

Western Europe

Great Britain

National Affairs

AS THE POPULARITY OF THE Conservative government continued to decline in 1994 and early 1995—despite signs of further economic recovery—that of the opposition Labor Party and to some extent also that of the Liberal Democrats continued to rise. Tory unpopularity was shown in massive losses in local elections in May 1994 and May 1995 and in the elections for the European Parliament in June 1994. Evidence from polls suggested that since the summer of 1994, not only were Conservatives abstaining but also they were switching their support to Labor. The government's one major success, following secret negotiations, undeniably lay in the decision of the Irish Republican Army in August to declare an “unconditional” ceasefire.

Manifest disunity in the government and in the Conservative Party—most obvious in the case of policy toward the European Union—as well as recurrent scandals involving sex and money and professional lobbyists, cumulatively created an atmosphere of sleaze that discredited the integrity of people in public life. Standards of care in the National Health Service and educational resources were also perceived to be deteriorating. The national budget, presented in November 1994, pledged cuts of £28 billion in public spending and was widely held to be associated with the decline in public services.

The counterpart to Tory decline was the rise of Labor. The latter party did indeed suffer a grievous blow with the sudden death of its popular leader, John Smith, in May 1994. After a period of maneuvering, Tony Blair was elected leader in July and immediately undertook a campaign to modernize the party and to forge a new relationship with the trade unions. Meanwhile, Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats, was attempting to move his party closer to Labor and discard its earlier policy of “equidistance” between the two major parties. This move, if adopted by the Liberal Democrats, would certainly increase the pressure on the Conservatives.

Israel and the Middle East

"Our political relationship . . . has never been so warm, has never had so much content and common ground," commented Prime Minister John Major after meeting with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel in Jerusalem in March 1995. This closeness was already apparent in May 1994, when the British government lifted its 12-year embargo on sales of arms to Israel; in June, when Israel and Britain set up a joint science and technology research fund; in August, when Foreign Office minister Douglas Hogg stated Britain's readiness to allow Israel full participation in the European Union's high-tech research program; and in September, when Major, visiting Saudi Arabia, attempted to secure the end of the Arab trade embargo against Israel.

October marked a high point: General Ehud Barak became the first Israeli chief of staff to visit Britain, and Malcolm Rifkind the first British defense secretary to visit Israel officially. (Rifkind, Tory MP for Edinburgh Pentlands and a strongly identifying Jew, was appointed to his post in 1992.) Major described Israel's peace agreement with Jordan as an "extraordinary achievement" during a warm and productive meeting with Prime Minister Rabin on a visit to London that was abruptly curtailed because of a suicide bomb attack in Tel Aviv; and Queen Elizabeth's consort, Prince Philip, visited Jerusalem to receive the "Righteous Gentile" award presented posthumously to his mother, Princess Alice, who had hidden Greek Jews from the Nazis during World War II. In November, Major, the first British prime minister to address the Joint Israel Appeal's (JIA) main fund-raising event in London, endorsed the unprecedentedly close ties between Britain and Israel.

Some points of contention remained, including the future of Jerusalem. A statement by Major in May 1994, emphasizing that Britain did not recognize Israeli sovereignty over any part of Jerusalem, was thought untimely but representing no shift in policy. The statement was issued when the Likud-backed Campaign for a United Jerusalem asked Major to send greetings to a Jerusalem Day dinner in London. In March 1995, Jerusalem's mayor, Ehud Olmert, attacked the decision to send a Foreign Office diplomat to the PLO's Jerusalem headquarters, Orient House, during Major's visit. Speaking at the opening of Anglo-Jewry's celebration of 3,000 years of Jerusalem, he criticized Major and other British officials for failing to grasp Israeli and Jewish anxieties about the city's future.

Another point of dispute was Israeli settlement policy. In April 1994, Foreign Office minister Hogg announced that, in an effort to prevent extremists from scuttling peace efforts, Britain was making regular representations to the Israelis to "cease the construction of settlements which we regard as illegal . . . and an obstacle to peace."

The British government showed its support for Palestinian control over the autonomous areas of Gaza and Jericho in various ways. Following the massacre of Palestinians in Hebron's Cave of the Patriarchs by a Jewish settler in February 1994,

Prime Minister Major wrote to PLO leader Yasir Arafat denouncing the act and promising to provide £34,000 in aid for those wounded in the attack. In May, when Britain warmly welcomed the Cairo signing of the Israel-PLO agreement to withdraw Israeli forces from Gaza and Jericho, the government announced the provision of £70 million in assistance in the year ahead. In July, after warnings from Foreign Office officials that delay in bringing law, order, and prosperity to Gaza and Jericho would play into the hands of extremists opposed to the peace process, the figure was raised to £75 million. In July it was reported that senior Palestinian police officers were receiving training at Bramshill, Britain's national police training college, while Whitehall-backed experts were advising Arafat's officials on setting up a civil service and independent judiciary and on the development of financial institutions.

In January 1994, Britain agreed to export arms to the Lebanese government in order to strengthen its control over the country; in October, Hogg, returning from a visit to Damascus and Beirut, called on Lebanon to stop Iranian-backed fundamentalist guerrillas from attacking Israel. Addressing an Institute of Jewish Affairs (IJA) meeting in London the same month, Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd called Iran the world's most dangerous exporter of terrorism. In March 1995, in an interview with the *Jewish Chronicle*, Major reaffirmed Britain's determination to confront extremist violence by groups supported by Iran and other countries. Britain, he said, had not changed its position on Iraq, nor its "concern" about Iran, both of which were opposed to the peace process.

The London-based Committee to Free Mordechai Vanunu, the imprisoned Israeli nuclear spy, pressed its cause at a Jerusalem meeting with Israeli president Ezer Weizman in December 1994 and published simultaneously an appeal signed by leading politicians, actors, and writers in newspapers in London, Tel Aviv, New York, and Cairo.

Islamic Terrorism

The threat from terrorist attempts to disrupt the Israeli-Palestinian peace process caused the Board of Deputies of British Jews to put the Jewish community on the alert, first in March 1994 after the Hebron massacre in Israel and again after the Jewish community building in Buenos Aires, Argentina, was bombed on July 18. However, nothing could prepare the community for the two horrifying car-bomb attacks that took place on July 26, one outside London's Israeli embassy, the other outside the offices of the Joint Israel Appeal (JIA). No fatalities resulted, but 19 people were injured, and the buildings were considerably damaged. A pledge that Britain would do its utmost to catch the perpetrators was given by Foreign Secretary Hurd to Israeli ambassador Moshe Raviv and by Home Secretary Michael Howard to community leaders.

Immediately following the attacks, armed police, backed up by Scotland Yard's antiterrorist squad, mounted guard on key Jewish institutions. In August Scotland Yard officials meeting with Board of Deputies security officers considered that the

community was still under “significant threat,” and in September Home Secretary Howard agreed to maintain a nationwide antiterrorist guard on Jewish communal institutions. In November a communitywide security operation was launched after Assistant Commissioner David Veness, in charge of Metropolitan Police specialist operations at Scotland Yard, cautioned community leaders against becoming complacent. British Jewry was facing a long-term threat from extremist terror gangs “motivated by a rejection of peaceful coexistence in the Middle East,” Veness said.

In January 1995, five Palestinians, born in either Lebanon or Jordan, were arrested and held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in connection with the bombings. Between January and March, three of the five (Nadia Zekra, Samar Alami, and Jawed Mahmoud Botmeh) were charged at Bow Street magistrates court with conspiring with others to cause explosions. In April Botmeh and Zekra were committed to stand trial at the Old Bailey, and in May Zekra and Alami were freed on bail totaling £1 million.

Anti-Semitism and Racism

The number of anti-Semitic incidents reported in the United Kingdom increased to 346 in 1993 from 292 in 1992, according to figures released by the Board of Deputies of British Jews in June 1994. An annual report published the same month by the London-based Institute of Jewish Affairs (IJA) placed the rise in the preceding year at over 20 percent. Entitled *Antisemitism World Report 1994*, the 270-page document assessing anti-Semitism in more than 70 countries named the United Kingdom as one of ten countries where manifestations of anti-Semitism were increasing. Incidents had risen steadily over a five-year period, and “the climate has definitely deteriorated,” it stated. IJA executive director Antony Lerman expressed “great concern” at the increase in “electronic Fascism,” the distribution of anti-Semitic and Holocaust-denial material through computer networks and bulletin boards, computer games and videos, telephone networks and hot lines, most of which, Lerman claimed, came from the United States.

The Board of Deputies reported that anti-Semitic incidents rose sharply after the July car-bombings of the Israeli embassy and Joint Israel Appeal offices (see above). More than 50 incidents—double the monthly average—occurred between July 26 and August 26, including threatening telephone calls, assaults, and abusive behavior.

Although Jews in Britain had not been subject to physical violence in the way that other minorities had, according to Mike Whine, Board of Deputies defense director, the continued high level of desecration of communal property—21 percent of total attacks—was cause for serious concern. In February 1994 an attack on Grimsby cemetery was reported; in April there was a burglary and arson attack on the Machzikei Hadass *mikveh* (ritual bath) at Preston, Manchester; in October a nursery school in Stamford Hill, North London, was burned down; in November an arson attack at Stamford Hill’s Yesodey Hatorah school was reported, and Pardes

House grammar school, Finchley, North London, was ransacked; in December, Mamlock House, Manchester's Zionist headquarters, was broken into; in April 1995 an arson attack severely damaged Reuben's Kosher Restaurant in Central London.

The IJA report found the distribution of anti-Semitic material "disturbing." This included leaflets sent to Jewish and non-Jewish homes in North-West London referring to Jewish ritual murder and accusing Jews of pedophilia, a pamphlet distributed among far-right activists urged them to kill Jews and nonwhites, and a leaflet sent to some 20 London nursery schools with the message "Avoid Orthodox Jews—child ritual murder outbreak feared." In February 1995 a Board of Deputies delegation told Prime Minister Major that it was "puzzled and angered" at the lack of prosecutions against the publishers and distributors of hate literature. In March 80-year-old Dowager Lady Birdwood received a three-month suspended prison sentence at the Old Bailey for inciting racial hatred by the publication and distribution of 15,000 copies of a leaflet, "The Longest Hatred," alleging a Jewish conspiracy to undermine society and claiming that the Holocaust never happened.

The fears aroused by the first electoral victory of the far-right British National Party (BNP) in London's East End in September 1993 persisted throughout 1994, because the party was deemed responsible for many racist episodes. In January 1994 Liberal-Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown called on all main political parties to unite against BNP in May local elections. In March the Board of Deputies, the Anti-Racist Alliance, the Churches Commission for Racial Justice, and the Liberal-Democrat and Labor parties launched the United Campaign Against Racism with a rally in the East End, organized by the Trades Union Council and attended by more than 35,000 people. In April Home Secretary Howard pledged the support of the Conservative Party and the government for the campaign. In April, too, the Board of Deputies' defense committee mounted its biggest preelection campaign in years in an effort to mobilize British Jews against racist candidates in the elections.

Although BNP lost its sole local government seat in the May elections, far-right candidates increased their share of total votes to a national average of 6.8 percent (from between 2 and 4 percent in 1990 local elections). However, in June European Parliament elections, the 14 extreme right candidates averaged below 2 percent of the total votes; and BNP candidates polled only 562 and 360 votes, respectively, in East London by-elections—at Tower Hamlet in December and Newham South in February 1995.

Even though the government claimed to take racial attacks and racial harassment "extremely seriously," a February 1994 report by the Commission on Social Justice found that current laws urgently required improvement. The government's response came with the introduction in May and June of two amendments to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill: one making the production and distribution of racist publications an arrestable offense; the other imposing a jail sentence of up to six months or a fine of up to £8,000 on those "causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress." By October-November both amendments had received royal assent. In April 1995, following an investigation into racist literature distributed to police

forces around the country, police were able to arrest two people under the terms of the first amendment.

The report of the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee on Racial Violence was published in June 1994 following a year's deliberations and more than 100 written submissions. The committee, chaired by Jewish Conservative MP Sir Ivan Lawrence, made 38 recommendations, which it urged the government to implement "without delay" in view of the rapid spread of racism. In July Home Secretary Howard dismissed the report's suggestion of a new law against racially motivated assault, reiterating his belief that there was "already more than enough legislation to deal with such offenses." Howard's 20-page reply to the report in November supported some of its recommendations, including giving the police extra powers to prosecute those responsible for racial harassment and improving the response by the police and courts.

In January 1995 Union of Jewish Students (UJS) campaigns officer Paul Solomon told the Board of Deputies that Islamic fundamentalists constituted an unprecedented threat to Jewish students, that the rise of the fundamentalist group Hizb-ut-Tahrir "strikes at the very root of Jewish campus experience." Its message, conveyed by leaflets around campuses, mixed anti-Semitism and Holocaust-denial with a call to kill Jews, Hindus, and homosexuals and contempt for Western democratic ideals. Despite repeated appeals to the Home Secretary from MPs, the Board of Deputies, and student leaders, the government was reluctant to take legal action against Hizb operating on university campuses.

Nazi War Criminals

In January 1994 the Scottish Office announced that there was insufficient evidence to proceed with the case expected to be brought against Lithuanian-born Anton Gecas, although "the file would remain open." Gecas, aged 77, a police officer in a Lithuanian battalion, was charged with involvement in the massacre of Jews in Soviet territory occupied by the Germans in World War II.

The following month, the decision was made to wind down the work of the Scottish war-crimes unit. Addressing the concerns of some MPs, peers, and Jewish groups, assurances were given throughout the year that the decision to close the Scottish unit would have no effect on inquiries in England and Wales. Although questions were raised at the end of the year about continued funding of the Scotland Yard war-crimes unit, Home Office minister Baroness Blatch said in February 1995 that cases would be investigated "as long as there is a possibility of evidence being made available." "Parliament is determined that these cases be pursued." To date, investigations had cost just over £5 million. Of the 369 cases investigated, the Crown Prosecution Service had decided not to proceed in 239, and over 100 suspects had died in the interim. In March the attorney-general revealed that government lawyers had completed their examination of seven cases thought most likely to result in prosecution. In May he said that 20 suspected Nazis were still under investigation

by Scotland Yard's war-crimes unit. In a May issue of the London *Independent on Sunday*, legal-affairs correspondent Stephen Ward predicted that Britain's first war-crimes trial in 1996 would be that of 84-year-old Siemon Serafimowicz, who came to Britain in 1947, worked as a carpenter, and now lived in Banstead, Surrey. As a senior police official in Mir, Belorussia, during the German occupation, Serafimowicz was allegedly responsible for shooting Jews, a charge he denied.

Also in May 1995, consideration of a bill calling for a statute of limitations on war-crimes trials, introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Campbell of Alloway in November 1994, was suspended by the House of Commons and no new date for discussion set. The bill, which would have effectively prohibited further war-crimes trials, had passed through all stages in the Lords.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The number of synagogue marriages in 1994 showed its largest annual decrease since 1975–76, according to statistics issued by the Board of Deputies' Community Research Unit. The 10-percent drop—to 914 in 1994 from 1,015 in 1993—reflected a decline in the number of marriages in the general population. Figures for completed divorces fell to 236 in 1994 from 275 in 1993.

Burials and cremations under Jewish auspices dropped to 4,069 in 1994 from 4,359 in 1993. Estimated figures for births, based on totals for circumcision, rose to 2,847 in 1993 from 2,808 in 1992.

Regional figures showed considerable variation. Leeds Jewish Historical Society calculated the local community at 8,900 in January 1994, as compared with 17,800 at its first survey in 1964. A five-yearly census by the Representative Council of North-Eastern Jewry, published in March 1994, showed a rise in the ultra-Orthodox Gateshead community to 1,420 from 1,200; and the Newcastle Reform congregation increased to 227 from 179. By contrast, Newcastle's United Hebrew Congregation had fallen to 729 from 910 and Sunderland to 166 from 291, while the Middlesborough congregation showed a loss of 40 souls. The preliminary results of a census by Merseyside Jewish Representative Council published in June 1994 suggested a population of between 3,300 and 3,400, against 5,750 ten years earlier.

Communal Affairs

Fears that Lord Young's new Central Council for Jewish Community Services (CCJCS)—the former Central Council for Jewish Social Services and an umbrella body for 41 organizations—could erode the Board of Deputies' position as the community's leading lay organization dominated the last months of Judge Israel Finestein's term as board president.

Finestein retired in April 1994, disappointed at the rejection of many of the

reforms proposed during the session but confident that the board's machinery had been improved and its strategy to some extent rationalized. In May the Federation of Synagogues—a grouping of right-of-center Orthodox synagogues formed in 1887—decided not to renew its affiliation with the board. This was in part an economy measure, but also because federation president Arnold Cohen no longer considered the board relevant; individual federation synagogues were free to affiliate in their own right.

In June Eldred Tabachnik, a 50-year-old barrister, became the youngest president in the Board of Deputies' history. In a drive to reassert the board's central role, Tabachnik pledged in July to take the lead in discussions of the chief rabbi's review of the role of women and to set up a working group to consider how the board could be more responsive to the concerns of women deputies. In October he launched an initiative for a wide range of consultations with communal leaders and organizations to be held under board auspices. In January 1995, to indicate the importance the board attached to communities outside London, its leaders began a series of visits to major Jewish centers, including Bournemouth, Leeds, and Glasgow.

The inaugural meeting took place in March 1994 in Kidderminster, North Midlands, of the National Jewish Youth Assembly, sponsored by the Board of Deputies together with the Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade, the Association of Jewish Youth, Maccabi Union, and the Zionist Youth Council. Between them, these groups provided activities for up to 20,000 young Jews weekly, but they operated with a total deficit of £400,000. Speakers at the conference claimed that young Jews were entitled to financial support as an investment for the future and demanded that the assembly be represented on "all major decision-making bodies, including the Board of Deputies." A commission of inquiry into the funding of youth services, under the auspices of CCJCS and headed by high court judge Sir Bernard Rix, issued its report in August 1994, pinpointing the need for improved funding, marketing, and planning of youth services. In October the organizations involved agreed to meet under the auspices of the Board of Deputies to discuss a follow-up to the Rix report.

In April 1994 a Holocaust survivors' center opened at Sinclair House, the Jewish youth and community center in Redbridge, East London. A year later Sinclair House announced plans to merge with Jewish Care, Anglo-Jewry's largest domestic charity, giving Jewish Care its first direct involvement in youth and community work. In May 1994, Nightingale House, the home for aged Jews in South London, benefited financially from a bequest of property in Charleston, South Carolina, by Alec Davidson, a Londoner who had emigrated to the United States.

The 50th anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) Day in May 1995 was observed with services of commemoration of the dead and thanksgiving for peace in synagogues throughout the country. Prior to VE Day, a newspaper poll found that fewer than 40 percent of 11–14-year-olds in state schools had heard of the Holocaust. This brought appeals from the chief rabbi and Israeli ambassador Moshe Raviv for a national Holocaust Museum to be created in London.

OVERSEAS AID

British Jewry's efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry were divided between groups like the 35s, the Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry, which stressed resettlement in Israel, and programs like Exodus 2000, which worked with youth in the former Soviet Union to create new communal structures and train future leaders. Exodus, run by the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain in conjunction with the Israel-based World Union for Progressive Judaism, reported in September 1994 that, after two years' operation, 12 congregations in Britain were twinned with counterparts in the former Soviet Union. In addition, visiting British rabbis had held seminars and taught in the newly formed Institute of Advanced Jewish Studies in Russia, and exchange visits and summer camps had been organized.

January 1994 saw an active campaign on behalf of Ron Arad, the missing Israeli airman thought to be held hostage by Tehran-based gunmen in Lebanon since he disappeared in 1986. Simon Pollock, chairman of the Free Ron Arad Campaign, sent a direct appeal for help to Iranian diplomats in London, and some 850 people demonstrated outside the Iranian embassy to show solidarity with Arad. British diplomats, including Foreign Secretary Hurd, took up Arad's case in talks with Syrian and Iranian officials. And Prime Minister John Major, presented with a petition with 25,000 signatures, assured Arad's family that Britain would play a leading role in the international campaign to secure Arad's freedom.

In April 1994 a seder for Bosnian Jewish refugees was held at the North-Western Reform Synagogue, in Golders Green, North-West London. In June Belgrade Jews received an emergency consignment of medical equipment and food sent by the Central British Fund (CBF)-World Jewish Relief and the British-Israel Forum, a London-based Jewish volunteer network. CBF-World Jewish Relief changed its name to World Jewish Relief in March 1995; in April it sent Passover food to the Jewish community of Sarajevo.

RELATIONS WITH MUSLIMS

Even as Jews worried about Arab terror and Islamic fundamentalist activity on campuses, there were efforts to bring Jews and Muslims closer together. Jews, Muslims, and Christians attended memorial services in March 1994 at the West London Reform Synagogue for victims of the Hebron massacre and in November at London's Yakar for victims of the Tel Aviv bus bombing, the latter arranged by Palestinian peace activist Saida Nusseibeh. In October a Jewish-Muslim community forum was set up in Manchester to "promote good relations and mutual understanding," while in London the Institute of Jewish Affairs organized an interfaith meeting at which Dr. Zaki Badawi, chairman of the U.K. Imams and Mosques Council, shared a platform with Board of Deputies vice-president Rosalind Preston. In November North London's Leo Baeck College joined with the Calamus Foundation to present a lecture series, "Where Muslim and Jewish Civilizations Meet."

Religion

WOMEN

In June 1994 women took seats for the first time on the United Synagogue (US) Council, the central policy-making forum of 66 central Orthodox British synagogues. Based on a formula drawn up by Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks in consultation with the Bet Din (religious court), two women per constituent synagogue, appointed or elected by their local boards of management, were enabled to join the council. New US plans announced the previous February also foresaw reducing the council in 1996 from 300 to around 150 members, split equally between men and women. At the local level, synagogue boards of management would elect nine men and nine women (compared with the previous 12 and 6, respectively), in addition to the synagogue officers, though men would retain right of veto. Synagogues would have five officers, including an elected male chairman and vice-chairman. The reforms were disappointing, said Sheila Cohen, chairwoman of the Association of US Women.

The review of the status of women in Anglo-Jewry, the first practical initiative of Chief Rabbi Sacks's "decade of renewal," was published in June 1994. It found strong consensus that women's needs had been ignored for too long, causing them to feel marginalized in communal and religious life, especially in central Orthodoxy. They wanted greater participation in prayer services and greater spiritual involvement through study, special prayers, and rituals to mark major events in life. Sacks named Syma Weinberg, education consultant to Jewish Continuity, as special adviser for the review's overall implementation and urged all communal bodies to investigate means to carry out its recommendations. In October the Board of Deputies established a standing committee on women's issues.

The review was based on a statistical survey and a series of discussion groups with Jewish women nationwide, conducted by the Board of Deputies' Community Research Unit. Of the 1,350 respondents to the survey, of whom 1,125 were affiliated with synagogues, only 43 percent of US-affiliated women had found synagogues that satisfied their needs. This compared with 51 percent of Orthodox women outside the US; 69 percent of Reform women; 79 percent of Liberals; and 81 percent of Masorti (Conservative). The survey's findings showed a gradual shift taking place toward the left of the religious spectrum: only 61 percent of the daughters of Orthodox parents belonged to Orthodox synagogues.

The popularity of women-only services grew. In January 1994, Manchester's Yeshurun Synagogue sanctioned a women's prayer group on the Sabbath in a private home, provided it followed the chief rabbi's guidelines, and in February, Pinner, North-West London, held its first women-only Shabbat service. However, when women-only services using a Torah scroll took place at Yakar, the independent Orthodox congregation in Hendon, North-West London, in March and Au-

gust, and at the Limmud education conference in Oxford in December, Rabbi Sacks warned that use of a Torah scroll by women could “put at risk the entire effort to improve the position of women in accordance with the principles and spirit of Jewish law.”

In November 1994, Fraybin Gottlieb was appointed assistant registrar to the Bet Din, the first woman to hold a senior post in that body.

The Jewish Women’s Network, aiming to create a framework for dialogue for women throughout the community and to improve their position in Jewish life, held its first annual meeting in March 1995. Since its beginning in January 1993, it had held five major events around the country, said newly elected chairwoman Sharon Lee. Membership was growing, and hundreds of women were participating in debates, study sessions, and workshops.

In February 1995 the chief rabbi called in Dayan Berel Berkovits of the Federation of Synagogues to work out a new draft of the prenuptial agreement (PNA). This had been proposed by Sacks in 1993 to prevent Orthodox women being trapped in failed marriages when husbands refused to give them a religious divorce (*get*). However, questions regarding the document’s practicality and halakhic (Jewish legal) validity had delayed implementation.

OTHER MATTERS

The United Synagogue continued to make structural changes, implementing the recommendations of the 1992 Kalms Report. Among other changes, it set up an Agency for Jewish Education to replace its own education department, so as to reduce the US head office’s role. An independent, self-financing Orthodox body, the new agency would conduct teacher training, carry out inspections, and produce educational material. The agency began functioning in January 1995.

During much of 1994 the US grappled with financial problems: in March it announced that it owed £8 million to its banks, mostly due for repayment within three years. In June seven synagogues were named as having had “chronic deficits” in 1993: Cricklewood, Dollis Hill, Finsbury Park, Hackney and East London, South Tottenham, South-West London, and West Ham. Four others presented “the most difficult situation,” requiring “special action”: Edgware, Finchley, Ilford, and Richmond. In October Edmonton and Tottenham Synagogue closed due to declining numbers. In December Finsbury Park Synagogue was sold to a right-wing Orthodox nursery; male membership had declined from 700 in 1970 to 130, 61 percent of whom were over 71, and 41 percent over 76. This, said US treasurer Leslie Elstein, was the path the US had to take, realizing assets from declining congregations and making them available for new communities. In April 1995, Dollis Hill Synagogue closed, following its sale in February to the North Finchley Torah Temimah primary school; membership had fallen from a peak of 600 families to some 300, half of whom were over 70.

In September Environment Secretary John Gummer ended three years of public

debate by agreeing to establish the British community's first *eruv*—a symbolic boundary designed to permit Orthodox Jews to carry on the Sabbath—in North-West London. In January 1995 there were calls for a judicial review of the *eruv* decision.

On the death of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Brooklyn in September 1994, Prime Minister John Major sent the Lubavitch Foundation a message commiserating on its loss of “an inspirational, and perhaps irreplaceable” leader. A £5-million fund was set up in the Rebbe's name to further his work in Britain, and Chief Rabbi Sacks gave the inaugural Lubavitcher Rebbe Memorial Lecture.

In October, Shmuel Boteach resigned as Lubavitch rabbi in Oxford after being suspended by the Lubavitch Foundation in Britain for his refusal to withdraw an invitation to Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin to speak to his L'Chaim Society, which Boteach continued to head.

In November 1994 leading Orthodox rabbis in Manchester, alarmed at the spread of the Masorti movement to northern England, pledged action to prevent a congregation being established in the city. Masorti services were held in Bradford in January 1995 (the first in northern England) and in Manchester in March.

In December 1994 the Office of the Chief Rabbi made it clear that it did not accept as valid any conversion or marriage conducted under Masorti auspices. Rabbi Dr. Julian Shindler, director of the marriage authorization department, told the *Jewish Chronicle* that he issued the clarification because of claims to the contrary by the Masorti movement, following the Manchester controversy. In January 1995 Chief Rabbi Sacks aroused considerable discussion when he described the Masorti movement as intellectual “thieves” posing a danger to the future of British Jewry. Writing in the right-wing Orthodox *Jewish Tribune*, he accused Masorti of making “misleading” claims to being Orthodox and stated that anyone not believing that the Torah was dictated by God to Moses had “severed links with the faith of his ancestors.”

The ensuing outcry from the Jewish public and many communal organizations partially abated after Sacks wrote in the *Jewish Chronicle* that, while resolute in his support of an Orthodox Jewry firm in its faith and practice, he was equally committed to “tolerance, warmth and intellectual openness.” Speaking at the February 1995 opening of the US's 125th anniversary celebrations, Sacks said, “The successes of the US represent one of the greatest achievements of modern Jewish life,” and warned that those representing “less traditional alternatives” threatened to turn Britain into the fragmented community seen in America.

In February 1995, police were called when ultra-Orthodox Jews protested at Manchester's Jewish cultural center, claiming that the speaker, the chief rabbi of Efrat, Israel, Shlomo Riskin, was a “heretic.”

The Reform Synagogues of Great Britain published a Calendar of Torah and Haftarah Readings, 5755–5757, and a new *Pilgrim Festivals Machzor*; the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues issued a new prayer book, *Siddur Lev Ha-dash*.

Education

In July 1994, Jewish Continuity—Chief Rabbi Sacks's fund-raising plan for Jewish education—announced a partnership with the Joint Israel Appeal (JIA), British Jewry's central fund-raising organization, which pledged at least £12 million to Continuity over the ensuing three years. Said JIA president Sir Trevor Chinn, "JIA has always been involved in saving Jewish lives and in the social development of Israel and will continue to do so. But you can not look at the national priorities of the Jewish people today without recognizing that Jewish continuity in the diaspora is a major element." In September the chairman of the Jewish Agency, through which JIA funding for Israel is channeled, sharply criticized the agreement with Continuity, stating that this "unilateral, almost secretive decision breaks the rules of the partnership between us." Agency officials were particularly concerned about whether donations to Israel would suffer.

In February 1995, Continuity gave £250,000, its largest single grant, for Israel programs for Anglo-Jewish youth, supplementing JIA's own contribution of £500,000 to Zionist youth programs.

Fears that Chief Rabbi Sacks's remarks about the non-Orthodox would affect the policy of Jewish Continuity were partially allayed in January 1995 when chairman Dr. Michael Sinclair confirmed that Continuity remained a "community-wide" initiative. Continuity grants in April 1995, in fact, included £26,000 to the new Masorti Academy, £23,000 to Leo Baeck College, the Progressive rabbinical training institute, and £18,200 to the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues. The safeguard for this even-handed policy was the Independent Allocations Board, which Continuity set up specifically to reassure the Progressive section in May 1994.

In June 1994 it was announced that Rabbi Dr. Daniel Sinclair would succeed Rabbi Dr. Irving Jacobs as principal of Jews College. In August the Masorti movement launched the Masorti Academy, an institution for training rabbis for the movement as well as offering an adult education course leading to a diploma. In December the British Sephardic community decided to establish a seminary to train future Sephardic rabbis, naming Dayan Dr. Pinchas Toledano, Av Bet Din of the Sephardic congregation, as principal.

At secular institutions, the Centre for Modern Hebrew Studies was established at Cambridge University in February 1994. In March the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust Studies was founded at Leicester University. In May Oxford University announced that it would offer a B.A. in Jewish studies. In July Rabbi Dr. Norman Solomon, director of Birmingham's Centre for the Study of Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations, was retrenched due to a funding crisis. In January 1995, Prof. Philip Alexander resigned as president of Oxford's Centre for Hebrew Studies (OCHS). A six-month dispute over the autonomy and financing of Yiddish studies at OCHS ended in April 1995 with the resignation of leading Yiddishist Dovid Katz, who became director of research of a new Oxford Institute for Yiddish Studies, which he had launched in October 1994.

Publications

The European Jewish Publication Society was established in London in February 1995, its aim to subsidize the publication of manuscripts on subjects of Jewish literary, educational, or historic interest that might not be taken up by commercial publishers.

South African-born Ronald Harwood received the 1994 Jewish Quarterly Prize for fiction for his novel *Home*; the nonfiction award went to Leo Abse for *Wotan My Enemy*, a psychoanalysis of Germany and the Germans; the poetry prize was awarded to Ron Taylor for an unpublished poem, "The White Jew of Cochín."

New literary studies included *Tradition and Trauma: Studies in the Fiction of S.J. Agnon*, edited by David Patterson and Glenda Abramson; and *Construction of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society* by Bryan Cheyette.

New works on local British history were *London Jews and British Communism, 1935–1945* by Henry Felix Srebnik; *Uniting the Tailors: Trade Unionism Amongst the Tailors of London and Leeds, 1870–1939* by Anne J. Kershen; *The Northampton Jewish Cemetery* by Michael Jolles; *A Documentary History of Jewish Immigrants in Britain, 1840–1920*, edited by David Englander; *The Jewish East End: Then and Now* by Aumie and Michael Shapiro; *Living Up West: Jewish Life in London's West End* by Gerry Black; *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841–1991* by David Cesarani; *Minerva or Fried Fish in a Sponge Bag: The Story of a Boarding School for Jewish Girls*, edited by Zo Josephs; *A Good Jew and a Good Englishman: The Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade, 1895–1995* by Sharman Kadish; and *We're Not All Rothschilds*, Leila Abrahams' account of Brighton and Hove Jewry.

The plethora of works inspired by the Middle East peace process included *Gaza First: The Secret Norway Channel to Peace Between Israel and the PLO* by Jane Corbin; *From War to Peace: Arab-Israeli Relations, 1973–1993*, edited by Barry Rubin, Joseph Ginat, and Moshe Maoz; *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* by Benny Morris; *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of Middle East Peace?* by John King; two books by Shimon Peres: *Battling for Peace* and *The New Middle East*; and *Building Bridges: The Arab-Israeli Multilateral Talks* by Joel Peters, who, with Keith Kyle, also edited *Whither Israel?*; and *Israel at the Crossroads: The Challenge of Peace*, edited by Efraim Karsh and Gregory Mahler. Karsh also edited a new quarterly journal, *Israel Affairs*, which first appeared in autumn 1994.

Books about Israel included *The Gates of Gaza: Israel's Road to Suez and Back, 1955–1957* by Mordechai Bar-On; *Press and Politics in Israel* by former *Jerusalem Post* editor Erwin Frenkel; and *The Supreme Court Building, Jerusalem* by Yosef Sharon. Major works on political themes were *Democracy and Arab Political Culture* by Elie Kedourie and *On Modern Jewish Politics* by Ezra Mendelsohn.

Three Yiddish works were published by Three Sisters Yiddish Press: *Drei Shvester* (Three Sisters) by Menke Katz; *Der Flacher Shpitz* (Flat Peak) by Heershdovid Menkes (alias Dovid Katz); and *Moscover Purim Shpielen* (Moscow Purim Plays) by Gennady Estraiikh.

Holocaust literature contained several books concerning Poland, such as *Did the Children Cry?* by Richard Lukas, an account of the sufferings inflicted on Polish children by the German invaders; *A Survivor's Saga* by Richard Stern; and *Konin: A Quest* by Theo Richmond. Other new works touching on the Holocaust were *Crimes of War* by Roger Hutchinson, detailing the libel case alleged Nazi war criminal Antanas Gecas brought against Scottish Television; *Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* by Eva Fogelman; *Auschwitz and After: Race, Culture and "the Jewish Question" in France*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman; *A Cat Called Adolf* by Trude Levi; *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* by Tony Kushner, a history of the British and U.S. governments' responses to the Holocaust; *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation*, edited by David Cesarani; and *Weekend in Munich*, Robert Wistrich's analysis of the manipulation of the arts to political ends in the Third Reich.

New and noteworthy works of fiction included *Kolymisky Heights* by Lionel Davidson; *The Marble Kiss* by Jay Rayner; *The Stamp Collector* by David Benedictus; *The Far Side of Desire* by Ralph Glasser; *Moo Park* by Gabriel Josipovici; *Dr. Clock's Last Case* by Ruth Fainlight; and *Dreamers* by Elaine Feinstein, who also published *Selected Poems*. Two books of short stories were Amy Bloom's *Come to Me* and Frederic Raphael's *The Latin Lover and Other Stories*. *Gabriel's Palace: Jewish Mystical Tales* and *Elijah's Violin and Other Jewish Fairy Tales* by Howard Schwartz, and *Broken Bridge* by Lynne Reid Banks aimed at a younger readership.

Poetry published during the period included *Wordsounds* and *Sightlines* by Michael Horovitz; *You Are, Aren't You* by Michael Rosen; *Treasury of Jewish Love: Poems, Quotations and Proverbs* by David C. Gross; *A Weekly Scotsman* by David Daiches; *Voices from the Dolls' House* by Adèle Geras; *Hebrew Poems* by David Prashker. Translated verse was represented by *Flowers of Perhaps: Selected Poems of Ra'hel*, translated by Robert Friend; and *Modern Poetry in Translation*, edited by Daniel Weissbort.

Progressive rabbi Sidney Brichto published *Funny . . . You Don't Look Jewish: A Guide to Jews and Jewish Life*. Works on religious subjects were *Moses of Oxford* by Shmuel Boteach; and *Faith in the Future* and *Will We Have Jewish Grandchildren? Jewish Continuity and How to Achieve It* by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

Works on the arts included *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine, 1880-1948* by Jehoash Hirshberg.

Biographical and autobiographical studies included *Sacred Games* by Gerald Jacobs, a biography of Hungarian Jew Miklos Hammer; *Fromental Halevy* by Ruth Jordan; *Isaiah Berlin* by John Gray; and Berlin's own work, *The Magus of the North*, an introduction to the work of 18th-century German thinker Johann Georg Hamann; *A Lesser Child* by Karen Gershon; *Troublesome Boy* by Harold Rosen; *Summing Up: An Autobiography* by Yitzhak Shamir; *A Giant Among Giants*, in which Samuel C. Melnick tells the story of his grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel Kalman Melnick; *Overview*, a collection of occasional writings by Steven Berkoff; *Remembering My Good Friends* by George Weidenfeld; *As Much as I Dare* by Arnold

Wesker; *Intermittent Journals* by Dannie Abse; and *The Electronic Elephant: A Southern African Journey* by Dan Jacobson.

Two anthropological works were *Jewish Identities in the New Europe*, edited by Jonathan Webber; and *Eat and Be Satisfied: A Social History of Jewish Food* by John Cooper.

Personalia

Knighthoods went to Leslie Turnberg, professor of medicine at Manchester University and president of the Royal College of Physicians, for services to medicine; and Hans Singer, emeritus professor at Sussex University, for his contribution to economics. Nobel Prize winner Cesar Milstein, deputy director of Cambridge Medical Research Council's laboratory, was made a Companion of Honor.

Among British Jews who died in 1994 were Jack Brenner, secretary of the London Board for Shechitah and National Shechitah Council from 1948 to 1977, in January, aged 86; Jon Kimche, journalist and Middle East expert, in March, aged 83; Nakdimon Doniach, Hebrew scholar, in April, in Oxford, aged 89; Harry Farbey, AJEX general secretary, in April, in London, aged 72; Rudi Friedmann, communal worker and Zionist civil servant, in April, in London, aged 81; Clive Labovitch, Jewish communal worker and publisher, in April, aged 61; Alec Nove, Soviet scholar, in May, aged 78; Julius Emmanuel, prominent in "In Manchester" Jewish theater, in May, in Manchester, aged 78; Monty Modlyn, media personality and charity worker, in May, aged 72; Sidney Somper, Jewish educator, in June, aged 85; Stanley Segal, Jewish educator specializing in children with special needs, in June, aged 74; Shmuel Pinter, principal, London's Yesodey Hatorah schools for 40 years, in June, in London, aged 75; David Lewis, Oxford University professor of ancient history and Oxford communal figure, in July, in Oxford, aged 66; Elsie Lady Janner, outstanding Jewish communal worker, in July, in London, aged 88; Bernard, Lord Delfont of Stepney, one of the three Winogradsky (Grade) brothers powerful in the entertainment business, in July, in Angmering, Sussex, aged 84; Frank Muller, Institute of Jewish Affairs librarian for 25 years, in August, in London, aged 80; Rabbi Isaac Bernstein, controversial minister of Finchley Synagogue, in August, in London, aged 54; Elias Canetti, Nobel Prize winner in literature (1981), in August, in Zurich, aged 89; Chaim Raphael, Jewish historian, author of mystery stories under the nom de plume Jocelyn Davey, and former treasury spokesman, in October, in London, aged 86; Mary Mikardo, active socialist and Zionist, in October, in Manchester, aged 88; Marjorie Moos, Progressive Hebrew teacher, in November, in London, aged 100; Julian Symons, crime writer, in November, aged 82; Meshulam Aschkenazi, Hassidic rabbi, in November, in London, aged 92; Haskell Isaacs, medical doctor and oriental scholar, in November, in Cambridge, aged 80; Keith, Lord Joseph, former Conservative cabinet minister, in December, in London, aged 76.

British Jews who died in the first six months of 1995 included Lord Kagan,

clothing manufacturer and friend of former prime minister, Harold Wilson, in January, in London, aged 79; Harry Golombek, international chess expert, in January, in London, aged 83; Joseph Grizzard, journalist, in January, in London, aged 73; Sam Goldsmith, London editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 1958-75, in January, in London, aged 84; Miriam Karalova, Yiddish theater leading lady, in February, in London, aged 92; Bernard Olivestone, Federation of Synagogues staunch supporter, in March, aged 91; Salli Kesten, founder of the Judaica Philatelic Society, in March, in London, aged 84; Dorothy Stone, communal personality, in March, in London, aged 86; Sydney Simone, bandleader, in March, in London, aged 81; Jacob Weingreen, Hebrew scholar and grammarian, in April, in Dublin, aged 87; Arnold Abraham, Lord Goodman, British public servant and active patron of Jewish causes and Israel, in May, in London, aged 81; Nathan Rubin, former United Synagogue secretary, in May, in Guernsey, aged 74; Harold Berens, comedian, in May, in London, aged 92.

MIRIAM & LIONEL KOCHAN

The Netherlands

National Affairs

THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW—1994 and the first half of 1995—encompassed significant local and national elections and the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Holland from German occupation in World War II.

The elections for the Municipal Councils on March 12, 1994, revealed the declining popularity of both Labor (PvdA) and the Christian Democrats (CDA), partners in the government's ruling coalition for the previous four years. This trend was confirmed in the elections for the Second Chamber of Parliament on May 8, in which both Labor and the CDA lost considerably, Labor dropping from 49 to 37 seats, and the CDA from 54 to 34 seats, thus losing its place as the largest party. The center-left D'66 gained spectacularly, going from 12 to 24 seats, and the center-right Liberals (VVD) from 12 to 21 seats. The extreme right-wing Centrum Democrats went from one to three seats, and the more extreme-right C'86 got no seats at all.

With CDA and PvdA no longer holding a majority in the Second Chamber, a new coalition was formed, this time of PvdA, D'66, and the VVD, with former Labor deputy prime minister Willem Kok succeeding Ruud Lubbers (CDA) as premier, and Hans van Mierlo of D'66 as deputy prime minister and foreign minister. The composition of the new government was rather surprising, since the views of Labor and the VVD on social issues had always been diametrically opposed. Although the PvdA and D'66's campaign slogans called for change, in fact the policies of the new government were very similar to those of the previous one.

Three members of the new Second Chamber, of different parties, were born to two Jewish parents, but did not stress their Jewish identity. The new cabinet had no members of Jewish origin.

A lamentable event was the disappearance from political life of Ed van Thijn, a Jew, who had been a Labor interior minister in 1981–82, parliamentary Labor chairman in 1982–83, and mayor of Amsterdam since 1983, a position he greatly loved. When the then Labor minister of the interior died unexpectedly in January 1994, Labor leader Willem Kok urged Van Thijn to succeed her and to give up his position as Amsterdam's mayor. Van Thijn acceded to this appeal, but in May 1994, after the parliamentary elections, he and the minister of justice had to resign in connection with an alleged scandal in the Amsterdam police for which both men were held ultimately responsible. In the meantime, someone else had been appointed mayor of Amsterdam, and Van Thijn was not included by Kok in his new cabinet.

The economy in general showed favorable growth, with low inflation, though unemployment remained high, particularly among new immigrants.

The arrival of persons from Third World countries seeking political asylum in Holland continued unabated, in particular after July 1994, when Germany, Belgium, and France made admission to those countries more difficult.

V-E Day Anniversary

Plans for commemorating the end of World War II in May 1945 engendered debate over a role for Germany in the events. Fifty years after the end of the war, relations between the Netherlands and Germany were still problematic. Public-opinion polls showed that prejudice against Germans was prevalent even among young people and their parents born after 1945. At the same time, Germany was the main trading partner of the Netherlands.

In the end, German representatives were not invited to the memorial for the war dead on May 4, 1995, nor to the celebration of liberation on May 5, but were invited to an international symposium in The Hague on the future of Europe, on May 8.

German chancellor Helmut Kohl paid an official visit to Holland on May 22–23, 1995, primarily to Rotterdam, whose center had been destroyed by German Luftwaffe bombardment on May 13, 1940. In his address at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, he called the bombing a crime, as was the entire war unleashed by Hitler; he also mentioned the Jewish victims of the Nazis in Holland.

Numerous events marked the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands from Nazi occupation—ceremonies, exhibitions, symposia, a large number of books (most of them in Dutch), plays, TV and radio documentaries, and the like. Some dealt with local history, others with such aspects of the occupation as resistance, hiding, collaboration, Nazi reprisals, and various battles.

Many commemorative events paid special attention to the fate of the Jews, 80 percent of whom—over 102,000—perished at the hands of the Nazis. One of the themes dealt with was the inadequate help given by the large majority of the Dutch people. This point was stressed by Queen Beatrix in her official address in The Hague on May 5, as it was in her address in the Knesset in Jerusalem on March 28. In her speech on May 5 she said, *inter alia*: “In remembering the Second World War, a particular feeling of shame befits us that we did not do more for our Jewish fellow-citizens.” (See more about her address in the Knesset, below.) Another theme presented in many documentaries and programs was the hostility, or at least indifference, with which many of the survivors were met after their return from the camps or from hiding, and the difficulties they had regaining their possessions and property.

The Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation, RIOD, held an international symposium in Amsterdam, April 26–28, 1995, on “Memory and the Second World War in Comparative Perspective,” with the participation of several scholars from abroad.

(See also “Holocaust Commemoration,” below.)

Israel and the Middle East

Queen Beatrix and Prince-Consort Claus paid an official three-day visit to Israel, March 27–29, 1995, after having made a similar visit to Jordan in December 1994. This was the first official visit by a Dutch royal couple to Israel. Beatrix and Claus had visited when she was still crown princess, and her mother, Juliana, had visited when she was no longer queen, with her husband, Bernhard. But in view of the hostile relations between Israel and the Arab world, successive Dutch governments had thought it inadvisable for a Dutch head of state to visit Israel. After the signing of the Oslo agreement between Israel and the PLO, the objections vanished.

The highlight of the visit was Beatrix's address to the Knesset, which was simultaneously broadcast in full on Dutch TV. Referring to the fact that the large majority of the Jews of Holland had perished during World War II, she acknowledged that, while many Dutch non-Jews had tried to save Jews at the risk of their own lives, they were the exception rather than the rule. (This was intended to debunk the myth still current among Israelis and others that nearly the entire Dutch population had helped to save the Jews.) The same observation was made by Shevach Weiss, the Knesset chairman, in his welcoming address, and had been made the night before by President Ezer Weizmann at the official dinner for the royal pair.

In what was described as a private visit, Beatrix and Claus, at their explicit wish, toured the holy places in the Old City of Jerusalem—the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Al Aqsa Mosque, and the Western Wall. At the same time, Dutch foreign minister Hans van Mierlo, who accompanied the royal couple during the official part of the trip, visited Yasir Arafat in Gaza and later met with Faisal Husseini in Jerusalem. The latter had wanted the meeting to take place in Orient House—the PLO's headquarters—but the Israeli authorities objected. The meeting took place at the private residence of the Dutch representative to Jericho, who resides in Abu Tor, on the border between west and east Jerusalem.

The Netherlands Department for Development Aid to Third World countries paid for 20 Palestinian policemen from the Gaza Strip to undergo training in Holland in peaceful methods of riot control. It also donated Fl. 6 million for their maintenance in the Gaza Strip, as well as Fl. 6 million for the Palestinian Authority and Fl. 1 million for Palestinian universities, primarily Bir Zeit in the West Bank.

PLO head Yasir Arafat visited Holland on February 17–18, 1994, primarily to meet with Nelson Mandela, who was in Holland on an official visit. Arafat visited Prime Minister Lubbers, whom he asked to mediate between Israel and the PLO, and addressed a meeting of Dutch industrialists, whom he asked to invest in the autonomous areas.

The commission of the Netherlands Aviation Council (RLD) investigating the cause or causes of the disaster in which an El Al Boeing 747 cargo aircraft crashed over the Bijlmer District of southeast Amsterdam on October 4, 1992, published its conclusions on February 24, 1995. The main cause, it found, was the breaking off of engine number 3, which in turn dragged with it engine number 4. Israel was

satisfied with this conclusion. Boeing took full responsibility; 43 persons had lost their lives (including four Israelis—three crew members and a passenger) and four had been seriously wounded. Boeing paid damages, some extremely high, to 600 claimants, many of them recent immigrants. A Dutch journalist, Vincent Dekker, who had followed the disaster from the beginning, published a book titled *Going Down, Going Down*—the last words of El Al pilot Yitzhak Fuchs before crashing—in which he accused El Al of hiding part of the truth.

At the end of April 1995, the Netherlands ended its participation in the Multinational Force of Observers in the Sinai, which it had maintained since 1982 with communications personnel and military police. During these 13 years, some 2,400 Dutchmen had served in Sinai.

Anti-Semitism and Extremism

The extreme right, as represented by the Center Democrats (CD), CP'86, and the Nederland Volksfront—the latter two split-offs of the CD—were, as shown by the above-mentioned election results, relatively unimportant and far less influential than the Front National in France and the Volksfront of Filip Dewinter in Belgium. The CP'86, which was much more extreme than the CD, tried to stir up anti-immigrant sentiment through street demonstrations and marches. In May 1995, the Hague district court sentenced five members of the executive of CP'86 to fines of Fl. 10,000 each for racial discrimination and inciting xenophobia, but did not ban the party as such.

No serious cases of anti-Semitism occurred during the period under review. Neither the STIBA (Foundation for Combating Anti-Semitism) nor the CIDI (Center for Information and Documentation on Israel), which was also concerned with anti-Semitism, found much occasion for taking action.

Considerable attention was paid to a controversial book by Evelien Gans, *Goyish Envy, Jewish Narcissism*. Gans, a woman of Jewish origins with strong left-wing leanings who had recently regained interest in her Jewish roots, charged that there was considerable anti-Semitism in Holland, largely inspired by non-Jewish envy of Jews enjoying and exploiting their status as victims. A large part of her book was devoted to the columnist Theo van Gogh, whose writings in various media habitually ridiculed persons of Jewish origin, primarily the youngish Jewish author Leon de Winter, who had brought lawsuits against van Gogh on and off for the past ten years.

Van Gogh in turn attacked Gans in his column in the weekly of the University of Amsterdam, *Folia*, using offensive language that led to his dismissal from the paper. Van Gogh continued, however, as a columnist for other media, including television, claiming his right to “freedom of expression.”

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Netherlands Ashkenazic community (NIK) reported its membership at the end of 1994 at 5,620, against 5,703 at the end of 1993. Three fifths, or 3,032 members, were living in the Amsterdam area, 387 in the Rotterdam area, and 382 in the Hague area; the remainder were scattered in 9 middle-sized and 21 very small communities. The membership of the Sephardic community, largely based in Amsterdam, was about five hundred, including recent immigrants from Middle Eastern countries. The membership of the Liberal Jewish community (LJG), with six congregations, was about 2,500.

Since the total number of Jews or persons of Jewish origin in Holland was estimated at between 25,000 and 30,000, this meant that only about one-third belonged to the organized religious community. Some 10 percent or so were members of general Jewish groups, such as Maccabi or WIZO. Still others limited their Jewish contacts to making use of the services of Jewish welfare organizations to apply for benefits to war victims.

Communal Affairs

Within the NIK, Rabbi Lody van de Kamp, who had been a communal rabbi of The Hague since 1981 and of Amsterdam since 1988, became the rabbi of the Ashkenazic community in the Rotterdam area in August 1994. The board of the Amsterdam Ashkenazic community (NIHS) decided not to appoint a third rabbi as Van de Kamp's successor but to leave the number of communal rabbis at two. Sam Behar, age 62, a member of the Sephardic congregation and a former army chaplain, was appointed to do pastoral work for 12 hours a week.

The stability of the NIK and the NIHS was threatened by a rift between a small group of ultra-Orthodox Jews, led by former chief rabbi Meir Just and communal rabbi Frank Lewis, and the majority, which supported the Orthodox character of the community but was more tolerant of different views. The conflict was expressed in various issues, one being the institution of more stringent conditions for the conversion of a non-Jewish partner in a mixed marriage.

The conflict between Rabbi Just and the executive of the NIK over the funds received by the chief rabbinate for supervision of kosher slaughter was resolved in 1995. Rabbi Just had claimed that he was entitled to use these funds at his own discretion, specifically to finance a preparatory yeshivah for two 14-year-old boys who later were to attend a yeshivah abroad. The parties agreed that the money belonged to the NIK as such and not to the chief rabbinate, but that the NIK should use it mainly for strengthening religious activities among Dutch Jewry (though not to educate the two boys).

Rabbi Shmuel Katzmann, age 27, originally from New York and a son-in-law of

Rabbi Isaac Vorst of Amsterdam, was appointed a second Ashkenazi rabbi in The Hague, primarily in charge of the Scheveningen congregation and the recently opened Jewish old-age home there. Katzmann and the earlier appointed rabbi, Pinchas Meijers, and Rabbi Vorst all belonged to Chabad-Lubavitch. Meijers and Katzmann both received their training at Chabad institutions abroad.

In Amsterdam, the small synagogue in Linnaeus Street in the eastern part of the city was closed down for lack of worshippers. Most of the congregants had moved to the south of the city, where the suburb of Amstelveen now had the main concentration of Jews. For the same reason, the Sephardic community bought a house in Amstelveen where services could be held. The Sephardic community appointed 24-year-old Mordechai Enekar, born in Morocco, as assistant rabbi. He received his training at the Gateshead Yeshivah in England.

The David Henriques de Castro Foundation was established to raise money for the restoration of the tombstones in the nearly 400-year-old Sephardic cemetery at Ouderkerk, southeast of Amsterdam. Henriques de Castro was the author of a monumental work on the tombstones of this burial ground, written a century ago.

A conflict arose in the Liberal Jewish synagogue in Amsterdam about the wearing of a *tallit* (prayer shawl) by women during services. A number of women, largely from the United States or otherwise newcomers to the community, had introduced this custom, to which the majority of the established members objected. It was agreed that Rabbi David Lilienthal would help decide each case individually.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Liberal Jewish monthly *Levend Joods Geloof*, a symposium was held in Amsterdam in January 1995 on the theme "Europe, A Many-coloured Coat," on the contributions Jews have made to European civilization.

The new building of the Cheider, the strictly Orthodox Jewish school, was officially dedicated on February 2, 1994, at an impressive ceremony attended by Princess Margriet. It had been unofficially in use since November 1993.

A new Jewish old-age home, the Mr. L.E. Visser Home, was opened in Scheveningen near The Hague, to replace the Jewish old-age home in Rotterdam. It contains a synagogue that also serves residents and tourists in this seaside resort and replaces the former synagogue at the Harstenhoekway, which was closed down. Many months after the official opening of the Visser Home, some 20 rooms were still unoccupied for lack of candidates.

JMW opened a second house in Amsterdam for the temporary accommodation of Jews applying for asylum in Holland whose applications had not yet been acted on. At the same time, beginning in December 1994, JMW ceased giving legal assistance to applicants for asylum in Holland who came from Russia and claimed to be Jews but were not, having made use of forged papers or of papers they bought.

WIZO Holland was host to the European WIZO conference, December 11-12, 1994, which had as its theme "Equal Rights for Women." With funds collected in Holland, WIZO opened a center in the Arab village of Rihaniyah in Galilee.

The European branch of the International Council of Jewish Women held a

conference in Amsterdam in the Liberal Jewish Center in March 1995, with the participation of women from 22 European countries, on the theme "Jewish Identity Under Pressure."

Holocaust Commemoration

The central Jewish commemoration of the end of World War II and the liberation of Holland, organized jointly by the three Jewish communities—Ashkenazic, Sephardic, and Liberal—was held in the Sephardic Esnoga in Amsterdam on Sunday afternoon May 7, 1995, almost 50 years to the day that the first synagogue service in liberated Amsterdam took place in the same sanctuary, which, as a protected monument, had been left untouched by the Germans. Those taking part then, with the late Rabbi Justus Tal conducting the service, had just emerged from their hiding places in the Amsterdam area, largely still unaware of the fate of their dear ones.

The Esnoga was also chosen for the present event because it is the largest synagogue building in Amsterdam—to its 1,100 seats were added benches so that overall it could accommodate 1,400. Tickets were no longer available a fortnight before the event.

Although *Yizkor* and *Kaddish* were recited, as well as prayers for the royal family and for the State of Israel, this was not a religious service. Former chief rabbi Meir Just had objected to participating in a religious service together with representatives of the Liberal Jewish community and had even forbidden Chief Cantor Hans Bloemendal to officiate. The solution found was to have Bloemendal sing as a soloist in the synagogue choir, but not as *hazzan*. The dispute received much publicity, in the general as well as the Jewish press.

The impressive ceremony was attended by Prince-Consort Claus, by Crown Prince Willem-Alexander, by Premier Willem Kok, who was one of the speakers, and by the Israeli ambassador. The entire event lasted over an hour and was shown in full on Dutch television. Other speakers were Rabbi Barend Drukarch, of the Sephardic community, who as a young man had survived in hiding in Amsterdam, and former mayor of Amsterdam Ed van Thijn.

The commemoration of Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) on April 26, 1995, took place, as it had for many years, in the courtyard of the Hollandsche Schouwburg, the former Amsterdam theater that was used by the Germans from September 1942 to September 1944 as a collecting point for Jews who had been rounded up and were awaiting transport to Westerbork, a concentration camp. The annual ceremony, which is organized jointly by several Jewish congregations and organizations and is always attended by representatives of the civil authorities, including the present mayor of Amsterdam, Schelto Patijn, was unusually well attended this time.

A few weeks earlier, on April 12, a ceremony took place at Westerbork, in the east of the country, to commemorate its liberation exactly 50 years earlier by

Canadian soldiers. Among those present were survivors, representatives of the Israeli and German embassies, and Crown Prince Willem-Alexander. At the time of liberation only 800 Jews were still in the camp. The other nearly 100,000 who had stayed there at one time or another had all been deported to extermination camps in the east, and only 6,000 of them survived. Also memorialized were the 245 Gypsies who in June 1943 had been rounded up and taken to Westerbork and then to the east, of whom only a few dozen survived.

OTHER EVENTS

In connection with the 50th anniversary of liberation, a number of memorial tablets were unveiled for local Jews who had perished. These were, among others, in The Hague at the site of a former Jewish center; in Dinxperlo, at the site of the former synagogue; in Bois-le-Duc, for the pupils of the Jewish school who had perished; and in the village of Gennep.

In November 1994, the small synagogue of Middelburg, which had been destroyed 50 years earlier by a British shell during the battle for the island of Walcheren, was renovated, thanks to the efforts of a local, largely non-Jewish, committee. As very few Jews now lived in the entire province of Zeeland, it would also be used as a cultural center. On January 30, 1995, the 18th-century synagogue of Amersfoort, which had been in bad repair and been renovated, likewise largely through local efforts, was rededicated.

Among many exhibitions related to the war were "Children in Westerbork" at the Westerbork Center; "Rebel mijn hart" (Rebel, my heart) at the Resistance Museum in Amsterdam, devoted to artists who lost their lives during the German occupation either in the resistance or because they were Jews; and an exhibition of art by Art Spiegelman for his *Maus* books at the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam.

A number of documentaries on the suffering of the Jews from Holland during the years 1940–45 were presented by various Dutch broadcasting companies, both on TV and radio. Some had been shown earlier, such as these two by Willy Lindwer: *The Last Seven Months of Anne Frank* and *Child in Two Worlds*, about the reactions of Jewish children to their stay with non-Jewish foster parents.

A new production by Willy Lindwer was *The Fatal Dilemma*, a balanced look at the much maligned "Joodsche Raad" (Jewish Council) that was established by order of the Germans and that was accused after the war of having collaborated and cooperated in the deportation of most Jews from Holland. A book on the subject was published simultaneously.

Settela, a documentary by Aad Wagenaar, a journalist, contended that the girl in a well-known picture—wearing a head scarf and looking out of a train wagon in Westerbork just as the doors were about to close—was not Jewish but a Gypsy girl, Settela Steinbach. On June 16, 1944, she was deported from Westerbork, together with 244 other Gypsies. The picture was a still from a film about Wester-

work made at the order of the Nazi camp commander by the German-Jewish filmmaker Rudolf Breslauer, who himself was deported on September 4, 1944.

Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* was the most popular film in Holland in 1994. It was launched at a gala premiere, the proceeds of which went to the Anne Frank Foundation to help fund the worldwide showing of its documentary *The World of Anne Frank*.

The Survivors of the Shoah Project of the Spielberg Visual History Foundation, which records the personal stories of survivors, was launched in Holland in February 1995. Some 120 interviewees were selected from 200 applicants, most of them non-Jewish. The goal was to interview about a thousand survivors from Holland, but by the end of May only 85 persons had shown an interest in being included.

The Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem continued to honor Righteous Gentiles in Holland. The ceremony held on June 6, 1995, at which 19 awards were presented, 10 of them posthumously, had a very special character, because of the 50th anniversary of liberation. It took place in the Sephardic Esnoga in Amsterdam, which was filled to capacity, and was jointly organized by the Israeli embassy, the Ashkenazic, Sephardic, and Liberal Jewish communities, and the Friends of Yad Vashem Society. The awards were presented by the director of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, A. Shalev. The speakers were Minister of Defense Joris Voorhoeve and Rabbi Benyamin Jacobs. A special feature of the event was a video presentation in which each of the rescuers, or one of his or her children, and one of the Jews he or she had helped to survive, told of their shared experiences.

The much disputed proposal to give a Yad Vashem award to Alfons Zündler, the German guard at the Hollandse Schouwburg in 1942–43 who had helped several Jews to escape but who had been a member of the SS, continued to arouse protest from an ad hoc action committee. Yad Vashem eventually decided to send him a letter of thanks but not to give him an award.

At the end of April 1995, a reunion took place in Amsterdam between Luba Tryczynskaja, now living in Miami, Florida, and the 50 or so Jewish children she had helped to survive in Bergen Belsen, after their parents had been deported from there in December 1994. "The angel of Bergen Belsen," as she was called, received the Silver Medal of the Municipality of Amsterdam.

On May 7, 1995, prior to the central Jewish commemoration of VE-Day in the Esnoga, the Genootschap voor de Joodse Wetenschap, the Jewish Historical Society, organized a symposium on "Dutch Jewry 1945–2020," which was attended by some 180 persons. The symposium was also held to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the society, which was established in 1919 by a small group of Jewish scholars engaged in Jewish studies. The society was now open to all interested Jewish university graduates and had a membership of about 350. Meetings were held about eight times a year.

The Jewish women's organization Deborah, in connection with the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of liberation, organized a symposium on "Jewish Women in the Resistance Movement."

Other Holocaust-Related Matters

Following the lead of the Second Chamber of Parliament, the Senate voted on July 7, 1994, to cease giving permanent payments under the Law for Payments to War Victims (WUV) to members of the second and later generations, those born after World War II. Financial support for psychiatric treatment would be continued, however. The Jewish Social Welfare Foundation (JMW), the Organization of Second Generation Victims, and the three main Jewish communities protested, as did the Organization of Jewish War Victims from Holland in Israel, Ayalah.

JMW began organizing programs for Jews still feeling the effects, in one way or another, of their experiences during the years 1940–45. In March 1994, it offered a well-attended conference on “The Jewish Child During the War,” for members of the first, second, and third generations. In May it presented a conference in The Hague for the same constituency on “Speaking About Silence,” which was attended by some 400 persons and was opened by the minister of social welfare. The conference received much attention in the media.

The Anne Frank Foundation, which is not a Jewish institution, received permission from the Amsterdam municipality to expand the Anne Frank House by demolishing some adjoining houses. The Anne Frank House had become much too small to accommodate the thousands of visitors a day (some 600,000 a year), with long queues always waiting outside. The costs of the reconstruction, which were estimated at some \$10 million, would be defrayed partly by the Amsterdam municipality and partly, it was expected, by sponsors.

Culture

The Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam continued to receive a large number of visitors. In the period under review, it opened one semi-permanent exhibition, which would be on view for the next five years, on the participation of Jews in the economic life of the Netherlands since 1796, and four temporary exhibits. One offered some 40 paintings by the German-Jewish painter Felix Nussbaum (1904–1944), organized with the cooperation of the Kulturgeschichtliches Museum in Osnabruck, where he was born and grew up. His parents moved to Amsterdam after *Kristallnacht* in 1938 and were eventually deported; the artist and his wife lived in Brussels, from where, in 1944, he too was deported. Another temporary exhibition was of sketches by Art Spiegelman for his cartoon novels *Maus I and II*, and a third consisted of photographs of monuments and posters created by Dutch-Jewish artist Ralph Prins, born in 1926, both for Jewish memorials and for Amnesty International.

The fourth and most important of the temporary exhibitions was titled “The Marginal Great,” featuring works of some 60 Dutch-Jewish painters who were active between 1845 and 1940. The works were either on loan for the exhibition or were in the possession of the museum but not usually shown to the public. There

were paintings by both well-known and lesser-known painters, and only some of the works had explicit Jewish subjects.

An International Jewish Music Festival was held in Amsterdam, November 16–29, 1994, with special attention to klezmer music. Among the performers was the American Klezmer Conservatory Band.

Publications

A large number of books published in 1994 and early 1995, nearly all of them in Dutch only, were personal accounts by Jews of their wartime experiences.

Two new noteworthy books not related to the Holocaust, written entirely or partly in English, were *From Peddlers to Factory Owners: Jewish Enterprises in the Netherlands 1796–1940*, edited by Hetty Berg and others, a companion to the exhibition in the Jewish Historical Museum; and *Treasures of Jewish Booklore*, containing 50 contributions by specialists in their own fields on rare books in the possession of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, the Hebraica and Judaica department of the Amsterdam University Library. The magnificently produced, illustrated volume was published on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Leeser Rosenthal (1794–1868), whose library forms the nucleus of the present Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana and was presented by his heirs to the Amsterdam municipality.

Geoffrey Wigoder's *Joodse Cultuur*, a richly illustrated work, appeared in Dutch translation before its publication in the original English.

Popular novelist Leon de Winter was invited by the Commission for the Promotion of the Dutch Book (CPNB) to write the "Book Week Present" for 1995, a 96-page paperback given free of charge to anyone spending a specified amount during the annual Book Week. Like previous works, his new novella, *Serenade*, deals with a Jewish theme. It is about a Jewish woman, the mother of the "I" who is more or less the alter ego of the author, a survivor of the Holocaust, who suddenly disappears into Bosnia where she wants to help the victims—a most improbable plot in which sex plays a large part. Despite some protests over the sexual content, the Ministry of Education distributed 200,000 copies to high-school students—linking it to the 50th anniversary of Dutch liberation.

Personalia

Gerhard L. Durlacher received the 1995 Anne Frank Prize of the Anne Frank Fund in Basle as well as the AKO Prize (Dutch booksellers) for his novel *Quarantaine*, based on his experiences on returning from the concentration camps to Holland. A sociologist by profession, who began writing about his wartime experiences when he was in his fifties, he was also awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Amsterdam.

Otto Treumann, aged 75, a graphic designer, was honored by the Foundation for the Graphic Arts for his life's work. In addition to commissions for non-Jewish

organizations, he designed a "logo" for El Al and designs for many Jewish organizations in Holland, such as the Jewish National Fund.

In the Queen's Birthday List for 1995, the award of Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau was given to, among others, Prof. Hans Bloemendal, chief cantor of the Ashkenazic congregation of Amsterdam; Mrs. R. ("Ted") Musaph (née Andriess), inter alia chairwoman of the board of governors of the Jewish Historical Museum; and Rabbi Avraham Soetendorp, the Liberal rabbi of The Hague.

Mrs. Anna Cohn (née Erwteman) became chairwoman of the European branch of WIZO. Jaap Meijers and Herman Menco were succeeded as chairman and honorary treasurer of the United Israel Campaign by Joseph Elburg and Dick Bruinsma, respectively.

Among prominent Dutch Jews who died in 1994 and the first half of 1995 were Prof. Ivo Samkalden, a former minister of justice and from 1967 to 1977 mayor of Amsterdam, aged 82; Manuel Ph. Menco, for 23 years chairman of the Jewish community of Groningen and at the time of his death a member of the executive of the Netherlands Ashkenazi community, aged 68; Edna Rafaelowitz, Polish-born, with her late husband one of the champions of Yiddish in Holland, aged 82; Hermann Bleich, Polish-born journalist who came to Holland in 1938 and after 1945 became Dutch correspondent for many Swiss and German papers and for the Israeli *Ma'ariv* as well as chairman of the Association of Foreign Correspondents in Holland, aged 78; and in Israel, Aaron Schuster, chief rabbi of Amsterdam from 1953 to 1972, a founder of the Conference of European Rabbis, aged 89.

HENRIETTE BOAS

Italy

National Affairs

ITALIAN PUBLIC LIFE IN 1994 and early 1995 was marked by tempest and turmoil. Italians went to the polls in the wake of three years of corruption investigations and political upheaval that destroyed the political parties that had ruled the country since World War II and disgraced numerous luminaries. Parliamentary elections were held March 27, 1994, coinciding with the first day of Passover. Following Jewish and other protests, state authorities extended voting until after sundown on March 28 so that observant Jews could vote.

The elections caused grave concern in the Jewish community. They brought a stunning victory to a center-right "Freedom Alliance" coalition headed by media magnate Silvio Berlusconi. Berlusconi, who only entered politics in January 1994, allied his new Forza Italia party with the federalist Northern League and the National Alliance—a new right-wing party based on the neofascist Italian Social Movement (MSI) and led by MSI leader Gianfranco Fini. National Alliance candidate Alessandra Mussolini, granddaughter of Il Duce, trounced her opposition to win a Parliament seat in Naples. Berlusconi's 25-member cabinet included five members from the National Alliance, three of whom were MSI members. This marked the first time in postwar Europe that members of a neofascist party entered government, and the development drew protest and warning from many quarters within Italy and abroad. Italian officials went out of their way to play down this concern and reiterate their belief in the democratic process. In May, for example, Foreign Minister Antonio Martino met with Jewish leaders in Washington to reassure them that the government was not extremist.

The new president of the Chamber of Deputies, Irene Pivetti, also caused some initial concern. A fundamentalist Catholic, Pivetti had been cited for anti-Semitic writings in the Institute of Jewish Affairs' 1993 *Anti-Semitism World Report*. Two months after she took office in April, Pivetti met with Rome chief rabbi Elio Toaff and Israeli ambassador Avi Pazner, who also met with Foreign Minister Martino.

In August, Labor Minister Clemente Mastella sparked accusations of anti-Semitism against Berlusconi's government when newspapers quoted him as blaming the weakness of the lira at least partly on New York Jewish financiers. "The presence of the National Alliance in the government worries New York's Jewish lobby," Mastella was quoted as saying. "Jewish high finance still does not get the distinction between the old [neo-fascist] Italian Social Movement and the National Alliance. We should explain to them that the evolutionary line carried forward by Gianfranco Fini is increasingly distant from the old concept of a static and nostalgic right."

Mastella apologized for his remarks, saying that they had been taken out of context and misinterpreted by the media. He had what the Labor Ministry termed a “long and friendly conversation” with Chief Rabbi Toaff to “[clarify] the sense of the words which when distorted provoked an unjustified row.” Toaff accepted the explanation but warned of what he believed was rising anti-Semitism in Italy.

Berlusconi was forced to resign in December, after being notified that he was under investigation for corruption and after the Northern League pulled out of the coalition. A government of technocrats headed by banker Lamberto Dini, which did not include neofascists, took over. Meanwhile, in a national convention in late January 1995, Fini formally cut National Alliance links with the MSI and declared the National Alliance a mainstream rightist party that rejected racism and extremism. Some hard-line MSI members refused to go along and maintained their own small party.

Jews tended to remain skeptical of the change in the National Alliance and wary of Fini, however. In February 1995, the Martin Buber-Jews for Peace group, a political-cultural organization dedicated to combating racism and anti-Semitism and promoting Jewish cultural activities and Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, issued an open letter to American Jewish groups urging them not to meet with Fini if he traveled to the United States.

In regional elections in April 1995, right-wing forces, including the National Alliance, did far worse than expected, with center-left candidates scoring impressive victories. Jewish leaders expressed satisfaction at this.

Israel and the Middle East

The dramatic changes in Italy’s political system and ruling elite in the wake of the wide-ranging corruption scandals combined to create a closer relationship between Italy and Israel. The foreign policy of Italy’s previous governments, dominated by the Christian Democratic Party, was overtly pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian, and the left-wing Communist opposition was also strongly anti-Zionist.

The evolution of a new political leadership—paralleling the positive evolution of the Middle East peace process—influenced a change in foreign policy direction to one noticeably friendlier to Israel. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres both visited Italy in 1994. In the late spring and early summer of 1995, Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli arranged to host secret Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in several locations in Italy.

Vatican-Israel Relations

Events unfolded rapidly following the agreement between Israel and the Vatican to establish full diplomatic relations, signed December 30, 1993. Three weeks after the agreement was signed, Archbishop Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo was named the Vatican’s first envoy to Israel, and veteran Israeli diplomat Shmuel

Hadas was named Israel's first envoy to the Holy See. Italian-born Lanza di Montezemelo, 68, had considerable experience in the Middle East and at the time of his nomination was serving as the Holy See's Apostolic Delegate to Jerusalem and Palestine and as the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Cyprus.

In early February 1994, a huge interfaith conference brought 750 Christian and Jewish leaders from 92 nations to Jerusalem, among them senior Vatican officials. Israeli prime minister Rabin met with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican in March 1994 and asked him to use the Vatican's influence with the PLO and Arab states to get the Middle East peace process back on track. At the meeting Rabin also renewed Israel's invitation for the pope to visit Israel. No specific dates were mentioned, but a Vatican spokesman said the pope accepted the invitation "with the sincere hope that circumstances will permit him to make this desired visit." Foreign Minister Shimon Peres also reiterated the invitation during a meeting with the pope at the Vatican in November 1994. During 1994 and early 1995, John Paul several times said he wanted to visit Israel and the Holy Land and walk in biblical footsteps, particularly as the year 2000 approached.

Full diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel were finally formalized in June 1994, and Lanza di Montezemelo and Hadas were confirmed as ambassadors. Two weeks later, the Dead Sea Scrolls went on display at the Vatican, marking the first time the scrolls had been exhibited in Europe, and the first time that an official Israeli exhibition had gone on show at the Vatican.

Meanwhile, the Vatican also improved its relations with the Arab world. The Vatican established diplomatic relations with Jordan on March 3, 1994. In mid-January 1994, a delegation from the Palestine Liberation Organization met with senior officials at the Vatican in a move to open more regular contacts between them, which led to formal diplomatic ties being established in October. The links fell short, however, of full diplomatic relations.

Racism and Anti-Semitism

Racist attacks, skinhead activities, and manifestations of anti-Semitism worried Jews and non-Jews alike. Concern was also raised by a form of revisionism manifested in a growing trend to depict wartime fascists as victims on a par with the victims or opponents of fascism. The reevaluation of fascism and its legacy became a subject of widespread debate in the media and in political and intellectual circles.

In December 1994, for example, an organization of fascist war veterans put up about 1,000 posters bearing a large portrait of Mussolini on Milan walls. This was to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Italian Social Republic, Mussolini's fascist puppet state set up in 1944 in northern Italy after the Allies took over the southern part of Italy. The placing of the posters was approved by city officials but sparked protest from opposition parties. Independent Milan city councilman Nando Dalla Chiesa branded the posters an example of the "irresponsible institutional legitimization of those who were accomplices of the tragedy of the

Holocaust.” In March 1995, a group of 11 Italian historians touched off a related debate in some intellectual circles by writing a letter to *La Stampa* newspaper defending the right of Holocaust deniers and revisionists to publish their beliefs, calling it a free-speech issue. The letter was in response to the decision by the French government, following other governments, to ban such publications.

Numerous incidents of racist violence and vandalism and skinhead activity were publicly condemned by Jewish leaders. In February 1994, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI) issued a strong denunciation of “the acts of racism against immigrants and refugees that take place almost every day in Italy.” Most racist incidents involved dark-skinned immigrants, but there were also some specifically anti-Semitic episodes. In one such episode, in early January 1994, a local priest in Rome, Don Curzio Nitoglia, delivered a sermon with a strong anti-Semitic message during a service held to commemorate the killing of three neofascist youths 16 years earlier. The priest’s remarks were in sharp contrast to the overall positive developments in Jewish-Christian relations and came just a few days after Israel and the Vatican signed an agreement paving the way to full diplomatic relations. Also in January, a Rome court sentenced a 22-year-old youth to four months in jail for anti-Semitic vandalism amounting to “apologizing for genocide,” then released him on conditional liberty. His conviction was for actions in November 1992, when a group of skinheads stuck up adhesive signs bearing a star of David and slogans such as “Zionists out of Italy” on a number of shops belonging to Jews in a Rome neighborhood. A Norwegian Jewish woman living in the central Italian town of Assisi was attacked twice—once in August 1994 and again in January 1995—in assaults apparently motivated by anti-Semitism.

In May 1994, a rally by 300 skinheads was held in the northern city of Vicenza with the authorization of Vicenza’s police chief, prompting outrage and protest both locally and nationwide. The police chief and another official were removed from their positions. One week after the skinhead rally, about 3,000 people staged an antiskinhead demonstration in Vicenza. The demonstration, however, was marred by violent incidents between ultra-left-wing demonstrators and rightists, despite a heavy police presence.

In 1995, a bar owner in Bolzano in northern Italy touched off a furor by selling bottles of red wine labeled with the pictures of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Bolzano is the capital of Italy’s Alto Adige, or South Tyrol, region, which was part of Austria until World War I and has a mixed German and Italian-speaking population. The South Tyrolean People’s Party, which represents German speakers in Alto Adige, tried to have the bar owner prosecuted for selling his Mussolini wine, but a judge ruled that the wine label did not contravene Italian laws against fascist propaganda.

Researchers at the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDEC) in Milan kept careful track of racist and anti-Semitic trends, manifestations, and publications. A research center largely devoted to studies and documentation on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism in Italy, CDEC marked its 40th year of operation in 1995.

Nazi War Criminals

The case of Erich Priebke and efforts by Italian authorities to have him extradited to Italy from Argentina to face war-crimes charges was a developing issue of major concern. Priebke, an SS captain and deputy to Herbert Kappler, the Gestapo chief during the Nazi occupation of Rome, was tracked down in early May 1994 in the Argentine Andean town of San Carlo Bariloche by ABC News. Italy asked that Priebke, 81, be extradited on charges of involvement in the massacre at the Ardeatine Caves of 335 Romans, 75 of them Jews, carried out in March 1944 in reprisal for a partisan attack that killed 33 German storm troopers in Rome. Priebke escaped from a British prisoner-of-war camp in 1948, just before he was to appear before a war-crimes tribunal, and fled to Argentina. As of May 1995, Argentine authorities said Priebke would be extradited, but no date was set. In the wake of the Priebke case, an Italian magazine claimed in late May 1994 that nine Nazi war criminals either currently lived or had lived at one time in Italy with impunity since World War II.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

Some 35,000–40,000 Jews lived in Italy. There were more than a score of organized Jewish communities, only one of them, Naples, south of Rome. Most Italian Jews lived in the country's two main cities: 15,000 in Rome and 10,000 in Milan. The other communities ranged from a few dozen to just over 1,000 Jews, and a number of other Jews lived scattered in towns and cities without organized community facilities.

Communal Affairs

In July 1994, delegates from all Italian Jewish communities gathered in Rome for the Congress of the Rome-based Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI), the umbrella organization of Italian Jewry. The congress is held every four years to elect officials and chart Italian Jewry's official policy for the next four years: policy within the community, relations with Italian society at large, and formal relations with state institutions. The three-day congress was given wide coverage in the Italian media. Italian president Oscar Luigi Scalfaro opened the meetings with a speech underlining the importance of Jewish culture in Italian life.

Delegates elected a new council and retained Tullia Zevi as president of the union. The first woman president of the organization, she had served in that office since 1983.

Delegates unanimously passed a resolution calling for vigilance against right-wing extremism and neofascism in Italy and urging international Jewish organizations to

consider local Jewish opinion before meeting with right-wing Italian politicians. The resolution warned that "the theory of historical revisionism today finds grounds for legitimization in the creation of a 'gray zone' in which the struggle for liberation and Nazi-Fascism, and thus democracy and barbarism, are being placed on the same plane."

Other resolutions dealt with financial matters and fund-raising; urged decentralization of UCEI activities; reiterated support for Israel in the peace process; recommended a solution be found for small communities that have no rabbi and few Jewish facilities; proposed plans for enhancing Jewish cultural and educational activities; and urged greater collaboration between the Beth Dins (rabbinical courts) in Milan and Rome, particularly on such matters as dietary laws and conversion. Resolutions also dealt with the problems (financial and other) of safeguarding the Jewish cultural heritage in Italy, suggested compilation of a catalogue of Jewish artistic and cultural treasures, and urged formal coordination among the growing number of Jewish museums in Italy.

The year 1994 saw the growth of Jewish community centers in Italy, particularly the center in Rome, which programmed many activities, courses, lectures, and social events. There was also a strengthening of relations and activities linking Italian Jews and other Jewish communities in the Mediterranean region. This took place within the framework of a Mediterranean regional group sponsored by the European Council of Jewish Communities and initiated at the end of 1993.

Numerous Jewish organizations of all types operated in Italy. These included WIZO, ORT, Hashomer Hatzair, Keren Hayesod-Hamagbith (UJA), Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael (Jewish National Fund), the Union of Young Zionists, the Italian Jewish Youth Federation, the Italian Sephardic Federation, and the Martin Buber-Jews for Peace group, a politically active organization of young adults.

In addition, there were organizations specifically dedicated to relations between Italy and Italians, Jewish or not, and Israel. The Federation of Italy-Israel Associations, founded in 1989 to spread knowledge of Israel in Italy, included 50 chapters throughout the country, with a total of 2,000 members. The Europe-Israel Association, formed informally during the Gulf War to disseminate correct information about Israel, was officially constituted in 1992. It sponsored a wide range of events and initiatives aimed at making Israel and the Jewish experience better known in Italy.

Principal Jewish publications included *Shalom*, the magazine of the Rome Jewish community; *The Bulletin* of the Milan Jewish community; *Ha Kehilah*, the newsletter of the Turin Jewish community; and *Rassegna Mensile d'Israel*, an intellectual and literary monthly published in Rome, which celebrated its 70th year of publication in 1995.

Italian Jewish communities faced a number of challenges, many of them related to the small size of the community as a whole. An officer of the Rome Jewish community described assimilation and intermarriage as a "serious problem," but said that many children of mixed marriages were brought up as Jews. (The intermar-

riage rate was about 50 percent, comparable to the rest of Europe.) In March 1994, about 70 people from European countries and Israel took part in a strictly kosher Jewish singles weekend at a Milan hotel, organized by Armonia, Italy's first Jewish matchmaking organization, set up 18 months earlier. Among many other Jewish youth activities sponsored by communities and organizations was a gathering of 70 young people from Rome, Milan, and Barcelona at a thermal resort in Tuscany, April 29-May 1, 1995, for a seminar on "Friendship and Sexuality," organized by the Jewish community of Milan. Speakers included a rabbi, a doctor, and a psychologist.

Religion

The ritual orientation of Italian Jews was Orthodox, with communities divided among Ashkenazic, Sephardic, and Italian Jewish rites. Many of the Sephardim in today's communities, particularly in Rome and Milan, immigrated over the past 30 years from North Africa and the Middle East. There was no chief rabbi for all of Italy, but Rome's chief rabbi, Elio Toaff, was a nationally known figure, highly respected among non-Jews as well as Jews.

Chabad Lubavitch, which had a decades-long presence in Italy, became accepted as a more "mainstream" part of the Italian Jewish scene, thanks to a change in policy by the Italian Rabbinical Assembly, which accorded a seat in the assembly to a Lubavitch rabbi and sought to foster better relations. Chabad's activities were mainly in Milan and Rome (Chabad marked 18 years of activity in Rome with a gala dinner in March 1995). In Venice, home to only 500 or so Jews, a Lubavitch rabbi and his wife had opened a Chabad house in the Ghetto in the early '90s, selling books and kosher supplies. During Hanukkah, they set up a huge menorah in a gondola and took it around Venice's canals.

Jewish-Catholic Relations

On the eve of Holocaust Memorial Day (Yom HaShoah), on April 7, 1994, Pope John Paul II hosted an unprecedented concert at the Vatican to commemorate the Holocaust. Some 7,500 people, including cardinals, diplomats, Jewish Holocaust survivors, and numerous political and religious leaders, attended the event at the modernistic Pope Paul VI Hall, where the pope holds general audiences, and millions more saw it on international television. The concert was conceived and conducted by American Jewish maestro Gilbert Levine, who for several years was conductor of the Krakow Philharmonic in Poland. The actor Richard Dreyfuss recited *Kaddish* in an excerpt from Leonard Bernstein's *Kaddish* Symphony. Other musical works performed were by Beethoven, Bruch, and Schubert. At the conclusion of the concert the pope spoke eloquently about the Holocaust and called for a long moment of silence in commemoration.

Two new American cardinals appointed by the pope in October 1994, William

Keeler of Baltimore and Adam Maida of Detroit, were considered friendly to the Jewish community. Keeler, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, had long been involved in Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

In July 1994, the pope angered and perplexed Jews by naming former Austrian president Kurt Waldheim a "papal knight." Waldheim, a former secretary-general of the United Nations, was a Nazi intelligence officer in the Balkans during World War II and had been implicated in the deportations of Jews and reprisal killings of anti-Nazi partisans in the region.

On the occasion of the Day of Christian-Jewish Dialogue, January 16, 1994, a meeting was held in the northern city of Bergamo to launch a campaign to create a forest of 10,000 trees in Israel in memory of Pope John XXIII and Jules Isaac, a French Jewish historian who lost his family in the Holocaust and who after the war promoted Christian-Jewish dialogue. The meeting was sponsored by the diocese of Bergamo, Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael (Jewish National Fund), and the Federation of Italy-Israel Associations.

The year 1995 marked the 30th anniversary of the landmark Vatican document "Nostra Aetate," which opened the way to modern Catholic-Jewish dialogue. In February 1995, American Jewish Committee leaders met with the pope at the Vatican to mark the anniversary. At the meeting they asked him to issue an encyclical condemning anti-Semitism.

Holocaust-Related Matters

Educating young Italians about Judaism and recent history, including the Holocaust and World War II, was a continuing concern of Italian Jews. In early 1995, a survey of 1,000 Italian young people between the ages of 16 and 24, carried out by the Italian Federation of Psychologists and the Jewish Museum in Casale, showed them to be ignorant of recent history, including the Holocaust and Italy's World War II experience. According to reports of the survey published in the Italian press, 28 percent of those questioned thought a "pogrom" was a Jewish holiday, nearly 12 percent thought it was a Jewish prayer, and only 4 percent knew what it really was. Only a little more than 38 percent knew that there had been racist anti-Semitic laws in Italy during World War II. About half the young people said they would like to know more about history. They blamed their lack of knowledge on schools and mass communication.

To this end, two videos were produced to help teachers educate high-school students about Judaism, the Jewish experience, and the Holocaust and motivate them to oppose anti-Semitism and racism. The first, a 70-minute film entitled "Who Are the Jews," was prepared by the Ministry of Education and the Union of Italian Jewish Communities and released in February 1994. It was prepared as part of a package of other course material and documentation. The second was a 20-minute film in the form of a music video entitled "Vernichtung Baby" (Extermination Baby), which used rap and rock music, computer graphics, and fast-cut film clips

in music-video style to teach about the Holocaust in Italy and warn that racism could happen again. Prepared by the Lazio Region and the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, it was unveiled in April 1995 at a one-day seminar for educators in Rome on teaching about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism.

In addition to these videos, the Contemporary Jewish Documentation Center in Milan (CDEC) maintained a large video library of commercial and documentary films on the Jewish experience and the Holocaust, which it made available to schools.

Culture

A growing interest in Judaism and Jewish culture among non-Jewish Italians was reflected in the publication of numerous books on Jewish topics and the presentation of many concerts, plays, exhibitions, and other cultural events with Jewish themes. Newspapers and magazines published many articles on Jewish and Holocaust themes, and there was ample coverage of commemorative events related to the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. There were also a number of conferences and seminars on issues related to Judaism, Jewish culture, Israel, and the Middle East.

On March 9, 1994, "La Tutela dei Beni Culturali Ebraici," a major conference on the care and management of Jewish cultural monuments, Judaica objects, archives, archaeological remains, and the like, took place in Bologna under the auspices of the Institute for Cultural Heritage of the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, the city of Bologna, the Italian Senate, and the Italian Culture Ministry. The conference discussed a wide range of topics, including the current lack of nationwide coordination of activities aimed at preserving Jewish relics and the issue of the Jewish catacombs in Rome. There was also a major conference on the Jewish history of Pisa. One of the most important conferences on Italian Jewry took place in London at the end of April 1995. Held under the auspices of the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London, the three-day international conference on "The Jews of Italy, Memory and Identity," examined the history, archaeology, and culture of the Jewish communities.

In February 1995, a gala ceremony took place in the little Tuscan hilltown of Pitigliano to rededicate the totally reconstructed Baroque synagogue. Originally built in 1598, the synagogue collapsed after World War II. Reconstruction, funded by the municipality, took nearly ten years. The structure will serve as a Jewish museum but also will remain consecrated as a house of worship. Pitigliano had an important Jewish community from the 16th century until the war, but only a handful of Jews live there now. Also in February, a ceremony unveiled a plaque commemorating the Jewish presence in the small town of Lugo di Romagna, near Ferrara.

Moni Ovadia, a Milan-based Jewish performer whose cabaret-style musicals employ Yiddish culture and lore, won rave reviews with two shows—*Oylem Goylem*

in 1994 and *Dybbuk* in the spring of 1995—and there were numerous other performances by a variety of Italian and foreign performers on Jewish themes. They included *Pitchipoi*, *Stories from the Warsaw Ghetto*, whose national premiere was May 3, 1995, in the central Italian city of Terni, and a concert of Catalan Jewish songs sung by Lidia Pujol in Rome in March 1995.

The numerous Jewish-interest exhibits included an exhibition of Jewish book plates that opened in September 11, 1994, in Soncino, site of Italy's most famous Hebrew publishing house. A major exhibition on racism and anti-Semitism under fascism, "La Menzogna della Razza, documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista," was shown in Bologna the last three months of 1994 and then traveled to other cities. A major exhibition on the Dreyfus affair opened in Rome in December 1994 and then traveled to Forli. More than 100,000 people saw a big exhibition of Marc Chagall's works in Milan in early 1995, and in February 1995, the Bordone gallery in Milan hosted an installation on Auschwitz by German artist Joachim Seinfeld.

Publications

Well over 100 books on Jewish topics were published in 1994/early 1995. They included fiction, poetry, history, sociology, religion, Holocaust and other memoirs, and art books, by Italian authors as well as translations of Israeli and other foreign Jewish writers. Among them were several books detailing the art and history of Jewish communities in specific Italian towns and regions.

Rome chief rabbi Elio Toaff's book *Essere Ebreo* (To Be a Jew) became a major best-seller, and *La Sinistra e Gli Ebrei in Italia* (The Left and the Jews in Italy), by Maurizio Molinari (1995), raised important political issues. Erri De Luca's new translation of the Book of Exodus was also a big success.

Personalia

Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff was feted on his 80th birthday with ceremonies, tributes, and celebrations, including a gala ceremony on May 14, 1995, at Rome's city hall, the Campidoglio, hosted by Rome mayor Francesco Rutelli. Italian president Oscar Luigi Scalfaro conferred on Toaff the award of Knight of the Great Cross of the Italian Republic to mark the occasion.

At a solemn ceremony at Rome's city hall in May 1995, five Italians were honored by Israel as Righteous Gentiles for rescuing Jews during World War II.

Two non-Jews who died in 1994 had a special relationship with Jews and Israel. Former Prime Minister Giovanni Spadolini, a longtime leader of the Republican Party, died of cancer August 4, 1994, at the age of 69. A journalist and historian who turned politician, in 1981 he became Italy's first prime minister who did not come from the Christian Democratic party. He held various other government positions and served as president of the Senate from 1987 until early 1994. In

writings, speeches, and other activities throughout his career, Spadolini staunchly defended Israel, often representing a minority view among Italy's political leadership, who were largely pro-Arab. He visited Israel often and had close ties with Italy's Jewish community. The Federation of Italy-Israel Associations launched a drive to raise funds for a forest in Spadolini's name in Israel.

Guelfo Zamboni, an Italian diplomat who saved nearly 300 Jews during World War II by giving them false papers, died in Rome in March 1994, at the age of 97. As Italian consul in Salonika in 1943, under Nazi occupation, he was able to provide documents enabling 280 Jews to flee to Athens, which was under Italian military occupation, thus saving them from deportation to Auschwitz. In October 1992, Israeli ambassador to Italy Avi Pazner conferred on Zamboni the medal of honor from Yad Vashem, and 280 trees were planted in Jerusalem, one for each of the Jews he saved.

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