Federal Republic of Germany

Demography

On January 1, 1982 the 66 local Jewish communities in the Federal Republic and West Berlin had 28,374 members. In 1981, 842 immigrants and 301 emigrants were recorded, together with 105 births and 487 deaths; there were 45 conversions to Judaism. On January 1, 1983 a total of 28,202 Jewish community members were registered—14,450 males and 13,752 females. In 1982 there were 620 immigrants, 340 emigrants, 95 births, 410 deaths, and 20 conversions to Judaism.

The largest Jewish communities as of January 1, 1983 were West Berlin with 6,548 members (about 40 per cent of whom were recent arrivals from the Soviet Union), Frankfurt with 4,872, Munich with 3,920, Düsseldorf with 1,704, Hamburg with 1,391, and Cologne with 1,279. An additional 25,000 unregistered Jews were thought to be living in the Federal Republic and West Berlin.

Communal Activities

A survey of Jewish life in the Federal Republic was contained in the Rosh Hashanah message prepared by the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (Central Council of Jews in Germany), the representative political organization of the Jewish community, in September 1981. The message noted that Jewish existence in Germany was burdened both by the experience of persecution in the past and a degree of undisguised prejudice in the present. While the Central Council maintained cordial relations with various governmental bodies and parliamentary parties, the average Jew experienced a degree of unease in everyday affairs. German public awareness of the Jewish community appeared to be less than friendly, the message maintained. Jews in Germany were also troubled by the political strains between the Federal Republic and Israel.

Against the background of the Lebanon war and the strong anti-Israel reaction that it produced among the German public, the Central Council, in summer 1982, expressed concern about a revival of antisemitism. The organization noted with chagrin that political, religious, and labor groups had all joined in the attack on the Jewish state, and that the Israelis had been likened to Nazis. Still, the Central
Council welcomed the fact that mutual contacts and youth exchanges between the Federal Republic and Israel continued, even if on a somewhat diminished basis.

The Central Council kept a watchful eye over neo-Nazi tendencies in the Federal Republic. While the organization believed that neo-Nazism did not pose a threat to the constitutional order, there was concern about potential violence. The Central Council stated: "We and all citizens have a claim to be protected from potential murderers. We note with approval that the appropriate federal and state departments have begun to recognize the danger posed by neo-Nazism and to combat it appropriately." The Central Council alluded to the fact, emerging from various studies, that one out of every ten Germans held strongly antisemitic views. On the anniversary of the January 1942 Wannsee conference, at which plans were completed for the final solution to the Jewish question, the Central Council declared: "We expect that all the relevant bodies of the Federal Republic, in common with parents and teachers, will continue to pass on . . . the disastrous story of the Nazi past, in order to alert younger people to the terrible consequences that intolerance, irrational racism, and national arrogance can have."

While the issue of Jewish security stood in the forefront of the Central Council's deliberations, the organization was also concerned about the status of youth, the integration of new arrivals (mostly from Soviet bloc countries), cooperation with Israel, contacts with international Jewish organizations, and cultural activities. Representatives of the Central Council held numerous meetings with leading German political figures to discuss various issues. Werner Nachmann, chairman of the board of the Central Council, warned against German arms shipments to Saudi Arabia. On the occasion of a visit to the Federal Republic by Soviet party chief Leonid Brezhnev, Nachmann appealed to leading German political figures to raise the issue of Soviet Jewry. Regarding German-Israel relations, Nachmann noted that the period of unbounded sympathy for the Jewish state was now over; the Federal Republic was gradually withdrawing from the special role it had taken on as a result of the crimes which the Nazis had committed against the Jews.

The Central Council awarded the Leo Baeck Prize to three individuals: rabbi and historian Bernhard Brilling of Israel; lawyer and journalist Robert Weltsch of Israel; and politician and historian Anton Keim of Mainz. The latter had published numerous studies relating to German-Jewish history and had undertaken a variety of initiatives to further German-Jewish and German-Israeli relations. In May 1982 the Central Council held its fifth youth and culture conference in Saarbrücken; the meeting, which drew over 100 participants, was devoted to the theme "Israel and Us." Professor Shemeryahu Talmon of the Hebrew University succeeded Professor Leon Feldman of Rutgers University as rector of the College for Jewish Studies in Heidelberg, which had been established at the initiative of the Central Council. The College for Jewish Studies sought to train a new generation of leaders in the areas of Jewish education and Jewish communal service.

The Central Welfare Agency of Jews in Germany, in conjunction with the Central Council, carried out a program of aid to needy Jews in Poland, providing them with kosher food. By the end of 1982, over 323,000 marks had been raised for this
purpose. The Central Welfare Agency also conducted vacation programs for young people, as well as training seminars for youth leaders, kindergarten teachers, and social workers.

During the Lebanon war, the Zionist Organization of Germany urged increased activity on behalf of Israel. The Jewish National Fund conducted a successful fund-raising campaign. The WIZO Federation of Germany supported several projects in Israel.

The Jewish community of West Berlin awarded the Heinrich Stahl Prize to German publisher Axel Springer, in appreciation for his ongoing efforts toward German-Jewish reconciliation and his labors on behalf of Israel.

The most active Jewish youth organization was the Bundesverband Jüdischer Studenten in Deutschland (BJSD, Federal League of Jewish Students in Germany), which either sponsored or participated in the following activities: "An Encounter with Chabad," in London; a seminar on "The Holocaust and Modern Antisemitism," in Thessaloniki, Greece; a leadership training seminar, in Jerusalem; a seminar on "The Effects of the Holocaust," in Milan; a seminar on "Israel—Tendencies and Perspectives," in Cologne; a seminar on "Fascism as a Historical and Social Phenomenon," in Cologne; a seminar on "Jewry and Judaism in Education," in Bad Nauheim; and a seminar co-sponsored with the College for Jewish Studies on "Messianism in Judaism," in Heidelberg. BJSD delegates participated in international student meetings, including one in Strasbourg, and visited the Budapest Jewish community.

A BJSD delegation met with representatives of the Central Council to discuss the problems of Jewish students. A meeting between BJSD delegates and the executive committee of the Circle of Christian Democratic Students had the aim of furthering cooperative efforts. The BJSD repeatedly took a stand on issues of the day, e.g., protesting the possible delivery of German arms to Saudi Arabia, criticizing the Soviet Union for human rights violations, appealing to the Soviet government to shed light on the fate of Raoul Wallenberg, protesting against the pro-PLO policies of the Greek government, and criticizing the pope for meeting with Yasir Arafat. BJSD members conducted pro-Israel public information campaigns in connection with Israel Independence Day. BJSD chairman Joram Hess, who was elected general secretary of the European Union of Jewish Students, represented the latter organization at a conference of the European section of the World Jewish Congress.

The Bund Jüdischer Jugend (BJJ, Jewish Youth League) organized a variety of workshops, seminars, and social events to promote ties between Jewish youth in the Federal Republic. Particularly noteworthy were the following: a seminar on "Religious Problems of Young Jews Today"; a workshop on "Israel After the Elections"; a workshop on "The Peace Movement—A Jewish Question?"; and a seminar on "Jewish Life and Religion in the Visual Arts."

The College for Jewish Studies in Heidelberg presented a lecture series for young people on Jewish history, religion, and culture.

Maccabiah Germany, through its local affiliates, provided Jewish youth with excellent opportunities for physical training. In 1981 the organization's activities
were geared toward the 11th Maccabiah in Israel; 74 Jewish athletes from Germany participated, winning several medals. In November 1982 the congress of the European Maccabiah Confederation, meeting in Düsseldorf, decided to hold the 1987 European Maccabiah games in Cologne. This would mark the first time since World War II that the games were held on German soil.

**Religion**

At its annual meeting in Frankfurt, in December 1981, the Rabbinerkonferenz in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Rabbinical Conference in the Federal Republic of Germany) elected Emil Davidovic of Dortmund as managing director for the years 1982–1983. The Rabbinical Conference sought to formulate halakhic responses to all the matters brought before it, but the decisions were only advisory in nature; conversions to Judaism fell totally within the domain of individual rabbis. Among the issues that the Rabbinical Conference discussed were ecumenical religious services and the burial of non-Jewish spouses in Jewish cemeteries. With regard to the latter, the setting aside of a special parcel for mixed-married couples was recommended.

In Munich, in 1982, Paul Biberfeld was inducted as the new rabbi of the community, succeeding Rabbi Hans Grünewald. The Jewish community of Düsseldorf engaged Abraham Hochwald as the new rabbi for the whole North Rhine district.

In June 1981 the Leo Baeck Synagogue in the Senior Center on the Lietzensee in West Berlin was dedicated—the first new synagogue constructed in Berlin in more than 50 years. With funds provided in part by church groups, the municipality, and non-Jewish individuals, a new synagogue was built in Krefeld, Rhineland; the building was dedicated in May 1981.

**Personalia**

On the occasion of his 70th birthday, Heinz Galinski, president of the West Berlin Jewish community, received the Great Service Cross with Star and Ribbon, the highest distinction that the Federal Republic could bestow. Ernst Roth, rabbi of Hesse and the Rhineland-Palatinate, received the Great Service Cross. The following were awarded the Federal Service Cross: Arno Katín, longtime advisor on environmental questions in the federal ministry of the interior and representative of the Bonn Jewish community; Hans Lamm, journalist and chairman of the Munich Jewish community; Alfred Weichselbaum, director of the Central Welfare Agency of Jews in Germany; Arno Lustiger, leading representative of Jewish organizations; Gabriel Peled, Israeli agrarian expert; Artur Levi, local politician and Jewish representative in Göttingen; Simon Snopkowski, physician and president of the Union of Hebrew Congregations in Bavaria; Elias Canetti, Nobel Prize winner for literature; Alfred Israel, representative of Jewish organizations; Shmuel Rodensky, Israeli actor; Rudolf Gottschalk, Alice Schwarz-Gardos, and Hanna Gluecksmann,
Israeli who played an active role in furthering German-Israeli relations; Max Bass, president of the Jewish community of Freiburg; and Moshe Gerhard Manfred Hess, director of the Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft in Frankfurt.

Walter Strauss, chairman of the Organization of the Jews from Württemberg in the United States received the Service Medal of Baden-Württemberg. Franz Unikower, representative of Jewish organizations, received the Letter of Honor of Hesse. French politician Simone Veil received the International Charlemagne Prize of the city of Aachen. Painter Marc Chagall was awarded honorary citizenship of Mainz in appreciation for the six windows which he created in St. Stephan's Church. Anna Freud, psychoanalyst and daughter of Sigmund Freud, who lived in London, received an honorary doctorate from Goethe University in Frankfurt. The city of Würzburg awarded its cultural prize to Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai, who was born in Würzburg. Austrian writer Hilde Spiel was awarded the Roswitha Commemorative Medal of the city of Bad Gandersheim. Russian writer Lev Kopelev, now living in the Federal Republic, received the Peace Prize of the Organization of German Booksellers for advancing German-Russian understanding. Journalist Eva Reichmann, a resident of London, received the Moses Mendelssohn Prize of the Berlin Senate. Literature expert Walter Berendsohn, a resident of Stockholm, was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Hamburg. The Grand Lodge of Ancient Freemen and Accepted Masons of Germany awarded its cultural prize to violinist Yehudi Menuhin. The Literary Union of Berlin awarded its Medal for Humane Studies to Israeli author Meir Faerber. American author Myron Levoy received the Buxtehuder Bulle, the literary prize of the north German city of Buxtehude. The Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts awarded its prize for literature to author Wolfgang Hildesheimer, who lived in Switzerland. The city of Heidelberg awarded the Richard Benz Medal for Art and Science to resident lyric poet Hilde Domin. The German Academy for Language and Poetry awarded its Georg Büchner Prize to writer Peter Weiss, who died in May 1982.

Ludwigshafen was the first German city to honor the work of Ludwig Guttmann, Jewish physician and promoter of sports for the handicapped; a street in the Oggersheim section was renamed for him. A street in Fürth, Bavaria, was renamed for Isaak Hallemann, former Jewish teacher and head of the Fürth orphan home, who died at the hands of the Nazis.

Julius Spokojny, chairman of the Jewish community of Swabia-Augsburg, was elected by the Union of Jewish Communities in Bavaria as representative to the Bavarian Senate; Spokojny succeeded David Schuster, chairman of the Jewish community of Würzburg.

Herbert Lewin, physician and longtime leading representative of Jewish organizations in the Federal Republic, died in Offenbach on November 21, 1982, aged 83. I.D. Evian, attorney and representative of the Jewish community, died on August 28, 1982 in Düsseldorf, aged 80.
German Democratic Republic

In the entire German Democratic Republic (DDR) there were less than 600 registered Jews in eight communities—about 200 in East Berlin, 70 to 75 in Dresden, 50 in Leipzig, and smaller groupings in Halle, Karl Marx-Stadt, Magdeburg, Mecklenburg/Schwerin, and Erfurt. Most of the Jews were quite elderly, making further population shrinkage inevitable. Peter Kirchner, president of the East Berlin Jewish community, predicted that in ten years’ time there would be as few as 120 Jews in his city.

The Jewish community received financial aid from the DDR, which also provided funds for the maintenance of more than 100 Jewish cemeteries in the country. In his Rosh Hashanah greeting in September 1981, Klaus Gysi, state secretary for church affairs in the DDR, expressed thanks for the “active help given by our Jewish fellow citizens in forming our socialist society.”

Representatives of the DDR’s Jewish community participated in international Jewish conferences in 1981 and 1982, including a meeting in Vienna of the European section of the World Jewish Congress. Members of the International Conference of Christians and Jews visited the East Berlin Jewish community in connection with a conference that was held in West Berlin in August 1982. The Jewish community was also visited by American journalists in September 1982.

Helmut Aris, president of the Verband der Jüdischen Gemeinden der DDR (Federation of Jewish Communities in the German Democratic Republic), declared in a 1981 message commemorating the 43rd anniversary of Kristallnacht: “The legacy of all the victims of fascism, including Jewish citizens, has been fulfilled in the DDR. The policy of our state guarantees that a Kristallnacht cannot happen again.” The commemoration in 1982 of the 44th anniversary of Kristallnacht received wide publicity in the DDR press, and was used as an occasion to honor the Jewish victims of Nazism. Representatives of the state laid wreaths at memorials and Jewish cemeteries. In the cathedral of Magdeburg a photographic exhibition, “Jews as Neighbors,” was mounted.

In a number of cities in the DDR, church groups were formed to promote Christian-Jewish understanding. In February 1982 the Dresden church group organized a major event to commemorate both the Dresden pogrom of February 14, 1349, and the Nazi murder of Jews. Federation president Aris, who spoke at the event, stressed the common roots of Judaism and Christianity, which he saw as a basis for mutual understanding. In spring 1982 an “ecclesiastical sign of reminder” in memory of the Jewish victims of Nazism was unveiled in the cathedral of Halberstadt. At the beginning of 1982 the Jewish cemetery in Gotha was desecrated.

In October 1981 the district court in Halle sentenced 69-year-old Karl Jäger to life in prison and deprivation of civil rights for war crimes. A former member of
a Nazi police battalion, Jäger had played an important role in sealing off the Warsaw ghetto and in carrying out Nazi actions against the Jews. Also in October 1981 a court in East Berlin sentenced former Nazi lawyer Rudolf Otte to 12 years in prison for war crimes. Between 1939 and 1945, Otte had taken a leading part in legal proceedings against Polish citizens. In April 1982 an East Berlin court sentenced former Nazi judge Erich Geissler to 15 years in prison for war crimes. In November 1982 representatives of the judiciaries of the DDR and Poland met in Warsaw to discuss joint efforts to track down and punish Nazi war criminals.

The hostile attitude of the DDR toward Israel became even more pronounced as a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The weekly newspaper Volksarmee proclaimed: "Genocide! This is the designation in international law for the crime that the aggressor Israel is committing in its war against Lebanon and the Palestinian people. . . . On land, in the air, and at sea, the aggressors are acting exactly like the fascist German forces in the Soviet Union and NATO's leading power, America, in Vietnam." In the United Nations, DDR delegate Harry Ott demanded sanctions against Israel for its "escalation of racist and terrorist machinations"; he accused the "ruling circles of Israel" of attempting "to solve the Palestine question through genocide against the Palestinian people." DDR state and party chief Erich Honecker, during a visit to Damascus in October 1982, condemned the "bloody crimes" of Israel.

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinians in November 1981, state and party chief Honecker reaffirmed the "close ties and solidarity of the DDR with the Palestinian people." In a telegram to Yasir Arafat, he hailed the "heroic struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO"; a visiting PLO delegation was promised increased military aid. In March 1982 the PLO office in East Berlin was raised to the rank of an official embassy. PLO chief Arafat, on the occasion of his visit to the DDR, was received with the protocol appropriate for a head of state.

During the Lebanon war, the Jewish community in the DDR issued statements praising public opposition in Israel to the Begin government's policies. Still, there was unhappiness in the Jewish community over the fallout of events in the Middle East. As East Berlin Jewish community president Kirchner noted in November 1982:

"Since the official political line of the DDR is anti-Israel and pro-Arab, the mass media especially emphasize the anti-Israel component. They even call special attention to it, so that we really can no longer avoid determining the extremely close relationship of this anti-Israel attitude to traditional antisemitism. If young people are fed almost daily, for political reasons, negative data about Israeli Jews, they can hardly avoid applying this negative description to the Jews in their environment as well. We have once again presented these concerns emphatically to the state secretary for church affairs and voiced the request that attention be called to the historical and cultural contribution of Jews to German history, in order to convey a more objective picture of the Jews."

FRIEDO SACHSER