

Netherlands

National Affairs

IMMIGRATION AND DEMOGRAPHY

Always a densely populated country, the Netherlands had a population of over 16 million with a national average of 483 inhabitants per km². Beginning in 2001 calls began to be heard urging limits on immigration. These derived from a perceived threat to Western values from the growing number of Islamic newcomers.

More stringent immigration policies adopted over the next few years began to be felt in 2006, as the country's population grew by less than 2,000 over the course of the year. From April through June it even dropped slightly, the first quarter with a population decline since the government began keeping such statistics. The Netherlands was the only EU country to have more people leave than enter it, and its negative immigration balance—27,000 for 2005 and 19,000 for the first half of 2006—was the largest in Europe.

Tough policies against non-Western immigrants dominated the news. Immigration Minister Rita Verdonk, a.k.a. "Iron Rita," was repeatedly criticized for a string of actions that many deemed inhumane.

In April, left-wing opposition parties demanded Verdonk's resignation for endangering the lives of unsuccessful Syrian asylum seekers by informing the Syrian government about their imminent return, and informing the Dutch parliament about this fact. Shortly after the "Syrian incident," Verdonk sought forcibly to return Iranian asylum seekers who risked being persecuted or even killed by the Islamic regime for being homosexuals or converts to Christianity. She reversed this decision only after pressure from all but one of the parties represented in parliament. And on April 28, in the face of a public outcry, an 18-year-old Serbian, Taida Pasic, was deported back to Kosovo just weeks before her Dutch high school exams. Taida had been in the country since 1999. (In May, she passed her exams in the Dutch embassy in Sarajevo.)

In June, the government fell over Verdonk's treatment of Somali-born Ayaan Hirsi Ali, an MP for Verdonk's own party, VVD. Hirsi Ali was a well-known critic of fundamentalist Islam and had been living in safe-houses, under constant police surveillance, after receiving death threats

(see AJBY 2005, pp. 367–69). Verdonk wrote a letter to Hirsi Ali in May questioning her Dutch citizenship; apparently Hirsi Ali had given a false surname and date of birth on entering the country in 1992. Hirsi Ali responded to the letter by instantly resigning from parliament in a dramatic press conference on May 15, and moving to the U.S. Several nightly debates later, D66, a party in the ruling coalition, quit the cabinet over Verdonk's action, and the government lost its majority.

Verdonk stayed on as minister in the caretaker government, unlike her colleagues Justice Minister Piet Hein Donner and Housing Minister Sybilla Dekker, who resigned on September 21 over fallout from yet another immigration drama, the Schiphol prison fire of 2005 (see AJBY 2006, p. 374). According to an official report issued in 2006, 11 unwanted immigrants awaiting expulsion died and another 15 were severely injured “unnecessarily.” The victims, including children imprisoned along with their parents, perished because they were locked up in detention cells when the fire broke out.

Even in December, with the caretaker government including Verdonk still in place, bitter strife over immigration issues continued. Parliament approved a motion to suspend the deportation of 26,000 unsuccessful asylum seekers who had been living in the Netherlands for over five years, pending a general pardon (most other countries, including the U.S., had procedures for legalizing longstanding undocumented immigrants). But the government said it would ignore the motion and proceed with the deportations. During the debate that followed, Verdonk further enraged the majority of MPs by announcing that, whatever points were raised, she would continue deporting these people. Although now forced to relinquish the immigration portfolio, Verdonk stayed on in the cabinet.

POLITICS AND SOCIETY

Elections were held in March for local city councils. PvdA (Labor) and the Socialist Party enhanced their representation. The PvdA won the largest number of combined council seats, 1,988, and the SP garnered 333, more than double its previous number. The Christian Democrats (CDA) and the Liberal VVD, both government parties, were the big losers.

The VVD dominated the news in May, first with the Hirsi Ali incident (see above) and then with an abortive attempt by Rita Verdonk to seize the leadership of the party from its chairman, Mark Rutte, an action described in the media as a “failed coup.” The government, as noted above, subsequently fell over the Hirsi Ali issue.

In the November elections, all three government parties lost parliamentary seats to small left-wing and right-wing parties, but the possibilities of forming a coalition different from the old one were slim. The Christian Democrats, whose leader, Jan Pieter Balkenende, headed the previous government, remained the largest party despite its losses. Any combination of CDA with either Labor (PvdA) or the Liberals (VVD) would need a third party to ensure a parliamentary majority, but both of those former government parties excluded cooperation with one or more of the smaller parties. The year ended with the old cabinet still in place.

Interethnic tensions, especially hooliganism at soccer matches, presented an ongoing problem. The followers of Ajax, the popular Amsterdam-based club, continued to be called "the Jews" both by their own fans and those of rival teams: Ajax enthusiasts brandished Israeli flags and decorated themselves with Jewish symbols, while the other side countered with anti-Semitic slogans. In February, a gang of 70 Ajax fans attacked the clubhouse of ADO—a team based in The Hague whose following included rabid neo-Nazis—forced their way in, beat up the eight ADO fans present with bats, stabbed one of them with a sharp instrument, and set fire to the building. Five fans were hospitalized.

A fight broke out on July 29 during a soccer match between Maccabi Tel Aviv and the local team of Den Helder. Four Dutch supporters raised a Palestinian flag and refused to remove it. Maccabi Tel Aviv fans then stormed them, and the match had to be delayed several minutes while order was restored.

On December 10, Ajax spokesman David Endt announced plans to ban Jewish symbols and the fans' favorite war cry, "Jews," from the stadium. Ajax players were to visit schools "to put an end to the Jewish image." Meanwhile, the country's Internet-discrimination watchdog filed a claim against the author of a sports blog who described the only two Jews recently associated with Ajax ("the Jew Jaap van Praag and the Jew Sjaak Swart") using anti-Jewish stereotypes.

In March, nine out of 14 suspected members of the Islamic "Hofstad" terror group received stiff prison terms, the highest being 15 years. These were the first sentences for belonging to a terror organization since the introduction of new antiterrorist laws. The group's leader, Mohammed Bouyeri, had already been jailed for life in 2005 for murdering filmmaker Theo van Gogh a year earlier (see AJYB 2006, p. 374).

The Dutch economy, which had performed worse than that of any other European country in 2005, improved markedly in 2006, ending a five-year period of weakness. The upturn, part of a general revival of the

European economy, was characterized by a strong expansion of sales to Asian markets.

Israel and the Middle East: The War in Lebanon

Israel, always prominent in the Dutch media, virtually dominated the news during the summer as its troops fought against Hezbollah in Lebanon. Initial reports were sympathetic to Israel, focusing on the sufferings of the residents of northern Israel under Hezbollah attacks and on the plight of the families of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers. But it did not take long for the words "disproportionate violence" to creep in. As early as July 11, the Christian daily *Trouw*, not known as a particularly anti-Israel paper, carried a cartoon showing an Arab woman with a child being threatened by heavily armed IDF troops claiming, "We only want our corporal back." On July 15, a few dozen demonstrators carrying Palestinian and Lebanese flags chanted slogans such as "Boycott Israel" and "Israel child murderer" in front of the government buildings in The Hague. The next day Foreign Minister Bernard Bot, a Christian Democrat, told his Israeli counterpart Tzipi Livni in a telephone conversation that it was becoming increasingly difficult "to show some understanding as the number of civilian victims grew."

Many Dutch Jews were on holiday or visiting family in Israel when the war broke out. Nevertheless, the Jewish community rallied round the Jewish state, fund-raising for organizations such as Magen David Adom and organizing aid for residents of northern Israel who were under rocket fire. Special prayer meetings were held for Israel and for the kidnapped soldiers, and the rabbinate called on everyone to add two psalms and a special prayer for Israel to their daily prayers.

Eleven members of the Jewish youth group Habonim left for their yearly Israel trip on July 16. Two days later 40 Jewish and Christian organizations held a rally "to show our solidarity with the people of Israel and support Israel's right to defend itself." Some 1,200 people attended, and the speakers included Rabbi Michael Melchior, a member of the Knesset. In November, Dutch Jews joined a demonstration in front of the European Parliament buildings in Brussels, Belgium, in solidarity with the kidnapped Israeli soldiers.

A small but vocal group, Another Jewish Voice, that advocated views at odds with the mainstream Jewish community, received much media attention. Author Hajo Meyer, a prominent member of EAJG, published a book, *The Fall of Judaism*, which claimed that Israeli government poli-

cies endangered Jewish survival. Planning a German translation of the book, Meyer sued the German Jewish journalist Henryk Broder for writing a column about it in which he called Meyer a "Judeophobe" and charged that Meyer and his publisher "played Adolf." A German media judge ruled that Broder had to retract the former claim but that the latter was permissible. Meyer went on to outrage most Dutch Jews in October, when he declared that the way Nazis treated Jews at the entrances to the wartime Amsterdam ghetto was "child's play compared to the way Israeli soldiers treat Palestinians in the occupied territories."

On July 18, three parties critical of Israel—Labor, the Socialists, and the Greens—demanded that parliament return from summer recess for an emergency debate on the war in Lebanon, a course seconded by some extra-parliamentary groups, including Another Jewish Voice. In the course of the parliamentary discussion that ensued, on July 20 Foreign Minister Bot declared that "Israel has the right to defend itself" and that both he and the government were "pro-Israel." Hans van Baalen, speaking for the Liberals, "did not see the need for such a debate," and felt that Israel was rightly defending itself against terror attacks from Hamas and Hezbollah. On July 23 Van Baalen flew to Israel with two officials of the Dutch Jewish community; he was the only MP to show his solidarity in this way. The delegation was received by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, and the Dutch ambassador to Israel.

Meanwhile an anti-Israel demonstration in Amsterdam on July 22 drew about 1,500 people; once again, among the organizing groups was Another Jewish Voice. Achmed Marmouch, a Muslim who was Amsterdam's first Moroccan-born city council chairman, spoke at the rally on behalf of the Labor Party. Protestant and Catholic organizations, however, including one whose spokesman had previously been hostile to Israel, called and wrote officials of the Jewish community expressing solidarity with the people of Israel; some of them included the Dutch Jewish community as well, "with its strong ties to Israel."

As in other European countries, the bombing of Qana on July 30 represented a turning point in public opinion. A poll taken on August 2 showed that only one in three Dutchmen showed some understanding for Israel's actions, and that 39 percent had "come to see Israel in a more negative light" due to the conflict.

In December, Another Jewish Voice chairman Max Wieselmann was invited to address an annual meeting of Christian organizations held at Westerbork, the site where Dutch Jews were interned awaiting deportation to concentration camps. The theme of his talk was "human rights

all over the world." Wieselmann compared the Nazi treatment of Jewish Westerbork inmates to Israeli treatment of Palestinians, conceding, however, that the Israelis had "not yet gone that far." A few Dutch Jews praised him for showing "courage," but others, particularly survivors and younger members of the Jewish community, considered it a false comparison, which, made at that particular spot, amounted to "spitting on the graves" of the dead.

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

STATISTICS

In August, CIDI (Center of Information and Documentation on Israel), the nongovernmental organization monitoring racism and anti-Semitism in the Netherlands, published its statistics for 2005 and the first part of 2006. CIDI reported 159 incidents in 2005 as against 327 the year before, a marked decline.

The Lebanon war brought a sharp change: from July through August 9, 2006, CIDI counted 105 incidents—66 percent of the total number for all of 2005. These included threatening phone calls, anti-Semitic e-mails, graffiti (such as "Judens Raus"), and vandalism of a synagogue. CIDI noted that it did not include in its report any anti-Israel incidents that did not also involve anti-Semitism. And, as always, it counted a series of related incidents as one, and thus a barrage of virulently anti-Semitic and threatening postings on the Jewish Internet forum Joods.nl, forcing the site to close down temporarily, was counted as a single incident. This spike during the war conformed to the previous pattern whereby anti-Semitic incidents tended to proliferate at times of increased violence between Israel and the Palestinians.

Even disregarding the Lebanon-related peak, CIDI warned, the overall decline in the number of incidents was no reason for optimism. The decrease in 2005 was largely due to a decline in the number of anti-Semitic e-mails, from 121 in 2004 to 15 in 2005. But cases involving physical violence actually rose slightly, and the number of personal threats remained roughly the same.

Name-calling, as always, was the largest category of live incidents, and here the author of the CIDI report, Hadassa Hirschfeld, noted another worrying trend: over the 23 years that CIDI had monitored anti-Semitic incidents, Jewish reactions to such name-calling had become much more

resigned, so that, in Hirschfeld's words, "This has now reached a point where non-Jewish students call each other "Jew" and others use it to insult policemen. There is even a new word for this: 'being Jewed.'"

Despite the correlation between overt anti-Semitic acts and Israeli-Palestinian violence, the CIDI report cautioned that anti-Semitism existed in the country quite apart from Middle East issues. In a national opinion poll, 10 percent of the Dutch population described themselves as "overt racists" and another 17 percent said they were "racist some of the time." The contribution of Muslim perpetrators towards the total number of anti-Semitic manifestations actually declined, going from 45 percent in 2004 to 38 percent in 2005. An optimistic view would attribute this to several joint Jewish-Muslim educational programs in Amsterdam and to the vigilance of police and other law-enforcement agencies. A more cynical perspective was that the declining percentage of Muslim perpetrators was due to an increase in cases of extreme right-wing anti-Semitism.

INCIDENTS

A number of Jewish cemeteries, buildings, and monuments were vandalized during the year. While some of these actions may have been spontaneous, others must have been planned in advance, since they clearly required an effort—possibly including reconnaissance. Often, swastikas and other Nazi graffiti left at the scene indicated extreme right-wing connections.

On January 27, for instance, two stones were overturned in the Jewish cemetery of Terborg (Gelderland), and others were daubed with Nazi symbols and stickers of the extreme right-wing party *Nederlandse Volks Unie*. (A mosque in Terborg was similarly targeted.) Near Sliedrecht, a tree from Israel planted near a Holocaust monument was uprooted on three separate occasions in January, and an attempt to burn down the local synagogue was thwarted later in the year. The synagogue and Holocaust monument in Apeldoorn were vandalized.

On February 21 CIDI wrote to the minister of internal affairs expressing severe concern regarding these acts. It complained that "anti-Jewish graffiti are usually removed promptly, but the police do not investigate these incidents," and that the police were treating them not as hate crimes but "just like any other criminal act."

A large number of Holocaust monuments were vandalized on and immediately after May 4, the day the Dutch commemorate their wartime

dead. In Klaaswaal a swastika was daubed on the local monument, the one in Renswoude was set on fire, and in Zandvoort three boys wrecked one wreath and stole several others. A plaque in Hoogeveen with Hebrew letters bearing the names of Jewish inhabitants murdered during the war was severely damaged. In Nederlek a wreath placed at the local monument was stolen. In Amsterdam, meanwhile, police were looking for seven young men seen hanging out near a local monument where wreaths had been destroyed. Monuments were also disturbed in Enkhuizen, Zwijndrecht, and Lekkerkerk. In 2005, only one case of May 4 vandalism had been reported, and several organizations expressed concern about the sharp increase this year.

In the Diamantbuurt, an Amsterdam neighborhood where a small group of "Moroccan" boys had terrorized Jewish and other inhabitants in previous years, an elderly Jewish man and a Jewish member of the local council both called the police when stones were thrown through their windows in January. The two had been subjected to spitting and anti-Semitic name-calling before then; the council member had also been targeted for having undergone a sex-change operation.

CIDI launched legal proceedings against several Islamic sources that produced anti-Semitic material. The first suit, in February, was against the Arab European League, which put two anti-Semitic cartoons on its Web site in reaction to the Danish cartoons deemed insulting to the prophet Mohammed. In May, complaints were filed against the publisher and booksellers distributing *A Guide for Islamic Education*, which propagated corporal punishment for women and children; stoning and murdering Jews, homosexuals, and apostates from Islam; and female circumcision. A year earlier the public prosecutor had refused to take action against these passages in the book, saying they were "expressions of religious freedom."

On June 18, reported the *Nieuw Israelitische Weekblad*, the dean of the University of Utrecht ordered retiring professor Piet van der Horst to strike passages about Islamic anti-Semitism from his valediction. This act of academic censorship was reportedly related to the university's plans to open a department of Islamic studies.

One Dutch figure who drew considerable attention to himself for anti-Semitic rhetoric was N.K. (Kees) Mos, pastor of the Messiah Church in Wassenaar. In May, CIDI acquired the text of his virulent sermon, "The Jew in Us," that Mos delivered in 2005. Amid numerous derogatory passages about Jews, it claimed that Hitler's goal, "to definitely expel the Jew from our midst," was "grounded in biblical texts." CIDI demanded his

suspension, but the board of his church took no action, although it did concede that the sermon "should not have been delivered like that." On June 4, the words "Nazis Raus!" were sprayed on the church. According to a statement issued to the press by the anonymous perpetrators, the act had been done because "it is unacceptable that the anti-Semite Mos . . . still has not been fired despite his open appreciation for Hitler and the Holocaust."

On June 26, the top official of the nation's Protestant churches declared that he was "not qualified to judge" the sermon but "shared the outrage." Mos, meanwhile, allegedly ill, relinquished his pastoral duties. Then, on August 21, regional church authorities announced that "Mos had withdrawn his sermon and would resume his work." Mos himself did not make any statement until September 4, when he apologized in his own church for what he called "a completely derailed sermon." The year ended without any public apology to the Jewish community.

Gretta Duisenberg, the pro-Palestinian widow of Wim Duisenberg, the former president of the European Central Bank (see AJYB 2003, pp. 428–29), also contributed to Dutch anti-Semitism during 2006. Duisenberg travelled to Lebanon in September. An accompanying journalist from the weekly *Nieuwe Revu* duly took down quotes such as: "Israelis always lie, you can tell by their mugs. Bastards, that's what they are," and, "I approve of those kidnappings. This is their [Hezbollah's] only way to set prisoners free. What infuriates me is that the Netherlands will not send troops because they are afraid of hitting a Jew." She also repeated her "joke" of 2002 about wanting "at least six million signatures" in support of a new pro-Hezbollah Dutch political party. Despite several criminal complaints from Holocaust survivors against her offensive statements in recent years, Dutch authorities had declined to prosecute.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The CIDI report noted that the Dutch police and judicial system reacted more aggressively to anti-Semitic incidents in 2005 than before, when few cases were seriously investigated and even fewer prosecuted. The improved pattern of law enforcement continued into 2006.

In January authorities in Deventer criminalized the publication or distribution of the anti-Jewish pamphlet *Stop the Jewish Dictatorship*. The pamphlet had been surfacing, on and off, for several years, usually in big cities. Complaints by CIDI dating back to 2003 had not produced any

result until Deventer took action. That same month the creator of a satirical Web site that slurred Jews and homosexuals was fined 1,000 euros.

In May, the Dutch maker of the video "Housewitz" was sentenced to 40 hours of community service. The film was a spoof announcement of an electronic music festival supposedly to be held in Auschwitz on May 4 (Dutch Memorial Day). It showed a gate with the inscription "*Tanzen macht frei*," plus footage of Nazis, concentration camp barracks and inmates, gas chambers, and Jews being deported by train. The Internet antidiscrimination watchdog MDI had filed a complaint in May 2005, but the authorities found "insufficient punishable elements" to prosecute. A second complaint, however, in August 2005, brought a reversal of the decision and, in the end, a conviction on the charge of disseminating discriminatory material.

The police of IJmuiden arrested five youngsters in June for spraying swastikas on buildings during the local Luilak (Lazybones) prank day. Other pranksters caught smearing cars with butter and eggs were made to clean the cars; the police obviously took the swastikas more seriously. In July, a man in Zutphen was sentenced to one year in prison and compulsory psychiatric treatment for hanging a swastika in his window, making threats, and engaging in blackmail. When the police had demanded removal of the swastika, he called out the white power slogan, "Own people first!"

The police apprehended two men, in November, who had overturned nearly all the stones in the Jewish cemetery of Beek the previous month. But the officers "did not find any anti-Semitism" in their motives. Two neo-Nazis who had repeatedly destroyed the trees on a Holocaust memorial near Sliedrecht and attempted to burn down the local synagogue were convicted and sentenced, in November, to 18 months in jail for the arson attempt. On November 25, an attempt by an extreme right-wing group to demonstrate against a Jewish culture festival (or as the group put it, "against the denial of Dutch culture") in Apeldoorn was vetoed by municipal authorities at the request of CIDI and the Central Jewish Organization.

There was progress against anti-Semitism on the legislative front. In June, the Christian Union party sponsored draft legislation to outlaw denial or glorification of the Holocaust. France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Poland had already made Holocaust denial illegal. As the law stood in Holland, however, legal proceedings against deniers could only be ini-

tiated by survivors or their children, who were presumably personally affected.

Memorializing the Holocaust

Several new Holocaust monuments were erected in 2006 both for Jewish victims and for non-Jews who helped save their Jewish countrymen. Such monuments now existed in most Dutch communities.

A plaque bearing the names of the 29 Jews deported from the small town of Hattem (Gelderland) was erected on the wall of the former synagogue in April, at the initiative of the current owner of the building—an advertising agency. The 56 deported Jewish inhabitants of Zaltbommel were commemorated with a new plaque in May. In November, Mayor Wim Deetman of The Hague unveiled a monument in memory of over 1,700 Jewish children who were deported from the city.

In October, Clémence Ross, the assistant secretary of state, joined with a group of survivors to unveil a plaque in Bergen Belsen commemorating the Dutch victims of the camp; estimates of their number ranged between 1,300 and 3,500. Anne Frank was one of them, and among the initiators of the project was the Anne Frank Foundation.

In February, the Museum of Frisian Resistance put up a panel with the names of all 500 Frisians who had been named Righteous Gentiles by Yad Vashem for risking their lives to save Jews. Of the nearly 20,000 people from all over the world so honored, about 25 percent were Dutch. Maastricht put up a monument for members of the Resistance in May. The town of Hoorn erected a monument to those who hid Jews during the war; it was placed in “het Jeudje” (“the little Jew”), the street where the first Jews settled, possibly as early as 1640. Jews from Hoorn who perished during the war already had their monument, put up in 1970 where the synagogue used to be.

Another planned memorial generated considerable controversy. The predominantly Catholic town of Geleen wanted to put up the statue of a nun, Sister Maria Aloysia, on the spot where her cloister had stood. The Nazis deported her to Auschwitz on August 2, 1942, where she died. But the nun, born Luise Löwenfels, was a convert from Judaism, and was deported, along with six other born-Jewish nuns and the famous born-Jewish philosopher Edith Stein, together with the local Jews, because they were racially Jewish. The projected statue offended many Jews since it appeared to be a Catholic attempt to “appropriate” Holocaust victim-

hood status, the same complaint that had been voiced several years earlier when the Church declared Edith Stein a saint.

On the Internet, a new Dutch-language Web site, www.anne-in-debuurt.nl, showed where and how Anne Frank lived in Amsterdam before the family was forced to hide in what was now known as the Anne Frank House.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish community in the Netherlands, estimated at approximately 44,000 people in 2001, had undoubtedly declined since that time due to a low birthrate, which itself was the result of prolonged singlehood and late marriage. Despite community efforts, single Jews still found it difficult to find a (Jewish) partner in the Netherlands. Even assuming that it was the same size at it was in 2001, the Jewish community would make up only about 0.275 percent of the total Dutch population of 16.3 million in 2006. Jews, historically "the" minority group in the country, were now almost negligible in comparison to the much more numerous Muslim minority. Almost half of the Jews in the country lived in the Amsterdam area. Communities in the rest of Holland were small, often dwindling, and therefore tended to join with nearby communities for public events.

Communal Affairs

A number of initiatives were made involving synagogues and other community structures. The synagogue in the Jewish hospital in Amstelveen moved to larger premises and celebrated the event with the consecration of a Torah scroll. The Amsterdam Jewish community renovated the cellar of its headquarters to make it available for regular disco parties for Jewish teens. The work started in January. Although it was supposed to be finished in March, the disco had not yet opened as the year ended. The city council of Leiden announced in February that the former Jewish orphanage there, which had been used to house the offices of the local health administration when there were no more Jewish orphans to service, would become a hotel.

Preparations began for the establishment of Immanuel, a new Jewish hospice in Amsterdam, due to open in April 2007. The first Jewish hospice in Europe, it would provide special care in a homelike environment to terminally ill Jewish patients.

Plans were finalized for a Jewish museum in the former synagogue in Elburg, in memory of the town's 21 Jews who were deported during World War II, only one of whom returned afterward. The project had to overcome objections raised by local musical societies that used the building to practice, and claimed they could not find another location.

Several reminders of early Jewish settlement in the country were discovered or refurbished. The old Jewish cemetery in Leek, dating from 1783, was restored: stones that had been removed because they were broken were repaired and put back, and all the Hebrew inscriptions were translated into Dutch for the benefit of the descendants of those buried there. Other cemeteries, such as the one in The Hague dating from 1694, were also restored, usually with restitution monies. In September, archaeologists discovered a forgotten Jewish cemetery in Amersfoort, one of the five oldest in the Netherlands. Its Sephardi section dated from 1670 and the Ashkenazi part from 1727.

The small Jewish community of Leiden spent seven years raising the 140,000 euros necessary to restore its Jewish cemetery, located in Katwijk; the work was completed in 2006. Dating from 1785, the cemetery included the only existing memorial for victims of the "gunpowder disaster" in the city. On January 12, 1807, a ship carrying 37,000 pounds of gunpowder exploded in the harbor, devastating a large part of Leiden, including the Jewish neighborhood, and killing 151. The Jewish victims included 18 children, all pupils of the local Jewish primary school — which was completely destroyed — and their teacher.

There were several communal anniversaries. In March, the Jews of Groningen celebrated the 100th anniversary of their synagogue, two-and-a-half centuries of Jewish life in Groningen, and the rebuilding of the community 25 years ago. Over 1,000 Dutch primary-school children visited an exhibition about "Children during the War" in the synagogue. The Dutch Friends of Magen David Adom celebrated their 25th anniversary in May. Beth Joles, the Dutch old-age home in Haifa, celebrated its 50th anniversary. The umbrella organization of Liberal Judaism, Verbond van Liberaal-Religieuze Joden, celebrated its 75th anniversary; festivities in Amsterdam were attended by Queen Beatrix. The organization renamed itself Verbond voor Progressief Jodendom.

In Holocaust-related news, the digitalization of the wartime archives

of the Dutch Red Cross, containing 860,000 records, started on May 4. Jewish Social Work (JMW), the organization that had taken on the activities of the defunct foundations that had handled the affairs of wartime Jewish orphans, held meetings with a number of those orphans who now lived in Israel and were seeking an investigation into the financial management of their inheritance after the war.

A major advance in the restitution of artworks stolen by the Nazis occurred when the Goudstikker collection was finally returned to its heirs. Toward the end of the year an exhibition, "Looted Property," opened in Amsterdam, showing art that was probably stolen from Jewish families during the war. The exhibitors hoped that at least some of the works might be recognized by descendants of the owners and returned.

Culture

Jewish cultural activities in 2006 included several fund-raising events, such as the art exhibition and auction organized by ARZA (Reform Zionists) in January on behalf of the Liberal Jewish community Har El in Jerusalem. There were performances by foreign celebrities, including concerts by pop stars Matisyahu, Eyal Golan, and other Israeli singers, an evening featuring Fran (the "Nanny") Drescher, and a visit from Sacha Baron Cohen as Borat.

The statistics for visitors to Jewish museums during 2005, released in January 2006, showed significant increases from 2004. The Westerbork camp museum drew 120,000 (a rise of 20 percent); 966,000 visited the Anne Frank House (up by 30,000); and 90,345 came to the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam (a 17.5-percent rise).

The Jewish Historical Museum, housed in three old synagogue buildings in the heart of Amsterdam's old Jewish neighborhood, underwent extensive renovations. The date for the official opening of the renovated section was postponed from September 2006 to February 2007, although a new children's museum opened on December 17. In May, workers digging a new cellar beneath one of the buildings uncovered two ritual baths dating from the eighteenth century. It was decided to incorporate them into the building plans and leave them partly visible.

Skijar 2006, the yearly ski trip organized by the Jewish youth organization Ijar, drew 60 participants from ten countries. Limmoed 2006, the annual Jewish study retreat, was held in the new building of the Rosj Pina Jewish primary school, with 120 participants. The biggest yearly event in Jewish Holland, the Jom Havoetbal soccer tournament in Amsterdam at-

tracted some 3,000 players and visitors in June. As usual, there was a waiting list for teams from abroad seeking to participate. The third MaJo football tournament between Jewish and "Moroccan" teams took place in Amsterdam in October, one of many "dialogue" meetings between the two communities.

UEFA, the European soccer league, banned its Israeli teams from playing their home games in Israel, for security reasons. Several of the Israeli teams chose Dutch stadiums as their "at home" venue. However, no spectators were allowed at the first league cup match involving an Israeli team, between Hapoel Tel Aviv and BST Domzale of Slovenia. For later matches, including a match in Nijmegen in which the Israeli national team beat Andorra 4-1 to qualify for the European Championships 2008, members of the Dutch Jewish community were able to secure tickets. The overall ban on spectators was finally lifted in September.

The annual Jewish Film Festival opened in Amsterdam and then toured the country. A symposium on Jewish tradition and modern life was held in the beautifully restored synagogue of Enschede in June. In July, concurrent with the Amsterdam Gay Canal Parade, Jewish gays organized a "Queer Shabbaton" in the Reconstructionist synagogue of Amsterdam. On European Jewish Heritage Day, September 3, six synagogues, the Jewish Cultural Center, and a movie theater with Jewish-themed films held open house in Amsterdam. Other Jewish sites that welcomed visitors for the occasion were in Bourtange, Delft, Enschede, Meerssen, Middelburg, Utrecht, and Winterswijk. Later that month the Israeli embassy organized an Israeli film festival in Amsterdam. November was designated Jewish Culture Month.

Publications of Jewish interest included the first Dutch translation of the *Kitzur Shulhan Arukh* (Concise Code of Jewish Law). *Koosjer Nederlands* (Kosher Dutch) was an over-800-page dictionary of words and expressions that entered the Dutch vocabulary from the Jewish population. *Satellieten* (Satellites), published by the Jewish Historical Museum, presented Jonas Bendiksen's photos taken in remote parts of the former Soviet Union and the stories behind them. *Synagogen van Nederland* (Synagogues of the Netherlands), with photos by Willy Lindwer, was a compendium of Dutch-Jewish architecture with a detailed description of all existing buildings ever used or still in use as synagogues in the country. *Een duif en een jongen* (A Dove and a Boy) was a Dutch translation of Israeli author Meir Shalev's latest Hebrew novel. In *Nieuwe maan* (New Moon), Renata Kersten described her long and difficult road to conversion to Judaism.

Personalia

In the yearly round of royal honors, Jews who received medals included Hans M. Polak, secretary of the Jewish Communities of Rotterdam and The Hague; Franklin de Liever and Bert Manasse of Amersfoort; Rabbi Jochanan Boosman and Wim Wertheim for their aid to Jewish members of the armed forces; Barry Cohn of Leiden; Jaap Wijnschenk and Uri Coronel of Amsterdam; Irene Berg-Baruch and Bert Woudstra of Enschede; and many others.

Rabbi Raph Evers received an award for his contribution to Jewish adult education from Israel's chief rabbis at the sixth Orthodox General Assembly in Jerusalem in January. Professor Philip Wallage received the biennial Alfred Coini Award from the Maatschappij tot Nut der Israëlieten for his works on accountancy. Silver Carnation Awards (for volunteers working to preserve culture or nature) went to Piet and Ida Sanders and Charles Gomes Casseres. Cassares, who lived on Curaçao, was to receive his award from Queen Beatrix on her visit to the island at the end of the year, but he died, aged 85, before that could happen. Author Harry Mulisch was named "Dutch Personality of the Twentieth Century" by the Dutch Institute in Paris. Photographer Ben Dalsheim, from Leeuwarden, received an Austrian gold medal for his photo, "Order is Order." He refused to travel to Austria to receive the medal, since, he said, "The gala is in Linz, ten kilometers from the concentration camp Mauthausen."

Aaron Betsky, about to leave his post as director of the Dutch Architectural Institute in Rotterdam to become director of the Cincinnati Art Museum, was awarded the Wolfert van Borselen Medal for his contributions to Dutch architecture and the city of Rotterdam. Prof. Bob Pinedo, founder of the Cancer Center Amsterdam, received the IJ Award from the city. The Jewish station Nefesh TV received a Dutch award for the best local TV program. Ruben Strandens was awarded the Bakkenist Young Talent Prize for his thesis on artificial intelligence. Journalist Arthur van Amerongen was a co-winner of the 2006 Journalism Award for his articles on Moroccan immigrants in Amsterdam. Violinist Liza Ferschtman received the prestigious Netherlands Music Award for young classical musicians and was appointed director of the Delft Chamber Music Festival, to be held in 2007.

David Simon, chairman of the Amsterdam Jewish community, resigned for personal reasons on January 18, after 17 years of communal service. Harry Kney-Tal, the new Israeli ambassador, did the rounds of Jewish

communities in March. Jochanan Boosman resigned as chief rabbi of the Dutch armed forces and was succeeded by Menachem Sebbach.

Prominent Jews who died during 2006 included Joop Bromet, 58, journalist, author, and art critic; author and Holocaust survivor Ab Caransa, 78; Bill Minco, 84, survivor and wartime Resistance member; Ida Vos, 74, author of novels and children's books; Bea Polak-Biet, 88, former owner of Joachimsthal, Holland's only Jewish bookshop and author of *Recepten uit de Joodse keuken* (Recipes from the Jewish Kitchen), a Dutch-Jewish cooking classic; Lidy Madoc-Van Maarsen, 52, member of the national board of WIZO Netherlands; internationally known Dutch-Jewish pianist Marjo Tal, 91, in Jerusalem; Jaap Blog, 89, who helped rebuild the community after the war; Emanuel (Manes) Wikler, 88, who held many positions in the Dutch Jewish community; Riek Cohen Marcus, 88, supporter of wartime orphans; and Bertje Levisson-Schoonheim, 88, founder and former chair of the women's group of the Liberal community in The Hague.