soldiers taking part in a UN peacekeeping force in the Middle East, Stoiber said he could not envision this given "our historical background."

German-Jewish journalist Richard Chaim Schneider speculated that Jews would hesitate to vote for Stoiber because he would likely choose the FDP as his coalition partner, necessitating a high ministerial position for Westerwelle—"the man "who did not have the courage to silence the anti-Semites [i.e. Möllemann] in his own party." Jews were more likely to support Schröder, Schneider felt, but not because of anything to do with the Middle East. Rather, they remembered how he had "rushed to Düsseldorf after the arson attack on the synagogue" in the summer of 2000, and how he pressured German industry to contribute to the $5-billion compensation fund for Nazi-era slave and forced laborers.

There was some fear that the issue of immigration would have an impact on the campaign and bring out nativist sentiments in the electorate. Seven million noncitizens resided in Germany—nearly 9 percent of the country's population of 82 million. Most of them, nearly six million, came from European countries (mostly Turkey, Italy, Greece, and former Yugoslavia). The next largest groups were Asians, Africans, North and South Americans, and Australians. An estimated 200,000 were arriving each year. A law had been proposed by the coalition government in 1998 to streamline regulations for asylum seekers, facilitate the integration of foreigners, and develop a method of determining who might enter the country in order to work, but it had not yet been voted into law. As it
turned out, however, Germany’s immigration policy did not become a focus of the election.

The anti-Israel, anti-Semitic slogans of Jürgen Möllemann served only to earn the FDP a reputation as a wishy-washy party ready to pander to the questionable fringes. Early in the campaign, party leader Westerwelle said he hoped to attract voters from the far left and the far right to his centrist party. Möllemann, who had previously expressed sympathy for Palestinian suicide bombers, said he wanted to attract Muslims (there were roughly three million Muslims in Germany, but only a minority of them were citizens with the right to vote). This drew criticism from mainstream politicians and Jewish leaders, among them Michel Friedman, vice president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (CCJG), the representative organization of German Jewry. Möllemann countered that “unfortunately, the politics of [Israeli prime minister Ariel] Sharon and the unbearably aggressive and arrogant manner of Mr. Friedman are liable to stir anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic resentment.” Jewish leaders and German political figures reacted with outrage to the imputation that Jews were to blame for causing anti-Semitism. Paul Spiegel, president of the CCJG, asserted that this insult of a Jewish leader by a mainstream politician was unprecedented in the postwar era. When Westerwelle did nothing more than verbally slap his deputy chairman on the wrist, several longtime party members quit the FDP. Yet Möllemann was hardly alone in his views: a poll released on May 31 showed that 40 percent of FDP party members (and 28 percent of the general public) agreed with him that Michel Friedman’s personality increased anti-Semitism.

In May, the head of the Turkish Community of Germany, together with the Turkish Union of Berlin-Brandenburg, protested what they called attempts by the FDP to attract Muslim voters by swinging toward the right. Members of the union, in fact, joined members of the Berlin Jewish community in a protest demonstration at the party’s headquarters. Ayman Mazyek, spokesman for the politically moderate Central Council of Muslims in Germany, told the Financial Times of Germany that it was “not enough to express anti-Israeli criticism and to expect that Muslims will rally around the FDP.” In September, shortly before election day, Möllemann distributed an anti-Israel, anti-Semitic flyer to some eight million voters in his home state in which he repeated past criticisms of Sharon and Michel Friedman. Again, his tactics brought a reaction of outrage from political leaders and Jews, and this time even FDP chief Westerwelle sternly rebuked his deputy.

In the end, the election turned out to be the closest in German post-
war history. Although the SPD and the CDU/CSU ran a dead heat, each winning 38.5 percent of the vote, the Greens’ 8.6 percent edged out the FDP’s 7.4 percent, ensuring a continuation of the Social Democratic-Green coalition. The postcommunist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) got 4 percent.

Some observers viewed the anti-American tone that helped Schröder eke out his victory as not just a passing election-year phenomenon, but rather a sign of profound change in the transatlantic relationship. It was hardly surprising that full-blown anti-Americanism—often linked to anti-Israel and anti-Semitic views—was common on the two political extremes, left and right. What was new was that mainstream society had become generally critical of American policies. According to a survey commissioned by the American Jewish Committee’s Berlin office, 77 percent of Germans believed that American foreign policy did not take the interests of U.S. allies into account. A substantial majority, however, said that good relations with the U.S. were important. In fact, when Justice Minister Herta Däubler-Gmelin was reported to have compared President George W. Bush to Adolf Hitler, outrage came not just from the American administration but also from pro-American German intellectuals and politicians, and she was forced to resign her post.

Despite the popularity of his continuing opposition to a war with Iraq, the reelected chancellor was losing public support by the end of 2002 due to the weak economy. The CDU/CSU opposition demanded an investigation into whether the SPD had used fraud to win the election by not informing the public that the budget deficit was much greater than predicted—indeed, that it was above the limit the European Union allowed its members, a situation that might lead to the imposition of fines.

As for the FDP, its poor performance in the election, said critics, proved that an anti-Semitic campaign could not win in Germany. In November, Westerwelle accused Möllmann of “attempting on his own to shift the axis of the FDP against its will” so as to turn it into a right-wing populist party, and asserted that this “caused the Free Democrats serious damage.” Political scientist Hajo Funke of the Free University in Berlin commented: “Contrary to Austria, West Germany after the Second World War distanced itself from anti-Semitism and racism, so if you try to play this card again, you shake the basic consensus of postwar federal Germany, the liberal democratic identity. And this was seen after a while by the electorate.”

Ultimately, it was not Möllmann’s message but his method that caused his downfall. An investigation launched soon after the election into the
source of funds he used to print and mail the offending flyers in his home state uncovered a pattern of illegal activity.

IRAQ

Early in 2002, former German culture minister Michael Naumann, who had lived in the United States for many years, criticized President George W. Bush for suggesting that Iraq might be the next target, after Afghanistan, in the war on terror. According to Naumann, Osama Bin Laden was the only person who stood to benefit from an attack on Iraq. Throughout the year, German officials insisted they needed proof that Iraq was a threat before they would participate in any war aimed at the ouster of Saddam Hussein. These sentiments accurately reflected German public opinion.

During the election campaign, Schröder said he would not allow American warplanes to fly over Germany if the U.S. went to war against Iraq without a UN mandate. After the election Schröder modified his stance, saying that he could imagine allowing U.S. jets to fly over and refuel in Germany in case of a war, since the NATO charter apparently mandated such aid. With British prime minister Tony Blair fully supporting the Bush administration's stance on Iraq, Germany found itself increasingly torn between loyalty to the war-wary European Union and the hawkish U.S.-British partnership.

In December, the Green Party passed a resolution calling on Schröder to deny refueling and fly-over rights if the U.S. acted unilaterally. A government spokesperson said that German support would have to be based on a UN mandate. But this stance was further modified by an SPD parliamentary spokesperson for internal affairs, who confirmed that the NATO Treaty required member-states to grant each other fly-over rights and the use of bases. By the end of 2002, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (Green Party) said he could not rule out Germany's supporting a UN resolution for war. The remark drew the ire of many figures in the SPD and in his own Green Party, but they were quickly overshadowed by Schröder's unequivocal statement that Germany would not support a war on Iraq. With this as its official position, Germany prepared to take its seat as a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council in January 2003; it was scheduled to assume the rotating chairmanship of the council in February.

CCJG president Paul Spiegel told the weekly Bild am Sonntag newspaper in December that war against Iraq might be necessary to avert even
greater horror, since “if Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction, he would use them.” Though he said he hoped war would not be necessary, the Jewish leader pointed out that democratic politicians during the Nazi era who did nothing to stop Hitler were later justly criticized for allowing the Holocaust to happen, and that “the Nazi concentration camps were not liberated by demonstrators, but by soldiers—hundreds of thousands of whom lost their lives.” The United States “played a decisive role” at the time, he stressed. In supporting rapprochement between Germany and the U.S. in defiance of German public opinion, Spiegel was doing something new. Previous postwar Jewish leaders in Germany had generally spoken out only on domestic or Israel-related matters. Spiegel’s readiness to address a controversial foreign-policy issue not directly related to Israel suggested a growing confidence among the Jewish leadership in the stability of German democracy.

Israel and the Middle East

The German government’s traditional support for the Jewish state, based on recognition of German guilt and responsibility, remained steadfast in 2002 despite pressures from an electorate with growing pro-Palestinian sympathies. Amit Gilad, spokesman for the Israeli embassy, found it encouraging that Chancellor Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer declared their support for Israel in the event of an Iraqi attack on it, and added that “the German commitment to the ongoing peace process is clear.” But Gilad warned of a trend in the media “of being more distant to Israel,” and noted that fewer Germans were visiting Israel, largely out of safety concerns.

The coalition government remained committed to helping bring peace to the Middle East. Foreign Minister Fischer’s seven-point plan for ending the conflict envisioned a negotiated cease-fire followed by peace talks. Chancellor Schröder, as noted above, favored a UN peacekeeping unit in the area including German troops, but Fischer found the idea of German soldiers on Israeli soil repugnant for historical reasons.

In April, when Israeli troops moved into West Bank cities after a series of Palestinian suicide bombings (see above, pp. 198–201), Germany joined with Britain and Italy in refusing to support a UN Human Rights Commission resolution condemning Israel for “mass killings” of Palestinians. During an earlier EU Commission meeting in Luxembourg, the three countries found fault with the resolution for not clearly condemning suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. However other EU states—
France, Spain, Sweden, Portugal, and Belgium—endorsed the resolution with reservations. It passed the Human Rights Commission 40 to 5 with seven abstentions and one member not present.

Military cooperation between Germany and Israel had been close for years. Israel was Germany’s seventh largest military client, and Germany was Israel’s second biggest supplier, after the U.S. In 2000, the last year for which figures were available, Germany sold Israel military equipment worth $170 million, including torpedoes and parts for tanks and armored cars. In April 2002, however, in the wake of the Israeli offensive into the West Bank, Germany halted arms sales to Israel, though it pointedly refused to call the action an embargo. Quiet diplomacy between the two countries brought a restoration of arms sales, but controversy erupted in Germany toward the end of the year over whether Israel should receive tanks and Patriot missiles it had requested. The debate centered on whether the tanks would be used to destroy Palestinian homes in the Territories, and on whether delivering any weapons at all would go against Germany’s constitutional ban on sending weapons into a war zone. Ultimately, two patriot missiles were delivered on loan for two years.

Two back-to-back demonstrations in Berlin illustrated the divided sympathies of the public. On April 13, some 4,000 people gathered for the largest pro-Palestinian demonstration ever held in Berlin. Observers expressed some surprise at the hate-filled tone of some of the slogans and signs; one demonstrator was later arrested for having dressed his children as suicide bombers. The following day, some 2,000 Jews and non-Jews demonstrated for Israel in a march organized by the nondenominational Association Against Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism and endorsed by several Jewish communal organizations. Speakers expressed their frustration that attacks on Israel were explained away while Israel’s acts of self-defense were condemned.

Since the start of the second intifada, said CCJG president Spiegel, there had been a dramatic increase in the amount of mail sent to him and other Jewish figures containing anti-Semitism thinly disguised as criticism of Israel. As a particularly shocking example he cited a letter that Norbert Blüm, a former German labor minister, wrote to Shimon Stein, Israel’s ambassador in Berlin, describing Israeli military actions as a “relentless war of extermination”—words echoing Nazi rhetoric.

Supporters of Israel felt that Jürgen Möllemann’s role in the election campaign was exacerbating the situation, making public expression of anti-Israel views acceptable in German society and blurring the line between criticism of Israeli policies and anti-Semitism. Proof of this was
offered in an exhibit at Berlin’s Jewish Museum of readers’ letters to German Jewish journalist Henryk Broder and to the editor of the Jüdische Allgemeine Zeitung. Though some letter writers expressed support for Israel and disgust with Möllemann’s election campaign, many others said that Möllemann had given them the courage to express their pent-up anti-Israel views and their dislike of individual Jewish leaders in Germany.

The letters were just the tip of the iceberg. Surveys conducted during the spring showed that Germans were increasingly critical of the Jewish state. A poll by the Emnid firm found that 73 percent of Germans believed that “Israel’s tough treatment of the Palestinians” was not justified. A study commissioned by the American Jewish Committee’s Berlin office showed that 34 percent of Germans respected Möllemann for his willingness to criticize Israel openly, and 23 percent respected him for having stood up to the leaders of the German Jewish community. It also found that Germans were increasingly likely to question the “special relationship” between Israel and Germany forged in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The weekly news magazine Der Spiegel released a study showing that 70 percent of Germans said they were just as ready to criticize Israel as any other country, and only 29 percent felt they should hold back from criticizing Israel due to the tangled historical relationship of Jews with Germany. Furthermore, 25 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that Israel’s actions in the Middle East “are principally no different from what the Nazis did to the Jews in the Third Reich,” a figure that rose to 35 percent in the 18–29 age group. And an Anti-Defamation League survey revealed that 25 percent of Germans sympathized with the Palestinians as against 17 percent who sympathized with the Israelis.

Media coverage of the Middle East encouraged a distancing between Germans and Israel, according to a study commissioned by the American Jewish Committee, “Mideast Reporting on the Second Intifada in German Print Media,” released in June. Affirming what many others had noticed, it concluded that “there is often distortion in the image of Israel, a lack of context and an aggressive tone” in Germany’s Middle East reportage. The media coverage came in for tough criticism at Berlin’s pro-Israel demonstration in April. There, Matthias Loerbroks, minister of the Protestant parish of Friedrichstadt, decried the use of such terms as “Old Testament-like,” “wrathful,” and “vengeful” in connection with Israeli policy by reporters who themselves were “not particularly pious.”

In February, Jewish students held a well-attended conference in Frankfurt to discuss how better to present the case for Israel on college campuses. Also, a group of Frankfurt Jews launched Honestly Concerned, a
media-watch group that would monitor the German press on its reporting of Israel and other issues of Jewish interest. In September, hoping to counter negative reporting, the Berlin Jewish Community proposed putting up posters in 50 subway stations showing the faces of Israelis who had been murdered by suicide bombers, and the question, “What if it had been your child?” But Berlin’s mass-transit corporation turned down the request, fearing that the posters would provoke a violent response. “We don’t want to create political propaganda,” a spokesperson said.

Among the strongest supporters of Israel in Germany was a small but steadfast group of Evangelical Christians, and in August they organized one of the largest pro-Israel demonstrations Germany had seen in years. Some 4,000 of them assembled in Berlin where they prayed, waved Israeli flags, and heard speeches critical of a proposed Palestinian state. Jewish groups did not participate, and the German Jewish Student Union protested against the anti-Palestinian stance displayed as well as the Christian fundamentalist view of Judaism as an “incomplete” faith. But the Israeli embassy welcomed the show of support, and later in the year Keren Hayesod (United Israel Appeal) and the U.S.-Israel based International Fellowship of Christians and Jews signed an agreement to launch a major campaign to activate Evangelical Christian support for Israel in Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

In spite of calls for boycotts against Israeli academics, German-Israeli cultural and scientific exchange continued, according to the Israeli embassy, though fear of terrorism had caused many Germans to “hesitate to come to Israel.”

In December, Israeli president Moshe Katzav paid his first official visit to Germany, at the invitation of German president Johannes Rau. The two joined in dedicating a synagogue in the city of Wuppertal, and paid a visit to the concentration camp memorial at Sachsenhausen. During his three-day stay, Katzav took issue with German attitudes toward Israel, saying that he did not understand how one could “equate Palestinian terror and our fight against terror.” In Berlin, Katzav told Jewish leaders that though he worried about anti-Semitism in Europe, he was optimistic about the future of German-Jewish relations. Katzav did not repeat the faux pas of his predecessor, Ezer Weizman, who upset the Jewish community during his 1996 visit when he said that all Jews should leave Germany and go to Israel. During Katzav’s visit, about 30 neo-Nazis demonstrated against the delivery of weapons to Israel; some 1,000 anti-Nazi protesters countered them. Paul Spiegel called the Katzav visit a “sym-
bol of solidarity and a sign of the recognition that Germany today is another Germany, in which Jews can live again.”

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

According to statistics compiled by the Department for Constitutional Protection, there were no reported cases of murder associated with right-wing extremism during 2002. There were, however, 28 anti-Semitic violent crimes, up from 18 the year before.

The number of right-wing and anti-Semitic incidents rose dramatically in the first half of 2002, according to the midyear report of the Party for Democratic Socialism (PDS), the postcommunist party that regularly requested a breakdown of such incidents from the federal authorities. In the second quarter of the year, police registered 319 such incidents, up from 127 in the first quarter. Most of them involved public expression or display of illegal material, such as swastikas, the raised arm of the “Hitler greeting,” the singing of SS songs, and Holocaust denial. For the year 2001, the government had reported 989 anti-Semitic incidents, down from 1,084 in 2000.

The area of the country that had formerly been East Germany saw the steepest rise in such crimes. In the state of Mecklenburg-Pomerania, for example, 33 incidents were recorded in the first half of 2002, as compared to 44 in all of 2001. A number of these attacks targeted Holocaust and death-march memorials in Raben-Steinfeld near Schwerin, as well as in Woebbelin and Boizenburg. (Throughout Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Pomerania there were markers showing the routes of the death marches conducted toward the end of the war, along which thousands of camp inmates died of exhaustion or were shot by guards.) In a few cases vandals placed pigs’ heads on Holocaust memorials. Authorities believed it possible that these events were linked.

On September 5—the night before Rosh Hashanah—in what one Jewish leader called a clear act of Holocaust denial, arsonists destroyed an exhibition room at a museum about the death march in the Below Forest. Local political and religious leaders joined in condemning the crime, and some 500 residents attended a demonstration the next day to show their disgust. A $10,000 reward was established for information leading to arrests. Around the same time, vandals spray-painted a swastika on a Jewish memorial stone in the town of Grevesmühlen in Mecklenburg-Pomerania. The state department of criminal investigation said that sim-
ilar red paint was used in the Below Forest crime. A later attack, in November, was also likely connected to those in Below Forest and Grevesmühlen: vandals destroyed a memorial to victims of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in the former East German town of Legebruch, north of Berlin.

There was considerable discussion of whether this upsurge of incidents reflected a resurgent German anti-Semitism or a backlash against Israeli policies. In some of these cases the perpetrators were described as appearing to be of Arab background, lending credence to the second interpretation, but in most cases no one saw the vandals' faces. Peter Fischer, who oversaw Jewish communities in former East Germany for the CCJG, said he believed the primary motivation for the latest attacks—which were largely aimed at Holocaust memorial sites—to be plain and simple Holocaust denial.

There were also several anti-Semitic incidents in the capital city of Berlin. In March, an explosive device was detonated near the entrance to a Jewish cemetery in the Charlottenburg district, damaging windows in the chapel. On March 30, two American rabbis visiting Berlin were accosted by about eight young men police described as being "of Arabic background" who beat and kicked one of the rabbis. This happened soon after a number of violent attacks on synagogues and other Jewish sites in France and Belgium, and the perpetrators reportedly first asked their victims if they were Jewish. The Jewish Community of Berlin requested special police protection following this incident. Several days later, a young Jewish woman wearing a Star of David necklace was attacked in similar circumstances at a Berlin subway station. Police said the attackers, who managed to flee, appeared to be of Arab origin.

Also in April, unknown persons threw a Molotov cocktail onto the grounds of a Berlin synagogue. Guards on night patrol were able to extinguish the flames before they could cause any damage. Later that month, a Holocaust memorial on the Pulitzbruecke in Berlin was vandalized. Police reported that swastikas had been painted on the memorial shortly after midnight. Again, the perpetrators were not apprehended. In May, vandals laid waste to the interior of an unused, pre-World War II Jewish hospital in Berlin. Jewish leaders said they had no doubt that the motivation was anti-Semitism. "The destruction of a Jewish historical site cannot be considered a neutral act," said a spokesperson. Alexander Brenner, head of the Jewish Community of Berlin, said that unfair media reports on Israel were partly to blame for such incidents. And Michel Friedman, vice president of the CCJG, said that greater protec-
tion for Jewish venues was "urgently needed" since the Hamas movement had declared Jews worldwide "enemy number one."

Reichstag member Ulla Jelpke, the PDS spokesperson for domestic policy, charged in July that anti-Semitic crimes were "clearly encouraged by the anti-Semitic abuses of Möllemann" and the failure of the government to ban the extreme right-wing National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD). The government coalition had indeed been trying to gather support to ban the NPD, which it compared to the Nazi party of the 1920s. But the effort suffered a setback in February, when the German Supreme Court postponed its hearings on the matter after learning that the federal Ministry of the Interior and the Department for Constitutional Protection had used paid government informants to gather evidence, and that these informants were among the "experts" scheduled to testify at the hearings. The court felt that this cast doubt on the strength of the government's case since the NPD could argue that the evidence against it was actually created by provocateurs. The scandal shook public faith in Interior Minister Schily, and opposition parties called for his resignation. Despite this embarrassment, the government reiterated its determination to have the NPD banned. Only two parties had ever been banned in postwar Germany before, a communist party and a neo-Nazi party, both in the 1950s.

In May, the theme of German anti-Semitism took on a new twist with the publication of Death of a Critic, a new novel by German author Martin Walser that drew widespread criticism for promoting anti-Semitic stereotypes. Frank Schirrmacher, publisher of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, which had serialized Walser's earlier books, chose not to run this one. Instead, he published an open letter to Walser calling the book a "document of hate." Specifically, he charged that André Ehrl-König, a character depicted in the novel as a Jewish literary critic, was meant to libel real-life Jewish critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki, the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. In one passage, for example, the fictional Ehrl-König is described as being fond of little German girls. Reich-Ranicki remained silent for a day or two. Finally, he told Die Welt newspaper that he found the novel "deeply shocking, offensive, and hurtful."

In August, another well-known German expressed sentiments that many considered anti-Semitic. Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping, forced to resign his post over accusations of financial irregularities, told a Hamburg audience that President Bush wanted to oust Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in order to garner the support of "a powerful—perhaps overly powerful—Jewish lobby" with the aim of helping Republicans win
the fall gubernatorial races in Florida and New York (the candidate in Florida was Bush’s brother, Jeb). Scharping went on to say that congressional redistricting in the U.S. since 2000 had strengthened the electoral power of American Jews.

Old-fashioned right-wing anti-Semitism reared its head again in October, when residents of a street in Berlin protested against the restoration of the street’s pre-Nazi name, Jüdenstrasse (Jews’ Street). During ceremonies for the renaming of what had been called, since Hitler’s time, Kinkelstrasse, some bystanders reportedly interrupted the speech of Alexander Brenner, head of the Jewish Community of Berlin, with statements such as “Jews out,” “It’s all the fault of you Jews,” and “You crucified Jesus.” Brenner, who later said he was shocked and nearly broke down, cut short his speech and told the hecklers, “Whether you like it or not, you have aligned yourselves with the Nazis.” Police launched an investigation. Reportedly, a good many of the approximately 40 people in attendance were members of Citizens for Kinkelstrasse, a local group opposed to the street renaming. They wanted to retain the old name, they said, not because of any anti-Semitism, but because the change had been made without consideration of their concerns, such as having to change their addresses.

A major investigation into right-wing extremism was bungled in July, when Berlin police arrested a neo-Nazi who, unknown to them, had been providing information about the extremist music scene to police in the neighboring state of Brandenburg. Toni Stadler, 27, was arrested as his pop group, White Aryan Rebels, was about to give a concert for 100 neo-Nazis in Berlin. Such concerts, illegal under the law forbidding the dissemination of racism and Nazism, were conducted clandestinely. White Aryan Rebels was known for its 2001 CD, Notes of Hate. One of the songs on it, “This Bullet Is for You,” called for the murder of CCJG vice president Michel Friedman and of the interracial children of tennis star Boris Becker, among others. According to German officials, the popularity of music with racist, anti-Semitic and ultranationalist lyrics was on the increase. To evade the German legal ban, the music was often downloaded from the Internet, particularly through U.S. providers.

The year 2002 saw the release of several polls and studies measuring German attitudes toward Jews and other minority groups. Two surveys released in June seemed to contradict each other. One, published in Der Spiegel magazine, found a drop in anti-Semitism in Germany. Some 79 percent of those surveyed said they would not care if they had a Jewish neighbor, and 20 percent said they would actually like having one. Only
1 percent said having a Jewish neighbor would bother them, down from 11 percent six years earlier. While 44 percent of those over age 60 felt that "Jews have too much influence in the world," only 16 percent of those aged 18–29 agreed. Nearly 50 percent of respondents said that Germany still had a special responsibility to Jews because of the Nazi genocide, up 16 percent since 1991.

The second survey, published in the Frankfurter Rundschau, purported to show an increase in German anti-Semitic attitudes since 1999. In 2002, 36 percent agreed with the statement, "I can understand that some people find Jews unpleasant." Three years earlier, only 20 percent had agreed. However the Frankfurter Rundschau poll showed greater dislike for Arabs than for Jews: 49 percent said they "could understand how some people might find Arabs unpleasant," while 23 percent disagreed.

Later in June, the Anti-Defamation League released a survey of attitudes in Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Denmark that found that "classical anti-Semitism, coupled with a new form fueled by anti-Israel sentiment, has become a potent and dangerous mix in countries with enormous Muslim and Arab populations." The ADL survey found that 55 percent of the German respondents considered Jews more loyal to Israel than to their home country, 32 percent thought Jews had too much power in the business world, and 58 percent—the highest figure among the countries surveyed—believed that Jews talked too much about the Holocaust.

In September, researchers at the University of Leipzig conducted a survey that found that anti-Semitism was more common in the western states of Germany than in the east, whereas a more generalized xenophobia tended to predominate in the east.

Finally, a study released by Bielefeld University in November indicated that Germans were becoming increasingly sympathetic to political calls for "law and order" and appeals to xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-Islamic feeling.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

On January 20, 2002, Germany marked the 60th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference at which the Nazi high command finalized the plan to kill out Europe's Jews. The 1942 conference resulted in a 16-page protocol, including Adolf Eichmann's alphabetical list of 33 European lands from which the Jewish people were to be eliminated. Calling the Holocaust "the darkest chapter of our history," Chancellor Schröder said the
Wannsee Conference demonstrated the "perversity of the Nazi system." The building where the meeting took place had been turned into a public memorial and education center a decade earlier. Some 60,000 people visited the site annually, about one-third of them from outside Germany.

A new exhibit, "Holocaust: The National Socialist Genocide and the Motifs of Memory," opened in Berlin's German Historical Museum on January 17, timed immediately to precede the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27. In what was believed to be a first for any German museum, the exhibit traced the development of modern anti-Semitism and racism in Germany through its culmination as the Nazis' "final solution." Included were artifacts such as concentration camp uniforms, early Nazi propaganda, period artworks, and a desecrated Torah scroll from Pultuk, Poland, on loan from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. "We wanted to demonstrate the causes and the reality of the Holocaust without arguing about it and without moralizing," said museum director Hans Ottomeyer.

In June, the International Auschwitz Committee announced that it would move its headquarters to Berlin in 2003, where it would intensify the battle against all forms of hate by using survivor testimony as the key weapon, especially in classrooms. Christoph Heubner, executive vice president of the committee, said that survivors "felt an urgent need to act. They said, 'At the end of our life we have to go a step forward and be even more energetic with our work in schools, giving younger people the chance to learn from history.'"

Historical sites associated with the Holocaust received increased federal support in 2002, according to Thomas Lutz, director of the memorial museums department at the Topography of Terror Foundation, an archive and memorial on the site of the former Gestapo headquarters in Berlin. Not only had the government earmarked more than $6 million for the preservation and restoration of former concentration camps, but Topography of Terror itself received a verbal pledge of nearly $32.5 million in federal and state funds to build a permanent museum. The flow of money to memorial sites had increased since the unification of Germany in 1990, said Lutz, when the government realized that the exhibits in the former East Germany were marred by socialist propaganda.

On July 7, a conference on Nazi abuse of law opened in Berlin, raising controversial issues about tyranny and justice past and present. The three-day seminar, called "Tyranny, Justice, and the Law," was a joint project of the Touro Law Center in New York, the Free University of Berlin, and Touro's three-year-old Institute on the Holocaust and the Law. In addi-
tion, the German-American Lawyers' Association and the Simon Bond Foundation supported the event. The conference dealt with the Nazis' destruction of democratic law, the flawed process of healing after World War II, and attempts to bring war criminals to justice. Looking at the contemporary scene, it examined the role of international criminal courts and the U.S. refusal to endorse them, and the question of whether the circumstances of Al Qaeda prisoners at the U.S. base in Cuba could be compared to the early Nazi concentration camps for political opponents.

In August, work on Germany's planned Holocaust Memorial in Berlin was postponed due to the discovery of irregularities in the bidding process for the contract to construct the 2,700 cement steles, some up to 15 feet high, on a 204,500-square-foot site near the Brandenburg Gate. After the bidding was repeated, it was announced that work would begin in 2003. American architect Peter Eisenman designed the memorial, which was approved in 1999 by the Reichstag after more than ten years of debate and discussion. It was expected to cost some $22 million.

A revamped museum in Peenemünde, on the Baltic, birthplace of both the intercontinental ballistic missile and, hence, of space exploration, reflected a new understanding of the moral ambiguities of local history. Ten years earlier, the nearby town of Usedom had opened a museum and planned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first launching of the Nazis' V-2 rocket from Peenemünde without mentioning that some 20,000 slave laborers had died working on the project, or that several thousand people were killed by the bombs themselves in England, Belgium, and the Netherlands. These omissions were rectified in new museum exhibits. The reopening was celebrated in late September with a "concert of healing" featuring conductor Mstislav Rostropovich. German president Johannes Rau spoke at the event.

In October, the Center for Research on Anti-Semitism at Berlin's Technical University marked its 20th year. Since its founding, the center had published more than 500 studies and books on subjects related to anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. The center held conferences on historical and current topics and published a yearbook as well as educational material disseminated to schools across Germany. "I will never say that our work is done," Wolfgang Benz, director of the center since 1990, said. "Every new generation must be taught to recognize the mechanisms that lead to prejudice."

Also in October, the publishing company Bertelsmann admitted that Jews had been forced to work in its printing facilities in Lithuania and Latvia, and that the firm had been a major producer of Nazi propaganda
books. Previously, the firm had claimed that the Nazis had closed the company in 1944 because its chairman, Heinrich Mohn, was a devout Christian who published theological texts. Bertelsmann was one of 6,000 German firms paying into a $5-billion fund set up by the German government and its industries for survivors of Nazi forced and slave labor.

October was also the month that controversial American scholar Daniel J. Goldhagen presented the German translation of his new book, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*, at the annual Frankfurt book fair. His remarks at the event, and the book itself, drew heavy criticism. *A Moral Reckoning* faulted the Catholic Church for its role in the historical development of anti-Semitism and what he termed its passivity, at best, toward the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany. Goldhagen proposed radical acts of atonement, including the issuance of new editions of the New Testament purged of anti-Jewish passages. After a court-ordered delay due to a disputed photo caption, the German edition entered the local bookstores. Goldhagen was no stranger to controversy. His 1996 book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, which suggested that there was a uniquely German "eliminationist anti-Semitism," was a best-seller in Germany, despite being panned by critics and historians.

In one of the more publicized cases of Holocaust trivialization, Roland Koch, governor of the state of Hessen and a member of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), came under fire in December for alluding to the Holocaust in a debate about a proposed tax increase. Responding to proponents of the measure who publicly named certain well-to-do citizens who would have to pay a higher tax, Koch accused them of putting "a new form of the star on the chest" of the wealthy. His statement evoked such an uproar that the state parliamentary session had to be interrupted. The obvious comparison to the yellow star Jews were forced to wear during the Nazi era was "an insult to all victims of the Nazi regime," said CCJG president Spiegel. Koch later apologized.

In December, the German Federal Archive released the names of 31,161 victims of the Nazi "euthanasia" program. The names had been filed in an archive in the former East Germany for decades, and it had taken years to computerize the information. Historians believed that some 300,000 people were selected for extermination as "worthless" under this Nazi program that preceded the mass murder of Jews and others.

The American Jewish Committee released a poll on December 17 that found that 52 percent of Germans believed Jews were exploiting the memory of the Holocaust for their own purposes. AJC executive director
David Harris called the finding highly disturbing. This was the third such AJC poll conducted since German unification in 1990.

There were two positive developments during 2002 in the area of Holocaust compensation. Early in the year, negotiations between the German government and the Conference for Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) resulted in a liberalization of eligibility criteria for payments from the Article 2 Fund (see AJYB 2002, pp. 22–23). This change allowed up to 5,000 additional Holocaust survivors to receive monthly compensation payments. In September, the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) reached agreement with the German insurance industry on the processing and payment of previously unpaid insurance policies to survivors and their heirs (see above, p. 109). In November, the Claims Conference held a two-day symposium in Berlin to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the first compensation agreement with Germany.

Heirs of the Wertheim department-store family fought to gain compensation in 2002 for a large parcel of land in Berlin, worth hundreds of millions of dollars today, which once belonged to the family. They said that German retailer KarstadtQuelle AG lied to the family in 1951 when it offered a low purchase price for the property, claiming the company stock had no value. Located in former East Berlin, the site was taken over by the federal government after German unification, and it refused to compensate the family.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

Communal Affairs

With an influx of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, Germany's Jewish population had risen from about 30,000 in 1990 to over 100,000 in 2002, making it the fastest growing Jewish community in the world. Since 1991, Germany had allowed 5,000 Jews per year to enter from the former Soviet Union in order to help rebuild Germany's destroyed Jewish communities. Germany granted such Jewish immigrants "contingent refugee" status, which gave them residency and full social benefits but not immediate citizenship. The program was to continue indefinitely, and Jewish representatives expected the community to grow to at least 130,000 members over the course of the next decade. The Zentralwohlfahrtstelle (Central Jewish Welfare Office), an arm of the Jewish
community, offered numerous classes to educate new immigrants about German culture, the German job market, and basic Judaism.

Germany’s 83 local Jewish communities operated under the umbrella of the Einheitsgemeinde, “united community,” which oversaw funding for communal needs. Under the law, German citizens who wished to belong to a church or synagogue paid a percentage of their annual income tax into a so-called “church tax” whose funds were channeled through the federal government to the faith communities in proportion to their membership. With the rapidly expanding Jewish population, the need had grown for more language and job-training programs, religious education, synagogues, and community centers. These were beyond the financial capacity of the CCJG, whose annual budget of nearly $1 million reflected the needs of the 1980s, when former chancellor Helmut Kohl created an endowment of nearly $20 million, interest from which funded the community’s budget.

In November 2002, after years of negotiations with the CCJG, the German government entered into an unprecedented contractual relationship with the country’s Jewish community, equivalent to the arrangement it had with the Catholic and Protestant communities. This left Islam, whose more than three million adherents made it the largest non-Christian minority in the country, as the only major religious group not covered by such a contract, largely because there was no comparable national umbrella organization to oversee the distribution of funds to local Muslim communities.

The contract with the Jewish community included a dramatic increase in financial support—the government would triple its annual budget for the CCJG to nearly $3 million, adjusted annually for inflation. This federal agreement did not replace or affect the contracts that individual German states had with their local Jewish communities. It was approved by the Parliament and was expected to go into effect in early 2003. Paul Spiegel called it an “historical situation, and it proves that the German government is not only aware of the new Jewish community here but also supports it and welcomes it.”

The World Union for Progressive Judaism, whose German affiliates were outside of the CCJG, feared it would be shut out by the new contract and wrote to Chancellor Schröder demanding a share of the money. But the government chose not to take a stand, seeing the controversy as an internal matter for the Jewish community. Spiegel said that if the progressive Jewish communities in Germany applied for CCJG membership they would be considered for funding.
Several new synagogues opened in Germany in 2002. In June, the former East German city of Chemnitz dedicated one, designed by Frankfurt architect Alfred Jacoby. The Jewish community there numbered some 500. In 1933, there were 3,000 Jews in Chemnitz. Only 57 returned after the war, among them community president Siegmund Rotstein. The community grew from 11 members in 1989 to its current size due to the influx of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. In July, the Jewish community of Osnabrück joined with the Lingen Forum for Jews and Christians to restore a 19th-century synagogue in Freren. The site would be used for a chapel and center for interfaith meetings. In December, Israeli president Katzav and German president Rau dedicated a new synagogue in the city of Wuppertal. This was the first time that an Israeli president had taken part in the dedication of a German synagogue.

One of Germany’s most famous new synagogues, dedicated in Dresden in November 2001 (see AJYB 2002, p. 423), suffered moderate damage due to the flooding of the Elbe River during the summer of 2002. Some 150 Jewish families in Dresden were left temporarily homeless by the flooded river, whose torrents forced tens of thousands of Dresdeners from their homes, damaged landmark buildings, and hampered communication with and travel to the historic city. Before the floodwaters hit, the Torah scrolls and prayer books were brought to the community house, situated on higher ground. Dresden’s original synagogue had been burned down on Kristallnacht, November 9, 1938.

In October, a new group calling itself “A Network of Jewish Women in Economics, Research, Media and Institutions” was launched in Berlin with a conference. The organizers said they aimed to build professional connections, provide mentors and role models, and overcome career obstacles in a society where more than 90 percent of upper-level professionals were men. Furthermore, said Charlotte Knobloch, a vice president of the CCJG and president of the Jewish Community of Munich, “the network has to have Jewish content” and be informed by “Jewish traditions, a Jewish way of life, a life built on Jewish values.” The Berlin-based network was the brainchild of Noa Gabriel Lerner, a 37-year-old entrepreneur who founded the Milch und Honig German-Jewish Web site (www.milch-und-honig.com) and a Jewish tourism service in Berlin.

Education

In July, the Cologne Jewish community signed a contract for its first Jewish primary school since World War II. In September, about 20 first-
graders began classes at the Lauder Morijah Elementary School (Morijah had been the name of a Jewish school there in pre-Nazi times). The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation contributed $1.4 million toward building the school and an adjoining new social-service center, a project that had been put on hold for a while because of funding problems. Contributions were also received from the Protestant church and from the state of North-Rhine Westphalia, which paid for security protection. Construction was expected to be completed in 2003. Paul Spiegel called the new school a “sign that Jews have confidence in this country.” Ten years earlier, the first postwar Jewish elementary school in North-Rhine Westphalia had been opened in Spiegel’s home city of Düsseldorf.

The Lauder Foundation was also active in the Jewish educational projects of other German communities. It financed the reopening of the Talmud Tora School in Hamburg, which had been closed 60 years before by the Nazis. Hamburg’s Jewish community now had about 10,000 members, many of them immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The foundation, in conjunction with Jewish Community of Würzburg, set up a new German-Jewish genealogy center in that city in October, called the Ephraim Gustav Hönlein Genealogie Projekt. The Würzburg community also planned to open a new Lauder Chorev Center, a meeting place for Jewish teens.

In November, financial irregularities led to a leadership change at the Institute of Judaic Studies in Heidelberg, as University of Heidelberg theology professor Manfred Oeming replaced Michael Graetz as program director, at the request of the CCJG. Graetz reportedly agreed to step down for the duration of an investigation into allegations that some funding appropriated to the institute was instead placed in a hidden account. Graetz’s appointment was to last until 2005. Oeming, 47, a specialist in the Hebrew Bible, said that one of his priorities as director would be to build up the institute’s multidenominational rabbinical program, which had opened in October 2001 with three students. There were a total of 164 students enrolled in the institute.

Kashrut

In January, Jewish and Muslim groups applauded the reversal of a 1995 law that had banned Islamic ritual slaughter in Germany. The decision by the high court in Karlsruhe was seen as an affirmation of religious freedom in Germany and Europe. But German animal-rights groups decried
the ruling and said they would not cease their quest for a European-wide ban on forms of ritual slaughter they considered cruel to animals. They intended to take their campaign to the European Union.

Though German law required that an animal be rendered unconscious before slaughter, an exception had long been made for Jewish ritual slaughter on the grounds that a trained and licensed kosher slaughterer was presumed to take precautions against an animal’s suffering. But the 1995 law banning Islamic slaughter reflected the view of many lawmakers that Islam was not as clear as Judaism in forbidding the slaughter of an unconscious animal, and that therefore it should be possible for Muslim butchers to produce halal meat under the existing German law. But Muslims had worked to overturn the law by comparing their deprivation to what Jews would have to undergo were kosher slaughter to be banned.

The year 2002 saw the arrival of two new sources of kosher bread in Berlin—Rabbi Yitzchak Ehrenberg, the religious head of the Orthodox community, certified a bakery as kosher, and the Chabad-Lubavitch rabbi, Yehudah Teichtal, took charge of making kosher the oven at an Israeli restaurant for the weekly production of challah, rolls, and pita. Teichtal also supervised a dairy near Berlin so that kosher milk could be produced. In Frankfurt, a new kosher food emporium opened.

**Remembering the Munich Massacre**

In August and September, Germany marked the 30th anniversary of the massacre at the Munich Olympics. On September 5, 1972, members of the Palestinian Black September guerrilla group took Israeli athletes hostage, and then killed them during a botched rescue attempt by German police at the Furstenfeldbruck military airport. Surviving participants as well as 23 family members of the victims took part in a ceremony at a memorial near the Olympic stadium on August 11, during the European athletic championships. Esther Roth, who competed as a hurdler for the Israeli team in 1972, was there. She recalled: “My coach was very happy because I had my best results for him. It was like a dream.” That coach, Amitzur Shapira, was one of 11 Israels killed in the attack. “Being around here makes me remember everything that happened 30 years ago,” Roth said. “Some pictures you cannot forget. Some pictures are still with you for 30 years.” Israel’s ambassador to Germany, Shimon Stein, and representatives of the local Jewish community also attended the event, which was organized by the Israeli Light Athletics Association together
with its European counterpart. During the one-hour ceremony, a large stone tablet was placed at the bridge linking the former Olympic village to the Olympic stadium, and an Israeli flag was draped across the tablet.

In September, Germany offered a financial settlement to survivors of the murdered athletes, whose compensation claims were based on the inadequate security that Germany provided at the Olympic village, and the bungled rescue attempt.

Culture

Museums and Exhibits

Berlin's Jewish Museum, which provided an introduction to Jewish traditions and the history of German Jewry, continued to attract record numbers. By May 2002 it had recorded more than 500,000 visitors since its opening on September 9, 2001, maintaining its status as one of Germany's most visited museums (see AJYB 2002, pp. 426-28). It was federally funded, with a budget of about $10 million.

Two collections of photographs brought before the public in 2002 provided insight into the psychological environment of the Nazi state. An exhibit, "Before All Eyes," opened September 5 at the Topography of Terror. It contained some 120 images of deportations of Jews, auctioning of their belongings, and public humiliations of Germans accused of consorting with Jews or slave laborers. The photos, most of which had never been seen by the public before, were culled from 335 images in the book of the same name, published in 2002 by the center's research director, historian Reinhard Ruerup.

A second photo collection illuminated the same subject on the microcosmic level. A long-missing cache of 119 photographs of deportations of Jews from Würzburg and Kitzingen, taken by a member of the Gestapo in 1941 and 1942, was rediscovered by historian Edith Raim of Munich's Institute for Contemporary History. In November 2002 the photos were the subject of a German TV documentary by filmmaker Renate Eichmeier, who interviewed survivors and other eyewitnesses. A traveling exhibit of the photographs was planned for 2003. The project was a cooperative effort of Munich's Institute for Contemporary History and the State Archives of Würzburg. Like the Topography of Terror exhibit, these photos suggested that very few Germans could have avoided witnessing the degradation and abuse of their Jewish neighbors.
In September, Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, the nonprofit organization that collected video testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses, opened a collection of survivor testimonies at the Landeswohlfahrtsverband Hessen (LWV) in Kassel, Germany. It included 13 rare interviews with survivors who were subjected to Nazi eugenic crimes and forced-sterilization programs. Lutz Bauer, director of the LWV, said his institution was "the first archive in Europe" to make such material available to the general public.

A controversial exhibit by Berlin artist Anna Adam raised the question of how far one could go in poking fun at philosemitism in Germany. Called "Feinkost Adam," the exhibit—a hit at the Jewish Museum in Fürth—consisted of mock "Jewish" products, such as a tiny sukkah for Jewish birds and a book teaching one how to breathe the Jewish way. A fracas erupted when a local rabbi called Adam and her exhibit anti-Semitic. The controversy served to attract more visitors.

Marking the new year of 2002 at Frankfurt’s German Architecture Museum was an exhibit about modern synagogue architecture, featuring the works of local architect Alfred Jacoby, one of which was the newly opened synagogue in Chemnitz.

Films

Several Israeli films were screened at the 52nd annual Berlinale Film Festival in February. One of them won the peace award—August, A Moment Before the Eruption, by Avi Mograbi, which delved into the everyday realities of tension and mistrust between Jews and Arabs in Israel and had its world premiere at the festival. This award was funded by the Action Group Peace Film Award along with the Heinrich Boll Foundation and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. A second Israeli film, Mabul (Flood), was chosen best short film in the children's category by a jury of 11 Berlin children. In it, filmmaker Guy Nativ portrayed the coming-of-age experience of two teenage brothers. Nativ, screenwriter Noa Berman Herzberg, and editor Yuval Orr all studied film at the Camera Obscura school in Tel Aviv.

Another film that premiered at the Berlinale was L'Chayim Comrade Stalin, a documentary by American filmmaker Yale Strom about the Soviet Jewish autonomous region of Birobidzhan. Both Strom's and Mograbi's films were also shown in June at the eighth annual Jewish Film Festival in Berlin, directed by Nicola Galliner. One of the most remarkable films screened there was German journalist Esther Schapira's 2002
documentary *Three Bullets and a Dead Child*, about the propaganda war over Palestinian children who were either killed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or volunteered for suicide missions. American director Pearl Gluck showed her work in progress, *Divan*, a charming and provocative film about her search for a family heirloom couch on which renowned rabbis once slept.

This year the annual two-week Jewish cultural festival in Berlin—one of several such events in Germany—was dedicated to the city of Berlin. It included dozens of programs of theater, music, exhibits, readings, and films. In a new twist, several Berlin-based Jewish filmmakers were asked to produce short films. The resulting works by Sharon Brauner, Dani Levy, Ulrike Ottinger, Esther Slevogt, Arielle Artsztein, and November Wanderin were shown under the title “JEWels.”

Germany’s first domestically produced comedy TV movie about the Holocaust aired nationwide in November, to mixed reviews. *Goebbels and Geduldig*, by Peter Steinbach, had won several awards in 2001, including two at the New York Film Festival. It told the fictional tale of Harry Geduldig, a Jewish man who looked exactly like Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister (actor Ulrich Mühe played both roles). In the story, the real Goebbels meets his double, and they accidentally switch. Steinbach said he was shocked to hear “that 70 percent of Germans feel they must not laugh about the Nazis.” But Nicola Galliner agreed with the naysayers when it came to Holocaust comedy. “You have to be a lot more thoughtful in Germany than in America or England,” she said. “You cannot show just anything.”

German film director Werner Herzog came out with *Invincible* in 2002, a film about Zishe Breitbart, an Orthodox Jewish blacksmith who became a circus strong man in the early 1930s. German and American fans called him “the strongest man in the world.”

**Publications**

*Aufbau*, the German Jewish newspaper founded by Jewish immigrants to the United States in 1934, opened a Berlin office in February. The newspaper’s publishers were ex-Berliners Manfred George and Ludwig Wronkow. Among the contributors to *Aufbau* in its early days had been Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Hannah Arendt, Franz Werfel, and Stefan Zweig. Irene Armbruster, director of the new Berlin office, noted that many Germans expressed surprise that she was not Jewish. She explained to them that Jews and non-Jews had always
worked together to produce Aufbau, and that the paper hoped to develop a readership in Germany that would go beyond the Jewish community. A new German editorial board member was appointed, historian Julius Schoeps, director of the Moses Mendelssohn Center at the University of Potsdam.

The third edition of Golem—Europäisch-jüdisches Magazin (Golem—European-Jewish Magazine), was published in the spring by Philo Verlag in Berlin. The magazine had been launched in 2000 by a group of Berlin-based writers, editors, and artists as a nonprofit venture. All articles were presented in three languages, English, German, and French.

Two works of translation drew considerable attention during the year. Jews in Berlin was an English translation of a comprehensive history of Jews in the city that had appeared in German in 2001. The authors were Hermann Simon, director of the Centrum Judaicum Foundation in Berlin, and Rabbi Andreas Nachama, director of the Topography of Terror archive there. A book tour in the U.S. was planned for early 2003. A German translation of Leo Rosten’s The Joys of Yiddish hit German bookstands in October, 35 years after it first appeared in English. The book’s title in German — translatable in English as Yiddish: A Small Encyclopedia — did not include the word “joy.” Wolfgang Balk, the head of Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, which published the book, explained that the word did not convey the seriousness of the work. He called the translation “our most important title this fall. It is very appropriate that a company that calls itself ‘German’ should show that German and Jewish culture belong together.” This was just one indication among many of growing German fascination with Yiddish, part of a more general curiosity about Jews and Judaism.

Other important books on Jewish themes in 2002 included "Ihr Leben in unserer Hand": Die Geschichte der Jüdischen Brigade im Zweiten Weltkrieg, a history of the Jewish brigade in World War II by Howard Blum; "Mein verwundetes Herz": Das Leben der Lilli Jahn 1900–1944, an epistolary biography of Holocaust victim Lilli Jahn by her grandson, Martin Doerry; Die Euthanasie und die späte Unschuld der Psychiater: Massenmord, Bedburg-Hau und das Geheimnis rheinischer Widerstandsslegender, a study by Ludwig Hermeler of the role played by Nazi psychiatrists in the “euthanasia” program; Wegweiser durch das jüdische Mecklenburg-Pomerania, a guide to Jewish Mecklenburg-Pomerania, the second in a series of books by Irene Diekmann about the history and culture of Jews in the states of the former East Germany; Antisemitismus in der Region, about anti-Semitism in several German states from 1870 to
1914, authored by Hansjörg Pötzs; *Dolgesheimer Mord*, a study of the 1933 murder of Julius Frank, a Jewish resident of a small village, written by Cologne attorney Winfried Seibert; *Errinerungen an die Hagerlocher Juden*, a portrait of the Jewish community of Haigerloch by Utz Jeggle, part of a series published by the University of Tübingen; and *In einem unbewachten Augenblick: Eine Frau überlebt im Untergrund*, the story of a German Jewish woman who survived the Holocaust in hiding, by Mark Roseman.

**Personalia**

In the fall, Paul Spiegel was reelected to a second four-year term as president of the CCJG. He promised to devote his attention to the integration of the Russian immigrants. Spiegel celebrated his 65th birthday on December 31. In congratulatory messages, Chancellor Schröder, President Rau, and Bundestag president Wolfgang Thierse complimented Spiegel on his dedication to the fight against anti-Semitism and xenophobia, and his commitment to building a better society. Spiegel had been instrumental in creating the “Show Your Face” campaign for civic courage in Germany following a disturbing rise in anti-Semitic and xenophobic crimes in the summer of 2000.

CCJG vice president Michel Friedman was elected to head the European Jewish Congress, becoming the second German Jew to hold that position (the first had been Ignatz Bubis).

Toward the end of the year, after a six-month try-out, Rabbi Ady E. Assabi was hired by the Jewish Community of Berlin to serve the non-Orthodox congregations in the city—Oranienburgerstrasse, Frankelüfer, and Rykerstrasse. Born in Tel Aviv in 1947, he was ordained at the liberal Leo Baeck College in London.

American Jewish businessman Arthur Obermayer presented the third annual Obermayer German Jewish History Awards, for 2002, in Berlin on January 27, 2003, Germany’s Holocaust Remembrance Day. The awards honored non-Jewish Germans who contributed toward recording or preserving the Jewish history of their communities. Obermayer was of German-Jewish heritage.

The winners were: Hans-Eberhard Berkemann, an elementary-school teacher who rescued two synagogues from demolition and documented the names of those interred in nine Jewish cemeteries in Bad Sobernheim and Rheinland-Pfalz; Irene Corbach, who, together with her late husband, a Protestant pastor, helped preserve the memory of Jewish life in
Cologne; Carla and Erica Pick, twin sisters and retired schoolteachers who instituted teaching about the history of the local Jewish community in the schools of Borken and Gemen near the Dutch border, where there were no longer any Jews; Gerhard Jochem and Susanne Rieger, who set up a Web site (www.rijo-research.de) on the Jews of Nuremberg; and Heinrich Dittmar, a retired teacher who cared for 16 abandoned Jewish cemeteries in the Hesse region.

The annual Leo Baeck Prize was awarded on September 3, 2002, to German actor Iris Berben. She was recognized for her dedication to tolerance, coexistence, and humanitarian causes, as well as her active commitment to the fight against racism, anti-Semitism, and neo-Nazism in Germany. Berben, who had traveled through Germany reading aloud from the diaries of both Anne Frank and Nazi propaganda minister Josef Goebbels, was the first actor to receive the award since its creation in 1957.

In November, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer accepted the 14th annual Heinz Galinski award from the Jewish Community of Berlin. He was recognized for his commitment to the security of the State of Israel, and the award was given just one day after two terrorist attacks against Israeli targets in Kenya. “Israel’s right to exist is one of the untouchable pillars of our state,” said Fischer. In March, Fischer had been the guest speaker at the first major dinner event in the CCJG’s history.

German rabbinical student Andreas Jonathan Hinz of Ulm was found murdered in London in July. Hinz had been completing his rabbinical studies at the Leo Baeck College in London and was planning to serve progressive Jewish communities in Germany. Police said the incident was not connected to anti-Semitism.

Toby Axelrod
On September 9, after Vice Chancellor Susann Riess-Passer and two other key leaders of the Freedom Party (FPÖ) resigned from the government, Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel called for new elections. He explained that it was no longer possible to maintain the governing coalition in the face of constant criticism from Jörg Haider, leader of the Freedom Party, the junior partner in the government. The "straw that broke the camel's back" in this case was Haider's strident objection to the government's postponement of promised tax cuts in order to pay for the extensive damage to crops and property brought on by the late-summer floods. The chancellor declared that the Freedom Party had to choose whether it wanted "to govern or oppose. . . Both are not possible." Following the call from the chancellor, Parliament dissolved itself on September 20, paving the way for elections on November 24.

This brought an end to the increasingly shaky center-right coalition led by Schüssel's People's Party (ÖVP, commonly referred to by its color, blue) and the far-right FPÖ (commonly referred to by its color, black), which had governed the country for two-and-a-half years. After the national elections in late 1999, the conservative ÖVP had struck a deal with Haider, making his party its governing partner. This was the first time in Europe's postwar history that a far-right party shared power at the national level in a member state of the European Union. No sooner had the blue-black coalition been formed in February 2000, however, than it ran into difficulties with the 14 other members of the EU, to whom Haider was anathema because of past remarks praising certain of Hitler's policies, and his unrestrained anti-foreigner views. The EU voted diplomatic sanctions against Austria, but these were withdrawn after seven months, and the coalition partners managed to get along.

That the coalition lasted as long as it did was largely due to Haider's forced resignation from his party's leadership in May 2000. His grip on the party machinery further loosened in February 2002 when he had to quit a national policy-making committee in the coalition government. But Haider remained the dominant force in the Freedom Party, which he ef-
effectively controlled from his elected position as governor of the southern province of Carinthia.

Meantime, the fortunes of the Freedom Party began to suffer at the polls after the government made a number of politically unpopular decisions. Though the economy remained buoyant, voters became increasingly disenchanted with painful spending cuts in social and welfare programs. In this changing political climate, the Freedom Party went into free fall, while both the People’s Party and the opposition Social Democrats (SPÖ, commonly referred to by their color, red) improved their standing in the provincial elections of 2001. Clearly, joining the government, a long-sought-after goal of Haider’s, had cost the Freedom Party much of its appeal as a protest movement. Adding to the party’s woes was Haider’s bizarre behavior: three visits to Baghdad to attack U.S. policies in the Middle East; several times assuming the party leadership and then resigning—earning him the derisive epithet, “the comeback kid”; and unilaterally naming close allies to key party positions.

It was against this background that Haider, in 2002, launched an attack against the government’s taxation policy as well as its support for EU expansion into the former Soviet bloc, policies that more moderate members of his own party—Vice Chancellor Riess-Passer, Finance Minister Karl-Heinz Grasser, and Transport Minister Monika Forstinger—supported. Their resignations induced the chancellor to call for new elections. Most observers believed that Haider deliberately provoked the crisis in the hope of regaining control over the Freedom Party, which, everyone acknowledged, he had almost single-handedly made into a national political force.

The election turned out to be a triumph for Chancellor Schüssel’s People’s Party, which won 42 percent of the vote. This was the first time since 1966 that the People’s Party had come in first. In second place were the Social Democrats at 37 percent. Haider’s Freedom Party plunged from its record of 27 percent in November 2000 to just over 10 percent. The Green Party came in last, with 9 percent. The People’s Party’s strong showing was largely attributed to the chancellor’s adroit handling of the economy and of the volatile Haider. Schüssel apparently understood from the beginning that his embrace of the Freedom Party would set off a storm of international criticism. Yet, over time, he had succeeded in splitting the far-right party by persuading its more moderate members to eschew xenophobia and anti-European policies, while at the same time adopting some of the FPÖ’s more reasonable positions, such as faster pri-
vatization of state-owned industries and retrenchment in government spending.

That the Freedom Party's defeat turned into a rout had much to do with Haider's unusual behavior and extreme rhetoric, and also with the fact that playing the anti-foreigner card, as he had done with much effect in 2000, now failed to fire up latent Austrian xenophobia because the government had already tightened the immigration and asylum laws.

Despite the People's Party's impressive showing, it still needed a coalition partner in order to govern. The question was who that partner would be. The Social Democrats, the Freedom Party, and the Greens each offered potential benefits, but also political problems. Another option was for the People's Party to form a minority government and rule on its own. While that might lead to instability and early calls for a new election, some analysts noted that several Nordic countries had been governed quite satisfactorily by minority governments.

Israel and the Middle East

Relations between Israel and Austria continued to be strained. Jerusalem had withdrawn its ambassador to Vienna following the swearing-in of the new government in February 2000, and only maintained a chargé d'affaires, Avraham Toledo. This action had been taken in response to the Freedom Party's inclusion in the coalition. Israel continued to show its diplomatic displeasure with Vienna even after the EU countries restored normal ties with it in September 2000 (see AJYB 2001, pp. 397–98). Discreet attempts by Austria to normalize relations with Israel went unanswered.

However, as far-right parties made impressive gains in national elections in other European countries, the policy of maintaining limited diplomatic relations with Austria became increasingly untenable. In Italy, the far-right National Alliance of Gianfranco Fini became a member of Silvio Berlusconi's center-right government. In Portugal and the Netherlands as well, far-right parties joined government coalitions, confirming the startling rightward political shift in Western Europe, and yet Israel continued to maintain normal ties with these governments. The patent inconsistency in this policy may well have been the reason why Jerusalem showed signs of reconsidering its position regarding Austria. In July, in an interview with ARD, the German television station, Prime Minister Sharon said: "I have in fact proposed to our foreign minister that he try to restore relations with Austria." Though the Austrian foreign minister
stated that Israel would have to take the first step in normalizing ties, Vienna made that possibility easier by maintaining its ambassador, Wolfgang Paul, in Tel Aviv rather than retaliating against Israel's withdrawal of its ambassador by calling him home. When Ambassador Paul completed his term of office in September, Vienna replaced him with another diplomat of equal rank, Kurt Hengl. Following Austria's government crisis in September and the subsequent breakup of the coalition, no further progress was made towards normalizing relations with Israel.

At the UN, Austria joined with other EU countries in voting against Israel on issues relating to Palestine.

As a result of the strained relations between the two countries, only two visits of high-ranking officials took place during the year. Kurt Fischer, president of the Austrian Parliament, came to Jerusalem in January at the invitation of Avraham Burg, speaker of the Knesset. In May, the mayor of Tel Aviv, Ron Hulda'i, was welcomed in Vienna as the guest of Mayor Michael Häupl. In addition, a cultural agreement between Israel and Austria, the third such arrangement, was signed in November. It spelled out a plan for intensified contacts over the coming four years in the areas of film, music, dance, and science. Earlier, in May, an Austrian delegation headed by State Secretary Franz Morak came to Israel and met with Matan Vilnai, Israel's minister of culture. They agreed that the Vienna State Opera would perform in Israel in February 2003, but its appearance was postponed because of security concerns.

An official Austrian exhibition depicting the life and times of Sigmund Freud was held in May at the Beth Hatefutsoth in Tel Aviv, with the cosponsorship of the U.S. Library of Congress. Itamar Rabinovich, president of Tel Aviv University, officially opened the exhibition.

**Holocaust Restitution and Compensation**

Under terms of the Washington agreement signed on January 17, 2001 (see AJYB 2002, pp. 438–39), the Nationalfond, established in 1995, was to distribute $150 million in an expedited manner to survivors of the National Socialist era. Each claimant was to receive $7,000 for losses of rental apartments, small-business leases, household property, and personal valuables and effects. In the event an eligible person died after October 24, 2000, his or her heirs could apply for the money. As of December 31, 2002, payments had been made to 19,000 survivors or heirs living in many different countries.

Another major component of the agreement called for establishment
by the Austrian government of a General Settlement Fund (GSF) so as to acknowledge, through voluntary payments, Austria's moral responsibility for losses and damages inflicted upon Jewish citizens and other victims of National Socialism. Following through on this aspect of the agreement, the Austrian Parliament enacted legislation in January 2002 creating such a fund, in the amount of $210 million. These monies, to be administered by the Nationalfond, were to be provided by the Republic of Austria and by Austrian companies. Persons or associations persecuted by the Nazi regime or forced to leave the country to escape such persecution, and who/which suffered property losses or damages, were eligible to apply. Categories of property for which compensation could be sought were liquidated businesses, real property, bank accounts, stocks, bonds, mortgages, insurance policies, and occupational or educational losses. In addition, applications would be accepted for restitution of real estate and buildings (in the case of Jewish organizations, also tangible movable property) owned by the federal government or the city of Vienna as of January 17, 2001. The deadline for filing was set for May 28, 2003. As of December 31, 2002, 7,000 claims had been filed. A key condition of the agreement was that no money would be paid out of the GSF until all U.S. class-action suits against Austria and/or Austrian companies relating to the National Socialist era were dismissed. As the year ended, there were still two such suits pending in U.S. federal courts, one in New York and the other in Los Angeles.

Under the terms setting up the GSF, claimants turned down by the claims committee might appeal the decision. It would then go to a special three-person arbitration panel, one of whose members would be named by the U.S. government, another by the Austrian government, and the third, chosen jointly by them, would serve as chair. Appeals to the panel had to be filed no later than October 4, 2003 or, at the latest, one year after the Austrian Historical Commission issued its final report (see below).

Another part of the Washington agreement was the allocation of an additional $112 million to be paid out in the form of social benefits to survivors living outside of Austria, including those who were under six years of age in 1938, when Nazi Germany annexed the country. These monies were available, on a case-by-case basis, for nursing care, the retroactive purchase of pension rights, and similar purposes. Responsibility for payment rested with Austria's Ministry of Social Affairs and the administrative authorities of the Austrian pension fund.
Toward the end of 2001, Ariel Muzicant, president of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (IKG), the representative body of Austrian Jewry, met with representatives of the federal government and the country's nine provincial governments to resolve outstanding issues that had not been addressed by the Washington accord. Negotiations with the federal authorities centered not only on Holocaust compensation but also on strengthening the IKG’s network of social services, such as help for the Jewish elderly and new immigrants, meeting rising security costs, improving Jewish schools, and renovating synagogues. The sum requested was on the order of $22.5 million. While no progress was made in these negotiations, the talks with the provincial authorities yielded positive results in regard to the return of looted artworks and ritual artifacts, upkeep of Jewish cemeteries, and aid for social institutions. In May 2002, an agreement was signed with a committee of four of the provincial governors, representing all nine, on compensating the Federation of Jewish Communities of Austria $18 million over five years. The same condition attached to the GSF disbursements would apply: payments would only begin once the U.S. class-action suits were closed.

Under a plan worked out in U.S. federal court in August, two Austrian banks, Credit Anstalt and Bank Austria AG, made the first payments to settle Holocaust-victim claims arising from the Nazi seizure of the banks over 60 years earlier. A three-member claims committee reviewed some 58,000 claims for the $40-million settlement agreed upon by the two banks. About $30 million were set aside in a fund for survivors and their heirs. The rest was divided into two other funds, one of which would support the Austrian Historical Commission’s investigation of Austrian banks’ activities during the Nazi era and the publication of its report.

The Holocaust Victims’ Information and Support Center (HVISC, or Anlaufstelle), which the IKG established in July 1999, expanded its work of promoting and protecting the interests of Jewish Holocaust victims in and from Austria (see AJYB 2002, p. 441). Through its extensive data banks, research and information programs, and semiannual newsletter, the HVISC, with a small staff, helped survivors and their heirs comply with the complex requirements for obtaining compensation and restitution of properties seized by the Nazis. Two HVISC social workers provided information on how to obtain documents, such as birth and marriage certificates and proof of past membership in the IKG, which were often required to claim compensation. They also assisted people, many of them elderly, in filling out forms and submitting them by the deadlines.
HVISC researchers were often able to locate archival material identifying the personal effects and furniture of people whose apartments were taken over by Austrians after they were forced to emigrate.

This information was stored in a computer database where survivors or their heirs could consult it. The HVISC also developed databases of Jewish associations that had been in existence prior to 1938 but were dissolved by the Nazis and had their assets confiscated. Starting in 2001, it trained lawyers and historians in the use of archival materials so that these resources could be used in processing claims for compensation from the GSF. In June 2002, the IKG concluded an agreement with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum for microfilming the complete collection of archival material covering the National Socialist period as it related to Austria's Jewish population.

The HVISC also worked with the Erste Bank in researching Jewish assets that the bank held during the Nazi regime and thereafter. They found 199 savings accounts of Jewish clients that were looted by the Nazis after the annexation of Austria.

The HVISC was active in securing the restitution of artworks. Four of its representatives sat on the Austrian Commission for the Investigation of the Provenance of Art Objects. Since the 1998 Austrian federal law concerning "Return of Works of Art from Austrian Federal Museums and Collections" did not provide for a search of owners or heirs, the HVISC sometimes carried out its own investigations. It also provided technical support to several of the provinces—notably Styria, Upper Austria, and Vienna—in crafting legislation for restituting artworks from provincial museums and collections, and undertook investigations on behalf of individuals with claims for the restitution of artwork.

On October 1, 1998, the government had set up the Austrian Historical Commission (Historikerkommission) with the mandate "to investigate and report on the whole complex of expropriations in Austria during the Nazi regime and on restitution and/or compensation (including other financial or social benefits) after 1945 by the Republic of Austria." By early 2000, the commission had issued two reports, one on "forced labor" and the other on "withdrawal of rental rights." On June 6, 2002, it submitted six more reports, dealing mostly with the legal and practical implications, on the federal and provincial levels, of Austria's postwar restitution and compensation legislation. Six more interim reports were issued before the end of the year. A final report was expected in March 2003.
In an unprecedented action, Austrian police seized a painting by Egon Schiele just before it was to go on sale at the Dorotheum, Vienna's famed auction house, in November. The seizure was at the request of the IKG, which was acting on behalf of the heirs of Dr. Heinrich Rieger, a Jewish dentist in Vienna, whose collection of early-20th-century Austrian art was among the world's largest. The IKG claimed that the painting, *Wayside Shrine, Houses and Trees*, had been part of an 800-piece collection expropriated in 1938 under the “Aryanization” policy, and taken by Dr. Friedrich Welz, a prominent gallery owner and Nazi party member. Rieger was killed in 1942 in the Theresienstadt concentration camp, and his collection was never returned to the heirs. Even though Austria passed a law in 1998 under which such items were to be given back, this was the first time that authorities had confiscated an art object on grounds that it might have been illegally taken by the Nazis. Since many other paintings from the Rieger collection were held in public and private collections in numerous countries, and the ownership of these artworks might also be contested, the outcome of this case, according to legal experts, could have ramifications throughout the art world.

This tangled web of information about the painting became known through the research of Stephan Tempi and Tina Walzer, whose book, sarcastically entitled *Unser Wien* (Our Vienna), was published in Germany in 2001. Indeed, the book's publication was expected to have an impact on the final legal disposition of the case. Previous efforts to recover Nazi-confiscated art in Austria and other European countries were often stymied by a provision of the law, dating back to ancient Roman jurisprudence, stating that a stolen object bought in good faith could not be recovered by the original owner. In this case, however, lawyers for the Rieger heirs were prepared to argue that *Unser Wien* had already established and made public the fact that the Rieger collection was, or could have been, stolen, and that the auction house should have known of this.

Another Schiele painting was likely to be restituted to heirs of the prewar Jewish owner, Daisy Hellman, by the city of Linz. In December 2002, municipal authorities decided to return *Landscape at Krumau*, a $10-million Schiele landscape, completed in 1916 and held in the city's New Gallery museum, to the seven legal heirs. After Hellman fled Austria when the Nazis annexed the country, the Gestapo seized the work. A Vienna auction house sold it to a collector from Berlin, who sold it to the Linz museum in 1953. Although the New Gallery purchased the painting without knowing its provenance and was therefore not legally
bound to relinquish it, Franz Dobusch, the mayor of Linz, explained: "Morally, this return is justified." For three years, the IKG had been working to help the heirs regain the painting.

In a landmark decision in California in December, a three-member panel of the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Maria Altmann, an 87-year-old Los Angeles woman, could sue the Austrian government in U.S. courts to recover six Gustav Klimt paintings. Now valued at $135 million, they had been taken by the Nazis from her uncle, Ferdinand Bloch. Even though, following the war, the family agreed that the paintings belonged to the Austrian National Gallery, Altmann, who fled to California to escape the Nazis, contended in her suit that the family had been coerced into signing away its rights. The court's unanimous decision marked the first time that a federal appeals court required a foreign government to answer in the United States for a Holocaust claim. Federal law, under the doctrine of sovereign immunity, had generally barred lawsuits against foreign governments, although there were certain exceptions. The court ruled that Altmann's case fell under an exception—when rights or property are taken in violation of international law. The attorney representing the Austrian government and the state-run Austrian National Gallery said that his clients were considering an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

A court of lay judges in the town of Feldkirch found journalist and publisher Walter Ochensberger guilty of six counts of Holocaust denial for writing articles claiming that the Holocaust had not happened. The court sentenced him, in January, to a two-year term—eight months to be served in prison and the rest on probation. Long associated with extreme right-wing groups, Ochensberger had previously been convicted of similar charges.

An exhibition documenting atrocities committed by German soldiers during World War II, which had already provoked severe controversy in Berlin (see AJYB 2002, pp. 417–18), went on display in Vienna, running from April 9 through May 26. The exhibition, showing photographs of Wehrmacht soldiers carrying out crimes against civilians, sparked a demonstration by some 180 right-wing protesters who marched in Heldenplatz (Heroes Square) carrying placards charging that the exhibition desecrated the memory of German soldiers. It was in this square that Adolf Hitler addressed masses of Austrians after annexing the country in March 1938. As some 2,000 left-wing counterdemonstrators approached carrying banners reading "Give no inch to the fascists" and "Solidarity with the victims of anti-Semitism," police intervened to avoid
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violence. For decades after the war, many Germans and others had believed that it was primarily the Nazi SS and Gestapo that carried out Hitler's murderous policies, and that the regular army was not involved.

In solemn ceremonies held in Vienna in April, the body parts of executed opponents of the Nazi regime were put to rest in Vienna's central cemetery. The burial, in a communal grave near the tombs of Beethoven and Schubert, marked an end to a grisly chapter in the history of the University of Vienna. Until just a few years earlier, the university had been using the body parts for research at its anatomy institute. The university launched an investigation after the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Israel alleged that the university had used the corpses of victims from the notorious Mauthausen concentration camp for its celebrated anatomy text, the *Atlas of Topographical and Applied Human Anatomy*. Often referred to as the *Pernkopf Atlas* after its creator, Eduard Pernkopf, an ardent Nazi who became dean of the medical faculty in 1938, this hand-illustrated book was widely used by medical and art students throughout the world.

After a yearlong investigation, historian Gustav Spann concluded that there was no evidence that the cadavers used in preparing the atlas came from Mauthausen, which was some 125 miles away. Rather, Spann said, they came "from just around the corner." Between 1938 and 1945, when Austria was part of the Third Reich, the corpses of 1,377 men and women (eight of them Jewish) went straight from the Vienna guillotine to the university's laboratories. More than half of the victims were executed for opposing the Nazis or for "treason." And, indeed, some of the human tissue was still being used at the university in the mid-1990s. The epitaph on the new tombstone of the victims read: "Here rest the mortal remains of victims not known by name of National Socialist justice whose bodies were unlawfully used for research and teaching in the anatomical and other institutes of the University of Vienna's Faculty of Medicine. The University of Vienna regrets deeply this culpable involvement and commemorates these people with great respect."

In another commemorative ceremony, the remains of children tortured and murdered by the Nazis in the name of medical research were also laid to rest in Vienna's central cemetery, six decades after their death. Between 1940 and 1945, 789 mentally and physically handicapped children were killed at Am Spiegelgrund hospital for leading "worthless lives." The brains of most of these children, preserved in a chemical solution and used for neurological research, remained accessible to the medical profession until only a few months before the burial. In recent years, the Aus-
The Austrian government had come under heavy pressure from families of the victims and survivors of the infanticide program to have a proper interment of the remains. Approximately 600 urns were buried over a two-week period in April, under stone plaques inscribed with each child’s name. The headstone on the honorary grave read: “Never forget.” Addressing the mourners, Austrian president Thomas Klestil said that his nation had been very late in facing up to this criminal chapter of its history. Austrians, he warned, must ensure that a “cloak of silence” not be spread over what happened, and that those who participated in the Nazi euthanasia program should be brought to justice.

Reality did not match the rhetoric. Dr. Heinrich Gross, one of the chief perpetrators of these crimes against children, remained a free man. Gross became a prominent neurologist and forensic psychiatrist in postwar Austria despite several attempts to bring him to trial. He often appeared as an expert witness on psychiatric matters in Austrian courts, and published dozens of papers on brain deformations, much of it based upon research undertaken on the Spiegelgrund victims. Austria awarded Gross a medal of honor in 1975 for his psychiatric work. Gross was finally brought to trial in 1999 for acting as an accessory to multiple infanticide at the clinic in 1944, but proceedings were suspended after the court heard he was suffering from dementia (see AJYB 2000, pp. 367–68). In May 2002, apparently embarrassed by the publicity attending the burial of the remains of the children and those of the opponents of the Nazi regime, the government stripped the 86-year-old Gross of his medal.

The U.S. Department of Justice carried out the order of an American court to deport Michael Gruber from the U.S. to Austria. Gruber, an Austrian citizen, had served as an armed guard at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp during World War II.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish population registered with the IKG numbered 6,702, an increase of 95 over 2001. Knowledgeable observers, however, placed the actual number of Jews living in the country at 10,000–12,000. Following a long historical pattern, the overwhelming majority of Jews lived in Vienna; only some 300–400 made their homes elsewhere, primarily in the large provincial cities of Salzburg, Graz, Baden, and Linz.
The Jewish community worried about its small numbers; many young Jews were leaving in search of economic opportunities elsewhere, and there was little immigration. In 2000, the IKG had requested the government to waive certain provisions of the country's highly restrictive immigration laws so as to allow the entry of the same number of Jews who left. The government did not respond at the time, and the IKG did not pursue the matter.

Communal Affairs

Elections were held over a three-day period to select members of the IKG governing board. Of 5,198 eligible voters, 3,255, or 62.6 percent, turned out to vote. Eight parties competed in the election, with Atid, the party headed by IKG president Ariel Muzicant, winning 11, a plurality of the 24-member board. The other parties winning seats were Sephardim-Bukharin (3); Federation of Social Democratic Jews (3); Kehal Yisroel (3); Alternative (1); Mizrahi (1); Bloc of Religious Jews (1); and Georgian Jews (1). The new board unanimously reelected Muzicant to another term as president.

With an eye to improving the IKG's efficiency, the board established a special reform commission charged with reviewing the work of the board in all its aspects, and recommending changes in the statutes governing its operations—statutes that had remained in effect virtually unchanged since their enactment in 1896. The commission was to submit its report in two years.

Toward the end of the year, an organizational plan was developed for the establishment of a new research center, to be called the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies. It would bring together relevant archival resources of the Jewish community, the Wiesenthal Documentation Center, and the Austrian Resistance Center, and was expected to open in 2003. Working in collaboration with the Institute of Contemporary History of the University of Vienna, it would offer fellowships, host scholarly lectures, hold seminars in the field of Holocaust studies, and disseminate findings to the broader public. Mayor Häupl of Vienna indicated that the city would provide some initial financial backing, and the IKG planned, at a later stage, to seek federal government support as well.

The IKG negotiated an agreement with the governor of Lower Austria and the mayor of Baden to restore that city's synagogue, desecrated by the Nazis on Kristallnacht, November 9–10, 1938. The work was to be completed in 2004.
As part of a court settlement, Jörg Haider apologized to Ariel Muzicant for making derogatory remarks about his character during the 2001 Vienna state election. In a statement released to the press in January 2002, Haider said he “withdraws” his comments with “an expression of regret and apology.” During the campaign, Haider had made mocking reference to Muzicant’s first name, which was also the name of a brand of detergent, saying: “I don’t understand how someone called Ariel can have so much dirt on his hands” (see AJYB 2002, pp. 434–35).

In a solemn ceremony on November 10, the 64th anniversary of Kristallnacht, a monument was dedicated to the Austrian Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The monument, designed by architect Thomas Feiger and located in the Stadttempel, Vienna’s central synagogue, was in the form of a book, with the names of the 65,000 Austrian Jews who perished inscribed on it. Attending the ceremony were President Klestil; Heinz Fischer, president of the National Parliament; Mayor Häupl of Vienna; Avraham Toledo, the Israeli chargé d’affaires; Chief Rabbi Chaim Eisenberg; and IKG president Muzicant.

Among the exhibitions mounted by the Vienna Jewish Museum was one, titled “Music and Poetry,” that ran from October 23 through January 6, 2002, featuring manuscripts from the collections of Stefan Zweig and Martin Bodmer. Included were autographed manuscripts of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Gustav Mahler, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Claude Debussy, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Arnold Schoenberg, Arthur Schnitzler, and Sigmund Freud. Before his expulsion from Austria, Zweig had been obliged to sell the collection. It was acquired in 1936 by the Swiss academician Martin Bodmer (1899–1971), who added to it and converted it into a foundation consisting of selected manuscripts, books, and works of art going back three millennia—a library, in the full sense of the word, of world literature.

Another exhibition contained pictures and models of works by the architect Ernst Epstein (1881–1938), whose buildings left an indelible mark on the city of Vienna. Epstein was responsible for about 100 structures, mostly middle-class residential buildings, but also simpler apartment houses, villas, and industrial facilities throughout Vienna. His style reflected practically all of the fashionable movements of the age. On May 21, 1938, Epstein, by now a wealthy man and childless widOWER, took his own life out of fear of arrest by the Gestapo. The exhibition ran from June 30 through September 29.

A third exhibition featured the life and work of the painter and sculptor Ernst Eisenmayer. Born in Vienna in 1920, Eisenmayer was deported
to Dachau in 1938, but managed to escape before the war and made his way to London. There he met the famed painter Oskar Kokoschka, who helped him in his artistic development. Eisenmayer's creations are in the classic Modernist style, his early works heavily influenced by life in exile—the subject is often man and his fate, with depictions of oppression, violence, and abuse of power. The exhibition presented a wide range of sculptures, oil paintings, and drawings. Between 1975 and 1988 Eisenmayer lived and worked in Carrara, Italy. In 1996, he returned to his native city of Vienna.

The fourth Vienna International Theodor Herzl Symposium was held April 8–11 under the patronage of President Klestil and Mayor Häupl. Attended by scholars as well as by religious and communal leaders from Israel, the United States, and Austria, it had as its major theme the significance of the Jewish Diaspora and its relationship to Israel.

The Jewish Cultural Weeks Festival, in October and November, offered a wide array of events—music, featuring chamber-music concerts with the Amber Trio and other groups; lectures, notably orchestra conductor Herbert Prikopa speaking on "Jewish Influence on Viennese Song"; plays, such as performances by the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theater of Montreal; and a variety of films on Jewish life.

**Personalia**

In April, the International Association of Prosecutors awarded its Medal of Honor—given to figures who promote and defend human rights under the just rule of law—to Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal. Wiesenthal was the third person to receive this honor; his two predecessors were Justice Louise Arbour of the Canadian Supreme Court and the UN war-crimes tribunal in The Hague, and former South African president Nelson Mandela.

*Murray Gordon Silberman*
East-Central Europe

The postcommunist countries of the region continued to institutionalize their integration with the West. At a NATO summit in Prague in November, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia were invited to join the 19-nation alliance. The newcomers would assume full membership in 2004. In December, a European Union summit in Copenhagen formally agreed to admit ten new countries to the EU: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. They would officially enter on May 1, 2004.

These landmark decisions came against the background of global developments related to the war on terrorism, the conflict in the Middle East, and the buildup to possible war with Iraq, all of which had an impact on the region. There was also continuing concern over the persistence of racism—directed primarily against Roma (Gypsies)—and anti-Semitism in the region, though anti-Semitism linked to the Palestinian intifada was less of a concern in former communist states than in it was in some Western countries.

NATO made respect for ethnic and religious minorities one of its criteria for joining. In March, representatives of Jewish communities in East-Central Europe met in Bucharest, at the same time that a summit of leaders from postcommunist states aspiring to enter NATO was taking place there. Participants in the Jewish roundtable—organized by the American Jewish Committee—came from Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovenia, as well as from three states that had entered NATO in 1999—Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. The delegates presented status reports on Jewish affairs in their countries, which were circulated to prime ministers and NATO officials at the summit.

Jewish communities continued their own internal development and integration with European and world Jewry. Countries in the region took part in the European Day of Jewish Culture, held June 16, a continent-wide initiative that saw hundreds of Jewish-heritage sites in more than a score of countries opened to the public.

Paris historian Diana Pinto, a leading proponent of the idea of a new pan-European Jewish identity, declared that now, 13 years after the fall of communism opened the way for Jewish revival, it was “bar mitzvah
time”—a moment to reflect on achievements already made and to plan for the future. In Prague in November, representatives from Jewish communities in some 40 countries attended a “meeting of presidents” sponsored by the European Council of Jewish Communities. Debate centered on the impact of rising anti-Semitism; global terrorism; Islamic fundamentalism; Holocaust revisionism; and widespread support for the Palestinian side in the Middle East conflict and the consequent demonization of Israel. There was also considerable hands-on discussion of internal issues related to Jewish communal development.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

In April, Bosnia-Herzegovina marked ten years since the outbreak of its 1992–95 war and international recognition of its independence from the former Yugoslavia. In general elections held October 5, nationalist parties representing rival Serbs, Muslims, and Croats made a strong showing. Vienna’s Die Presse newspaper called the vote a clear rebuke to efforts to foster closer coexistence between these communities, and said that the international community should now rethink its strategy in Bosnia.

In July, the presidents of Yugoslavia, Bosnia, and Croatia held a landmark summit in Sarajevo. The first top-level three-way meeting of the main countries involved in the Bosnian and Croatian wars, it was aimed at rebuilding links, trust, and cooperation.

In December, coinciding with Hanukkah, the 14th-century Sarajevo Haggadah went on permanent public display for the first time in its history. Handwritten in Spain and brought to Sarajevo after the expulsion of the Spanish Jews in 1492, it had long symbolized the Jewish presence in the Balkans. A gala ceremony inaugurated the exhibition of the priceless 109-page manuscript in a secure, new, climate-controlled room in the Sarajevo National Museum, where it was displayed along with valuable religious texts of the same period produced by Bosnia’s other faiths: Islam, Catholicism, and Orthodoxy. The $150,000 project to restore the Haggadah and prepare the new exhibition room was spearheaded by Ambassador Jacques-Paul Klein, special representative of the UN secretary general to Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was facilitated by grants from the UN mission to Bosnia, the Bosnian Jewish community, the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), and two foundations—Yad Hanadiv and Wolfenson. Representatives of the other faiths, including the chief Muslim imam of Bosnia, joined Jewish leaders and government officials for the impressive inauguration ceremony.
When Klein left his post in December, Jakob Finci, president of the Bosnian Jewish community, sent him a letter of appreciation thanking Klein for his "generous personal contribution" to the Haggadah project as well as his assistance in restoring Sarajevo's Old Synagogue. Finci wrote: "From the very beginning you have championed mutual understanding and respect as the means to bring disparate ethnic and religious communities in our country together. We do not know of any other international statesman who has taken the time and the effort that you have to explore the underpinnings of our life and faith."

**Bulgaria**

Bulgaria remained one of Europe's poorest nations, with an average annual monthly salary of little more than $100, and fraud and corruption were widespread. President Georgi Parvanov took office on January 22.

Jewish leaders expressed concern during the year at increasing anti-Semitism, including graffiti and anti-Semitic publications. While not quite calling it an organized phenomenon, one Jewish leader said, "at least as a publishing activity, anti-Semitism has become more than just a pattern of infrequent, isolated episodes." At a news conference in February, the leaders of five Evangelical churches in Bulgaria denounced rising anti-Semitism, noting the recent publication of material with an anti-Semitic character or espousing Holocaust denial, as well as skinhead threats against Roma and other minorities. One publication specifically noted was *The Boomerang of Evil* by the deputy editor of the *Monitor*, a daily newspaper that ran anti-Jewish material. The book, they said, was a collection of classic anti-Semitic stereotypes.

March 9 was designated as the official Day of Commemoration of Holocaust Victims and the Rescue of Bulgarian Jews. At a ceremony on March 10 in Plovdiv, in front of a Holocaust monument, President Parvanov described it as "a day of deserved national pride." It was on March 9, 1943, that preparations were being finalized by the Nazi-allied government to deport 8,500 Jews to Auschwitz. But protests by parliamentary deputies, clergymen, intellectuals, and ordinary citizens prevented the deportation. One of those Jews who was to have been deported with that group was Emanuel Zisman, a native of Plovdiv, who now served as Israel's ambassador to Bulgaria.

On March 12, Yad Vashem named Metropolitans Stefan of Sofia and Kiril of Plovdiv as Righteous Among the Nations in recognition of the role the Bulgarian Orthodox Church played in the rescue of the country's 50,000 Jews from the Nazis. On April 9, coinciding with Yom Hashoah,
Holocaust Remembrance Day, the National Assembly, Bulgaria’s parliament, unanimously adopted a declaration condemning all manifestations of racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism as threats to a democratic civil society and as contradicting human, moral, and Euro-Atlantic values. The National Assembly’s speaker recalled the role of wartime legislators, headed by Dimitar Peshev, in helping foil the deportations. He also underscored the role of the king at the time, Boris III, the father of the current prime minister, Simeon Saxecoburggotski. In October, a museum was opened in honor of Peshev, in the house in the town of Kjustendil where he was born in 1894. It was funded by the Israeli embassy and private donations, mostly from Bulgarian Jews who lived in Israel.

In May, the third biannual Sephardi cultural event, Esperansa, took place near Sofia. About 1,600 people from Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Turkey, Greece, Israel, and the former Yugoslavia attended the four-day celebration of song, dance, theater, and cuisine. A delegation of board members of the JDC, the main organizer of the event, also attended. The festival concluded with six couples, ranging in age from 45 to 55, renewing their matrimonial vows under six wedding canopies, in the kind of traditional Jewish ceremony that had been forbidden under communism.

In June, Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres made a two-day official visit to Bulgaria. He met with the president, prime minister, and foreign minister. During the year, the Bulgarian government began implementing a long-term strategy to revive relations with Arab countries. Thus there were high-level official contacts with Libya, Jordan, and Syria, and Prime Minister Saxecoburggotski and Foreign Minister Solomon Passy both visited the Middle East.

In the summer, Passy, who is Jewish, was named an honorary member of the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, in recognition of Bulgaria’s wartime rescue of its Jews. The foundation, established in 1966 to promote dialogue, understanding, and peace among nations, carried out research on, and publicized the work of, people who rescued Jews and others during World War II.

In July, Prime Minister Saxecoburggotski urged the National Assembly to adopt a legal framework that would guarantee the right “to a religious faith and religious freedoms.”

Croatia

In January, David Granit, Israel’s ambassador to Croatia, honored ten Croatian individuals or families as Righteous Among the Nations for saving Jews during the Holocaust, when Croatia was ruled as a Nazi pup-
pet state by the fascist Ustashe movement. The ceremony—which was streamed over the Internet—took place at a Zagreb high school. The students wrote stories about each of those honored, which were published in the school newspaper and given to the families of the honorees. Granit urged young Croats to learn more about the Holocaust, and President Stipe Mesic, who attended the ceremony, urged Croats to take pride in their countrymen who showed courage and saved Jews. The ceremony was part of a Holocaust education program spearheaded by Natasha Jovicic of the Ministry of Education, who also initiated several pilot programs to introduce Holocaust education into Croatian schools. The Jewish community of Zagreb was granted $20,000 from the Claims Conference to train educators to teach about the Holocaust, but the funds had not yet been utilized as the year ended. Another Claims Conference grant enabled the Jewish community in Osijek to initiate a Holocaust research project that included publication of a book on the history of the Jews of Vinkovci.

In December, Jovicic—newly named the director of the recently reopened museum at the former Ustashe-run Jasenovac concentration camp—announced the disturbing findings of a study she had initiated of how Croatian textbooks dealt with the Holocaust. A group of high-school teachers analyzed 23 texts used in Croatian elementary schools, and found a clear tendency to rationalize Croatia’s role. One eighth-grade history book, for example, was found to have relativized fascism and the antifascist resistance to the point where they were morally indistinguishable. This book included a picture of Croatian wartime leader Ante Pavelić with a caption describing him as a jurist, politician, and the founder of the Ustashe movement, but making no mention of the war crimes committed under his rule.

Simmering tensions regarding Croatia’s role in World War II persisted through 2002. Early in the year, writer Slavko Goldstein and his son, Ivo, came under attack in the media—including the Catholic press and Croatian television—for criticizing Alojzije Stepinac, the archbishop of Zagreb between 1941 and 1945, in a book on the Holocaust in that city. (Slavko Goldstein, now 73, joined the Yugoslav Resistance in 1942, after his father was killed by the Ustashe. He served as president of Zagreb’s Jewish community from 1986 to 1990. Ivo Goldstein was professor of medieval history at the University of Zagreb.) In their book, the Goldsteins noted that Stepinac did save some Jews and that after the war he was sentenced to 16 years in jail on trumped-up charges. But they also wrote that he failed to condemn the Ustashe regime or the Nazis until 1943, when
his brother was killed by either the Nazis or Ustashe. The book had won praise when it came out in late 2001, and President Mesic spoke at a ceremony at Zagreb’s Old City Hall marking its publication.

In April, Prime Minister Ivica Racan took part in a ceremony at Jasenovac honoring hundreds who died in a failed attempt by about 600 prisoners to break out of the camp on April 22, 1945.

In November, at Zagreb’s Mimara Art Museum, President Mesic inaugurated an exhibition on the Holocaust, “The Courage to Remember,” organized by the Simon Wiesenthal Center and brought to the Croat capital by the Civic Committee for Human Rights, a Zagreb-based NGO concerned with the recent Balkan wars. The exhibit, shown in 19 countries since 1988, consisted of 40 panels documenting the Holocaust from the rise of Nazism in 1933 to the survivors’ postwar struggles. A small group of Croatian nationalist demonstrators protested the opening, demanding “Jews out of Croatia.”

Concern about nostalgia among young people for the Ustashe regime—exemplified by a concert at a stadium in Split, where some in the crowd of 40,000 wore Ustashe insignia and waved Nazi flags—prompted Croatian legislators to sponsor a bill, in the fall, criminalizing the glorification of Nazi ideology. It was still under debate as the year ended.

Amendments passed in the summer to a property-restitution law stipulated that people who emigrated from Croatia but did not maintain their citizenship would be eligible for restitution of property confiscated by Croatia’s wartime fascists or by the postwar communist government. Jewish Holocaust survivors who left Croatia after World War II and Jews who, after the war, emigrated and settled in Israel and were forced to give up their citizenship in order to leave, would be among those benefiting from the changes. Under the law, only direct lineal descendants had the right to be compensated for seized property, and compensation was capped at a maximum of $500,000. A deadline of January 5, 2003, was set for filing claims.

Relations between Croatia and Israel, launched with the establishment of full diplomatic ties five years earlier, were good. One result was an influx of Israeli tourists to Croatia, with some 100,000 coming in 2002.

In May, the leftist Feral Tribune newspaper published an editorial accusing the government of not supporting a UN resolution criticizing Israel for “petty pragmatic reasons,” such as fear of alienating Israeli tourists. It called on Croatian Jews themselves to criticize Israel’s military actions against the Palestinians, which it considered “war crimes,”
and charged Croatian Jewish intellectuals with turning a deaf ear to what it described as “the terrible events in the Middle East and mass killings of Palestinian civilians in Jenin.”

There was a mixed response from the Jewish community. The _Feral Tribune_’s pro-Palestinian stance was nothing new, but, on the other hand, it had for years earned Jewish gratitude by courageously opposing extreme Croatian nationalism and those who tried to downplay Croatia’s role in the Holocaust. Sociologist Zarko Puhovski, the head of the Croatian branch of the human-rights group Helsinki Watch, described the _Feral Tribune_ editorial as “hate speech.” (Puhovski’s mother was Jewish but he had never been an active Jew.) Slavko Sajber, however, a Jew who had survived the Holocaust and then was a communist official, condemned “Israeli state terrorism” in an interview with the _Feral Tribune_, and called Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon “a pathological killer.” Slavko Goldstein published an article saying, “One must not draw a line between Auschwitz and Jenin, as we can read in some articles today, but it does not mean that we can remain silent concerning the crime in Jenin, as crime is always crime.” This, in turn, prompted criticism from other members of the Jewish community.

**Jewish Community**

About 2,000 people were registered as members of the Croatian Jewish community, most of them living in Zagreb. But figures from Croatia’s 2001 census, issued in 2002, showed only 576 people describing themselves as Jews “by ethnicity” and 475 describing their religion as Judaism. Before the count was conducted, the president of the Zagreb Jewish community, Ognjen Kraus, wrote to community members urging them to identify as Jews on the census form. Croatia recognized Jews as an official minority group who were thus entitled to state aid—including money for a kindergarten, a retirement home, a newspaper, and a variety of Jewish cultural projects. Jewish leaders were concerned that their status with the government could be lost if too few people declared themselves as Jews. It was estimated that more than 90 percent of Croatian Jewish community members were either partners in or children of mixed marriages. Before the breakup of Yugoslavia, most Jews in Croatia had identified as Yugoslav.

In September, more than 200 Jews from all parts of the former Yugoslavia—and also Yugoslav Jews who had emigrated to other places in Europe, to North America, to Israel, or elsewhere—gathered on an island
off Croatia’s Dalmatian coast for the weeklong Beyahad (Hebrew for “Together”) meeting, organized by the Croatian Jewish community. This annual event grew out of the sporadic contacts that the Jews of the former Yugoslavia managed to keep up during the wars of the 1990s, when communications between Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Belgrade were difficult or impossible. Beyahad featured concerts, dancing, performances, literary events, and lectures, as well as excursions, sports, and time on the beach. Each year, guests were invited from a different “outside” Jewish community to provide insight into Jewish intellectual and cultural activities in that foreign location. This year, the Jewish community of Berlin furnished the guests.

Work was carried out in Dubrovnik to expand the 40-member community’s facilities and to adopt new security measures. In the building housing the town’s historic synagogue, two rooms were refurbished as exhibition halls for the synagogue’s precious collection of ritual objects, including valuable silver and textiles, as well as Torah scrolls written in Spain in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and brought to Dubrovnik after the expulsion of 1492. In addition, the community moved its office to a nearby building. In August, Dubrovnik was the scene of an international conference on Jewish history and culture in the Eastern Adriatic. The conference—held regularly every other year since 1996—drew scholars from Europe, Israel, and the United States. It coincided with the height of the tourist season and featured a public concert of Sephardi songs performed by two Israeli musicians.

Throughout the year, there was a wide-ranging public debate in Zagreb about what to build on the site of the synagogue, destroyed in World War II and restituted to the Jewish community in 1999. The debate centered on whether to recreate the facade of the demolished landmark, or to put up a modern building.

Meanwhile, Darko Fischer, president of the Jewish community of Osijek, floated the idea of rebuilding the destroyed synagogue in Vukovar as a symbol of tolerance and of the renaissance of a bombed-out city. Vukovar’s grand, domed synagogue was damaged during World War II and sold by the Yugoslav Jewish Federation in 1958, its remnants to be used for building material. Vukovar’s 500 Jews were deported to Jasenovac and only about ten survived. In 2002, Vukovar also embodied the destruction inflicted by the wars of the 1990s. On the border with Serbia, it had been besieged for three months by the Yugoslav army in 1991 and almost totally destroyed. Its Croatian citizens left en masse, and now Serbs and Croats in the town lived separately.
Czech Republic

Following national elections in mid-June, a center-left government headed by Social Democratic leader Vladimir Spidla took office on July 15. Eleven ministers in the 17-member cabinet were Social Democrats, and the other six were from a two-party centrist alliance. The government had only a one-vote majority in the 200-seat Chamber of Deputies. The country was hit hard by devastating floods in August that wreaked havoc on Prague and other cities and towns (see below for the effect of the flooding on Prague's Jewish community). At the European Union summit in Copenhagen in December, the Czech Republic was confirmed to join the EU in May 2004.

Racist attacks—primarily on Roma—and other manifestations of right-wing extremism caused concern throughout the year. Officials reported that skinhead violence was on the rise. In May, published results of a survey conducted by the Center for Public Opinion Research showed that one-third of Czechs did not “always” tolerate foreigners living in the Czech Republic, and that half were intolerant of people of a different skin color. About three-fourths claimed to display tolerance toward Jews, but only 25 percent were tolerant of the Roma. An analyst told the media that, compared with the center's findings for 2000, tolerance had grown toward all groups except the Roma.

In January, police charged two 16-year-old boys with racial hate crimes after seizing a videotape showing as many as seven teenagers vandalizing more than 50 tombstones at a Jewish cemetery in the Prague suburb of Uhrineves. The video, apparently shot by the teens themselves, showed them giving Nazi salutes and chanting Nazi slogans. In February, the Interior Ministry dissolved the far-right group Republican Youth, saying that parts of the organization's program broke the law by including anti-Roma references. In September, four members of the skinhead rock band Hlas kvre (Voice of the Blood) were charged with promoting a movement disseminating hatred. Police said the band's lyrics “openly propagate ideas of racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia.”

In June, a smoke bomb was thrown at Chief Rabbi Karol Sidon while he was meeting with a journalist in a bookshop in the town of Liberec. The news media reported that the perpetrator, who managed to run away, looked like a skinhead. At the beginning of July, the synagogue and a Holocaust memorial in the spa town of Karlovy Vary were vandalized. In October, the Supreme Court overturned the conviction of a publisher fined about $60,000 in 2001 for having published a Czech translation of
Mein Kampf without explanatory footnotes or disclaimers. Michal Zitko's conviction for “supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms” had been upheld on appeal earlier in the year, but the Supreme Court ruled that Zitko could not have promoted Nazism since the movement did not exist at the time of the alleged crime. The ruling angered Czech Jewish groups as well as government officials. Interior Minister Stanislav Gross described the verdict as “shocking and crazy,” and legal experts said that it might set a precedent hindering prosecution of other right-wing extremists.

Both the Czech people and their government were favorably disposed toward Israel. Relations between the intelligence services of the two countries were described as “excellent,” and Czech media coverage of the Middle East was generally pro-Israel or even-handed. Milos Zeman, then the prime minister, visited Israel in February. In an interview with the daily Ha'aretz, Zeman was quoted as labeling PA chairman Arafat a terrorist and drawing parallels between him and Hitler. Zeman applauded Sharon's policy of not negotiating with Arafat as long as violence persisted. He compared the Palestinians to the ethnic Germans who lived in Czechoslovakia before World War II, whom he called “Hitler's fifth column.” Just as those Sudeten Germans should have been expelled from Czechoslovakia to avert World War II, he said, the Palestinians should be expelled for not accepting Israel's peace proposals. Zeman later denied that he had compared Arafat to Hitler. He said that when asked by Ha'aretz “about the possibility of such a comparison, I replied: ‘Of course it is not my duty to pass judgment on Arafat.’ ” However, the published text read: “Of course. It is not my duty” suggesting that the Arafat-Hitler analogy was a matter of course. Zeman now added that his government considered a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle East as “the only realistic way” out of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. He said, “I regard as desirable the return of all the parties involved to the negotiating table. The peace negotiations must take into account the Palestinians' legal rights, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and the security needs of the State of Israel.”

In April, Zeman told the Czech Parliament that the Palestinians had no right to an independent state unless they halted terrorism against Israel. Also in April, the Czech Republic was one of only five states to vote against a UN Commission on Human Rights resolution, in Geneva, condemning Israel for “gross violations” of humanitarian law in the Territories and “mass killings” of Palestinians. The resolution passed 40-5. In addition to the Czech Republic, the others voting “no” were Germany,
Great Britain, Canada, and Guatemala. Seven countries abstained. The Palestinian Authority's representative in Prague criticized the Czech vote. Foreign Minister Jan Kavan visited Israel in May and conferred with Israeli and Palestinian leaders. While Kavan met with Sharon, he canceled a scheduled meeting with Arafat.

Prague remained a popular destination for Israeli tourists, but the number of Israeli visitors to the Czech Republic dropped sharply in 2002. The Czech statistical office said that in the first nine months of the year there was a 38-percent drop in the number of Israeli tourists as compared with the same period in 2001. Total Israeli visitors for the year were expected to number about 100,000—about half those in 2001. The decline surely had something to do with fears related to the September 11 attacks, but there were two other factors as well: the flooding in August and the continuing tense situation in the Middle East.

Jewish Community

A total of some 3,000 members were registered with the Jewish communities of the Czech Republic, about 1,700 of them living in Prague. Jewish leaders, however, estimated that there were many more unaffiliated Jews in the country. In addition, an estimated 2,000 Israelis lived in Prague, though they had little contact with the local Jewish community. At the beginning of the year, Jan Munk, director of the Terezin Memorial, was reelected to a third three-year term as president of the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities. In November, the Prague Jewish community hosted a meeting of presidents of the European Council of Jewish Communities, which drew leaders and representatives from more than 40 countries.

Early in the year, the federation voted to recognize the Conservative (Masorti) stream of Judaism, opening the way to establish an official Conservative congregation and hire a Conservative rabbi. The federation later passed new rules allowing member communities to accept patrilineal Jews (people with Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers), who were not considered Jews by Orthodox criteria. Friction—and some confusion—ensued among Prague's non-Orthodox congregations as the new rules were put into effect.

In September, Bejt Praha, the "open Jewish community," dismissed Rabbi Ronald Hoffberg, a Conservative rabbi it had brought from the United States to serve as its spiritual leader, less than a year into his two-year contract. Bejt Praha said that Hoffberg, who oversaw the conversion
to Judaism of a group of Czechs in September, was fired because he “did not fulfil his commitment to the board.” Observers suggested that “politics and personality conflicts” were involved in the break, which left bitterness on both sides. (Bejt Praha’s director, Peter Gyori, told an interviewer that he had received “disturbing messages and letters.”) Despite opposition by the Masorti movement in the U.S. and elsewhere, Bejt Praha began bringing in, periodically, the American-born retired chief rabbi of Sweden to lead services. Hoffberg, however, remained in town. Earlier in the year he had been hired by the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities—with modest state support for his salary—to be available to the outlying communities, and during the second half of 2002 he became quite active in visiting and lecturing in these places.

In October, Hoffberg founded his own Conservative congregation in Prague, which formally affiliated with Masorti Olami, the World Union of Masorti Judaism. Some ten former members of Bejt Praha followed him into the new congregation. Bejt Simcha, a liberal congregation affiliated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism (Reform), engaged Hoffberg to conduct lectures, but later chose Rabbi Michael Dushinsky, described as “a different type of Orthodox rabbi,” as its Judaism teacher. In Israel, Dushinsky had been accused, in 1997, of taking money to arrange quick conversions, after which he moved to the town of Ostrava in the Czech Republic. A Czech opponent of Dushinsky got hold of a video filmed by Israeli TV during an undercover sting operation that showed the rabbi accepting a bribe, and he showed it in Prague.

The Prague Jewish community took in $4.7 million in annual revenues, making it one of the wealthiest Jewish communities in Central Europe, community president Tomas Jelinek told an interviewer in August. The main sources of money were rent from restituted properties, income from tourism, and contributions from the state. But the devastating floods that swept Prague and other cities in the Czech Republic shortly after Jelinek’s remarks caused hundreds of thousands of dollars of damage to Jewish sites, cut tourism, and strained community resources.

Giant steel barriers and sandbags prevented the Vltava River from overflowing into Prague’s low-lying historic Jewish quarter, but several feet of water seeped up through underground drains and channels. Water flooded the 13th-century Old-New Synagogue and floodwater rose to seven feet in the Pinkas Synagogue, damaging some of the 80,000 handwritten names of Czech Holocaust victims inscribed on the walls. The Jewish Museum was also hit by underground flooding, but its priceless relics had all been moved to safety in time, and insurance covered most
of the repairs to the building. Terezin, site of the former concentration camp/ghetto north of Prague, was submerged by as much as ten feet of water. A cemetery for some 10,000 Holocaust victims there was totally flooded. President Havel toured the flooded Jewish sites in Prague, and the Jewish community issued an appeal for international help. Individuals, governments, and organizations responded. Among them, Israel's deputy foreign minister, Rabbi Michael Melchior, toured damaged Jewish sites and handed over $50,000 from the Israeli government, and the Claims Conference gave $20,000 to help Czech flood victims who were Holocaust survivors.

The Prague Jewish community recognized that the damage to Jewish sites was minor compared to the damage suffered in other parts of the city, and donated funds to help several schools in the hard-hit Karlin district. With funds from the Weinberg Foundation and several U.S. Jewish federations and individuals, the JDC also undertook three nonsectarian flood-relief projects in Prague and Terezin.

There were a number of commemorative events throughout the year. Holocaust Remembrance Day was marked on January 27, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and, for the first time, representatives of the country’s Jewish and Romany communities observed the day in a joint ceremony. In April, the town of Plzen (Pilsen) commemorated the 60th anniversary of the Nazi deportation of its 2,600 Jews by creating a memorial consisting of pebbles inscribed with the victims’ names. Plzen hosted a number of events to commemorate the Holocaust as part of a project called “Year 2002—Year of Memories.” In May, representatives of more than two dozen countries, including U.S. first lady Laura Bush among them, laid wreaths at the annual ceremony commemorating the liberation of Terezin. At an event at the Terezin museum in June, 250 Czech children received prizes for paintings and essays in memory of the Holocaust. That same month, a commemorative ceremony and cultural event marked the completion of the renovation of the synagogue in the small town of Boskovice. Among other things, local high-school students began documenting the Boskovice Jewish cemetery. Also in June, Arthur Avnon, the Israeli ambassador to Prague, honored a group of Czechs as Righteous Among the Nations. In October, more than a dozen Czech Holocaust survivors flew to Israel, led by Rabbi Samuel Abramson of Karlovy Vary, to show their solidarity with the Jewish state.

There were numerous cultural events of Jewish interest. In February, the German motor company Porsche donated to the Prague-based Franz Kafka Society a reconstruction of Kafka’s personal library of more than
1,000 books. A seven-day festival honoring Czech- and German-Jewish culture opened in Prague on June 27 with a ceremony commemorating the deportation of Czech Jews to Nazi concentration camps. The third Nine Gates Festival of Czech-German-Jewish Culture featured films, concerts, and lectures, and took place in Prague and other locations. Simhat Torah marked the official launch of www.chewra.com, a Web site devoted to Czech Jewish cemeteries, tombstones, epitaphs, and information about the people buried there. This project was initiated by Jaroslav Achab Haidler, a Czech theater director who wanted to convert to Judaism and had formed the Keshet Foundation several years earlier to document Jewish cemeteries. In October, Prague was the scene of a joint Czech-Argentine project called Golem 2002/5763, which featured films, performances, exhibits, and a seminar about the legendary Golem figure. Also in October, a two-day conference on anti-Semitism was hosted by Radio Free Europe in Prague, and held under the auspices of Prime Minister Spidla and the president of the Czech Senate, the upper house of Parliament. In March, admirers of Thomas Masaryk, the first president of the former Czechoslovakia, presented Chief Rabbi Sidon with an honorary medal on the 152nd anniversary of Masaryk's birth. The medal recognized Sidon's role in maintaining the "spirit" of Masaryk, considered a figure of great moral integrity.

**Hungary**

In the April general elections, the center-left opposition narrowly ousted Prime Minister Viktor Orban. The ex-communist Socialists and their liberal Free Democrat allies won 198 seats in the 386-seat National Assembly, giving them a ten-seat majority over Orban's conservative alliance centered around his party, FIDESZ. The election was bitterly contested, and the results showed a divided country. During the campaign, Orban used with-us-or-against-us rhetoric to rally "patriotic" Hungarians. The extremist right-wing Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP)—which repeatedly appealed to anti-Semitic sentiments—predicted big gains for itself, but in the end failed to win even the 5 percent of votes necessary to enter Parliament. Socialist Peter Medgyessy, a 59-year-old former finance minister, formed Hungary's new government in May. At a European Union summit in Copenhagen in December, Hungary was confirmed to join the EU in May 2004.

Jewish leaders and others expressed concern about anti-Semitism throughout the year. In January, the Alliance of Hungarian Jewish Com-
munities criticized the Justice Ministry for not introducing legislation against hate speech. Complaining that government officials had not distanced themselves from anti-Semitic discourse in the public media, it suggested that the government might be courting the far right in advance of the elections. During the campaign, however, Orban's foreign minister, János Martonyi, flatly ruled out a government coalition with MIEP.

On January 17, thousands rallied outside the National Assembly building to mark the anniversary of the liberation of Budapest’s World War II ghetto in 1945 and to call for action against anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice. Martonyi and Budapest mayor Gábor Demszky addressed the gathering, and a message from President Ferenc Madl was read. This was the first time that the annual commemoration, usually conducted inside the historic Dohany Street Synagogue, took place in a public space. Péter Tordai, president of the Alliance of Hungarian Jewish Communities, told reporters that this was to show that Jews could appear before the general public without fear. Still, the U.S. State Department's spokesman for European affairs told the Nepszabadsag newspaper that Washington remained concerned about anti-Semitic and anti-minority extremist groups in Hungary. He noted that Martonyi had admitted during a visit to Israel that month (see below) that anti-Semitism remained a problem in the country even though the government condemned it and was committed to protecting the rights of minorities.

In February, the Orban government opened a controversial “House of Terror” museum in the downtown building that had been the headquarters of the Hungarian pro-Nazi Arrow Cross in 1944–45 and was taken over by the communist secret police after the war. The museum’s aim was to memorialize the victims of totalitarian terror—both those of wartime Hungarian fascism and of postwar communism. However, Jews and other critics charged that it presented all victims as equal and all victimizers as equal, and painted Hungary as one of Nazi Germany’s victims rather than an accomplice. They also noted that it devoted only one of nearly two dozen rooms exclusively to the Holocaust, seeming to imply that communism was far worse.

In March, Ferenc Olti, a vice president of the Alliance of Jewish Communities in Hungary, said that bias against Jews had grown dramatically over the past several years. He charged that anti-Semitic publications were being reprinted and sold without restriction, and that anti-Semitism had become part of everyday discourse, including on state-owned radio and television. (In February, Jews raised an outcry when a Hungarian-language edition of Henry Ford’s anti-Semitic book, The International
Jew, went on sale at outlets of the British supermarket chain Tesco in two Hungarian cities. Tesco apologized and removed the books.) Olti said the government had promised several times to strengthen regulations barring anti-Semitic speech and Holocaust denial; not only had this not happened, but existing laws were not even being enforced. Olti presented his report at the meeting of East-Central European Jewish representatives organized by the American Jewish Committee and held in Bucharest alongside a summit of countries aspiring to enter NATO.

In November, senior World Jewish Congress officials, accompanied by legal experts from several countries, met in Budapest with Hungarian justice minister Peter Barandy and other officials to discuss how to strengthen Hungary's legislation aimed at curbing racism and anti-Semitism.

The activities of Pannon Radio, a commercial station controlled by the extreme-right MIEP, caused particular concern. In January, the National Radio and Television Board fined Pannon Radio the equivalent of $8,400 for broadcasts that promoted MIEP, encouraged hatred and anti-Semitism, and grossly insulted ethnic minorities. Later in the year, the broadcasting board warned Pannon Radio several more times about its overtly pro-MIEP bias. Indeed, some 60 musicians demanded that Pannon Radio stop playing their songs because of the station's "openly racist and anti-Semitic tone."

In June, Lorant Hegedus, a Protestant minister who was a MIEP member of the National Assembly, pleaded innocent to the charge of "incitement against a community." The charge was based on an article he published in 2001 advocating the expulsion of the Jews. Parliament had suspended his parliamentary immunity, making him liable to prosecution (see AJYB 2002, p. 458).

In December, on the sixth night of Hanukkah, a group of more than 100 skinheads disrupted an open-air Chabad-sponsored menorah lighting in Budapest, chanting "Hungary is ours!" There was no physical violence and police did not intervene. Later, the national police chief apologized to the Jewish community, as both groups had been granted permission to hold public meetings on the same square at the same time. Representatives of foreign Jewish organizations were present at the menorah lighting, which took place ahead of a meeting of the European Jewish Congress in Budapest on December 8.

Jews regarded the Hungarian government's policy toward Israel as fair and friendly, with few outstanding issues other than the subject of Hungarian anti-Semitism, which was often raised by Israeli officials. Eco-
nomic relations were particularly good: Israel had capital-investment projects worth over $1.5 billion in Hungary. In January, Foreign Minister Martonyi made a four-day official visit to Israel and the territory of the Palestinian National Authority. He met with top Israeli and Palestinian leaders, including PA chairman Yasir Arafat, and told reporters that Hungary had offered its assistance in mediation efforts and would be prepared to host negotiations. But, he said, the first step toward resurrecting the peace process would have to be an end to terrorism. He added that the Hungarian government dissociated itself from, and would take action against, anti-Semitic phenomena within the country.

For the most part, the attitude of the general public toward Israel was positive, despite what Jews described as a clear pro-Palestinian bias in the print and broadcast media, which, they felt, was influenced by the way the media in Western Europe covered Middle East news. Anti-Semitic elements in the press blamed Israel for everything wrong in the Middle East and around the world, but even many of the more objective journalists also criticized Israel.

In October, Auschwitz survivor Imre Kertesz, 72, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for his novels describing the Shoah and its aftermath. Kertesz was deported to Auschwitz as a teenager in 1944 and later sent to Buchenwald, where he was liberated in 1945. The honor came as a surprise, as his books had a very small readership in Hungary. His first novel, Sorstalanság (Fateless), was a first-person account of a teenage boy in Nazi concentration camps and his attempts to reconcile himself to that experience after the war. Written in the 1960s, it was not published until 1975, when it was greeted with almost total silence. That volume turned out to be the first part of a trilogy of semiautobiographical novels: A kudarc (Fiasco), was published in 1988, and Kaddis a meg nem születetett gyermekért (Kaddish for a Child Not Born) in 1990. “There is no awareness of the Holocaust in Hungary,” Kertesz told the AP after winning the prize. “People have not faced up to the Holocaust. I hope that in the light of this recognition, they will face up to it more than until now.”

After the Nobel announcement, editions of his books quickly sold out and Kertesz was hailed as a Hungarian national hero. The president, the prime minister, the speaker of the National Assembly, and many other officials congratulated him personally, Budapest gave him the key to the city, and the National Assembly passed a bill exempting his prize money from taxes. The Culture Ministry said it would send copies of Sorsta-
lanság to all schools. The far right, however, criticized the award on the grounds that Kertész did not represent Hungarian national values.

**Jewish Community**

Data from the February 2001 census, released in the summer of 2002, showed only 13,000 people identifying themselves as Jewish, even though a recent survey put the actual number of Jews in Hungary at more than 100,000. About 90 percent of them lived in Budapest, the vast majority nonobservant, secular, or totally unaffiliated. Only 6,000 or so were formally registered with the Jewish community, and about 20,000 had some sort of affiliation with Jewish organizations or institutions. The dominant religious affiliation was Neolog, similar to America’s Conservative Judaism. There was a very small Orthodox community made up of both Modern Orthodox and Hassidim. During the year, a new Modern Orthodox congregation, composed mainly of young adults, opened. Neolog communities were grouped in the Alliance of Jewish Communities in Hungary (MAZSIHISZ), while the Orthodox operated as the Autonomous Orthodox Community. Sim Shalom, a small Reform congregation established in Budapest in 1992, led by a female rabbi and associated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism, functioned outside these official umbrella structures. There was also an active Chabad-Lubavitch presence.

For some time, the official Jewish leadership had come under criticism from the independent Jewish monthly Szombat for autocratic policies, sloppy finances, and personal and political infighting. Similar criticism had been voiced by various individuals, but not publicly. In November, however, Ferenc Olti, vice president of MAZSIHISZ, openly accused the president, Gusztav Zoltai, of “dictatorship” and lack of financial transparency, and called for his resignation. Olti made his accusations at the general meetings of MAZSIHISZ and of the Budapest Jewish community. The latter voted him off its board.

There were three Jewish day schools operating in Budapest in addition to kindergartens, with a total enrollment of 1,800. Budapest also had a Jewish University, which included the Rabbinical Seminary and a teacher-training college. Budapest’s Balint Jewish Community Center had an active program of lectures, clubs, courses, and public events. A new program launched in 2002 was a “family day” one Sunday a month, featuring events to attract three generations. The Lauder/JDC international Jew-
A summer camp at Szarvas in southern Hungary drew about 2,000 Jewish children from all over East-Central Europe. The camp was also used for seminars, such as the fourth Machol Hungaria, which taught Israeli folk dancing. This five-day seminar in May drew 140 participants from 12 countries. The Hungarian Jewish Social Support Foundation coordinated extensive social-welfare programs, including a 360-bed Jewish hospital that also had a hospice center for the terminally ill.

There were a number of commemorative events. During the course of 2002, more than 50 Hungarians were honored for having saved Jews during World War II. In April, there were several programs to mark the national Holocaust Memorial Day, April 16. In May, the newly restored Orthodox synagogue in the town of Mako was renamed in honor of its rabbi, Mozes Vorhand, who was killed by Hungarian Nazis in 1944, shortly before the Jews were deported to Auschwitz. Local officials, members of the National Assembly, and Jewish leaders attended. So did scores of Orthodox Jews originally from Mako, who came regularly from Israel, Europe, and the U.S. on an annual pilgrimage to commemorate the community. In July, a monument to Hungary's wartime Jewish Aid and Rescue Committee and its controversial leader, Rudolf Kasztner, was dedicated in the courtyard of Budapest's main Dohany Street Synagogue. A 30-person delegation came from Israel for the ceremony. Kasztner was murdered in Israel in 1957 after critics accused him of "playing God" in negotiating with the Nazis to win safe passage out of Hungary for 1,684 Jews. In August, a memorial ceremony in Budapest marked the 90th anniversary of the birth of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews during World War II and vanished after being taken into custody by Soviet troops.

In December, Prime Minister Medgyessy laid the cornerstone of what will become the country's Holocaust museum, a multimillion-dollar complex to be located in a disused synagogue just outside the downtown area. The synagogue, built in 1923, was designed by Lipot Baumhorn, Europe's most prolific modern synagogue architect. Also taking part in the ceremony was Tibor Vamos, head of the Holocaust Documentation Center and Memorial Collection, the public foundation behind the project. Due to open in April 2004, the museum was expected to collect and publish historical documents related to the Holocaust, host conferences and seminars, and run educational programs. The state was to contribute $7 million to cover renovation and construction costs. "It is our duty to remember and to remind people about the past," Medgyessy said during
the cornerstone ceremony. "The Holocaust was a tragedy for the whole nation."

There were numerous Jewish cultural and social events, including the annual Jewish culture festival in Budapest in August. From April through September, the Jewish Museum in Budapest featured an exhibition on Hungarian Jewish women.

Israel Sela, the JDC country director for Hungary, died in Jerusalem in November at the age of 61 after a four-year battle with cancer. Sela, an Israeli, took up his JDC position in Budapest in 1994.

**Macedonia**

In October, the Social Democratic Union and the ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration announced the formation of a coalition government headed by Social Democratic leader Branko Crvenkovski.

According to Jewish leaders, the government had a generally positive view of Israel, often holding up Israel as an example for Macedonians both because of its successful economic development and the way it persevered in a hostile environment. The 200-member Jewish community, said these leaders, maintained "very friendly" relations with Macedonia's Islamic community, and had not experienced negative consequences from the intifada.

In early June, eight Macedonians and two couples from Belgrade underwent conversion to Judaism in Skopje. Preparations started early in 2001, when the Belgrade-based Orthodox rabbi Yitzhak Asiel, who also served Macedonia, agreed to give lessons to the candidates. Classes took place both in Skopje and in Belgrade. The Reform bet din (religious court) was led by a U.S. military chaplain, Rabbi Kenneth J. Leinwand, who came from Germany. One of the Belgrade couples, who had been married for many years under Yugoslav civil law, married in a Jewish religious ceremony in the Skopje synagogue after their conversion. The Macedonian converts included seven young women and a young man who was studying with Rabbi Asiel to learn how to conduct services. The Macedonian Jewish community planned eventually to send him to a yeshivah.

At a ceremony in Skopje on August 29, Finance Minister Nikola Gruevski announced that the government would either physically return or provide compensation for Jewish communal properties claimed by the current Jewish community. Furthermore, all heirless private Jewish prop-
erty or compensation from it would go to a newly created “Holocaust Fund” foundation, jointly administered by the government and the Jewish community. These decisions, based on a 2000 law on the denationalization of property, were hailed as the most sweeping regarding the return or compensation of property enacted in any postcommunist country. The foundation was to use the restituted assets to create a regional Holocaust museum and education center; to finance the repair, restoration, and upkeep of Jewish heritage sites; and to underwrite as-yet-undefined programs in the areas of education and multiethnic understanding. To provide start-up funding, Gruevski said the government would immediately transfer to the Holocaust Fund government bonds worth nearly $500,000 as compensation for four heirless properties assessed in Skopje.

In those cases where the property no longer existed or else belonged to someone other than the state, the Finance Ministry would evaluate the current worth, and the government would give the foundation that amount in interest-bearing, euro-linked, ten-year government bonds. Jewish community officials said that as many as 1,000 sites could be involved. Under the new provisions, compensation for communal property would not be administered as part of the Holocaust Fund, but directly by the Jewish community. Gruevski announced the restitution of several specific communal properties and said that the Jewish community would receive financial compensation for nearly three dozen sites that could not be physically returned.

At a ceremony in Washington in December, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell and Macedonian foreign minister Ilinka Mitreva signed an agreement regarding the preservation of cultural properties in Macedonia, including places of worship, historic sites, monuments, cemeteries, and cultural archives. The countries pledged to take steps to help protect and preserve properties important to the cultural heritage of citizens of the two nations; to cooperate in identifying and preserving such properties; and to ensure equal treatment of all cultural groups in property preservation and access policies. It also established a Joint Cultural Heritage Commission for bilateral efforts on these issues, which was expected to focus on the cultural property of groups in Macedonia that the Nazis tried to exterminate, and groups that suffered under the communist regime. Warren C. Miller, chairman of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad, who negotiated the agreement, said that his commission planned to conduct a survey of Jewish cultural properties in Macedonia. This agreement with Macedonia was the 11th such pact between the U.S. and other countries. A $190,000 pro-
ject to restore the historic Jewish cemetery in Bitola, partly funded by the Macedonian government, was already under way.

Poland

As Poland implemented market-oriented reforms needed for entry into the European Union, the unemployment rate surged to over 18 percent. Two-thirds of respondents to a survey conducted in April were pessimistic about the country’s future. This situation fueled support in the country for populist, “Euro-skeptical” parties and political figures, including the radical farmer Andrzej Lepper, head of the Self-Defense Party. The EU summit in Copenhagen in December confirmed its invitation to Poland to join in 2004. During the year, Poland, which joined NATO in 1999, was a strong supporter of U.S. President George Bush’s foreign policy, including the military buildup against Iraq.

In January, Prime Minister Leszek Miller told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in New York that he would work to improve Poland’s relations with the international Jewish community. His priorities included restitution of Jewish property, broader ties with Israel, support for Jewish culture in Poland, and backing for the creation of a $60-million Museum of Jewish History in Warsaw, which would include a multimedia education center employing computer images, films, databases, dioramas, models, and interactive technology. The museum would stand on the site of the wartime Warsaw Ghetto on a plot donated by the city, just in front of the sculptural Warsaw Ghetto memorial. The museum already had a Web site, www.jewishmuseum.org.pl.

In July, Poland’s Institute of National Memory (INM) announced that a nearly two-year-long investigation confirmed that local Poles, not Nazi occupiers, had carried out the 1941 massacre of 1,600 Jews in the village of Jedwabne. However, it would not file charges against anyone for the crime. For decades, the massacre had been attributed to German Nazis. Revelations in 2000 that local Poles were responsible sparked widespread debate about the role of Poland and of Polish people in the Holocaust, and prompted the involvement of the INM, which was charged with investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of Nazi- and communist-era crimes (see AJYB 2001, pp. 424-25; 2002, pp. 463-64). In July, 20 teenagers from Jedwabne were taken on a trip to the United States as part of a program aimed at teaching tolerance. Jedwabne’s former mayor, Krzysztof Godlewski, was given an award for openly condemning the 1941 massacre and arranging the memorial ceremony held on its 60th an-
niversary in 2001. At the time, townspeople had branded him "anti-
Polish" and forced his resignation.

The INM also investigated reports of Polish crimes against Jews in
other places, and, in November, it published a two-volume report listing
incidents in at least two dozen villages. In December, the remains of 13
Jews believed killed by Poles during World War II were ceremonially
buried in the Jewish cemetery in Tomaszów Mazowiecki. The remains
were discovered in September at a mass grave in a nearby wooded area.

A public-opinion survey conducted in April asked Poles which one
group they thought was too influential in Poland. Less than 1 percent of
respondents said "Jews," while more than 10 percent said "the Catholic
Church," and 26 percent said "businessmen." But when the same survey
asked which ethnic groups were too influential, Jews were mentioned the
most often, by 19 percent of respondents, and when the remaining 81 per-
cent were asked specifically if Jews had too much power in Poland, 24
percent said "yes." In October, as part of Action Week of Football
Against Racism in Europe, a petition against racism in Polish soccer sta-
diums, signed by 27,000 people, was presented to the president of the Pol-
ish Football Association. The petition noted anti-Semitic abuse, neofas-
cist symbols, and frequent hostility to black players. A group called Polish
Humanitarian Action and the independent antiracist association Never
Again had collected the signatures at stadiums and schools all over
Poland.

The Jewish cemetery in Wrocław was vandalized during the period be-
tween Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur; about 70 tombstones were toppled
or broken into pieces. The Jewish community issued an appeal for
aid to repair the damage, and about 200 local volunteers responded.

Jewish restitution claims for communal property seized during World
War II got under way in earnest in February, just three months before the
May 2002 deadline for filing set by the 1997 restitution law. The Founda-
tion for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland elected as its
cochairs Jerzy Kichler, chairman of the Union of Jewish Religious Com-
munities in Poland (JRCP), and Kalman Sultanik, president of the Fed-
eration of Polish Jews in the United States and chairman of the Ameri-
can Section of the World Zionist Organization. It also named Eve
Anderson, an American, to be its Warsaw-based executive director,
charged with coordinating the process of researching and filing claims for
the restitution of thousands of properties that belonged to the pre-
Holocaust Jewish community. The foundation was formed as a partner-
ship between the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) and the
JRCP after wrangling between the two bodies had held up the process for years. Claims for 5,200 properties were filed by the May deadline, but many of them still required the submission of further documentation. Once restitution is made, the foundation will own and manage recovered properties located mainly in areas where no Jews now lived. Properties elsewhere in Poland, where organized Jewish communities existed, were being reclaimed, owned, and managed by the JRCP and the individual communities. Some Jewish leaders came under criticism for their handling of restitution transactions and for lacking an overall strategy for dealing with properties and profits (see below). In the wake of this controversy, the Jewish community of Warsaw held an open meeting in November on the topic, "Where do we get money and what do we spend it on, and what are our plans for the future?" JRCP leaders present discussed the organization's budget and addressed criticism.

Restitution of prewar Jewish private property remained an unresolved, contentious issue. Despite the lack of clear legislation, however, many individuals, including Jews residing outside the country, were already using existing legal mechanisms to get back property that had belonged to them or to their ancestors (see below).

According to a report by Konstanty Gebert, publisher of the Jewish monthly Midrasz, the State of Israel "used to enjoy a favorable image in Polish public opinion, as the Arabs were seen as allied with Moscow, Poland's arch-nemesis." Israelis "were not seen as 'Jews,' in the sense of the negative stereotype associated with the latter," he said in the report, presented at a March meeting in Bucharest of Jewish representatives from East-Central Europe. Also, "many Israelis came from Poland, and ties of friendship, or of landsman solidarity, remained." Even the Polish right wing, he said, "saw in Israel a country implementing values and policies Poland should in their eyes emulate: a strong state with a powerful and popular military and a widely accepted national-religious ideology, one that does not let its neighbors push it around." But, Gebert cautioned, some of these positive associations "have since dissipated, as the mainstream media has reported, and often distorted, the plight of the Palestinians. There is a consensus that Israel uses excessive force, and possibly wanton cruelty, in retaliating against Palestinian attacks, and Ariel Sharon is considered a war criminal. Internet chat lists are infused with hatred, with many participants alleging that the reprehensible behavior Israel is charged with stems from the 'nature' of the Jews."

Nonetheless, on the whole, Poland's relations with Israel were good. Israel's ambassador in Warsaw, Shevach Weiss, a Polish Holocaust survivor
and former speaker of the Knesset, was very popular, traveling widely around the country and appearing frequently on television and at public events. In March, Polish national security adviser Marek Siwiec made a four-day visit to Israel, where he and Israeli National Security Council chairman Maj. Gen. Uzi Dayan signed a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of bilateral cooperation in the war on terrorism. Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres visited Warsaw in April, and took part in a conference linked to the creation of the Museum of Jewish History. (During the conference, Polish foreign minister Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz said that the aim of the museum was "to state the honest truth about the composite nature of Polish-Jewish relations; to show all of their light and dark sides. This is the only way of helping to abolish harmful stereotypes, xenophobic prejudices, and unjust images of each other.") While Peres was in the country, a group of 41 right-wing lawmakers from Self-Defense, the Peasant Party, and the League of Polish Families presented a protest to the Israeli embassy against the "barbaric war on the Palestinian land." Warsaw's mayor visited Israel in May. He donated hundreds of original cobblestones from the Warsaw Ghetto to Yad Vashem, which planned to recreate a ghetto street as an exhibition. In September, Poland's Defense Ministry announced it would buy anti-tank missiles from the Israeli arms maker Rafael. During a state visit to Washington in July, President Aleksander Kwasniewski said that Poland strongly supported Israel's right to exist in peace, but also wanted to see the creation of a Palestinian state that was democratic and "free from fundamentalism, terror, and crime."

**Jewish Community**

Estimates of the number of Jews in Poland ranged widely, from the 7,000–8,000 officially registered with the community, belonging to Jewish organizations or receiving aid from the JDC, to the 10,000–15,000 people of Jewish ancestry who showed interest in rediscovering their heritage, to as many as 30,000–40,000 with some Jewish ancestry. The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation ran the country's most extensive Jewish educational programs, including a school in Warsaw with more than 160 pupils and a genealogy project. The Joint Distribution Committee, which provided extensive social-welfare aid, also ran education and leadership-training programs. The Polish Jewish community's Web site, www.jewish.org.pl, provided information about the community and news about cultural, religious, and other activities.
Established Jewish religious communities were grouped under the umbrella of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland. In addition, a liberal, havurah-type congregation, Bejt Warszawa, operated in Warsaw. Though not a member of the umbrella group, it sometimes cooperated with Warsaw’s Orthodox congregation—for example, both joined forces at Simhat Torah celebrations this year, for the first time. For the High Holy Days, Bejt Warszawa received a 100-year-old Torah as a gift from the Reform community of Clarksdale, Mississippi. In October, a group of Jews from Cleveland presented a Torah to the Lomdei Mishnayot synagogue in Oswiecim, the town near the Auschwitz death camp. The synagogue was restored and reopened in 2000 as the Auschwitz Jewish Center, with a museum and facilities for Jewish study and prayer.

In December, the board of the nationwide secular Jewish organization, the Social-Cultural Association of Jews of Poland (TSKZ), unexpectedly voted out its longtime leadership, including its president, Szymon Szurmiej, director of Warsaw’s state Jewish theater.

During the summer, young Polish Jews attended several Jewish summer-camp programs as well as the Szarvas camp in Hungary. Twenty-one Jewish students from Poland visited Israel as part of the Birthright Israel program, the first time that Polish students had taken part in it. A delegation of Polish Jews also visited the Jewish community in Bulgaria as part of the JDC Buncher leadership-development program.

During the year, tensions emerged between the Orthodox rabbinical establishment and Jews who wanted to join the Conservative (Masorti) stream. These came to a head in September, when 20 residents of Wroclaw underwent Conservative conversion ceremonies conducted by a Masorti bet din (religious court) of rabbis from Israel and the United States. The group was prepared for conversion by Rabbi Ivan Caine, a Conservative rabbi from America who served as the Wroclaw rabbi. Warsaw’s American-born rabbi, Michael Schudrich, who was Orthodox, denied permission to use the Warsaw community’s mikveh (ritual bath) for the conversion, so the group used one in a private hotel in Kraków. There, Sasha Pecaric, an Orthodox rabbi and head of Lauder Foundation activities in the city, organized a demonstration against the group and attempted, unsuccessfully, to bar access to the mikveh.

At the beginning of the holiday of Sukkot, two weeks after the conversions, two Wroclaw girls became b’not mitzvah in an egalitarian, Conservative ceremony that was believed to be the first of its kind in Poland. The parents of both girls were leading members of the Wroclaw congregation. But since the mother of one and both parents of the other had
been among the group just converted to Judaism in September, neither girl was Jewish, according to Jewish law. Both, therefore, had undergone Conservative conversion in the United States during the summer after studying with Rabbi Caine.

Several Jewish communal scandals made the headlines during the year. Feliks Lipman, an Auschwitz survivor in his 80s who was chairman of the Jewish community in Katowice and a vice chairman of the Union of Polish Jewish Religious Communities, killed himself at the end of August. In a suicide note, he reportedly cited failed business ventures. The Polish daily *Rzeczpospolita* ran a major article implicating Lipman in shady dealings related to the restitution of both communal and privately owned prewar Jewish property. Media reports and Jewish sources said police were investigating several restitution cases in which Lipman was involved. The revelations followed earlier accusations of fraud connected with private restitution requests elsewhere in Poland. News articles during the year reported that several buildings in Kraków, in particular, had been restituted and later sold on the basis of falsified wills or through proxies. Kraków prosecutors said that organized networks of swindlers were carrying out such scams and asked the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw to help trace the legal heirs to properties.

In the fall, the Warsaw Jewish community fired Boleslaw Szernicer, the caretaker of the Jewish cemetery, after police found and destroyed a plot of marijuana growing in the vast graveyard. This sparked an article in the *Polityka* newspaper charging that Szernicer’s dismissal was actually the result of broader conflicts involving Jewish quarrels over restitution profits. It quoted a letter Szernicer wrote in August accusing Jewish communal officials of disposing of restituted Jewish heritage sites by selling them off quickly, and of “secrecy” and lack of transparency in the disposition of profits from restituted property. The paper said that Szernicer was attempting to establish a congregation in Warsaw separate from the established community. *Polityka* also dwelt on other instances of independent groups, in Gdansk and Poznan, that were not recognized by the union. In Gdansk, the Independent Community of the Mosaic Faith was headed by Jakub Szadaj, the former chairman of the official Gdansk Jewish community. The union had removed Szadaj in 2000 after accusing him of financial irregularities, including accepting money to allow the building of a gas station on the site of a Jewish cemetery, and of inflating the membership of his community by including fictitious names. Szadaj, however, claimed that his opposition to the union’s restitution policy was the cause of the conflict.
There were a number of commemorations during 2002. The Roman Catholic Church in Poland marked its fifth annual Day of Judaism, January 17, with a series of events commemorating the Shoah and exploring Jewish teachings. These included a prayer ceremony in the former Majdanek concentration camp near Lublin and a discussion on Bible passages and their commentaries organized by Józef Zyckiński, the archbishop of Lublin. Among the participants was the chief rabbi of Haifa, Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen. Several events commemorated the 60th anniversary of the annihilation of Jewish ghettos in German-occupied Poland. One took place on August 19 in Otwock, near Warsaw. Several hundred townspeople, Jewish representatives, and a Jewish survivor from the town gathered at the train station from which the Otwock Jews were sent to Treblinka, and there they prayed and lit candles. The ceremony was organized by local citizens and the Committee for the Commemoration of Otwock and Karczew Jews, headed by the editor of the Catholic monthly Wiez (Link).

In August, a memorial to Janusz Korczak, the Jewish doctor and educator who, in 1942, was killed in Treblinka along with all of the children from his Warsaw Ghetto orphanage, was dedicated in Warsaw’s Jewish cemetery.

Numerous Jewish cultural events took place throughout the year, including concerts, exhibitions, seminars, and festivals. The audiences for these were mostly non-Jewish. The annual Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków drew a record number of people to its final concert, parts of which were broadcast live on Polish national television. As usual, the Jewish Culture Center in Kraków sponsored events each month. In September, an exhibit on the participation of Polish Jewish soldiers in World War II opened at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Also in September, Roman Polanski’s Holocaust movie, The Pianist, had its world premiere in Warsaw. School classes were taken to see the film, which was based on the memoirs of pianist Władysław Szpilman, who survived the Warsaw Ghetto. The film won the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Polanski, who himself survived the Holocaust in Kraków as a child, attended the premiere along with Szpilman’s widow and children. The fifth annual Warsaw Jewish Book Fair, organized by the Lauder Foundation and the Jewish monthly Midrasz, took place in October. Warsaw’s mayor opened the five-day event. Lecturers during the book fair included Joanna Olczak-Roniker, whose book, In the Gardens of Memory, which told the story of her Jewish family, won Poland’s most coveted literary award, the Nike. The city of Warsaw, with the cooperation of Warsaw’s
Jewish Historical Institute, set up a new Web site that provided detailed information on Jewish historical and heritage sites in Warsaw, http://jewish.sites.warszawa.um.gov.pl.

In June, Britain's Prince Charles toured Kraków's centuries-old Remuh Synagogue and Old Jewish Cemetery, and met with local Holocaust survivors. His guide was Tadeusz Jakobowicz, the head of the city's 200-member Jewish community.

Dr. Arnold Mostowicz, a resistance fighter who treated fellow Jews in the Lodz Ghetto during World War II before being deported to Auschwitz, died in February, aged 87.

Romania

Most Romanians continued to live in grinding poverty, which fueled rampant corruption and, among some, nostalgia for the regime of communist dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu. In April, a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers, presented at an international conference in Bucharest, said that the widespread corruption and the lack of transparency in the legal and political systems had cost Romania billions of dollars in foreign investment in 2001.

Romania was one of seven postcommunist countries invited to join NATO in November. Earlier, in March, representatives of Jewish communities in East-Central Europe met in Bucharest alongside a summit of postcommunist states that aspired to enter NATO. At a roundtable discussion organized by the American Jewish Committee, they presented status reports on Jewish affairs in their countries, which were circulated to prime ministers and NATO officials at the summit. Participants came from NATO aspirants Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovenia, as well as from Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, which had entered NATO in 1999.

NATO insisted on respect for human rights as a criterion for membership, and this put right-wing nationalist extremism, manifestations of racism and anti-Semitism, and nostalgia for the pro-Nazi World-War-II government of Marshal Ion Antonescu under heightened scrutiny. In February, the chairman of the U.S. NATO Committee told a Romanian newspaper that such phenomena could hinder Romania's efforts to enter NATO. The government attempted to crack down. In mid-March it passed a special ordinance against racism and the Antonescu cult, barring statues or plaques commemorating Antonescu or others condemned for "crimes against peace" and "crimes against humanity," and also pro-
hibiting the naming of streets or other public places in their honor. (This in effect mandated the removal of six Antonescu statues from around the country and the renaming of some 30 streets and parks.) The ordinance also banned the public display of "racist or fascist symbols" and outlawed organizations "of fascist, racist, and xenophobic character" such as the Antonescu Foundation, which promoted the dictator's legacy. Penalties for infractions ranged from fines to five years in prison.

In March, the head of the Dinamo Bucharest soccer team's fan club was fined the equivalent of about $50—an average monthly salary—for having failed to stop fans from unfurling a huge racist banner and a portrait of Antonescu at a match. At the end of March, a bust of Antonescu in Piatra Neamț was dismantled, and in April authorities took down another in Slobozia. During the year, however, reports in the local media suggested some resistance to the new legislation, with local councils in at least two towns voting against government orders to change street names honoring Antonescu.

In March, the government passed an ordinance that mandated stiff penalties for the desecration of Jewish cemeteries, synagogues, and other sites. It said that no construction on historically Jewish sites could be undertaken without the prior approval of the Federation of Jewish Communities (FEDROM), and that such projects must respect Jewish religious practice and traditions. Penalties for violations ranged from fines to 25 years in prison. A government spokesman said that while 600 out of 800 Jewish cemeteries in Romania were no longer in use, they had to be preserved as an important part of the country's heritage.

On March 18, the first course on the Holocaust in Romania was introduced at the National Defense College. It was taught to senior officers by Radu Ioanid, an official of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. In a message to the participants, Prime Minister Adrian Nastase called on Romania to recognize the role the Antonescu government had played in the Shoah. In the Senate, the upper house of Parliament, on April 2, several right-wing nationalist members rejected Nastase's admission of Romania's responsibility.

The Jewish Studies Institute at Babes Bolyai University in Cluj ran a six-week summer program for Romanian high-school history teachers who taught the Holocaust, one teacher chosen from each Romanian county. The faculty came from Israel, the U.S., France, and Poland, and the entire group visited Auschwitz at the end of the course. At a June 27–July 2 conference in Bucharest, Romanian and Israeli historians took part in three symposia on the role of Romania in the Holocaust.
In July, the Center for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism in Romania (www.antisemitism.ro) called recent government moves against racism and anti-Semitism superficial ploys whose aim was “to recruit Jewish support in the effort to push Romania's interests forward without Romania truly accepting its share of responsibility in the extermination of 20–50 percent of the Jews living in Romania before the war.”

In September, President Ion Iliescu, addressing a student forum in Bucharest, warned against what he saw as the danger of “the rebirth of aggressive nationalism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, racism, intolerance, and extremism.” That month, the license of the private television station OTV was revoked after an on-air appearance by ultranationalist senator Corneliu Vadim Tudor, who made derogatory remarks about Roma and Jews. Tudor, leader of the Greater Romanian Party, was already facing the prospect of several trials on charges of offending ethnic minorities in his newspaper.

In May, vandals desecrated the synagogue in Falticeni. Swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans signed by a previously unknown group, “The Front of Anti-Semitic Struggle,” were scrawled on its walls, and a Torah scroll was stolen. Six weeks later, there was a break-in at the synagogue in Vatra Dornei. In October, vandals marked swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans into the facade of the Yiddish theater in Bucharest. FEDROM criticized the police for not taking sufficient measures to prevent “anti-Semitic, xenophobic, and racist” incidents. Culture Minister Razvan Theodorescu called the vandalism “a serious provocation.” In the days that followed, anti-Semitic slogans were also found in Cluj.

On May 20, a former Nazi concentration camp guard, Nikolaus Schiffer, was deported from the U.S. to Romania.

In April, Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana toured the Middle East and met with leaders in Egypt, Jordan, and Israel. In Jerusalem he met with Prime Minister Sharon, and in Ramallah with Palestinian Authority chairman Arafat. He gave both a letter from President Iliescu offering Romania's “good services” for mediation in the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. Sharon said that Israel considered relations with Romania to be important. He praised recent measures aimed at preserving the Jewish heritage in Romania and banning the Antonescu cult. In June, President Iliescu came out against removing Arafat from his position as Palestinian leader, saying that such a step could lead to “additional tension, instead of alleviating it.” He expressed skepticism about President Bush's plan, announced June 24, to replace Arafat and gradually set up a democratic Palestinian state.
Relations with Israel were close, with growing economic links. Nearly 400,000 Romanian Jews had left for Israel in the postwar decades, and now many non-Jewish Romanians worked in Israel. Nevertheless, Jewish observers felt that the Romanian media, both the mainstream and fringe publications, were biased against Israel. In August, Ephraim Sneh, the Israeli transport minister, came to Bucharest with a delegation of Israeli businessmen and investors to participate in a symposium on Romanian-Israeli cooperation in infrastructure and the construction industry.

Naphtali Lavie, vice chairman of the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO), met with Prime Minister Nastase in Bucharest in November. Nastase said that Romania was “favorable” toward addressing compensation claims for property confiscated during World War II. Lavie said this could represent a turning point in negotiations, which had been going on since 1994.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Some 11,000—16,000 Jews were believed to live in Romania, about half of them in Bucharest. Most Romanian Jews were elderly, and they were hit hard by the poor economic situation—an average pension amounted to just $20—$30 a month. Educational, religious, and welfare programs were carried out by FEDROM, funded by the JDC. There were ten kosher canteens throughout the country. Thousands received supplemental food packages containing flour, cooking oil, sugar, rice, cheese, powdered milk, eggs, and kosher canned meat. Special deliveries were made for the Jewish holidays. In Bucharest, the meals-on-wheels program had a newly equipped kosher kitchen and delivered 300 kosher meals to the home-bound elderly every other day. There were also free medical services for the community, with a full-time ambulance and a staff of 12 doctors. There were three Jewish old-age homes in the country. At the end of the year the biggest of them, the Rosen Home in Bucharest, had 136 residents, most over 85 years of age.

There was also a nationwide Jewish youth movement, OTER (Romanian Youth Organization), funded by the JDC, with 11 branches around the country. Nearly 700 young Jews took part in its seminars, training programs, Jewish camps, and social and religious gatherings. In addition, the Lauder Foundation ran the Lauder Reut Kindergarten and Lower School in Bucharest. At the beginning of the year, a new mikveh opened in Bucharest and a bar mitzvah was celebrated in the small northern town of Roman.
In October, three JDC officials—President Eugene J. Ribakoff, Executive Vice President Steven Schwager, and Zvi Feine, the country director in Romania—attended a community celebration at the Choral Synagogue in Bucharest marking 35 years since the JDC returned to Romania in 1967 after a 20-year absence. Ribakoff, Schwager, and Feine toured several Jewish communities and met with government officials.

Numerous commemorative and cultural events took place. In July, President Iliescu awarded Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel the country’s highest honor, the Star of Romania. Wiesel, 74, was presented the award in Bucharest after he and his family, accompanied by Iliescu and the Israeli and U.S. ambassadors, paid a visit to his hometown, Sighet, from which he and his family were deported to Auschwitz in 1944. Thousands of townspeople turned out to greet Wiesel in Sighet, where he inaugurated a museum in the house where he lived as a child. In August, members of Parliament, ambassadors, cultural figures, and leaders of other religions joined Jewish community members at a ceremony marking the 70th birthday of Rabbi Menachem Hacohen, the Israel-based rabbi who served as chief rabbi of Romania. In October, there was a government-sponsored festival of Yiddish theater in Iasi.

Bibi Cajal, the wife of FEDROM president Nicolai Cajal, died in January. Ovidius University in Constanta awarded Nicolai Cajal an honorary doctorate in March. Writer and philosopher Henri Wald died in July.

Slovakia

In the September election, a coalition of the Slovak Democratic Party, the Christian Union (SDKU), ethnic Hungarians, Christian Democrats, and the business-oriented New Citizens Alliance (ANO) won 78 out of 150 seats in parliament. The new center-right government took office in October, led by Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda, leader of the Slovak Democrats, who began a second term in office. The NATO summit in Prague in November invited Slovakia to join, and the EU summit in Copenhagen in December confirmed Slovakia’s admission, set for 2004.

There was concern throughout the year about racist sentiments in the country and neo-Nazi attacks, mainly against Roma. In January, Slovak historians and Jews complained when President Rudolf Schuster awarded Jozef Mikus, 92, a diplomat who served the wartime Slovak fascist puppet state, a high state award, the Pribrina’s Cross. On March 14, dozens of skinheads and elderly Slovaks rallied outside the presidential palace in Bratislava to mark the 63rd anniversary of the establishment of the
pro-Nazi wartime independent Slovak state. (On the same day, the local Jewish community took Slovak officials on a tour of the site where a new memorial commemorating Jewish Holocaust victims was under construction.) In April, the media quoted police as saying that there were about 2,500 right-wing extremists and sympathizers in Slovakia. The active core was made up of some 500 skinheads, neo-Nazis, and fascists. Also in April, vandals defaced some 135 tombstones at the Jewish cemetery in Košice, causing $35,000 worth of damage. Police later traced the act to three schoolboys, aged 10–12, who could not be charged because of their youth.

In September, the government approved creation of a fund to compensate Holocaust victims who suffered under the Slovak wartime state. Prime Minister Dzurinda and Fero Alexander, executive chairman of the Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities, signed the agreement in October. Under the accord, the government allocated the equivalent of nearly $20 million to the fund, which, with its accrued interest, would be transferred to the union after ten years. A commission made up of four Jewish and three government representatives was to decide on distribution of the money.

There were about 4,000 Jews in Slovakia’s 13 Jewish communities. The two main communities were Bratislava and Košice, each with several hundred members.

In July, the underground mausoleum of the revered 19th-century sage Chatam Sofer was reopened after renovation. President Schuster attended the ceremony, along with members of the Slovak government and Jewish representatives. The work was carried out through the efforts of the Bratislava Jewish community, city officials, and the New York-based International Committee for the Preservation of the Gravesites of the Sages of Bratislava.

There were a number of commemorative events during the year. In March, ceremonies marked the 60th anniversary of the first Slovak transport to Auschwitz—March 25, 1942, when 1,000 young women were taken by train from Poprad. The Central Union of Slovak Jews used the occasion to warn against the spread of Holocaust denial. It issued a statement saying, “The number of those who demonstratively dismiss the existence of the Holocaust is growing, despite the large number of witnesses, historical records, archives, films, newspapers, and mass graves.” This denial, it said, represented “a continuation of the Holocaust. Dead Jews cannot be killed again, the last thing that can be taken from them is the almost forgotten shadow of their former existence.”
In June, Slovakia’s ambassador to the U.S., Martin Butora, received the American Jewish Committee’s Celebration of Freedom Award. The AJC said it was honoring Butora, a sociologist, for advancing freedom in the Slovak Republic and for working to “preserve and protect the surviving Jewish community in Slovakia, preserving Jewish landmarks, reestablishing institutions of Jewish education, and strengthening relations with Israel.” In November, Slovak director Matej Minac received an International Emmy in New York for his documentary film, Nicholas Winton—The Power of Good, which told the story of an English man, now aged 93, who, in 1939, save 669 Czechoslovak Jewish children.

Slovenia

Jewish leaders estimated that approximately 400 Jews lived in Slovenia, about 130 of whom were members of the Jewish community. Chabad rabbi Ariel Haddad, director of the Jewish museum in Trieste, Italy—about an hour’s drive from Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital—served as Slovenia’s rabbi, traveling to Ljubljana about once a month. Other rabbis and lecturers were also invited from time to time. During the year, the community, with financing from the JDC and the local government, published a lavishly illustrated Passover Haggadah, fully translated into Slovenian. This was the first book ever published in Hebrew in Slovenia, and proceeds from its sale were going to finance the creation of a synagogue in Ljubljana, the only European capital beside Tirana (Albania) that did not have one.

In October, scholars from Europe, North America, and Israel attended an international conference on anti-Semitism in the Balkans, held at the lakeside town of Bled. Topics included contemporary ethnic conflicts and their relevance to anti-Semitism; Holocaust denial and historical revisionism; anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism in public discourse; the survival and perpetuation of common anti-Jewish stereotypes in Balkan folklore, literature, and art; and the connection between the State of Israel, the status of local Jewry, and the evolution of anti-Semitism.

Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)

Yugoslavia’s economic situation was still disastrous, though significantly improved since the ouster of President Slobodan Milosevic in 2000. Inflation had dropped from 125 percent to an estimated 15 percent,
and the average monthly wage had risen from 35–40 euros a week to 160. The unemployment rate, however, was still around 50 percent.

In the spring, under a deal brokered by the European Union, Yugoslavia's two constituent republics, Serbia and tiny Montenegro, agreed to transform their relationship into a looser union under which each would exercise almost sovereign authority. Steps to attain this end were taken during the year.

In the fall, Serbians and Montenegrins tried unsuccessfully to elect new presidents. In Serbia, neither Yugoslav president Vojislav Kostunica nor his main opponent, Miroljub Labus, received enough votes in either the first round of voting or the runoff. The pro-Western Labus was backed by Kostunica's bitter rival, Serbian prime minister Zoran Djindjic.

Jews worried about manifestations of anti-Semitism. In February, after protests by Israel and the Yugoslav foreign minister, the synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church condemned anti-Semitic remarks made by a retired Orthodox priest in a New Year's broadcast. In May, vandals marked up the walls of the entrance to the Jewish community offices in Novi Sad with the Star of David, swastikas, and the slogan "Free Palestine," and left feces on the floor. In the summer, after receiving threats, the Jewish community in Zemun installed a new security door. The Jewish cemetery in Belgrade was desecrated in August. During the electoral campaign in the fall, graffiti appeared saying that both candidates were Jewish. In December, the Serbian minister of religion named Davor Salom, secretary of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia, to the consultative council of the ministry.

In March, Serbian prime minister Djindjic, accompanied by the minister of religion, visited the historic synagogue in Subotica, on the Hungarian border. He met there with leaders of the 225-member Jewish community and with members of the board of a new foundation aimed at restoring and reviving the synagogue. He pledged support for these efforts as a symbol of tolerance and multiculturalism. This was Djindjic's first visit as prime minister to a Jewish community, and it coincided with celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the Subotica Jewish Women's Association. Guests of honor included Princess Katarina—wife of Crown Prince Alexander of Yugoslavia, the pretender to the Serbian throne—and June Jacobs, the outgoing president of the International Council of Jewish Women. The Subotica community was the third largest of Yugoslavia's ten Jewish communities. Only Belgrade, with more than 1,800 members, and Novi Sad, with 600, were bigger. This year, after
a hiatus of several decades, a Jewish community was formally reestablished in the town of Kikinda, about 100 km north of Belgrade. Consisting of 42 members, it was admitted as a member of the Federation of Jewish Communities in December.

Yugoslavia’s 3,000-or-so Jews were highly integrated into the broader society, mostly secular, and often intermarried. Leaders of the federation urged members to identify as Jews in the national census. In February, nearly 200 Jews from the various parts of former Yugoslavia met for the “Sholet-2002” gathering in Novi Sad, and in June about 200 young people took part in a Maccabee games competition near Zrenjanin. In the summer, ten members of the 45-member community in Nis began a program to visit all the other communities in the country. Their program was based on the insight that “since nobody comes to visit us, we will go and visit everyone else.”

Yugoslavia had just one active rabbi, Belgrade-based Yitzhak Asiel. Stevan Lanyi (Ezra ben Jitzhok), a Subotica community member studying at the Rabbinical Seminary of the Jewish University in Budapest, served as religious leader in Subotica and also traveled to other nearby communities. He published a prayer book and Jewish calendar. In May, he began celebrating holiday services in the Subotica Synagogue rather than the smaller community prayer room, which had been used previously. Lanyi led the first communal seder in many years in Zrenjanin. In the town of Zemun, outside Belgrade, about 70 people attended the first communal seder since World War II. In addition, Stefan Sablic served as a cantor in Serbia, and once a month in Skopje, Macedonia. The religious activities of Asiel, Lanyi, and Sablic were subsidized by the JDC. The Italian government financed the reconstruction of a social hall and dining area for the kosher kitchen built under the Belgrade synagogue.

Subotica’s Jewish lay leadership was very active, sponsoring a number of civic, religious, educational, and social-welfare activities. But the community, wracked by internal divisions, was also in conflict with the Federation of Jewish Communities. In snap elections in the spring, the community ousted its president, Tomas Halbrohr (who lived part-time in Subotica and part-time in Budapest), and elected a new team headed by activist lawyer Mira Poljakovic. The federation, however, said that the conduct of the election violated its bylaws, and recognized both presidents as members of its board. A community faction backing the ousted leadership accused the new leaders of discrimination and misuse of power. Critics said the community bylaws were undemocratic in that, among other flaws, they did not provide for a secret ballot and they man-
dated criteria for community president that excluded the majority of members. In November, the Subotica community adopted new bylaws mandating secret balloting.

There were numerous Jewish cultural and commemorative events in Serbia, including lectures, performances, seminars, publications, and courses. In March, some 130 students from Europe, Israel, and the countries of the former Yugoslavia attended a five-day international Jewish seminar in Belgrade. Stefan Sablic, the cantor in Belgrade, performed during the year with his Jewish music group Shira Utfila. Sablic also directed the production of a play, *Visiting Mr. Green*, by the American playwright Jeff Baron and starring two Jewish actors. The play treated the evolution of a friendship between a timid, anguished Jewish homosexual and a lonely, old Jewish man who resists all contact with the outside world. It premiered at the Beyahad gathering in Croatia in September, and afterward became a huge hit at one of the top theaters in Belgrade.

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
Russia's economic and political evolution was marked by contradictory tendencies during the year. For the first time since the fall of communism, in the second quarter of 2002 more capital flowed into the country than out of it. President Vladimir Putin offered to allow repatriation of funds at low tax rates and with no questions asked, but the positive trend was probably due more to growing confidence in the economy. That confidence, in turn, stemmed from apparent political stability as well as Russia's ability to produce large amounts of petroleum for export at a time of uncertainty in the Middle East. By February, the Russian Federation was the world's largest oil producer, outstripping even Saudi Arabia, as huge Russian companies such as Yukos and Lukoil purchased companies in neighboring countries. However, the state continued to play a major role in the oil industry, as all crude oil leaving Russia passed through a state-owned pipeline to which the government assigned quotas for access.

On the other hand, many Western analysts pointed out ongoing weaknesses in the Russian economy. Wealth was highly concentrated, and small businesses continued to struggle against excessive government regulation, corruption, and onerous taxation. Eight large business groups were said to control 85 percent of the revenue from Russia's 64 largest private companies. World Bank figures showed that while small businesses in the United States produced 60 percent of the country's total economic output, in Russia they generated only 20 percent. In June, the Duma, the lower house of the national legislature, finally passed a law—by a very narrow margin—legalizing the sale and purchase of agricultural land, facilitating the long-postponed privatization of agriculture. But upon the insistence of communists and nationalists, the law forbade the sale of land to foreigners.

In the political arena there were contradictory tendencies as well. A new legal code, enacted in June, codified the principle of habeas corpus, for the most part eliminated double jeopardy, and gave suspects the right to demand a lawyer from the moment of their arrest. Going against years of Russian and Soviet precedent, the new code enshrined the presump-
tion of innocence, strengthened the position of defense attorneys, and somewhat diminished the powers of the prosecutors, which had previously been far greater than those of defense lawyers. The Duma also passed a law that, for the first time, allowed certain restricted categories of conscientious objectors to apply for alternatives to military service. An estimated 10 percent of those eligible for the draft evaded it, and the Russian army continued to be plagued by desertions, suicides, and murders, many caused by very harsh conditions and the mistreatment of subordinates by superiors.

Political murders continued to occur with alarming frequency. Parliamentary deputies—Vladimir Golovlyov, for instance—were assassinated, as were investigative reporters such as Valery Ivanov, who had been investigating organized crime in Togliatti, and law enforcement officials such as General Vitaly Gamov of the border guards, who tried to bring law and order to the Pacific Ocean fishing industry.

Western observers and Russian democrats were troubled by the continuing extension of state control over the mass media. The Moscow Higher Arbitration Court ordered the dissolution of T-6, an independent national television network controlled by Boris Berezovsky from London, where he was living in self-imposed exile. Berezovsky, one of the “oligarchs” who had prospered under former president Boris Yeltsin, continued his criticism of the Putin government, releasing a tape in which he made his case. Berezovsky claimed that the September 1999 explosions in apartment buildings in several Russian cities were caused not by Chechens, as the government claimed, but by the Russian security services themselves, and pointed out that the Duma had, in March 2000, rejected a call for an inquiry into the explosions. Berezovsky did admit that he had given $2 million to Shamil Basayev, then president of Chechnya, in 1997, ostensibly to repair a cement plant, and that he had negotiated the release of kidnapped people in Chechnya.

The closing of TV-6 left two of the three major national networks firmly under state control, and the third run by a state-controlled monopoly. Earlier, in the summer of 2001, the independent network NTV, owned by former “oligarch” and Jewish leader Vladimir Gusinsky, had been shut down when it could not pay its debts to Gazprom, the state-owned natural gas monopoly (see AJYB 2002, p. 481). Gusinsky, like Berezovsky a political enemy of President Putin, also remained outside the country, fearing rearrest. In October, the government rescinded Boris Yeltsin's 1991 decree allowing Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty to broadcast from Russia.
The breakaway region of Chechnya remained intractable. Chechen and Russian military forces continued their war there, with about 85,000 Russian troops deployed. Official government figures released early in the year admitted to 3,500 Russian dead since the fighting was renewed in October 1999, and claimed that between 10,000 and 13,000 Chechens had died in the conflict. Many observers considered these figures understated. On May 9, the anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, Chechens killed 41 parade-watchers, including 17 children, in the Russian city of Kaspiisk. In August, an overloaded Mi-26 Russian helicopter, designed to carry cargo, was shot down in Chechnya, and 118 Russian soldiers aboard were killed—about the same number lost in the sinking of the Kursk submarine in 2000. Putin sharply criticized the military for violating a 1997 ban on using the helicopters for troop transport.

The Russian government claimed that Chechen and foreign Muslim fighters were taking shelter in the Pankisi Gorge, a valley in the mountainous region between Russia and Georgia. Russian planes bombed the area, drawing protests from Georgians against what they saw as violation of Georgian airspace. Russia responded by accusing Georgia of harboring terrorists. In September, President Putin threatened to launch military strikes against Chechens who fled to Georgia. This set up a potential conflict with the U.S., which had sent a small contingent of specialists to train Georgian forces.

Aside from the ongoing conflict in Chechnya, another point of social tension was the conflict between the Russian Orthodox Church, which increasingly saw itself as the guardian of Russian values and identity, and the minority Catholic Church. When the latter announced that it was dividing the Russian Federation into four new dioceses serving a total of some 1.3 million Catholics, the Orthodox Church denounced this as an "unfriendly act," and reentry visas were denied to Catholic priests who had left Russia on short visits abroad. Though Pope John Paul II had traveled widely around the world, especially in former communist states, he had never been invited to visit Russia, and Orthodox leaders made quite clear that he was not welcome.

President Putin met with U.S. president George W. Bush in May. They signed a treaty cutting the American and Russian nuclear arsenals by two-thirds over the next decade and agreed to cooperate on developing an antimissile defense. In June, the United States officially recognized Russia as a market economy, facilitating Russian exports to the U.S.

At a meeting of its 19 member states, NATO agreed to allow Russia to participate in the organization’s discussions of specific topics, such as nu-
clear nonproliferation, crisis management, missile defense, and counterterrorism. But NATO did not grant Russia membership, leaving the country outside its collective defense pact.

Ukraine held parliamentary elections in the spring. Though President Leonid Kuchma, elected to a five-year term in 1999, came under mounting public criticism, his party, For a United Ukraine, won a plurality in the Rada (parliament) largely because independent regional candidates agreed to support him and his policies. In September, however, thousands protested in Kiev against Kuchma’s rule, which they called corrupt and inefficient. Kuchma was accused of arranging murders of political opponents and, most recently, of selling Kolchuga advanced radar systems to Iraq against the explicit wishes of the United States, even though Ukraine was the third largest recipient of American foreign aid. Moreover, several disasters had occurred in 2001–02, including the shooting down by Ukrainian forces of a Russian airliner bound from Israel to Siberia; a crash at an air show in Lviv that killed 23 children and 53 adults; and a coal mine explosion in July 2001 that killed 35.

Israel and the Middle East

To some extent, the congruence between Russia’s problems in Chechnya and Israel’s struggle against Palestinian terrorism brought the two countries together. In March, Israel and Russia signed an agreement on jointly combating terrorism and organized crime. On June 11, Israel extradited Andrei Zhuravlev, an Israeli citizen, to Russia, where he was charged with murder and other serious crimes committed in 1995–98, before he emigrated to Israel. The extradition was an unprecedented move by Israel, heralding a new level of cooperation between the law enforcement agencies of the two countries.

Israel’s military advance into Palestinian territory in the spring met with Russian disapproval, but this did not even approach the level of anti-Israel feeling manifested elsewhere in Europe. In April, the Duma adopted a nonbinding resolution condemning Israeli policies in the Territories and threatening Israel with economic sanctions. The Russian Foreign Ministry protested Israel’s storming of a hostel owned by the Russian Orthodox Church. Catholicos Garegin II, head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, expressed “extreme concern” about the situation and called on Israel to return Armenian church properties seized on the West Bank. Demonstrations criticizing Israel were held at the American and Israeli embassies in Baku, capital of Azerbaijan.
The atmosphere was quite different in September, when Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon spent two days in Moscow seeking to dissuade Russian leaders from cooperating with Iraq and Iran, whose policies Israel saw as inimical to its interests. President Putin used the occasion to praise Israel for fighting terrorism, and welcomed the ending of the siege that had kept Yasir Arafat confined to his compound in Ramallah.

Anti-Semitism

According to the Anti-Defamation League, the number of anti-Semitic incidents in Russia during 2002 roughly matched the number for 2001. There were some violent attacks and a number of worrisome political developments.

The most dramatic incident of violence occurred on May 27, near Moscow, when a 28-year-old woman, Tatyana Sapunova, was driving a car and saw a sign reading “Death to the Kikes [zhidy]” along the highway. She tried to remove it, triggering an explosion that caused her serious burns. Sapunova, who had a Jewish grandfather but was not raised as a Jew, was treated in Israel for her injuries. Yuri Chaika, the Russian minister of justice, condemned the act and said it must be “severely punished.” President Putin met with Sapunova on July 25 and remarked, “If we let this bacillus of chauvinism and national or religious intolerance develop, we will ruin our country.” There were at least seven other incidents similar to the Sapunova case, except that most of the explosive devices were fakes. In July, a box with an anti-Semitic slogan was found near the entrance to a maternity hospital and, in another incident, a pipe bomb bearing the slogan “Death to the Kikes” was thrown on to the balcony of a Moscow apartment where it exploded.

At least nine cases of vandalism of Jewish cemeteries and synagogues took place in 2002. The police, however, found few of the perpetrators, and classified the incidents as “hooliganism” rather than hate crimes, which were punishable under Russian law. In Volgograd and Taganrog buildings housing Jewish organizations were defaced, and, in November, guards at a Jewish school in Volgograd had to beat off a group of men armed with metal pipes. Ten-ruble notes were said to be circulating in Moscow, the phrase “Moscow without Kikes” carefully typewritten on both sides. Officials declared the bills still legal tender, and there was no way to stop their circulation or find out who was spreading them.

In September, the Russian Ministry of Justice registered a new political party called the National Great Power Party of Russia despite its open
and radical anti-Semitism. The party's official Web site included the slogan, "Not an ounce of power to the Kikes." Its cochairman, Boris Mironov, had been ousted in 1994 from his post as government press minister for anti-Semitic behavior. Another party leader, Viktor Korshagin, directed a publishing house that had issued several editions of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Another extremist faction, the People's National Party, had been registered in 1994 and claimed 10,000 members nationwide. It called for stripping citizenship from "persons who are not ethnically Russian or not members of the Orthodox faith," and for deporting all foreigners.

Jewish and other ethnic minority leaders pressed for criminal charges to be filed against the Russian Orthodox Church for permitting the sale of anti-Semitic literature, including the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, on church premises in Ekaterinburg and other cities.

A Jewish former army officer turned businessman, Vladimir Brikker, ran for the mayoralty of Dzerzhinsk, but was subjected to a great deal of anti-Semitic propaganda. Similar incidents were reported about electoral campaigns in Nizhny Novgorod, Saratov, and elsewhere.

Problems persisted elsewhere in the former Soviet Union as well. In Ukraine, police arrested eight young soccer fans who, following a Saturday game in April, smashed windows in a Kiev synagogue and, according to the rabbi, attacked worshipers and badly beat a Jewish-studies teacher. Police did not arrive until 20–30 minutes after the incident began. In Belarus, vandals desecrated cemeteries in Minsk, Borisov, and Vitebsk, and anti-Semitic graffiti appeared in six cities. President Aleksandr Lukashenka called the cemetery desecrations "a commonplace hooligan action" and denied charges by Jewish activists that anti-Semitism was growing in Belarus. The deputy chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the Belarussian Chamber of Representatives told a newspaper on November 25 that he favored a halt to the reconstruction of destroyed synagogues in Minsk. He declared his opposition to Jewish protestors who wanted to "turn Belarus into a springboard of Zionism," as they already had allegedly done to "Moscow." "America is an absolutely Zionist-fascist state and now they want to do this in Belarus," he said. "That is why I do not give a damn about these synagogues. I do not care about them just as Ariel Sharon does not care about mosques or Palestinian children."

In June, the Russian Duma adopted its third and final reading of a controversial bill on combating extremism. Defining extremism as any action that used force or other illegal means to impede the functioning of the
federal authorities, the bill prohibited “extremist activity” and organizations recognized by a court as “extremist.” Some human-rights activists expressed concern that the bill could be used to suppress protest since it also banned “inciting social animosity.” A month after the bill’s passage a Moscow city court ruled that the newspaper Russkie Vedomosti, which claimed a circulation of 10,000, should be shut down because it was publishing extremist, nationalist, and anti-Semitic materials. The paper had already received two warnings. Despite the new law, attacks by skinheads on foreigners, people from the Caucasus, and others went on. Officials in St. Petersburg estimated that there were more than 2,000 skinheads in that city alone.

Holocaust-Related Developments

There were a number of developments in Estonia during 2002 regarding the Holocaust. The Estonian government designated January 27, the day in 1945 that Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by the Red Army, a day of remembrance of the Holocaust and other crimes against humanity. A commission established by President Lennart Meri concluded that the 36th Estonian Police Battalion that collaborated with the Nazis during World War II played a role in the massacre of Jews in Nowogrudek (Poland/Belarus) in 1942. City officials in Parnu ordered the redesign of a privately funded monument featuring a soldier clad in a Waffen-SS uniform. Prime Minister Siim Kallas had condemned the monument, which also depicted a gun pointing eastward towards Russia.

Efraim Zuroff, director of the Jerusalem office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, offered $10,000 for information leading to the trial and conviction of Nazi war criminals living in the Baltic states. The center claimed that 17 residents had already come forth with 51 names of such criminals, 47 of them living in Lithuania. Twelve were known to have died. Some questioned the legality of Zuroff’s advertisements in local newspapers and others criticized the idea of offering bounties.

In western Ukraine, authorities in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk recognized 24 veterans of the SS Halychyna (Galicia) division as participants in the struggle for an independent Ukraine. Over 80,000 men had volunteered for the division. These veterans living in Ivano-Frankivsk, most of them disabled after being imprisoned in the Soviet gulag, were now entitled to an increase in their pensions and other benefits. Both Russian and Jewish organizations protested the authorities’ decision.

Also in Ukraine, the school program “Lessons of the Holocaust and
Tolerance in Ukrainian Schools" entered its third year. It was sponsored by the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine, the Center for Jewish Education, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, the Claims Conference, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The teachers' seminars that were part of the program drew participants from eight of Ukraine’s 25 regions.

The American branch of the Wiesenthal Center urged the Belarussian government to ask for the extradition of 79-year-old Michael Gorshkow from the U.S. on the grounds that, as a Gestapo interpreter, he had been directly involved in the mass killings of the Jews of Minsk.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Emigration

There was a sharp downturn in 2002 in the emigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union. This was due to the improvement of the Russian economy, the escalating violence in and around Israel, and tightened restrictions on immigration imposed by the United States in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001. Only 2,486 Jews from the FSU arrived in the U.S. in 2002, far less than the 4,978 who arrived the previous year. Whereas nearly 51,000 had immigrated to Israel in 2000 and 34,000 in 2001, only about 18,500 did so in 2002. For the first time, the number of Soviet Jewish immigrants to Germany—about 19,000—surpassed the number resettling in Israel.

In 2000, 2,700 people had left Birobidzhan, the “Jewish Autonomous Oblast” in Russia, for Israel. In 2001, only 250 did so, and 110 former emigrants returned from Israel to Birobidzhan. All told, in 2002 over 1,600 immigrants to Israel returned to the Russian Federation, and others returned to Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine.

Israeli media reported estimates that some 270,000 immigrants from the FSU were not Jewish according to Halakhah, Jewish law. Of those who arrived in Israel in 2002, some 70 percent were not Jewish according to this traditional definition. About 100 of these non-Jewish immigrants formed a small new organization, the Slav Union of Israel.

Communal Affairs

During the year, the Russian Jewish Congress organized demonstrations in Moscow and 14 other cities against anti-Semitism and terrorism,
and in support of Israel. It also withdrew its financial support from the Mezhdunarodnaya Evreiskaya Gazeta (International Jewish Newspaper), edited by veteran journalist Tankred Golenpolsky, and announced plans to publish another newspaper, Evreiskie Novosti (Jewish News).

Jewish organizations continued to proliferate and compete with each other. The Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, dominated by the Chabad-Lubavitch Hassidic movement, held its national congress in Moscow. About 400 delegates from 143 Jewish communities attended. The president of the federation was Mikhail Gluz, a former theater director, and its executive director was historian Valery Engel. Both had been active in the revival of Jewish culture in the early 1990s. Minister of Culture Mikhail Shvidkoi and Israeli ambassador Natan Meron attended the congress, as did a representative of President Putin.

A new Jewish group, the Association of Jewish Public Organizations, was established in Moscow in October by Chabad-affiliated people who felt excluded from the Conference of Leaders of Jewish Organizations, the latter reportedly affiliated with the Russian Jewish Congress and associated with Mikhail Fridman, head of the Alfa Group, one of the major business conglomerates in Russia. As a Jewish communal activist from Orenburg stated at the founding meeting of the association, “I’m here because my organization is poor,” implying that he hoped to get funding for local activities from the new body.

Another founding meeting, this of the World Congress of Russian-Speaking Jews, took place in Moscow over two days, and then continued in Jerusalem for another two days. Rabbi Berel Lazar, the Chabad leader recognized by President Putin as the spokesman for Russian Jewry, and Valery Engel spearheaded this meeting. They announced plans to open schools for Russian-speaking children in a number of countries and to publish Russian-language texts and magazines dealing with Jewish history, culture, and contemporary issues.

Finally, a Euro-Asian Jewish Congress announced its formation in April with a celebratory banquet at a luxury Moscow hotel. Its head was Aleksandr Machkevich, a Jewish businessman based in Kazakhstan.

On Lithuania’s national independence day in February, the state honored the 4,000 Jews who “voluntarily defended” Lithuania during its struggle for independence, 1918–23. The names of 60 of them who had died in combat were inscribed on new plaques in the restored Jewish museum in the capital city of Vilnius. The Lithuanian Ministry of Defense contributed $3,000 to the memorial.
Religion

The Chabad-Lubavitch Hassidic group continued to make great strides in establishing its influence during 2002. Just before Passover, President Putin met in the Kremlin with 21 Chabad rabbis and, according to them, voiced his gratitude for "the Jews' contribution to Russian society," praised the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, and sent holiday greetings to Russian Jewry. Putin also thanked the Chabad movement for its support in seeking repeal, in the U.S. Congress, of the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment. The argument for repeal was that emigration was now a freely available option, so that the amendment, no longer needed, only impeded Russian trade with the U.S. Among those who attended the meeting were Rabbi Berel Lazar, the Chabad "chief rabbi" of Russia, and Lev Leviev, a very wealthy diamond merchant born in Uzbekistan, who was a major funder of Chabad activities in the FSU. The Russian newspaper Kommersant (Mar. 20) reported that one decision reached at the meeting was that the Russian Jewish community would seek to establish close ties with Jews who had emigrated from the country.

Further evidence of Chabad's clout was the visit by President George W. Bush to the Chabad-run synagogue in St. Petersburg, where he stayed half an hour longer than scheduled and expressed satisfaction with the end of officially sanctioned Russian anti-Semitism. Bush's visit, which came during a summit meeting with President Putin, was seen as further cementing the relationship between Chabad and the Russian president.

In testimony to the U.S. Congress on March 7, Lawrence Uzell, director of the Keston Institute in England, specializing in the study of religion in former communist countries, decried the close relationship of the Putin administration to only one branch of Russian Jewry, Chabad. He claimed that the governor of Omsk, in Siberia, had approached members of a local synagogue board and asked them to switch their affiliation to the Chabad-controlled Federation of Jewish Communities so that regional government subsidies would follow.

The Reform movement claimed 110 affiliated groups in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, 54 of them officially registered in Russia, and some 5,000–10,000 people identifying with the movement. The Institute for Modern Jewish Studies in Moscow, affiliated with Reform, was said to be training 15 students in its one-year program for Jewish communal service, including nine women. Most of these students were not born Jewish according to Halakhah, and planned to convert to Judaism after com-
pleting their studies. The Reform movement was also building a new Jewish school in Lviv, western Ukraine, renovating a synagogue building in Evpatoria, Crimea, and registering a community in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

In Kostroma, Russia, a synagogue the Soviet government had seized in the 1930s was returned to the Jewish community. In Minsk, Belarus, about 30 demonstrators mounted a public demonstration demanding the reconstruction of a synagogue built in 1897 in the center of the city, and included in the Nazi-constructed ghetto during World War II. The synagogue was torn down in 2001 and a large apartment building constructed in its place.

Also in Belarus, a coalition of Uniate, Protestant, Jewish, and human-rights groups called on the legislature to reject a bill placing restrictions on small denominations that was meant to insure the domination of the Russian Orthodox Church. The bill banned publications, missionary work, and public prayer by religious groups having fewer than 20 Belarusian citizens as members, and forbade foreign citizens from leading religious organizations in Belarus.

In February, the Lithuanian government handed over 307 Torah scrolls that had been looted by the Nazis to an Israeli delegation. During Stalin's reign, Antanas Ulais, a Lithuanian archivist, had defied government orders to destroy the scrolls and hid them in St. George's Church. Negotiations to release the scrolls had dragged out over six years. Of those saved, 13 scrolls did not go to Israel but were kept in Lithuania as part of the national patrimony.

**Jewish Culture**

The Russian State Library ("Lenin Library") opened a small Jewish reading room. The library had about 40,000 books in Hebrew; 20,000 in Yiddish; and others in Aramaic, Arabic, Ladino, and other European languages. The Baron David Ginsburg collection included 7,000 books, 2,000 manuscripts, and the third largest collection of incunabula in the world (only the Jewish National and Hebrew University Library and the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York had more).

The Jewish Agency opened a School of Judaica, with free tuition, in Moscow for upper-grade high school and university students. Fifteen high school seniors began the course, which featured eight-day intensive seminars.

The Association of Jewish Principals and Schools of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic Republics held its 13th na-
tional seminar in Moscow in October. The group had a membership of 44 schools, and 39 principals attended the seminar. The association produced curricula for the study of Hebrew, Jewish history, and tradition, and also organized regular seminars for master teachers of Judaic subjects and for teachers and administrators in charge of Jewish studies, some of whom were sent to study for a time in Israel. It also held an in-service seminar in Moscow in June that was attended by 114 teachers from 31 cities. The Ohr Avner foundation, based in Israel, also opened a Jewish studies teacher-training institute in Moscow.

By the end of the year, nearly 1,600 young Jews from the FSU had visited Israel as part of Operation Birthright. The cost of the trips was partially funded by Lev Leviev.

Plans were announced in April to rebuild parts of the World War II ghetto area in Vilnius. Private firms would be given land on which to build, and they would fund the reconstruction and get rights to commercial use. However, they would turn over a third of the space to the municipal authorities, who would, in turn, give it to the Jewish Cultural Fund. Cost of the project was estimated at $78 million.

A small monument to the great Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem was unveiled in Moscow. It stood not far from the site of the former State Yiddish Theater, where many of his works had been performed.

Zvi Gitelman