

1 / Issues concerning antisemitism

Violence, vandalism and abuse

Incidents of violence, vandalism and abuse were once again reported in the media across Europe in November. In Italy, Natan Graf, a Jewish businessman and nephew of Milan rabbi Hetzкия Levi, sustained serious injuries outside a kosher pizzeria in Milan after being stabbed seven times by a man wearing a balaclava. Raffaele Besso, president of Jewish Community of Milan, said that “this is the most serious event that ever happened in our community.” Renzo Gattegna, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI), said “we will go forward, without being

intimidated,” and called for security measures to be increased.

In Marseille, France, a Jewish man was stabbed by a man wearing an Islamic State T-shirt who shouted antisemitic abuse at him along with two other men. The victim, a teacher at a Jewish school, suffered injuries not considered life-threatening. According to prosecutor Brice Robin, three people on two scooters had approached the teacher and then “insulted, threatened and stabbed their victim in the arm and leg. They were interrupted by the arrival of a car and fled.” Michele Teboul, regional president of the Jewish representative group CRIF, said, “I’m very shocked because this is the second incident of its kind in a very short time,” adding she was worried about the threat of further attacks.

In Germany, a Jewish cemetery in Hanover was desecrated with swastikas. Tombstones were defaced and the prayer house damaged. In the city of Cotbuss, two women were arrested after allegedly trying to vandalise the synagogue. Two windows and a window frame were seriously damaged. In the UK, at the beginning of the month, police were investigating “very offensive” antisemitic graffiti that appeared in Hackney. This followed a few days after “Kill Da Jew” was sprayed on the same road at the end of October. More antisemitic graffiti was found later in November.

Also in the UK, a Jewish student at Birmingham University was trolled with antisemitic abuse after she tweeted a photo which had been displayed across her campus, showing an image of Hitler with the words “Hitler was right” written underneath. Izzy Lenga, education officer at the Birmingham student union, posted the photo in order to highlight antisemitism. She said that “the backlash to my tweet has been extremely nasty and deeply upsetting. This sets a worrying precedent. I am worried about the rise of antisemitism across Europe and the world, and at points I am worried for my safety and that of my peers, but I am most concerned for the Jewish student community. Many Jewish students will now, and completely understandably, be apprehensive to speak up publicly about the antisemitism they may be facing, for fear of a similar backlash.”

/ ABOUT EUROPEAN JEWISH DIGEST

Written by **Richard Goldstein**, JPR’s Director of Operations, the **European Jewish Digest** is a monthly publication that summarises some of the key Jewish-interest stories in Europe, and provides links to articles about various newsworthy

items. Its purpose is to provide the reader with an overview of incidents and activities that have occurred across Europe each month. Note that all details come exclusively from press reports, and have not been verified by JPR researchers.

/ ABOUT JPR

The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research** (JPR) is a UK-based research unit, consultancy and think tank that specialises in contemporary Jewish issues. Formerly the Institute of Jewish Affairs, JPR has stood at the forefront of Jewish community research for several decades and is responsible for much of the data and analysis that exist on Jews in the UK and across Europe.

JPR’s research and analysis offer detailed insights into a wide range of issues, including Jewish population size, geographical density, age and gender structure, education, charitable giving, volunteering, antisemitism, Jewish practice, religious outlook and communal participation. Download JPR’s publications free of charge from our website: www.jpr.org.uk.

Megan Dunn, president of the National Union of Students, wrote that “my Twitter stream has been a stark reminder of the very real and horrific reality of antisemitism that Jewish students face in Britain. This harassment is deplorable. It is time that we all stepped up and played our part in facing down this disgusting abuse – whether online or on the street, once and for all.”

In Greece, the Jewish community protested after one of the country’s main newspapers published a caricature of former Finance Minister, Yanis Varoufakis, as a Jewish moneylender. The image, which showed Varoufakis wearing a black skullcap and hunched over a ledger counting bags of gold, was published in *Ta Nea*. The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece wrote in a letter to the newspaper’s editor that “we consider the use of religious racist stereotypes to portray current events as not only unacceptable and despicable, but especially dangerous, as it spreads religious hatred and perpetuates prejudices that should not have a place in today’s society.”

In the Netherlands, as a prank, students at Leiden University redesigned the dorm room of a Jewish classmate with motifs from a Nazi death camp. A video of the room showed mass graves painted on the floor, barbed wire hung on pipes and the words “Arbeit macht frei” spray-painted on the walls. A large swastika made of sticks was also on display.

In the UK, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) said that Jewish students at universities are “denying or hiding” their identity because of discrimination. The Council said that Jewish students had been “hounded” for not attending medical lectures on Shabbat and that it had evidence university staff had criticised student work on Israel because they did not agree with the point of view being expressed. One student told SCoJeC that “I was told by my university that either I sit exams on Shabbat or I fail,” whilst another said she no longer went to the business school or library and was worried about attending classes “due to fear of being harassed or attacked.” SCoJeC accused universities of not taking action, saying that “it is troubling that when the Jewish Student Chaplaincy Scotland has intervened with the support of SCoJeC to assist Jewish students who find themselves subject to abuse, our concerns have been dismissed by senior university staff who appear not to recognise that there have been failures.”

In Poland, an effigy of a strictly-orthodox Jew was burned during a demonstration in Wroclaw against accepting Muslim refugees. Whilst the effigy was burned, demonstrators chanted “God, Honour and Fatherland.” Piotr Kadlcik, a Polish-Jewish activist said that “recalling anti-Jewish stereotypes proves that we are still divided and that cooperation is not possible.” The demonstration was organised by the National Radical Camp and All-Polish Youth.

Also in Poland, the Czulent Jewish Association published a report which showed that nationalism and antisemitism are still present in some history textbooks. The report, called “Antisemitism is not an option,” analysed 142 Polish history textbooks used in formal education settings and 29 used in informal education settings. Anna Makowka-Kwapisiewicz, president of the Czulent Jewish Association, said that “there are factual mistakes, distortions of history, as well as open and covert nationalistic and discriminating content which may lead to the strengthening of prejudice and antisemitism.” The report was presented to the Polish Ombudsman’s office in Warsaw.

In Belgium, a court sentenced French comedian Dieudonné M’Bala M’Bala to two months in prison for incitement to hatred over alleged racist and antisemitic remarks he made during a show in Liège. He was also fined €9,000 by the court over a show he gave in the same place in 2012 in which he called Hitler a “sweet kid” and a “joyful braggart.” He also called into question the Nazi gas chambers and described the Talmud as a “s*** book.” Eric Lemmens, a lawyer for Belgium’s Jewish organisations, said: “All the accusations against Dieudonné were established – both incitement to hatred and hate speech, but also Holocaust denial.” The comedian was also ordered to publish the ruling in Belgium’s two main national daily newspapers, *Le Soir* and *La Libre Belgique*.

In Italy, Carlo Tavecchio, president of the Football Federation, was recorded in conversation with Massimiliano Giacomini, editor of website *Soccerlife*, saying of Jewish businessman Cesare Anticoli, “he’s a right Jew boy ... It’s better to keep a bit of distance between yourself and Jews.” He used the Italian term “ebreaccio,” a pejorative for “ebreo,” or Jew. Tavecchio also said of an unnamed gay football official “but is it true that he is a homosexual? ... I mean I have nothing against them, but keep them far away from me, I am totally normal ...” In response to the publication

of the recording, Tavecchio said: “It’s blackmail, retaliation from someone to whom I denied funding, who recorded me without my knowledge, not as part of an interview. What’s more, the audio file could have been tampered with. If you listen to the recording, my words are clear: I have had long

personal and professional relationships with Jews. The charges of homophobia are also groundless.”

In Germany, 87-year-old Ursula Haverbeck was sentenced to ten months in jail for Holocaust denial. Dubbed the ‘Nazi grandma,’ Haverbeck told the court in Hamburg that the Auschwitz death camp is “only a belief.” She was charged with Holocaust denial after saying on television that the Holocaust was “the biggest and most sustainable lie in history.” Magistrate Bjoern Joensson, who passed the sentence, said it was “deplorable that this woman, who is still so active given her age, uses her energy to spread such hair-raising nonsense.”

Spotlight on the impact of the Paris attacks on Jewish communities

Following the Paris terror attacks in which 132 people died and more than 350 were wounded, over 200 people gathered under heavy guard at the Synagogue de la Victoire to remember the victims. Among those at the service were Haim Korsia, Chief Rabbi of France, Roger Cukierman President of the CRIF umbrella group, Sacha Reingewirtz, head of the Union of Jewish Students, other leaders of the French Jewish community and Israel’s ambassador to France. Rabbi Moche Lewin, Director of the Conference of European Rabbis, led a prayer for the speedy recovery of the wounded. Chief Rabbi Korsia said that French Jews “feel with all intensity the pain of the families touched by the tragedy and the pain of the nation in general” and that French society “will rise up from its grief like American society rose up from the tragedy of 9/11, and like Israeli society, which never lay down for attacks.”

Representatives of Paris’ Jewish community, together with Muslim leaders, gathered outside the Bataclan concert hall to honour the 89 people killed there in the attacks. They laid white roses, alongside the hundreds of candles and bouquets left by members of the public. Standing at the venue, the groups sang La Marseillaise, the French national anthem. Hassen Chalghoumi, Imam of Drancy and President of the Imams’ Conference, said that “anyone who uses hate speech has no place in France and those places that preach hate are not places of prayer but are those of a sect. After this tragedy and the more than one hundred

Violence, vandalism and abuse links

- / Jewish businessman stabbed multiple times in Milan by masked attacker (*The Telegraph*, November 13, 2015)
- / Jewish teacher is stabbed on Marseille street by three men who shouted their support for ISIS (*Mail Online*, November 18, 2015)
- / Jewish cemetery in Germany defaced with swastikas (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 9, 2015)
- / Two women arrested in vandalism at German synagogue (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 18, 2015)
- / Police investigating “very offensive” antisemitic graffiti in Hackney (*Jewish News*, November 3, 2015)
- / Jewish University of Birmingham student trolled after complaining over Hitler poster (*Birmingham Mail*, November 4, 2015)
- / Swastika graffiti daubed on wall near synagogue in Highgate shocks Jewish community (*Evening Standard*, November 17, 2015)
- / Greek Jews protest newspaper’s Shylock caricature (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 2, 2015)
- / Dutch university students create Nazi death camp dorm room (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 18, 2015)
- / Scottish university staff accused of anti-Jewish discrimination (*The Herald*, November 23, 2015)
- / Effigy of haredi Jew burned at Polish protest against refugees (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 19, 2015)
- / Jewish group’s report: Nationalism, antisemitism appear in some Polish textbooks (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 19, 2015)
- / Human rights group: Ukraine Jewish mausoleum fire may have been arson (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 9, 2015)
- / French comedian Dieudonné sentenced to two months in prison (*The Telegraph*, November 25, 2015)
- / Head of Italian Soccer insists He Is Not Homophobic or Antisemitic Despite Recorded Comments (*New York Times*, November 2, 2015)
- / Euro court rejects French comic’s plea over fine for antisemitism (*Reuters*, November 10, 2015)
- / German ‘Nazi grandma’, 87, sentenced to jail for Holocaust denial (*Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 16, 2015)

deaths, now is the time to close these places of hate.”

In the aftermath of the attacks, most Jewish communal activities were cancelled or postponed. Roger Cukierman said that “security services told us to cancel all the events we can. We need to limit gatherings and meetings as much as possible.” He said “it’s a completely new situation. Before, terrorists targeted specific groups like Jews and journalists, but now they’re indiscriminately killing all French people who won’t submit themselves to sharia [Muslim religious] law.”

Jewish leaders around Europe expressed their shock and solidarity. Ronald S. Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), said the attacks represented “one of the most sickening forms of human violence one can imagine. The French Republic is strong, the French people are strong, and your government is strong. I have no doubt that you and your government will contend with this menace in the appropriate way. Rest assured that in this endeavour you have the support of the Jewish people and the entire free world. Our common values are stronger than those of the terrorists. Our common values will prevail. I think I speak on behalf of millions of Jews around the world, who are today grieving with your people, when I say: Bon courage, Monsieur le Président! We stand with you! Vive la République! Vive la France!” Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, said “the Conference of European Rabbis joins with communities around the world in mourning for those who were killed in last night’s tragic events in Paris. Our thoughts are with the victims’ families ... We are also aware of how vulnerable the Jewish communities of France are, and we urge the government not to neglect the security and protection of Jewish institutions.” British Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis also sent his condolences to the people of France, saying “I am so deeply shocked to hear about the horrific events in Paris. Our hearts go out to the families of those killed and the many wounded in this senseless and brutal attack on our freedom and our democratic values.”

Security implications were felt throughout Jewish communities in Europe. Sweden’s Jewish community shut down synagogues across the country in response to the country raising its official terror threat assessment level. Lena Posner-

Körösi, Chairwoman of the Official Council of Jewish Communities in Sweden, said that the security situation would be re-assessed on a daily basis. In Belgium, synagogues in Brussels were advised to remain closed after the authorities ordered the country’s capital to stay on the highest state of alert. The Jewish Central Consistory of Belgium, the country’s main Jewish umbrella organisation, advised synagogues to close down even for Shabbat. Prime Minister Charles Michel said “what we fear is an attack similar to the one in Paris, with several individuals who could possibly launch several attacks at the same time in multiple locations.”

Rabbi Avraham Gigi, Chief Rabbi of Brussels, told an Israeli radio station that there is no future for Jews in Europe. He added that “there is a sense of fear in the streets, the Belgians understand that they too are targets of terror. Jews now pray in their homes [as opposed to synagogues] and some of them are planning on emigrating. The synagogues were closed, something which has not happened since World War Two. People are praying alone or are holding small *minyanim* [small prayer groups] at private homes. Schools and theatres are closed, as are most large stores, and public events are not permitted. We live in fear and wait for instructions from the police or the government.”

In response Rabbi Menachem Margolin, Director of the European Jewish Association, said he was “determined to continue our work to ensure that the three million Jews [sic] who live on our continent can continue to command a safe home and to be able to freely and proudly identify themselves as Jews. We urge all European rabbis and community leaders to stand up in defence of the right of European Jews to remain in their historic homelands should they choose to, to support and encourage their pride in their European heritage and to similarly fight for their safety and security, as God forbid we should instil yet more fear in already very worrying times.”

In Nottingham in the UK, religious leaders called for more community projects to be run by a group of different faiths as a show of solidarity in the wake of the Paris violence. Muslim, Jewish and Christian leaders met at the city’s Council House and said that they wanted to build on “already strong relationships.” Imam Sajid Mohammed said

“it’s incredibly important that civic society shows courage in standing together because courage leads to unity, unity leads to justice and justice leads to love. Love is greater than hate and that’s the message we are putting out. We are not going to be divided by fear or by terror; we are together with our shared values and we are going to stand together and make this city safe for everyone. We are all victims of this affront to humanity – every ethnicity and religious group in the world – and we need to have this public declaration to show that Nottingham is a city that will stand together and fight against hate.” Tanya Sakhnovich, rabbi at Nottingham Liberal Synagogue, said “when different faith groups work together it shows that ordinary people share values, and that’s how we can build friendships which extremists and terrorists won’t be able to destroy.”

Spotlight on the impact of the Paris attacks [links](#)

- / 200 gather at Paris synagogue, under tight security, to pray for terror victims (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 15, 2015)
- / Muslim and Jewish leaders gather at Paris concert hall memorial (*The Guardian*, November 15, 2015)
- / Jewish institutional activities grind to halt in grieving Paris (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 15, 2015)
- / Jewish leaders around the world condemn Paris terror attacks (*The Jewish Chronicle*, November 15, 2015)
- / Synagogues in Brussels shuttered amid highest state of alert (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 23, 2015)
- / Swedish synagogues shut down as terror alert is raised (World Jewish Congress, November 19, 2015)
- / ‘There is no future for Jews in Europe’, says Brussels’ chief rabbi, who says many do not risk visiting Synagogues because there is a ‘sense of fear on the streets’ (*Mail Online*, November 26, 2015)
- / Paris attacks: Nottingham’s Muslim, Jewish and Christian leaders meet in show of solidarity (*Nottingham Post*, November 17, 2015)

Politics

In Poland, Antoni Macierewicz, the newly appointed defence minister, was criticised for statements made in 2002 when he told a right-wing radio station that claims of a Jewish plan for world domination outlined in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion may well be true. In an interview with Radio Marya, he acknowledged there was

dispute about the pamphlet’s authenticity, but said that “experience shows that there are such groups in Jewish circles.” In a letter to Prime Minister Beata Szydlow, the Anti-Defamation League said that Macierewicz’s appointment should be withdrawn and that although his comments date back to 2002, “it indicates profound and virulent antisemitism.”

In Ukraine, opposition MP and Jewish oligarch Vadim Rabinovich voiced concerns over the government’s use of far-right radical nationalist groups in the battle against Russian-backed separatists. He said that “the government must stop flirting with ultra-radical organisations, which are increasingly gaining ground in Ukraine.” However a spokesman for the Dnipropetrovsk Jewish community said that whilst Rabinovich heads the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress, he does not speak for Ukrainian Jewry. He added that “since Vadim Rabinovich is presenting the position of his political party ... it is not a Jewish voice of Ukraine.” Despite this, the heads of several Jewish organisations called on the Kiev government to do more to prosecute antisemitic crimes, with Eduard Dolinsky of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee asserting that he does not believe that Ukrainian civil society has responded adequately to the issue.

Also in Ukraine, speakers at an anti-government rally in Kiev called for the end of what they claimed was Jewish control over the government and accused Israel of seeking to colonise their country. One speaker claimed that “Ukraine found itself in a grip of the world Zionist conspiracy. We are fed up with this power with President Valtsman and [Parliament] speaker Groisman and other Jew trash,” and another called President Poroshenko a “kike”.

Again in Ukraine, the Jewish community were angered over the building of a monument to the perpetrators of an eighteenth century massacre that killed thousands of Jews. Residents of Uman unveiled the statue to Ivan Gonta and Maxim Zheleznyakov, who were among the leaders of a 1768 pogrom, which, according to some estimates, killed between 20,000 and 30,000 Jews. Eduard Dolinsky of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee blamed the far-right Svoboda party for the monument and said that “no comment from the government or from civil society has been made about this. Everyone is calm and this is a shame.”

In Scotland, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon apologised to the Jewish community after an MSP retweeted an “abhorrent” antisemitic image. Sandra White, a respected Scottish National party MSP, admitted causing offence by retweeting what she acknowledged was a repellent and offensive cartoon of Rupert Murdoch pulling the strings of David Cameron, Ed Miliband and Nick Clegg, as well as a cartoon showing piglets, including one carrying the Israeli flag suckling on an adult pig labelled Rothschild. Following an apology by White and the deletion of the tweet, Sturgeon told the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities that “I know that she understands the seriousness of this accidental retweet and deeply regrets the offence it has caused ... I do hope that Sandra’s letter addresses your concerns in relation to her actions. Regarding the original tweet itself, I find it and the image it contained abhorrent ... I will not tolerate antisemitism or religious or racial hatred of any kind at any level in our society.”

In Denmark, Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen expressed his support for Danish Jewry and said he would do everything to provide adequate security to the community and its members. At a reception organised by the Danish Jewish community, which included several members of Rasmussen’s government and the police, Rasmussen said that Danish Jews were an integral part of the country’s society and must be “able to live a normal Jewish life in Denmark, with the traditions that come with that.” He praised the contribution of Danish Jews in the fields of culture, science and business and added that “I get concerned when the Jewish school is vandalised, when a Gaza demonstration develops into antisemitism, and when men do not dare to wear a skullcap in Copenhagen because they feel unsafe.”

In Poland, thousands of people took part in an anti-racism protest in Warsaw, with many holding signs saying “Hug a Jew.” The protest mainly focused on the perceived increase in Polish nationalism and hostility toward Syrian migrants and other foreigners. At the *Umschlagplatz*, organiser Agata Kwiaton said “seventy-seven years ago, hundreds of thousands of Jews were deported to the death camp of Treblinka from this very spot. They were murdered because of their religion and origin. Others were threatened with exile.”

In Germany, the EKD, the country’s main Protestant organisation, disassociated itself from the antisemitism of its founder, Martin Luther, and pledged to confront the dark side of its roots. In a unanimous decision, the EKD Synod renounced Luther’s calls to persecute and banish Jews. In a statement the EKD announced that “we cannot ignore this history of guilt,” given the approaching 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The statement also expressed its “sorrow and shame” for the Protestant Church’s failure to respect and protect Jews. It added that “Luther’s view of Judaism and his invective against Jews contradict our understanding today of what it means to believe in one God who has revealed himself in Jesus, the Jew.”

The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign (BDS) appeared in the press in November. In Germany, Munich Mayor Dieter Reiter refused a request from Israel’s Consul-General to cancel a BDS event advocating a boycott of Israel in a municipal building. General-Consul Dan Shaham said that “we are sorry that this antisemitic BDS group has been allowed to use a municipal room to call for a boycott against Israel, which is by law not allowed in Germany.” Volker Beck, a Bundestag deputy for the Green Party, said that “those who do not see the antisemitic tone and character of the BDS campaign do not want to see it. Advocating BDS is indeed protected by freedom of expression, but this should not be sponsored by a particular city’s municipality. I consider that unacceptable.”

In Spain, Amparo Pernichi, Cordoba’s Alderwoman for Landscape and Infrastructure, said that a local Jewish music festival would need to be rethought if a motion she had submitted in favour of boycotting Israel passed. Her motion was rejected in the Cordoba City Council vote with only the United Left voting in favour. Its coalition partner, the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party, abstained. The International Sephardi Music Festival has been held in Cordoba since 2002. Pernichi’s four-page draft motion called Israel an apartheid state eight times, proposed to cut all ties and establish Cordoba as “an Israeli-apartheid free space” as “part of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, or BDS, movement.”

In Sweden, an argument broke out when organisers of a Kristallnacht commemoration in Umeå were accused of excluding the local

Jewish community. According to the leader of the small Jewish community, Carrine Sjöberg, as well as the local media, organisers from the local branch of the Arbetarpartiet, or Workers Party, failed to invite them to attend or address the gathering. Sjöberg said she was shocked to learn that the reason she was not contacted was because organisers believed that “Jewish people will be scared to come” because often Israeli flags are on display with swastikas daubed across them. However, Umeå councillor Jan Hägglund, 63, who was the main organiser of the event, said that “I wanted the Jewish community to be involved ... I supported it to the hills.” He added that he had spent most of his career fighting for equality and said he was “devastated” by the image of both himself and his city that had been portrayed by international media. Hägglund insisted that Sjöberg was invited to take part in the event several weeks in advance but was informed that she was not available because Jewish groups were holding their own memorial on the same day. Sjöberg confirmed that she had been sent a message by Hägglund but explained that he had not been “specific” about his reasons for wanting to meet with her.

2 / Revisiting Holocaust issues

Documents relating to Holocaust victims were published in November. In Poland, thirty-nine postcards sent from the Warsaw Ghetto have now been added to the permanent collection at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. The postcards were written to Tamara Deutscher, living in London, from her family in the Ghetto. The family was able to send letters to Deutscher via the country’s diplomatic mission in Portugal, where Stefan Rogasinski, a friend of Deutscher’s, forwarded the messages. The postcards were given to the Institute by Anita Prazmowska, a historian and lecturer at the London School of Economics.

In Budapest, a large cache of documents on the Jewish population of Budapest in 1944 before its liquidation by the Nazis was found hidden in a wall during the renovation of a city apartment. The 6,300 documents contain a census of the city’s Jewish population. The documents were believed to have been destroyed during World War II. Istvan Kenyeres, director of the Budapest City Archives, said “most wartime papers are

Politics links

- / Polish defence minister condemned over Jewish conspiracy theory (*The Guardian*, November 10, 2015)
- / Ukrainian Jewish leader accuses Kiev of ‘flirting with radicals’ (*The Jerusalem Post*, November 11, 2015)
- / Sturgeon says sorry for MSP’s retweet of antisemitic image (*The Guardian*, November 12, 2015)
- / Danish PM: ‘Jews must be able to live here in safety and according to their traditions’ (World Jewish Congress, November 11, 2015)
- / Thousands march against racism and antisemitism in Poland, carry signs saying ‘Hug a Jew’ (*The Algemeiner*, November 10, 2015)
- / German Protestant church denounces antisemitism of founder, Martin Luther (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 13, 2015)
- / Anti-government protesters accuse Israel of seeking to colonise the Ukraine (*The Jerusalem Post*, November 23, 2015)
- / Ukrainians erect monument to ‘national heroes’ who killed Uman’s Jews in 18th century (*The Jerusalem Post*, November 30, 2015)
- / Munich mayor snubs Israel’s request to cancel city-funded antisemitic BDS event (*The Jerusalem Post*, November 7, 2015)
- / Spanish pol says BDS law would mean ‘rethink’ of Jewish music fest (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 16, 2015)
- / Swede defends anti-Nazi event without Jews (The Local, November 10, 2015)

more faded or rotten than medieval documents, on bad quality paper due to the rationing. The content and scale of the finding is unprecedented. It helps to fill a huge gap in the history of the Holocaust in Budapest.” The census forms found in the apartment contain names of each building’s inhabitants and whether they were Jewish or not, with the total numbers of Christians and Jews marked in the corners. The aim was to identify houses to serve as holding locations for Jews before moving them to a planned walled ghetto in the city’s seventh district.

In the Netherlands, the municipality of Baarn, near Utrecht, announced that it would build a monument commemorating Holocaust victims near its central station in January 2016. Baarn was the municipality in which one of its schools removed Jewish pupils from the class attended by members of the royal family in 1952. Mark Röell, Mayor of Baarn, said “a memorial wall will be erected and fitted with a plaque with the names of

45 Jewish victims who were deported from Baarn or otherwise captured and murdered.”

In Munich, an argument broke out within the city’s Jewish community over how to remember the victims of the Holocaust. The argument revolves around the Stolpersteine (stumbling stones), small bronze plaques set into the pavement in front of the last place of residence of people murdered in the Holocaust. One group, headed by Charlotte Knobloch, President of the Jewish Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria (IKG), is fiercely opposed to the Stolpersteine because she believes they remind survivors of the dead and injured Jews who lay on the floor of concentration camps and the German soldiers who would step on them. However the other side of the argument is led by Peter Jordan who describes Stolpersteine as “an essential part of the post-war culture of remembrance.” Stolpersteine can now be found in 1,000 German municipalities and in twenty different European countries, although there are none in Munich. Jordan is now bringing a lawsuit against the city to try and change the policy.

In Lithuania, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre accused the Jewish community of a “shocking whitewash” after it posted an article on its official website proclaiming the innocence of a known Nazi collaborator. The article quoted research by the state-sponsored Centre for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Residents of Lithuania, showing that Jonas Noreika, one of the men responsible for the massacres of the Jews of Plunge and Telsiai, “didn’t participate in the mass murder of Jews in Lithuania during World War II.” Dr. Efraim Zuroff, Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre’s Jerusalem office, said that “it’s a total scandal. There is no question that Noreika was connected to the commission of Holocaust crimes.” He added that it was a “shocking example of its total lack of sensitivity to the Holocaust crimes committed by local Nazi collaborators.” He went on to say that “the local Jewish community uncritically adopts the conclusions of Lithuania’s Genocide and Resistance Research Centre, ignoring evidence that Noreika played a key role in the mass murder of the Jews of Plunge and Telsiai, as well as of the entire Siauliai region. It is indeed a shame and desecration of the memory of the Lithuanian Jews murdered in the Holocaust when the current community whitewashes the crimes of the perpetrators.”

Thomas Blatt, one of the few Jews to escape the Sobibor death camp, died at his home in Santa Barbara, California, aged 88. Born in 1927 in Izbica in Poland, Blatt was imprisoned in the ghetto with his family and the town’s other Jews before being taken to Sobibor in 1943. His parents and brother were murdered upon arrival at the camp. Six months after arriving at Sobibor, Blatt was involved in an extraordinary act of resistance. On October 14, 1943, Blatt’s role was to help trick SS officers into thinking a fine coat had been saved for them from a transport. One by one, they were enticed to a storeroom and killed. The idea was then to dress in the officers’ uniforms and march the prisoners out of the gates, but the plan was compromised and turned into a mass breakout. Blatt managed to race towards the surrounding forest, jumping in and out of craters and over bodies left by exploding minefields. More than 300 prisoners escaped, but most were hunted down and killed. Blatt was one of about 60 who survived. In a 2010 interview, Blatt said he still experienced nightmares and depression related to his Holocaust experiences. “I never escaped from Sobibor. I’m still there – in my dreams, in everything. My point of reference is always Sobibor.”

In the Netherlands, Anne Frank Fonds, the Swiss foundation that owns the publication rights to Anne Frank’s diary, is adding the diarist’s father, Otto, as co-author, in what is widely viewed as an effort to extend the book’s European copyright. In most European countries, copyrights automatically expire seventy years after the author’s death, which means at the end of 2015. Yves Kugelmann, a member of Anne Frank Fonds’ board of trustees, said that “after the war, Otto Frank merged, or compiled, the two versions of the diary that Anne Frank left, that were both incomplete and that partly overlapped, into one reader-friendly version. He typed over Anne Frank’s manuscripts and with scissors and glue subsequently, literally, ‘cut and pasted’ them into the version that was published in English from the early ‘50s. The book he created earns his own copyright.” However, in a direct challenge, both Isabelle Attard, a French Parliament member whose grandparents died in the Holocaust, and Olivier Ertzscheid, a lecturer at the University of Nantes, plan to publish the text on January 1, 2016. A spokesperson for Attard said that she is prepared to defend her online version of the diary in court, saying that “many revisionists, people who want to deny the extermination camps existed, have tried

to attack the diary for years. Saying now the book wasn't written by Anne alone is weakening the weight it has had for decades, as a testimony to the horrors of this war."

In Sweden, the family of Raoul Wallenberg asked Swedish authorities to declare him dead. According to a statement released, the request was made as a "declaration of death is a way to deal with the trauma we lived through, to bring one phase to closure and move on. But it will not affect his presence in our lives nor the inspiration he is to us and to the world. The family has lived in hope and despair: hope that their efforts would bear fruit and Raoul would return; despair as their hopes were dashed again and again. We have now decided to lay Raoul to rest and are planning a memorial site." Wallenberg was posted to Nazi-occupied Hungary during World War II, where he saved tens of thousands of Jews by issuing protective passports in the final months of the Holocaust. He disappeared in 1945 after being seen arrested by Soviet officers in Budapest. Wallenberg would be 103 if he were alive today.

In Germany, the Kunsthalle Mannheim art museum announced that it had found eighteen works in its collection that may have been stolen from Jews by the Nazis. Some of the sculptures and drawings are by artists Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Max Slevogt and Edgar Degas. The museum registered the pieces with the German Lost Art Foundation and on the Lost Art database in hopes of reaching possible heirs. Many observers have criticised Germany's art institutions for being slow to check for works that may have been confiscated or purchased under duress from Jewish collectors during the Nazi period.

Also in Germany, Cologne University paid compensation to the British heirs of two Jewish sisters who sold thousands of books to one of its directors for a trivial sum before being killed in the Holocaust. The university traced the heirs after finding 555 books that belonged to Elise and Helene Richter, who were killed in Theresienstadt. The sisters' library contained 7,000 books on English literature and theatre. The books were collected, but before any payment was made, Elise, 78, and Helene, 82, were deported by the Gestapo to the concentration camp. The library agreed to pay an undisclosed sum to Alexander and Laurence Jarosy, the sisters' legal heirs, who allowed the library to keep the books.

Revisiting Holocaust issues links

- / Postcards sent from Warsaw Ghetto given to Jewish institute (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 4, 2015)
- / Holocaust documents trove unearthed in Budapest apartment (The Guardian, November 21, 2015)
- / Dutch town where Jewish kids were segregated builds Holocaust memorial (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 18, 2015)
- / Munich Jews feud over Holocaust remembrance (The Local, November 26, 2015)
- / Lithuanian Jewish community accused of Holocaust distortion (The Jerusalem Post, November 5, 2015)
- / Thomas Blatt, Sobibor escapee who testified against Demjanjuk, dies at 88 (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 2, 2015)
- / Thomas Blatt (The Times, November 26, 2015)
- / Anne Frank's father made 'co-author' of diary in bid to extend copyright (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 17, 2015)
- / Challengers vow to publish Anne Frank diaries as foundation moves to keep control of copyright (The Guardian, November 25, 2015)
- / Family seeks to declare Swedish hero dead (The Local, November 20, 2015)
- / German museum finds 18 pieces of possible Nazi-looted art (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 17, 2015)
- / Germans pay for Nazi library (The Times, November 26, 2015)

3 / Other news stories about Jewish life in Europe you may have missed

In Poland, the Jewish community of Lodz received its first new Torah scroll since World War II. The scroll was donated to the community by British-based Jewish philanthropists Hilton and Louise Nathanson, and was introduced during a special ceremony in the city's synagogue. The small community of a few hundred members was previously using a very frail, older scroll that pre-dated World War II.

In Russia, the Jewish community of Ivanovo celebrated the opening of a new synagogue and Jewish community centre. The new centre includes classrooms, facilities for a Sunday Hebrew school, Jewish library, a 'chesed' centre for humanitarian services, a kosher kitchen and a synagogue. Berel

Lazar, Chief Rabbi of Russia, said that “the purpose of this centre is to create a warm and inviting space where the city’s Jews can explore, connect and deepen their Jewish knowledge and commitment, and be a hub of light for the city at large.”

In Ukraine, Limmud FSU, the Jewish learning conference, met in Lviv. The three-day conference brought together 700 Russian-speaking Jews. The conference was in Lviv for a second consecutive year at the request of the city’s Mayor Andrii Sadovyi, and marked the twentieth anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin’s death. Speakers included poet Igor Irten’yev, historian Igor Schcupak, Yiddish scholar Velvel Chernin and academic Zeev Khanin, currently the chief scientist of Israel’s Immigration and Absorption Ministry.

In Bosnia, the Jewish community celebrated 450 years in the country. Jakob Finci, President of the Jewish community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, instigated a series of anniversary events in Sarajevo which were part cultural and part academic. They included the inaugural exhibition of Edward Serotta’s photographs of the 1992-1996 siege of Sarajevo, titled ‘Survival in Sarajevo,’ as well as a two-day international conference and private tours to see the world-famous Sarajevo Haggadah in the city’s National Museum. Although the Jewish community currently only numbers about 1,000, Finci said that Jews are equal partners amid a majority Sunni Muslim population because of their long tradition and presence in the region. He is also confident about the future, saying “we’ve been here for 450 years and our intention is to stay another 450. The flame of Jewish life won’t leave Bosnia.”

In Belgium, Reform Jews in Brussels launched the city’s first gay Jewish organisation called *LGBT Jews in and around Brussels*, and it now has sixty members. David Weis, one of the founders of the community, said that “the fact that Progressive Jewish movements in the United Kingdom and the United States have started welcoming LGBT Jews means that expats often still have links with Jewish communities back home. In Belgium, many LGBT Jews have cut their links with Jewish communal life, and we hope indeed to bridge that gap among Belgian Jewry.”

In Portugal, top Jewish community professionals from forty countries met in Lisbon for a

conference organised by the World Jewish Congress (WJC). The National Community Directors’ Forum focused on developing cooperation between Jewish communities on issues of common concern, such as fighting antisemitism, strengthening communal security and effective communications on social media. WJC CEO Robert Singer, said “2016 will be a challenging year for Jewish communities everywhere, and everybody is aware of the gravity of their responsibilities. This meeting left no issues untouched, and subjects such as the worsening security situation for Jews in many countries were discussed. Exchanging best practices and providing Jewish leaders with the necessary tools are key missions of the World Jewish Congress, and I am glad that the group feels that a network is now in place and producing results.”

In Spain, King Felipe VI spoke at a ceremony granting citizenship to descendants of Sephardic Jews expelled in 1492. King Felipe said “dear Sephardim, thank you for your loyalty. Thank you for having kept like a precious treasure your language and your customs that are ours too. Thank you too for making love prevail over rancour and for teaching your children to love this country. How we have missed you.” Spain granted citizenship to 4,302 people a day after the law went into effect and there have been nearly 600 citizenship applications and 10,000 information requests since then.

In Germany, archaeologists discovered a centuries-old *mikveh* underneath a vaulted cellar in the former communist East. The State Office for Monument Preservation and Archaeology reported that the *mikveh* was found in the town of Schmalkalden, near the “Judengasse,” or “Jews’ Lane,” where a seventeenth century synagogue stood until it was destroyed in the Kristallnacht pogrom. They believe it may have been built in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, when the local Jewish population peaked.

Also in Germany, a new kosher supermarket is set to open in Berlin. The Daily Markt in the Charlottenburg district is the result of cooperation between the non-Jewish businessman Asan Mytev and entrepreneurs within the local Jewish community, supported by Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal, a rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin.

In the UK, Jewish and Muslim leaders met at the House of Lords to discuss how their communities can “move forward” together. The meeting was attended by Jonathan Arkush, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Qari Mohammed Asim, Senior Imam at Makkah mosque in Leeds, and was arranged as part of National Interfaith Week.

Also in the UK, the media reported that up to 40,000 people took part in Mitzvah Day, an event organised by the Jewish community involving hundreds of synagogues and schools around the country, and including volunteers from neighbouring mosques and churches. At Edgware United synagogue, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis and Imam Ibrahim Mogra, Assistant General Secretary of the Muslim Council of Britain, together helped prepare a meal for the homeless. Rabbi Mirvis said that he had “an enormous amount of pride in the generosity, selflessness and community engagement” witnessed during the event, and argued that the interfaith aspect of the day was crucial, maintaining “we must strengthen links and build bridges for tolerance and harmony.” Imam Mogra said both faiths taught the importance of common humanity and “Britain has become a multicultural and multi-faith society. It’s very important to be cohesive, not just by talking but in action.”

In Greece, 38 leading Jewish and Orthodox Christian clerics and scholars met for two days in Athens for a rare dialogue on relations between the two faiths. This was only the eighth round of talks since formal interfaith dialogue between Jews and Orthodox Christians began in 1972. It was only at the very end of the talks that the main historic tensions between the two religions were broached. In calling for a gesture similar to the Catholic Church’s *Nostra Aetate*, Rabbi David Rosen, called for Orthodox Christian leaders to issue a statement on the status of the Jewish people, saying that “a doctrinal repudiation that the Jewish people had been rejected by God could have enormous consequences.” Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, the head of the Orthodox delegation, did not respond to this in his concluding remarks, speaking only about the need for greater people-to-people contacts and his desire to include youth in the next round of talks.

In the UK, the bishops of England and Wales appealed to the Vatican to change the Good Friday

Other news links

- / Polish city of Lodz receives first new Torah scroll since WWII (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 6, 2015)
- / Centuries-old mikvah unearthed in former East Germany (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 9, 2015)
- / Jews of Ivanovo, Russia, celebrate a place of their own (Chabad Lubavitch News, November 25, 2015)
- / New kosher supermarket opens in Berlin despite security concerns (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 26, 2015)
- / In Ukraine, Jews connect with ‘kosher-style’ dose of Judaism (The Times of Israel, November 11, 2015)
- / House of Lords hosts interfaith discussion on Jewish-Muslim relations (Jewish News, November 16, 2015)
- / In post-war Bosnia, Jews celebrate 450 years of survival (The Times of Israel, November 28, 2015)
- / Mitzvah Day unites Jewish and Muslim leaders in kitchen (The Guardian, November 22, 2015)
- / Brussels gets first gay Jewish organisation (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 6, 2015)
- / More than four decades on, Jewish dialogue with Orthodox Christians still fragile (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 12, 2015)
- / Senior Jewish community professionals from forty countries convene in Lisbon (World Jewish Congress, November 16, 2015)
- / Prayer for Jews ‘should be updated,’ say England and Wales bishops (Catholic Herald, November 24, 2015)
- / King of Spain honours Sephardic Jews in ceremony recognising citizenship law (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, November 30, 2015)

prayer for Jews as recited in the ‘Extraordinary Form.’ The prayer states “let us also pray for the Jews: that our God and Lord may illuminate their hearts, that they acknowledge Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all men.” Archbishop Kevin McDonald, chairman of the bishops’ Committee for Catholic-Jewish Relations, said it had caused “great confusion and upset in the Jewish community,” especially as it is different to the more acceptable ‘Novus Ordo’ version introduced after the Second Vatican Council, which reads “let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God, that they may continue to grow in the love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant.” Archbishop McDonald added that “the 1970 prayer ... is basically a prayer that the Jewish people would continue to grow in the love of God’s name and in faithfulness of his Covenant, a Covenant which – as St John Paul II made clear

in 1980 – has not been revoked. By contrast, the ... ‘Extraordinary Form’ of the liturgy reverted to being a prayer for the conversion of Jews to Christianity.”

4 / In memoriam

British historian Professor David Cesarani, specialist in Jewish history and the Holocaust, died at the age 58 in November. Cesarani was a research professor at Royal Holloway, University of London and wrote and edited over fifteen books. He was awarded the US National Jewish Book Award for history as well as the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to Holocaust education and his work advising the British government on establishing Holocaust Memorial Day. Prime Minister David Cameron said “I will always be incredibly grateful to David Cesarani for his brilliant and passionate contribution to the

work of the Holocaust Commission. David was one of the great pioneers of Holocaust education and he had a profound influence on how we remember the darkest hour of human history. I hope the new National Memorial to the Holocaust, together with its accompanying learning centre, will help to continue the vital work to which David dedicated so much of his life.” Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis wrote that “the British Jewish community mourns the loss of Professor David Cesarani, a towering academic and historian. May his memory be for a blessing.”

In memoriam link

/ David Cesarani has died, aged 58 (*The Jewish Chronicle*, October 25, 2015)