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The Jewish People

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Between Thrive and Decline

Annual Assessment No. 1

EXECUTIVE REPORT

JPPPI PROJECT HEADS

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FOREWORD

There can be no doubt that the Jewish people face a set of challenges on a global basis. Jewish organizations worldwide exist to deal with such challenges. Understandably, every problem, be it demographic, different security threats, economic deprivation, or new forms of antisemitism, tends to be viewed in isolation or through a local or regional lens. At times that certainly makes sense. But a segmented view reduces the ability to see how particular problems in one part of the world may relate to another. And such an integrated view is essential for understanding what truly is most urgent for world Jewry.

While forging an integrated view is no simple task, the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute has now made an effort to do so. In its “The Jewish People, 2004: Trends, Evaluations, and Challenges,” it offers a comprehensive assessment of what might be described as the state of the Jewish people. Here analysis and reporting is provided on Jewish communities internationally. The trends reveal more than only a snapshot on how communities are doing; they reveal where there are communities in danger or at risk, where problems like demographics are becoming more acute, where stresses are emerging but remain manageable, and where responses internally and externally may be working.

A global assessment offers not only perspective, it also offers a baseline from which to judge how world Jewry is doing now and how it might be judged to be doing in time as we look back to this particular yardstick. If the assessment offered only analysis and facts, it would have value. What in my judgment gives it “value added” are its findings. It offers clear guidelines not only for what should be on the agenda for world Jewry but also for how to approach such critical priorities as responding to demographic trends, communities at risk, and preserving Jewish values, etc.

In preparing this comprehensive assessment, the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute is meeting its charge: It is filling a void and offering a basis on which to make judgments in the future. It will be up to Jewish leaders world wide to study its findings, evaluate them, and act on its recommendations.

Ambassador Dennis Ross

Chairman of the Board and Professional Guiding Council
The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute

INTRODUCTION

The Jewish people in 2004 face extraordinary challenges arising from the ongoing transformations of global polity and society, the implications of which for the quality of Jewish life are deep and uncertain. For its part, world Jewry continues to undergo internal changes of unprecedented import in the cultural, socioeconomic and demographic domains. These lead to very diverse possible future scenarios – some optimistic, some worrisome, some simply intriguing. The impact of these complex and intertwined changes in the political, economic and cultural environment on the chances for Jewish resilience and future growth is not easy to predict.

In the daily, long term confrontation with a very competitive, and sometimes brutal global context, the Jewish people and especially the leadership of international, pan-continental, national, and local Jewish communities and organizations need to develop appropriate decision making processes and undertake critical future-shaping choices. While many studies exist on specific aspects of the contemporary Jewish experience, to date no attempt has been made to systematically review the full range of internal and external trends affecting Jewish life, discuss their implications, and outline a strategic agenda which could serve as the basis for policy recommendations. Such an integrated approach to policy planning and implementation has been more the exception than the rule in the necessarily local vision of Jewish community organizations worldwide. It is especially significant that policies proposed by Israel's government do not usually evaluate the ramifications of decision making for the rest of world Jewry. If we value the existence of common interests, and more importantly, a commonality of fate, the process of integrated assessment and analysis can no longer be postponed.

The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute has taken up the gauntlet. In this Report, and, in far greater detail, in the volume *The Jewish People 2004: Trends, Evaluations, Challenges*, we present the major findings that emerge from a systematic assessment of the current state of world Jewish affairs. The book and this Report stress an integrated global approach to the internal and external trends affecting the Jewish people in the present and foreseeable future. To help in this endeavor, through professional contributions to successfully outline the main strategic challenges, and indicate some policy directions: this is the mandate of the *Jewish People Policy Planning Institute*, and this is what we hope to initiate by submitting this report.

This Report was prepared through the joint efforts of the JPPPI professional staff. Brig. Gen. (res.) Amos Gilboa headed the project until March 2004. To him and to all other contributors goes our grateful appreciation.

Sergio DellaPergola

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Main findings

The Eternal Glory of Israel shall not Fail (I Samuel, 15, 29)

The Jewish people and Judaic civilization are among the most ancient on earth. They have withstood enormous threats, including that of genocide; they did not succumb to the temptation of assimilation; and their contribution to human kind, both as individuals and as a civilization, has been impressive, and much more than their relative share of world population.

Jews all over the world share a deep belief that the Jewish People are here to stay. But Judaism, in contrast with some other religions and cultures, has never been passive or fatalistic. On the opposite, historically Jews have successfully coped with existential challenges and adjusted themselves to changing conditions.

Ensuring a future in which the Jewish people and Judaic civilization thrive requires, first and foremost, a careful assessment of the resources – physical, economical, cultural and spiritual – available to the Jewish people, coupled with a sober evaluation of threats and weaknesses. From there, recommendations for the future can be deduced.

The situation presented and analyzed in this Report leads to the recommendation to apply the considerable resources of the Jewish people to one acute critical choice and to thirteen long-term strategic issues.

A. OVERALL BALANCE

Multiple trends move in the direction of thriving, including the strength of spiritual values and sense of mission; widespread commitment to Jewishness; much soft and hard power; outstanding human resources; improvements in

Jewish education; positive effects of globalization; economic assets and philanthropy; cultural creativity; an impressive self-organizing institutional structure; and a devoted leadership.

However, opposite trends clearly move in

the direction of decline. Foremost among them are the threats to the security of Israel and large parts of the Jewish people everywhere. In particular, the growing ability of fewer and fewer to kill more and more, together with the rise of Islamic aggressive fundamentalism and increasing violent antisemitism, together with proliferation of weapons of mass killing in the hand of anti-Jewish-Israeli actors, add up to an existential threat.

Also significant are dangers to the Jewish nature of Israel, because of demographic trends and some social and ideological developments, accompanied by bitter disagreements. A recent

Attendance in Jewish day schools, Jewish adult education, Jewish programs at universities – all are on the increase at brande

survey finding that about a quarter of all Israeli Jewish youth wants to live abroad, though reflecting attitudes rather than concrete intentions, is ominous. These reinforce and interact with tendencies felt in considerable parts of the younger generation of Jews outside Israel towards a weaker identification and interest in Israel.

Not less dangerous are demographic decline of the Jewish people in both absolute and relative numbers, large scale out-marriages,

decreasing involvement and adoption of post-modern values.

Adding up these and additional trends, as discussed in the Report, leads to the following overall evaluation:

The future of the Jewish people is not assured, though there are great opportunities for thriving. Therefore, determined and large-scale efforts are needed to utilize the opportunities and ward off the dangers.

Doing so requires large resources, judicious coping with critical decisions and careful crafting of long-term grand-policies.

It is impossible to summarize in a few words the manifold findings of this report, but a first cut cannot avoid mentioning the following top priorities on the Jewish agenda:

- **Acting to rescue Jewish communities**, that are still endangered in their current locations, e.g. Iran, and ensuring personal security for Jews world wide;
- **Managing Jewish sovereignty**, finding the right path between preserving crucial interests in the domain of security and realpolitical interests, maintaining enlightened Jewish human and social values, and deepening the ties between Israel and the Diaspora;
- **Achieving peace and security for Israel;**
- **Encouraging Jewish cultural and demographic continuity**, strengthening Jewish identity, knowledge, self-respect and participation, and sustaining Jewish population resilience and the natural process of generational replacement;
- **Harnessing Jewish unity and solidarity**, encouraging internal Jewish dialogue, mutual understanding and tolerance, consensus building and common action, without ignoring the existence of a wide spectrum of Jewish ideas and forms of expression;
- **Confronting hostility toward Jews**, explaining the Jewish position and tackling all forms of intolerance and physical aggression that persist from the past or proliferate in the present;
- **Projecting Jewish values**, encouraging the

study of Jewish heritage, and engaging in “Tikkun Olam” – making a uniquely Jewish contribution to the welfare and enlightenment of world society;

- **Developing Jewish human resources** of the highest quality that will take the lead in accomplishing these tasks.

Ideally, these challenges should be understood, analyzed and met through a holistic approach that integrates the interests of the Jews in Israel, and in the Diaspora, where a majority still resides.

B. EXTERNAL FACTORS

External trends influence five main dimensions in which the Jewish people operate. On balance, these developments are more a matter for concern than satisfaction:

- **Physical security of Jews:** the globalization and diffusion of ethnic, religious, and political conflicts blurs the boundary between the frontline and rear, and exposes Jews everywhere to violence, boycott and contempt;
- **Socio-economic and political status of Jews in their respective countries:** Jews are successfully represented in intellectual, cultural and decision-making elites, reflecting growing acceptance by the majority, but tend not to appear as proponents of a distinct Jewish message. Socio-economic deprivation is on the rise in some communities, including Israel.
- **Jewish identity and Jewish communal vitality:** Jewish population stagnation and aging, reflected in a weakened propensity to identify and affiliate, and translating into a diminishing share of total society, threatens or hinders the ability of Jews to maintain an

effective cultural presence and defend community interests;

- **Unity of the Jewish people and the inter-relationship between the Diaspora and Israel:** notwithstanding the extensive amount of interaction between distant sections of world Jewry, the pressures of current processes and events often lead to internal tensions, disagreements, and competition rather than to a unity of purpose and concerted action;
- **Jewish creativity and culture:** impressive socioeconomic advance and acceptance is not equally matched by remarkable achievement in Jewish cultural creativity that are of relevance to civilization as a whole.

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The following longer-term global processes stand at the foundation of these developments and crucially affect the environment facing world Jewry:

- **Interdependence, fluidity, unpredictability:** the world system’s growing integration paradoxically produces a mix of greater independence and greater dependency for individuals and communities;
- **Geopolitical shifts, Arab-Israeli conflict:** within a fluid global geopolitical equilibrium dominated by one superpower, old conflicts including the Arab-Israeli conflict, do not seem closer to solution as new conflicts arise. These conflicts can mutually feed off of each other;
- **Science and technology, cyberspace and distance transformation:** knowledge is an

increasingly important basis for competitiveness and power, and a key driver of other changes. Cyberspace generates radical changes in the meaning of distance and creates new arenas with open-ended and, as yet, unclear potential;

- **Demographic trends:** the high demographic growth in less developed societies, the ensuing large scale migrations from these countries to the West, and the declining weight of the more economically developed countries where most Jews live, strongly and negatively impact the Jewish presence globally;
- **Cultural shifts and community values:** the emerging of greater individualism at the expense of community solidarity projects problematic impacts on particularistic cultures, community commitments and the family;
- **Islam, Christianity:** the great monotheistic religions worldwide, each with its own agendas and internal conflicts, play a more assertive role in world affairs. Their paths intersect Jewish issues and interests in very diverse and sometimes problematic ways, which often call for a Jewish response between engagement and disengagement;
- **Antisemitism and the emergence of new forms of Israel-linked Judeophobia:** antisemitic rhetoric, especially in its modern manifestations, attack basic Jewish assets and symbols – including the perception of a sovereign Jewish state;
- **Economic globalization:** National economies are less dependent on local resources and more open to competition. This engenders potential advantages and disadvantages for Israel and world Jewry.

- **Global governance:** Continuation of unsolved political and security issues may lead to the emergence of a more decisive call for global governance systems.

C. INTERNAL FACTORS

World Jewry faces a prolonged trend of **population stagnation and decline**. Steady growth in Israel is balanced by decline in most Diaspora communities.

- World Jewish population dispersion and international migration patterns are very significantly affected by the distribution of economic and political constraints and incentives worldwide;
- Jews are generally well educated, socially and geographically mobile, economically well off, and politically involved;
- Jewish marriage and birth rates outside Israel are as low as, if not lower, than those in the majority of western societies;
- A high percentage of young adults marry non-Jewish partners and do not bring up their children within any Jewish framework;
- The consequent aging of the Jewish population results in a negative demographic balance; Reasons for the **decline in Jewish involvement** are numerous:
 - 'Jewishness' has become more a matter of choice than birth;
 - Jews are less often accused of dual loyalty and there are few barriers to acceptance in society;
 - Assimilation and out-marriage mean that much of the next generation has little or no Jewish background;
 - The rise of individualism and the eclectic

interpretation and redrafting of traditionally accepted social norms has weakened incentives to seek social frameworks;

- The weakening of traditional family units, rise in divorce and the existence of more single-parent families has lowered the propensity for people to seek involvement in Jewish community life, which is often family-oriented;
- A shortage of Jewish education and knowledge has led to lower Jewish identification; 'Jewishness' does not appeal to or engage many Jews facing many cultural and social alternatives;
- The cost of Jewish living is high.

Nonetheless, five major causes have kindled a **spirit of identification and action** amongst Jews worldwide:

- **Support for the survival of Israel**, especially around the time of the Six Day and Kippur Wars. Solidarity with Israel continues to be strong during the current violent stage in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
- **The struggle for Soviet Jewry**, especially in the 1970s and 1980s;
- **Retaining the memory of the Shoah**, and confronting Shoah denial movements;
- **The rise of antisemitism in Europe in the last three years**, largely correlated with the rise of Islamic activism and developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
- **A sense of common history, culture and destiny, which most Jews wish to preserve for future generations:** significant Jewish community investments are creating new opportunities for Jewish culture.

D. CRITICAL CHOICE AND STRATEGIC AGENDA

The **one most critically acute choice** facing Israel and the Jewish people involves **the policies that should be adopted with respect to the conflict with the Palestinians.**

This issue and its linkages have far reaching implications, both direct and indirect, for values related to the Promised Land, the Jewish character of the state of Israel, its security and the security of the Jewish people as a whole. It also impacts on their moral and real-political standing.

The Palestinian issue poses tough and often tragic value and political dilemmas. It is a quandary with profound uncertainties. The inherent instability of the region virtually precludes easy, clear-cut and stable "solutions". Outstanding creative thinking and democratic determination are essential to craft promising policy options and implement them in the face of Palestinian realities and in a gauntlet of diverse dogmatic opinions in Israel emanating from the "left" and "right".

Israel is on the "front line", and her future essence and territory are at stake. The Israeli-Arab dispute, however, carries important implications for all Jews wherever they reside. Therefore, innovative measures are required to involve the Jewish people as a whole in this critical choice, without undermining the prerogative of Israel to make its own choices.

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Strategic Agenda

Together with pressing critical choices, deep processes within the Jewish people and its environments pose issues that require long-term policies to enable the Jewish people to thrive far into the future. These comprise the proposed strategic agenda as derived from the Report:

1. Thriving through historic ruptures:

The Jewish people is experiencing a period of radical shifts taking place in a rapidly changing world. This requires innovative policies fitting a new world in the making.

2. Fortifying the security and Jewish uniqueness of Israel:

The thriving of a Jewish State of Israel is critical for the future of the Jewish people as a whole. Therefore fortifying it, including large-scale aliyah, are a priority.

3. Counteracting demographic decline:

To assure the demographic basis of thriving, policies enabling Jewish families to have more children and qualitative upgrading of Jewish identity to compensate for lesser numbers are imperative.

4. Full utilization of cyberspace:

Cyberspace provides far-reaching opportunities to increase cohesiveness of the Jewish people and to make a leap in teaching of Jewish subjects.

5. Leadership and high-elites development:

Leadership and other high elites are critical in shaping the future. More efforts are needed to develop them, such as by setting up a

Jewish People Leadership Academy, and speeding up entrance of young persons into leadership positions.

6. Facilitating Jewish creativity:

Continuity together with adjustment to historic shifts requires peak Jewish creativity, to be facilitated by providing facilities and support.

7. Strengthening competitive exceptionalism:

With active belonging to the Jewish people being increasingly a matter for personal choice, the unique features of Judaism must be developed and emphasized in ways making them competitive with other life alternatives.

8. Supporting governmental multi-cultural policies:

Our assessment shows clearly that countries with governmental multi-cultural policies facilitate Jewish thriving. Therefore, Jewish institutions should support such policies.

9. Revising and strengthening Israel-Diaspora relations:

Israel-Diaspora relations need restructuring, on a basis of equality and shared projects, together with giving Jewish people representatives more of a voice in Israeli decisions of much import for the future of the Jewish people as a whole.

10. Crafting a geopolitical grand-policy:

Shifts in global geopolitics, such as the rise of Islam and the evolution of the European Union, as well as new antisemitism, require

overall Jewish grand-policies, lacking at present.

11. Tikkun Olam:

Jewish values as well as realpolitical considerations require more efforts to apply Jewish values to main moral issues facing humanity.

12. Reparations and restitutions:

With all successes, reparations and restitutions require more of an overall strategy,

with devotion of more of the payments to assuring a thriving future for the Jewish people as a whole.

13. Jewish people capacity building and systematic policy crafting:

The dangers of decline and opportunities of thriving require radical upgrading of Jewish people resources, institutions and strategy crafting capacities.

Table: **Selected Indicators on World Jewry**

(next page)

Legend

- a A measure of public health, educational attainment, and economic standard of living. Source: United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2003, Millennium Development Goals: A Compact among Nations to End Human Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press) 2003.
- b Source, unless otherwise stated: S. DellaPergola, U. Rebhun, M. Tolts, "Prospecting the Jewish Future: Population Projections", 2000-2080, *American Jewish Year Book*, 100, 2000, 103-146.
- c After downward reduction following 2001 NJPS.
- d Without Baltic states.
- e With Baltic states. Revised population projections for 2020.
- f Without Israel and FSU.
- g Including country not reported.

Table: **Selected Indicators on World Jewry**

| Country | Jewish Population (Core definition) | | | Index of Human Development ^a | | Recent out- marriage rate (%) | Jewish Day-school attendance rate (%) | Aliyah 2003 | Visits to Israel (%) |
|--------------------------|--|------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| | 1970 | 2003 | Projected 2020 ^b | Value | World Rank | | | | |
| World | 12,633,000 | 12,950,000 | 13,548,000 | .944–275 | 1–175 | | | 23,226 ^f | |
| Israel | 2,582,000 | 5,094,000 | 6,228,000 | .905 | 22 | 5 | 97 | – | – |
| North America | 5,686,000 | 5,671,000 | 5,581,000 | .937 | 7–8 | | | 1,873 | |
| United States | 5,400,000 | 5,300,000 | 5,200,000 ^c | .937 | 7 | 54 | 29 | 1,687 | 35 |
| Canada | 286,000 | 371,000 | 381,000 | .937 | 8 | 35 | 55 | 186 | 66 |
| Latin America | 514,000 | 401,000 | 364,000 | .888–467 | 27–150 | | | 2,493 | |
| Argentina | 282,000 | 187,000 | 149,000 | .849 | 34 | 45 | 60 | 1,371 | >50 |
| Brazil | 90,000 | 97,000 | 87,000 | .777 | 65 | 45 | 71 | 205 | >50 |
| Mexico | 35,000 | 41,000 | 42,000 | .800 | 55 | 10 | 85 | 72 | >70 |
| Other countries | 107,000 | 76,000 | 86,000 | .888–467 | 27–150 | 15–95 | 75 | 845 | >50 |
| Europe non-FSU | 1,331,000 | 1,161,000 | 1,030,000 | .944–734 | 1–96 | | | 2,691 | |
| France | 530,000 | 498,000 | 482,000 | .925 | 17 | 45 | 40 | 1,789 | >70 |
| United Kingdom | 390,000 | 300,000 | 238,000 | .930 | 13 | 45 | 67 | 330 | 78 |
| Germany | 30,000 | 108,000 | 108,000 | .921 | 18 | <60 | <20 | 57 | >50 |
| Hungary | 70,000 | 50,000 | 34,000 | .837 | 38 | 60 | <15 | 37 | .. |
| Other EU ^d | 171,000 | 151,000 | 134,000 | .941–836 | 3–39 | 33–67 | 10–25 | 253 | >50 |
| Other non-EU | 140,000 | 54,000 | 34,000 | .944–734 | 1–96 | 50–80 | 5–20 | 225 | .. |
| FSU ^e | 2,151,000 | 413,000 | 163,000 | .833–677 | 41–113 | | | 12,383 | |
| Russia | 808,000 | 252,000 | 130,000 | .779 | 63 | 80 | <15 | 4,824 | .. |
| Ukraine | 777,000 | 95,000 | 25,000 | .766 | 75 | 80 | <15 | 3,853 | .. |
| Rest FSU Europe | 312,000 | 43,000 | 5,000 | .833–700 | 41–108 | 65–75 | <15 | 1,209 | .. |
| Other FSU Asia | 254,000 | 23,000 | 3,000 | .765–677 | 76–113 | 50–75 | <15 | 2,497 | .. |
| Asia (rest) ^f | 104,000 | 19,000 | 21,000 | .932–470 | 9–148 | | | 370 | |
| Africa | 195,000 | 84,000 | 60,000 | .783–275 | 61–175 | | | 3,342 | |
| Thereof So. Africa | 118,000 | 75,000 | 57,000 | .684 | 111 | 20 | 85 | 88 | 70 |
| Oceania | 70,000 | 107,000 | 101,000 | .939–568 | 4–128 | | | 61 | |
| Thereof Australia | 65,000 | 100,000 | 95,000 | .939 | 4 | 22 | 65 | 60 | 79 |

2 The Jewish People: Overall Evaluation

A. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

1. Contemporary Jewry: Religion, Nation, Civilization?

The question of the meaning of Judaism, 'Jewishness', and Jewry in historical perspective is not trivial. Disagreements over the fundamental meanings of these terms carry significant weight in the contemporary debate about the present and future of the Jewish people in a global context. Key questions include:

- Are the Jewish people a **nation** within a broader paradigm of civilization inclusive of other nations, or a **civilization** in its own right?
- What is the changing importance of religion as a core component of Jewish identity?
- How can Israel be rated on a scale of **normalcy** to **exceptionalism** in comparison with other states?

Without entering into a deeper discussion of the various meanings of the concept of civilization, as distinguished from culture, we will assume here that the Jewish people form a civilization and not merely a national or religious group.

The apparently unique relationship within the Jewish people between the State of Israel and the Diaspora (or World Jewry as some would prefer) is actually shared by many other nations. However, when one considers the continued existence of the Jewish people over 2000 years without a state and long before the emergence of modern nation-states, the Jewish experience throughout history has been unique. The Jews as a people intimately interacted with Judaism to create an original and radical complex of beliefs, norms, values and folklore. A historical discussion of the Jewish people as solely a religion, or solely a nation, or solely an ethnic group is, therefore, misleading.

At the same time, the overlap between the vast majority of the Jewish people and western civilization is constantly growing. Since the period of Enlightenment and Emancipation, Judaism became increasingly reduced in Western Europe to a personal religious realm. Jews became for all intents and purposes citizens in one or another state, and took an increasingly active role in all aspects of civil life. The one exception to this apparent integration was the preservation

these challenges should be understood, analyzed and met through a holistic

of rituals that distinguished Jewish communities. This was the case mainly in Western Europe and in the growing Jewish community in the U.S.. Modernization of Jewish communities in most of Eastern Europe took other forms, and did reach only to a limited extent the diverse Jewish communities in North Africa and the Middle East.

Antisemitism was not completely rooted out by emancipation and progress. Ironically, antisemitism persisted and contributed, to the enhancement, survival and even renewal of the Jewish people, which includes the Zionist uprising and the establishment of the State of Israel. Whatever the interpretation, without a strong link to the Promised Land which constitutes a fundamental tenet of Judaism, Zionism could not have arisen and there would have been no chance for Israel's independence.

2. Jews in the Global System

At the turn of the 21st century, international political and military interventions, socioeconomic development and transactions, and not

these challenges should be understood, analyzed and met through a holistic

less significantly, cultural interactions and communication networks reached a definitive stage of globalization. Epochal events of global significance included the fall of the Iron Curtain and the demise of the Soviet Union as a super power, the reunification of Germany, the revival of religious fundamentalism – particularly Islam, the return of “ethnic cleansing” in parts of Europe

and Africa, new waves of mass international migration, the beginning and subsequent suspension of the peace process in the Middle East,

the Catholic Church's new position on the Shoah and the Jewish people and its historic recognition of the State of Israel, the European Union's expansion and monetary union, and the inception of global communication networks incorporating television, cellular phones and the Internet.

Shifts of the global polity, economy and communications generated perceptions of a shrinking of time and physical space as well as a greater frequency of mutual interactions – and with it, interdependency – between previously more remote points on earth. These changes profoundly and swiftly affected daily life and identity, and redefined the boundaries between nations, communities, and individuals in world society. World Jewry has not been immune to these dynamics and their far-reaching social and historical implications. The magnitude and pace of change and characteristics of Jewish populations, reflecting both biological-demographic and cultural-identificational determinants, are intimately intertwined with the major turning points in contemporary Jewish history and society. A powerful geographical redistribution of the Jewish population around the globe has ensued.

The general societal context of population needs to be reviewed. Between 1970 and 2003, the world's total population grew by nearly 2.5 billion, an increase of over 70%. In contrast, the total Jewish population increased by only 250,000, or 2%. Jewish population growth approached zero, at 13 million people (by the “core” definition) in 2004. The concept of “core Jewish population” refers to the aggregate of people identifying themselves or being identified by others as being Jews in census polls, surveys

or similar sources, as well as people of Jewish parentage that indicate no ethnic or religious preference and do not hold an alternative identity. In the U.S. 2000–01 National Jewish Population Survey, persons who reported a “non-monotheistic religion” and at least one Jewish parent or a Jewish upbringing were included in the Jewish population. The concept of an “extended Jewish population” also includes all non-Jewish members in Jewish households. The Law of Return extends eligibility for Israeli citizenship to grandchildren of Jews, and their spouses.

The Jewish share of total world population remains extremely small – little more than 2 promil of the world’s population, but Jews comprised more than 2% of the population in the United States and approximately 1% in the European Union. Between 1970 and 2003, the number of Jews diminished by nearly 80% in the European section of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), by 91% in the Asian section of the FSU and in North Africa, 56% in the rest of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, 36% in Southern Africa, and 22% in Latin America. Minor reductions occurred also in North America (-0.5%) and in Western Europe (-5%). In contrast, Jewish population increased by nearly 53% in Oceania, and by over 97% in Israel.

There has been a concentration of Jews in countries that offer better socioeconomic opportunities, and maintain a well-established tradition of political stability and legal equity. At the beginning of the 21st century, 92% of total Jewish population lived in the top 20% of countries ranked by standard of living. The Jewish presence in less developed countries has become negligible. This represents a significant departure

from the situation that prevailed throughout modern history until the first half of the 20th century.

3. The Role of International Migration

International migration patterns have long represented a critical factor affecting Jewish population size and distribution, and have provided the context shaping the development of Jewish life. Since World War II, approximately 4.8 million Jews were involved in international migration: 1.9 million between 1948 and 1968; 1 million between 1969 and 1988; and 1.9 million between 1989 and 2003. Israel received 59% of the 2.9 million Jewish migrants since 1969, while 41% dispersed across the major Western countries.

Of the total Jewish migrants, 55% came from Eastern Europe, 16% from Asia and Africa, 13% from Western countries, and 16% from Israel. The frequency of emigration (relative to the Jewish population in their countries of origin) was highest in numerically depleted communities in Asia and Africa, followed by Eastern Europe, and at a much lower rate Israel, and the Western countries.

Theoretical explanations need to be incorporated in the analysis of *aliyah* and other Jewish migrations, at least from the perspective of the preference given to Israel over competing countries of destination. Countries with lower than expected *aliyah* propensities include the leading English-speaking societies (United States, Canada, Australia) whose high standards of living function as a deterrent to *aliyah*, and which

these challenges should be understood, analyzed and met through a holistic

constitute in themselves key destinations for Jewish migration, in competition with Israel. Jewish emigration from several Latin American countries is also lower than anticipated, where at least in the past the favorable environment enjoyed by local Jewish communities contrasted with the problematic conditions in the respective societies. Nor do the recent antisemitic episodes in France seem to have generated so far a wave of immigration that was expected by some observers. One plausible reason for this is

Attendance in Jewish day schools, Jewish adult education, Jewish programs at universities – all are on the increase

the powerful hold exerted by an affluent and sophisticated French society over its Jewish population.

Interestingly, the frequency of emigration from Israel (yeridah) exactly mirrors the levels that might be expected for aliyah from a country with an equivalent level of socio-economic development as Israel. Similarly, decision-making concerning Jewish migration is strongly affected by practical considerations concerning lifestyle, socioeconomic

constraints and opportunities, and personal security, in both the Diaspora and Israel.

Given aspiration to further population and community growth, the capacity to create conditions that would attract more Jewish migrants, and hold the Jewish residents is a crucial policy priority in Israel and elsewhere.

B. THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND JUDAISM

1. Critical Events and Trends

External factors profoundly affect the central challenges facing the Jewish World in the Diaspora and Israel. The impact of these recent trends are analyzed for a medium-term time frame of 5-10 years. Many exogenous factors do not directly influence the Jewish world: major environmental or bio-medical events, like global warming or epidemics of new diseases (AIDS, SARS, etc.). These affect all humankind with no particular impact on the Jewish people.

Relevant external factors are of two types:

- **Longer term geo-political and socio-cultural trends** in the non-Jewish world that affect both Jewish security and Jewish identity concerns.
- **Specific events and ‘ruptures’** that primarily affect the security of Jews, such as the eruption in 2000 of the current Palestinian uprising, the collapse of the Oslo peace process, 9/11, the war on terror and the American campaign in Iraq.

External trends affect five major dimensions operating within the Jewish world:

- The physical security of Jews, including anti-semitism
- The socio-economic and political status of Jews in their respective countries
- Jewish identity and the vitality of Jewish communities
- The unity of the Jewish people and the relations between the Diaspora and Israel
- Jewish creativity and culture.

Twelve types of processes specifically affect world Jewry:

1. The interdependence, fluidity and unpredictability of the international environment

- A basic feature emerging in the world system – in tandem with key, relatively stable trends – is its general fluidity and unpredictability. Interdependence between forces operating at distant points on the planet produces a seemingly paradoxical effect on Jewish individuals and communities: greater independence blended with greater dependency on external trends. his trend.

2. Geopolitical shifts

- The demise of the Soviet Union and its aftermath is still strongly felt nearly fifteen years later. Primary consequences include Russian Jewish migration, the huge contribution of human capital from FSU to Israeli society, the establishment of large Russian-speaking communities in the U.S. and Germany; the renewal of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe; the emergence of out-marriages in Israel; acute problems of personal status and religious conversion in Israel.
- The new world order under U.S. hegemony as leader in the war on global terror increases the political influence of U.S. Jewry and strengthens Israel strategically, but at the same time creates a trilateral (US-Israel-Jewish) axis hated by large sections of the developing world.
- The expansion and consolidation of the European Union creates new opportunities for political integration, social mobility and

cultural expression of European Jewry– particularly those from Eastern Europe subsequent to accession in May 1, 2004. It also poses a double challenge: the need to build an effective pan-European Jewish community organization and leadership, and the need to find an appropriate mode of discourse at the institutional level in the EU.

- Arab control of oil resources retards U.S. global influence and may affect American-Israeli relations.
- A large Islamic country, Pakistan, already holds nuclear capabilities. The effort to obtain nuclear weapons continues in Iran, and other countries, as well as on the part of terrorist groups. Israel is an obvious target of unconventional threats, as well as the U.S. and its large Jewish population.
- The events of 9/11, and the recurring impact of Al-Qaeda, demonstrate that fewer can kill more.
- The fall of Saddam Hussein's regime and the American occupation of Iraq removes a danger on the Eastern front and strengthens Israel's strategic position. The longer run consequences of American occupation (in terms of actual or perceived success/failure) are not yet clear.
- China's, and to some extent India's, accelerated economic growth and political power occurs in societies virtually free of a Jewish presence and not influenced by Biblical images of the Jewish people.

3. Arab-Israeli conflict

- Seemingly permanent turmoil in the Middle East continuously polarizes attention in a dynamic world. It bears grave detrimental

effects on Israel's image and international standing, and adds pressure upon Jews in the Diaspora.

- Escalation of the conflict with the Palestinians engenders new modes of violence that are difficult to effectively confront. The consequences project not only on political values, but on basic human outlook as well.
- The weakening of the capacity for an Arab conventional attack is counterbalanced by proliferation of non-conventional weapons.
- The U.S.'s pro-Israel leanings antagonize other countries, including some in the West, and generates hostility against Jewish communities.

4. Demographic trends

- The rapid growth of developing nations, including Moslem countries, and the prolonged slowdown in natural population growth in most western societies, alters the global demographic balance, particularly in Europe and North America. There is constant decline in the share of the developed economies where most of world Jews reside.
- The negative natural increase among the general European population creates significant demand for foreign workers, stimulates immigration – partially from Moslem countries – generating the potential for compelling ethnic and religious cleavages in predominantly Christian and secular societies.
- Erosion of the conventional nuclear family, aside from generating a dramatic imbalance between young and elderly age groups, engenders a deeper transformation in traditional basic social norms, and reflects a diffuse sense of uncertainty about the future.

- Moslem migrants, especially in Western Europe, have provided the infrastructure for spreading anti-Jewish violence. Socio-economic need coupled with pre-existing xenophobia among the veteran population pushes many of the migrants to support fundamentalist Islam as an expression of collective identity, and of the dilemmas and tensions of being a Moslem in modern western Countries.

5. Science and technology

- Knowledge is an increasingly important basis of competitiveness and power. This provides great opportunities for the Jewish people, but also harbors some dangers.
- Twenty-first century technologies allow for consolidating the links between distant Jewish communities in the Diaspora and Israel, to aggregate, exchange information, meet visually and interact personally, confront crises, improve information, education and scientific research on Jewish themes, develop databases, broaden cultural experiences, and adopt more pluralistic cultural outlooks.
- New technologies have radically altered the nature of economic activity, of information, and potentially of education.

6. Cyberspace and distance transformation

- Cyberspace has generated radical changes in the meaning of distance and has created new spaces with open-ended and as yet, unclear potentials.
- It enables intensive interaction, strong episodic communities, and cost-effective and user-friendly opportunities for learning.

- Enhanced communication networks serve terrorist purposes by augmenting the potential for destruction, through diffusion of knowledge, logistic support, and international connections.
- The same technology serves the propagation of antisemitism, given the global reach of ideas and visual symbols.

7. Cultural shifts and community values

- The emerging trend of greater individualism, at the expense of community values, has a negative impact on Jewish community membership and commitment.
- Post-modern values question some of the basic assumptions underlying the existing system of religious and national identities, and deeply affect behaviors in the personal, family and social spheres.
- In western countries, a renewed search for meaning related to post-materialism drives people to either more fundamentalist manifestations of identity and ties within established religious movements, or away from the Judaic and Christian mainstream in favor of more exotic cults and cultures.
- Greater openness toward the “other” and cultural pluralism allow recognition of Jewish symbols and spaces in general culture and policies. An example is the establishment of days of Shoah remembrance and Jewish culture in most EU countries.

8. Islam

- Within Islamic circles, crisis emanates from the conflict between traditionalism and modernity, and between globalization and tribalism.

- In the struggle between moderate and fundamentalist Islam, the latter is gathering momentum.
- An antisemitic world outlook has emerged, particularly among fundamentalist Moslem organizations. In distinction from traditional Islamic anti-Jewish attitudes, this manifestation of antisemitism emphasizes the Israeli-Arab conflict, from both a religious and ideological perspective. It embraces the struggle against Judaism as the primary element in the struggle between Islam and western civilization.
- Islamic terrorist organizations envisage a common enemy in the U.S. and Israel, but also in the Judeo-Christian world at large. Judaism becomes entangled with Christianity in the historical struggle between Islam and Christianity.
- Jewish organizations the world over have become targets of terrorist attacks. The defensive alignment is much more complex than against “conventional” antisemitic events, and requires substantial means and new counter strategies.

9. Christianity

- The Christian world is in turn affected by trends in the Moslem world, and directs its policies towards Middle East populations and communities to avoid endangering the interest of Christian minorities. This implies that a precarious blend of attitudes and political measures is often adopted that may compromise Jewish and Israeli interests in the area.
- The more relevant change in the Christian world concerns the intensive policies by

Pope John Paul II adopted toward the Jewish people and Israel. Beginning with the historical, unprecedented visit of the Pope to the Great Synagogue and the meeting with Chief Rabbi Toaff in Rome in 1986, important steps were initiated through the document on antisemitism, the document on the Shoah, the new Catechism and a reassessment of responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ, and the recognition of the State of Israel to bring Christendom closer to the Jewish world. The Pope's visit to Israel in the year 2000 was the highlight of this intricate process. However, although the consequences were positive with regards to inter-faith dialogue, within the Catholic Church support for the Pope's course is not unanimous.

- Evangelical churches (primarily fundamentalist Protestants) develop a warm and supportive attitude to the Jews and the State of Israel, largely as an expression of Messianic beliefs and the role the Jewish people play as an intermediary in the fulfillment of the gospel. At least in the short run, and perhaps more for tactical than for strategic reasons, these are favorable developments in the standing of the Jewish people and Judaism vis-a-vis Christian society, particularly in the U.S..

10. Antisemitism and the emergence of new forms of Judeophobia

- Modern antisemitism perpetuates classic antisemitic rhetoric, and continues to attack Jewish symbols and targets.
- A number of new antisemitic arguments and motifs have appeared: 1) denial of Israel's

right to exist, ostensibly because of its "racist/colonialist character" and its "murderous attack on the Palestinians"; 2) delegitimation of the right of the Jewish people to a sovereign political framework; 3) denial of the Shoah.

- The flag bearers are Moslem fundamentalists, the extreme and less extreme left, and the extreme right. A coalition of these disparate groups demonstrated at the Durban conference on anti-racism how opposing interests can coalesce around an anti-Israeli agenda.
- Some supporters of the anti-global movement see globalization as a manifestation of Jewish dominance on world affairs.
- The media's often limited and frequently unilateral reporting from the Middle East promotes a biased and oversimplified impression of a very complex conflict.
- A small-scale but significant development is virulent anti-Israelism with some antisemitic overtones among some academic circles.
- Both veteran and new forces stand behind these developments: Christian antagonism toward Jews perceived as the "other" and "different"; impatience towards the "strong and victorious" State of Israel, an image that stands in contrast to the traditional view of the weak Jew; the strong link between a Jewish Israel and the U.S.; the need of the left and the right alike to find new adversaries; and the attitude of radical Islam towards Judaism spurring the growth of Islamic (as distinguished from Arab) antisemitism.
- As a result of these trends, Jews, especially in Europe, find themselves returning to a situation in which they are the object of hatred and violence.

- Following physical attack, destruction and damage of Jewish property, sentiments of fear are diffused among Jewish communities, primarily in Europe. Self-defense and patrols become a central topic in community discourse. On university campuses, Jewish students face a serious dilemma.
- Jews consider, and to some extent actually implement emigration projects, especially in France: internally from more endangered area, or internationally, to Israel and North America. Migration may increase if antisemitic trends become more powerful and wide-spread.
- Jewish liberals, especially in France, overwhelmed and embarrassed by the attitudes of European liberals who stand at the forefront of antisemitic/anti-Israeli activities, tend to renew ties to the organized Jewish community.
- One important implication of the new manifestations of antisemitism and Israel-linked Judeophobia is that the organized Jewish community, together with Israel, mobilizes against the new trend.
- Greater awareness in Western societies of the symbolic and practical implications of the Shoah translates into official governmental initiatives to incorporate the Jewish people into the mainstream of collective memory.
- Empirical observation to date tends to validate the notion that antisemitism motivates an increase in Jewish identity and solidarity, rather than stimulates denial. However, the

potential for 'flight' and distancing from Jewish identity exists.

11. Economic globalization

- Economic enterprises, both small and large, which can operate globally may draw advantage from globalization. National economies are less dependent on local resources and more open, but also more vulnerable to international competition. Globalization engenders significant potential advantages and some disadvantages for Israel's existing economic structure.
- Globalization will likely enhance international specialization, stratification, and social dependency. It may impair social justice globally, which has generated violent anti-global reactions.
- The opening of national economies to international competition has had a disruptive effect on the Jewish middle class in the Diaspora, particularly in South America.

12. Global governance

- Continuation of unresolved political and security crises may lead to the emergence of a more determined global governance system. Possible consequences of global governance range from less personal freedom for individuals to greater interdependence between national security systems.
- International organizations, such as the United Nations, influenced by the majority of participating countries, exhibit a distinct bias against Israel.

2. Opportunities and Challenges

The forces of the external world pose both opportunities and threats for the Jewish people.

Among the **opportunities**:

- Most Jews currently find themselves living in the most powerful countries and cities in the developed world, combining wealth, military might, technological sophistication and political freedom. Jews in Diaspora communities are well situated in terms of education, income, and position in key global industries, to defend Jewish interests. The Jewish people have at their disposal an enormous array of resources that can be mobilized to support Jewish identity and culture and defend Jewish communities against external threats.
- Globalization can enhance Jewish solidarity across Diaspora communities and between them and Israel. Through networking, it can also make Diaspora communities more effective.
- Traditional indications of antisemitism continue to decrease in North America.
- Western Jews continue to find themselves and their cultural attributes welcome. This can invigorate Jewish culture through innovation and creativity.
- Jews are well represented at the center of political and economic power. Although affected by global trends, they are also able to yield influence as well.
- The technological aspects of globalization can be harnessed to promote Jewish interests and cultural vitality, as well as a global and inter-dependent Jewish community.
- The defeat of Iraq and the war on terror in the short term improves Israel's strategic position.

But the **dangers** and **challenges** arising from these are formidable:

- Any weakness in the power of the American hegemony, or the West in general, or an increase in the manifestation of anti-Americanism, or a rift between the United States and Europe, would bode ill for the Jewish people and Israel. The outcome in Iraq may play a role here.
- The access of terrorist groups to unconventional weapons endangers the long term security of Israel and Diaspora communities. Fewer individuals increasingly have the capacity to kill a greater number of victims with less effort and per capita cost.
- Natural demographic growth will take place primarily in non-Western societies and populations. This is likely to precipitate instability and violence in developing countries, as well as population pressure in the West, resulting from migration flows. The latter is a cause for growing ethnic conflict and xenophobia in the West. Economic growth in China and India, and proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons of mass killing may diminish Western dominance. Moreover, the absolute and relative decline in Jewish populations will generate problems of critical mass, and decrease Jewish influences in the political affairs of the respective countries.
- Patterns of Jewish geographic migration, resulting from the global market for educated labor, may work against Jewish community political and cultural interests.
- The increase of Moslem and Arab populations in Western Europe and North America pose challenges to the socio-political efficacy

of Diaspora Jewry in defending Israel and related interests.

- The campaign to undermine the legitimacy of Israel remains ongoing, not only by Moslem radicals but by other segments of the Moslem and Arab world and by liberal factions in the West. One outcome of the campaign might be to alienate left-liberal Jews. This can weaken the links between Israel and Diaspora Jews. The new antisemitism demoralizes Diaspora Jews, while the continuation of terrorist attacks may have similar effects in Israel.
- Post-modern individualism undermines Jewish identity and community as historically understood.
- Challenges to conventional Jewish family life, such as interfaith marriage, civil and religious gay marriage, and radical feminism both within and without the synagogue also risk increasing tensions within the religious Jewish world, between Orthodox and non-Orthodox movements, in the Diaspora and Israel.

For World Jewry, a central challenge remains **how to maximize the benefits of external influences and participation in the global context, while minimizing the erosion of Jewish identity and commitment.**

C. MAJOR INTERNAL TRENDS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

1. Continuity and Identity

Jewishness has become a question of choice and not birth. Part of that choice is still expressed itself in high adherence to Jewish tradition. But perceptions of the essence of Jewish identifica-

tion tend to shift from a more conventional notion of Jewishness as a mode of *being* intimately related to a given set of beliefs and behaviors, to one in which Jewish identification is expressed by *connecting, traveling, journeying, listening, or even surfing and zapping.*

The Jewish people can be roughly divided into two distinct groups – the committed and the uncommitted. The majority are less involved. Membership in Jewish organizations and institutions is falling.

As Jews become better integrated into the wider society, they tend to look outward and abandon their traditions. Most still adhere to traditional rituals and rites of passage, such as the *brith mila, bar mitzvah, Passover Seder, Shabbat candle lighting* and so on, as evidenced in most major surveys of Jewish communities. This is probably an expression of interest in Jewish culture and heritage and an acceptance of Jewish symbols, rather than an expression of Jewish religion and values.

But for many there is **less involvement in Jewish causes and activities.** Jews are less inclined to belong. As Jews get better educated and more professional, they manage their leisure time and spiritual and cultural interests accordingly. The trend is towards greater specialization. In particular, membership organizations are on rapid decline. Yet, many Jews are still interested but searching for new and alternative forms of Jewish engagement, e.g. studying the Kabala, listening to Klezmer music and so on.

Even amongst the less-involved majority, more Jews formally identify themselves as Jews. Recent censuses in Canada, the UK, South Africa

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and Australia show that the vast majority of the Jewish population formally answered the voluntary question on religion as “Jewish”. However, when it comes to adherence to substance, Jews

tend to identify more with universal values, issues and culture. Israel is a strong drawing force, but also a factor of divisiveness.

The committed minority, especially the religious but also traditional and secular Jews, are better educated and more knowledgeable about things Jewish. Attendance in Jewish day schools is increasing.

Jewish adult education is expanding,

and the number of Jewish study programs especially at universities is growing. Jewish scholarship is flourishing in North America, Europe and Israel.

Committed Jews while constituting a smaller percentage in most communities are becoming stronger. **They are better educated** than ever before (and many, if not most, have academic degrees) and better versed in Jewish and religious matters.

The Orthodox and especially the **Haredim** are growing numerically and proportionally to the total Jewish community, and increasing in strength both in the Diaspora and in Israel.

Support for Israel remains steadfast.

In Israel, the vast majority identify themselves as Jews and to most, their Jewishness is important, although it often not expressed through religious rituals. Truly secular Israeli Jews are a relatively small minority and many search for some Jewish heritage and meaning.

The reasons for the decline in involvement are numerous:

- Jews are less often accused of dual loyalty and there are few barriers to acceptance in the general society;
- Assimilation and interfaith marriage mean that much of the next generation will have little or no Jewish background;
- The rise of individualism and the eclectic interpretation and redrafting of traditional social norms negatively impact on the propensity to seek individual and social identity in the Jewish community.
- The weakening of traditional family units, rise in divorce and the increase of single-parent families discourages involvement in frameworks that are often family oriented.
- The lack of Jewish education and knowledge lowers incentives to community participation.
- Jewishness does not appeal to or engage many Jews.
- Participation in the organized Jewish community involves a heavy cost.

Assimilation and more specifically, **interfaith marriage** are on the rise in most communities outside of Israel. In one sense, interfaith marriage is a direct function of the degree of Jewish acceptance in their general communities. The consequences, however, are alarming, as on average, half of all marriages take place outside the faith. In some communities, such as the FSU and Eastern Europe, the percentage exceeds 75%.

As out marriage increases around the Jewish world, so increases the number of **non-core Jews**, namely those Jews, their non-Jewish spouses and their offspring. While no accurate estimates of their number exist, they likely run into many millions. With concerted action,

many non-core Jews could be brought into the fold of Judaism.

The last twenty years have brought a significant **rise in enrollment at Jewish day schools** (and a parallel decline in supplementary Jewish education) in Diaspora communities, as it has become clear that the home and the communal environment are insufficient to provide a solid Jewish background. The greatest increase is in the religious sector where enrollment is approaching 100%.

The majority of Jewish parents in Diaspora communities prefer to enroll their children in public or other private schools. One reason is cost. In the U.S., South America and Australia, for example, school fees are prohibitive. Another reason is motivation. Many Jewish parents see Jewish education or Jewish socialization lesser as a priority than good secular education.

In Israel, the educational system has been considering introduction of more Jewish content in secular schools.

Although the size of Jewish communities is contracting, **Jewish creativity has grown significantly**. Jewish scholarship, religious study, responsa, Jewish music, literature, art, theatre and cinema, the media and other forms of expression, enjoy high visibility.

Hebrew, a language that a century ago was used only for prayer and learning, is now a normal, modern and fast developing language of most Jews in Israel, and is studied, and, to lesser extent, spoken by numerous Jews outside Israel. However, there are signs of decline in the teaching of Hebrew in some communities.

Feminism and individualism affects the Jewish community as it does the Western world. As Jews in general and women in particular

become better educated and more knowledgeable of Judaism, they demand greater status in the community and the synagogue. Change is taking place, albeit slowly, as more egalitarian minyanim open up. The Jewish gay movement is on the rise, in North America, Europe and in Israel.

2. Unity and Division

Jewish identity is also a reflection of major causes, issues and crises. Since 1948 and the establishment of a Jewish state, there have been five major causes that have kindled a spirit of identification and action amongst Jews worldwide. These are:

- Support for the survival of Israel, especially around the time of the Six Day War. Support continues to be strong in the current violent phase of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
- The struggle for Soviet Jewry;
- Preservation of the memory of the Shoah;
- The rise of antisemitism in Europe over the last two years. This is largely interrelated with the rise of Islamic activism and developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
- A sense of common history, culture and destiny, which most Jews want to continue and preserve for future generations.

Relentless attacks on Israel in the media and the rise of antisemitic incidents and sentiments in Europe have resulted in increased solidarity with local Jewish communities, with Israel, and, ultimately, with Jewish destiny.

Since the Second World War, the organiza-

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tional structure of the Jewish People in the Diaspora has become more unified. In most communities (Australia and the U.S being exceptions), there is a clearly defined hierarchical structure with fewer central yet more powerful representative organizations and a Chief Rabbi. Even the American Jewish community with its strong local communal organizational infrastructure, is becoming more effective at the national level, with a select number of representative organizations such as the Conference of Presidents, AIPAC and the UJC.

However, at the international level, the Jewish community is less unified. There are a plethora of international Jewish organizations and no one body that can speak for the Jewish People globally. Indeed, it may be argued that the global dispersion of the Jewish people creates diversities of interests and perspectives and also conflicts of interest, thus precluding hierarchical global structure. One case in point is the different assessment of preferred strategies and objectives in the highly delicate issue of reparations to Shoah survivors, including insurance policies, Swiss banks accounts, etc.

Jews are divided between religious and non-religious. They are also divided along religious denominational lines. They are divided on priorities. If there may be agreement on common causes and issues as described above, there is no common recognized agenda for the Jewish people. *Aliyah* is a case in point. Most Israelis see this as a major priority for the Jewish world, but this is not accepted by most Diaspora communities.

Whilst the majority of Jews define themselves as such, the Orthodox establishment and the formal institutions of the State of Israel do not necessarily recognize them as Jews, especial-

ly those converted by Reform rabbis. The “who is a Jew” question has yet to be worked out. Non-recognition of non-orthodox marriages and conversions is likely to push many away from the core of the Jewish world. Furthermore, as interfaith marriage increases so does the number of non-Jewish spouses and offspring of Jews. If efforts are not made to reach out to this growing sector, then they and many of their Jewish mates may be lost to the Jewish world in a generation.

While Jews around the world are concerned with Israel and its fate, most Israelis and official institutions ignore the rest of the Jewish world in their decision-making or concerns, except in times of particular crises.

Within Israel, there are stark divisions on religious and socio-economic matters although ethnic divide between *Ashkenazim* and *Sephardim* is slowly dissipating. The most controversial issue emerging in Israeli society concerns the continuation of Israel’s presence in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and Gaza. Divisiveness – which peaked with the 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin – may be re-approaching dangerous levels.

3. Numbers and Security

Numerically **the Jewish people in the Diaspora are declining**. An exception is the ultra-orthodox. Low birth rates, rising interfaith marriage, and population aging lie at the root of these diminishing numbers. The Jewish population of Israel continues to grow, albeit at a slower rate than in the 1990s, and is expected to exceed that of the United States in the coming decade.

The physical security of the Jewish people is largely a function of internal factors, such as

critical mass, and **external factors** such as antisemitism and other threats.

Critical mass has always been an issue. What is the minimum requirement for a vibrant healthy Jewish community in order to support synagogues, Jewish day schools community centers, kosher food outlets, and welfare services?

Over three generations, **the majority of Jews have moved from the periphery of the world to the centers of power.** Jewish population patterns have shifted, becoming concentrated in two distinct geographic areas – Israel and North America, and, to a lesser extent in Western Europe and Australia. The majority of Jews currently reside in these areas.

Diaspora Jews have become more urbanized. Previously scattered in thousands of small towns and communities, Jewish populations are now centered in a small number of major metropolitan areas – New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, London, Paris, Moscow, and so on. The largest urban concentration of Jews globally is in Greater Tel Aviv.

Up to recently, *aliyah* to Israel was driven by the ‘push factors’ of antisemitism, oppression, social barriers and adverse socio-economic conditions. With the decrease of these conditions in most countries today and the collapse of the Former Soviet Union, the potential for “push *aliyah*” has diminished (with the possible exceptions of France and South America).

Since the recent wave of mass emigration from the FSU, Israel is no longer perceived by most Jews considering migration as the sole haven from oppression, even in times of crisis – as witnessed by the relatively few number of Jews who immigrated to Israel from Argentina since the economic crisis in that country.

Nevertheless, Israel is still viewed by most as the refuge of last resort.

Serious threats to Jewish communities still exist in a few countries. The Jewish community in Iran faces a perilous existence, as do Jews in the Maghreb, Tunisia, Yemen, and Syria.

Jews in the Diaspora have moved on the defensive since the second Palestinian insurgency, or *Intifada*. A contradiction frequently emerges due to the wide gaps between Israeli action aimed at defending essential security interests and basic values of Western societies. The bias of a large part of the world media coupled by the ineffectiveness of Israeli advocacy efforts have not only caused Israel to be relentlessly attacked in the press, but also positioned the Jewish people in general, given their general support of Israel, as a “cause” of the Middle East conflict. In Europe, recent public opinion polls reveal that Israel is considered to be a “danger to world peace”.

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4. Economic and Social Standing

One of the significant trends of the post-war era is multi-cultural acceptance. The **Jewish people have become accepted into their respective national societies in the Diaspora.** In the West, few economic, social, political or cultural barriers remain and any Jew can pursue his or her personal ambition. Jewish political clout is stronger in the U.S. than in Europe and elsewhere.

On average the **Jewish community fares better** than the population at large in most parts of the Diaspora. They earn more, are better edu-

cated and professionally trained, and gravitate to the more profitable sectors of the economy. Israel also ranks in the top 25 most affluent countries in terms of per capita GDP, higher education, and life expectancy.

Yet poverty is a serious Jewish concern in many places. Without considerable international assistance from the Jewish community, many of the Jews in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and India would subsist in sheer misery. The collapse of Argentina's Jewish middle class threatens the future of that community and similar threats are prevail in other parts of South America, albeit to a less degree. Even in the United States over 200,000 Jews live beneath the poverty line.

Since 2000, **the Israeli economy has been experiencing a serious recession.** Poverty in Israel has reached an all-time high with 350,000 Israeli households (18.5%) living below the "poverty line" (mainly Arabs, Haredim and elderly immigrants, but also touching the lower middle class). There are clear signs that the econ-

omy is and will continue to improve in 2004-2005, but it will take time before this improvement – if robust – will trickle down to the bottom echelons of the socio-economic pyramid.

Living a Jewish lifestyle has become increasingly expensive.

The cost of synagogue memberships, Jewish community centers, day school education and even

Jewish burials are prohibitive. The entry cost into the Jewish community is driving away some Jews, who would like to but cannot afford to belong. Others that are involved in the Jewish

community are struggling under the financial burden.

Zedaka (charity) **has always been a strong Jewish tradition** and religious obligation. Although the scope of Jewish philanthropy has not decreased, its patterns and placement have altered rapidly. The younger generation has a weaker collective memory of the Shoah and their willingness to contribute is driven by other considerations. Jews are not less wealthy than they were in the past and not less likely to give, but they tend to donate proportionately less to specifically Jewish causes. Prominent Jewish donors direct only a third of their charitable contributions to Jewish causes and two thirds to museums, universities, hospitals, medical institutions, and other cultural institutions and general causes.

As the Jewish population ages, **needs are on the increase.** Public funds are shrinking, while Jewish organizations, schools, old age homes, welfare services and charities have to turn to outside sources. Jewish organizations face the challenge of stimulating Jewish funding and making it more attractive both to those who already give and to those that do not.

Any discussion of the social factors must take into account **the changes in Jewish leadership.** The young people of today, particularly community leaders, both professional and lay, differ from their predecessors. The memory of the Shoah no longer haunts them, and the need to stick together and invest in Jewish values and heritage is not perceived as an urgent priority. Their commitment and devotion appears to be more intellectual and less emotional.

Business leaders in the Diaspora are drawn from the world of finance, the media, and the

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communications and hi tech industries. Professionals, however, such as lawyers, accountants, doctors and so on provide the professional foundations of the new community leadership. The professional leaders tend to be highly qualified, trained and sophisticated and come to the top echelons of the major Jewish organizations with cutting edge skills and tools. Today's leadership is more demanding, more critical and highly professional. However, there are clearly not enough of them.

5. Israel-Diaspora Interactions

Interaction between the State of Israel and the Diaspora strengthen the Jewish people and constitutes a crucially important factor in shaping their future. There are five major dimensions to the complex dynamics governing the relations between Israel and the Diaspora, and between various Jewish communities throughout the world.

1. The Cultural and Ethical Dimension

Israel constitutes one of the dominant factors shaping the identity of the Jewish people today. It unites and divides at the same time. Israel is a source of honor, solidarity and pride. Yet, at times, it is a cause for concern and target of criticism.

Israel is not universally accepted as the center of the Jewish world or as its cultural fountainhead and source of spiritual inspiration. American Jewry invests considerable efforts to build an alternative center for rich and vibrant Jewish life – in line with the Babylon – Jerusalem metaphor.

Cultural trends born in the Diaspora have limited impact on Jewish life in Israel. Religious

pluralism and feminism that are filtering into Israel, and much religious scholarship originates outside of Israel's shore. At the same time it can be argued that Israel's impact on spiritual life in the Diaspora is minor, though there has been some infiltration of Israeli culture, music and literature abroad.

Diaspora leaders and organizations have had limited impact on Israeli political life, although they have been mobilized to promote Israeli policy when it was considered expedient to do so. By in large, Israeli politics operate independently of world Jewry. For the most part,

Israeli policies are set without regard to their impact on the Diaspora. Jewish communities are expected to rally around Israel and tender support without having any significant input in the decision making process.

Support has been primarily a one-way process and is often expressed in monetary assistance from the Diaspora to Israel. Nevertheless, in some instances, Israel provided the assistance – both financial and other – to Diaspora communities, especially poverty-stricken or physically threatened. Ethiopia is one example.

2. The Political and Security Dimension

The political and security situation in Israel directly affects the Diaspora and outlines part of its communal agenda. The increase in terrorism in Israel and seemingly biased media reporting have served to increase solidarity. At the same time, however, these have created confusion and induced more defensive posture among many Diaspora Jews who feel disenfranchised and unable to influence events in a relevant manner.

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This anomaly has manifested in several ways:

- A concomitant rise in criticism of Israel's policy towards the Palestinian Authority and a increase in solidarity
- A drastic reduction in individual Jewish tourism to Israel against an increase in organized solidarity missions
- An increase in donations to Israel especially for security related purposes
- A change in *aliyah* patterns from selected countries
- A strengthening of leftist-moderate elements in the Diaspora and weakening of the same within Israel.

The severe rise in antisemitism particularly in Europe has served to increase interest in and solidarity for Israel as well as Israeli solidarity for their brethren abroad.

3. The Economic and Social Dimension

Economically speaking, Israel still lags behind the most affluent western countries, where large numbers of Jews live and prosper. This tends to encourage *yeridah* and suppress *Aliyah*. On the other hand, this very disparity facilitates the Diaspora's philanthropic relationship with Israel.

Fundraising campaigns are one of the mainstays of organized Jewish communal life in the Diaspora. This is especially true of the Federation system in the U.S.. Recent national budget cuts in Israel have drastically reduced the assistance given to immigrants and serve as a disincentive to *aliyah*. They have also affected important partnership ventures such as Birthright. In addition to their economic impact, such budget cuts have also created resentment and disillusionment.

The Israeli high-tech industry is one of the

most significant in the world. As a world leader in scientific publications, Israel is a source of pride for all Jews. This is one of the realms where Israel has much to offer. The downside during periods of economic recession is the brain drain of Israeli scientists and engineers to the West.

4. The Geographic Dimension

The potential sources for *aliyah* have shifted dramatically. While *aliyah* from the Former Soviet Union still exists, it is limited and many Russian Jews currently favor Germany over Israel. Pockets of "distress" will always be a source for *aliyah*. These currently include Argentina, South Africa and possibly Iran. For these groups, the destination of choice is not Israel, but rather the U.S., Canada, and Australia. These also constitute the preferred destinations for *yordim*.

Otherwise, the main potential is in the west, but *aliyah* at the present time is not perceived as a real alternative for the vast majority of Jews, a situation that is unlikely to change, unless major changes take place in Israel or communities experience severe crises.

5. The Institutional and Organizational Dimension

The Jewish people constitute a fluid, voluntary, and self-organizing system that possess some central and many local and sectoral institutions.

There are few organizations that view the Jewish people in a global perspective. The World Jewish Congress (with its network of affiliate congresses in Europe, Latin America and Africa) and the Jewish Agency are two prominent examples. Neither they nor any other organization, however, represent the Jewish people in its

totality. Many international Jewish institutions, such as Bnei Brith, Keren Hayesod, WIZO, HIAS, the Conference on Material Jewish Claims against Germany, and the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) are concerned with particular issues and spheres of activity.

A number of large American organizations have an international focus, such as the UJC, the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Jewish Committee, Hillel, Hadassah, and ADL. Similarly there are both Israel-based organizations that are concerned with the Diaspora (focusing on Jewish and Zionist education, *aliyah*, religious life, philanthropy) and Diaspora-based institutions that are focused on support and interest in Israel. Interestingly enough, with the reorganization of the UJC, an Overseas Needs Assessment and Disbursement Committee (ONAD) was established. Thus, Israel's once separated and privileged status in need evaluation was downgraded and became part of a generic "overseas" rubric.

While there is significant cross-germination, a common global Jewish agenda that unites all these organizations and their activities is lacking. Some key issues, such as support for Israel and its representation in the media, antisemitism, revival of Jewish life in the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the distribution of reparations and restitution funding are of common concern to world Jewry. Organizations in the Diaspora, however, tend to focus on problems such as Jewish continuity, Jewish education, assimilation and welfare services that are often common to most communities, but essentially local in scope.

The religious organizations are among the most focused and globally oriented. The

Orthodox Union, Habad, the Reform and Conservative movements have a clear purpose to propagate their respective religious styles and messages throughout the larger Jewish community.

Some attempts have been made to address the model of the Israel-Diaspora connection, which has traditionally been parochial in nature, based to a large extent on uni-directional philanthropy rather than true partnership. Some attempts have been made to revise this model and develop a greater sense of mutuality

in which contributions from all sides complement each other. The first successful example of partnership – Project Renewal in the early 1980s – has since been superseded by Partnership 2000. This partnership is based on the establishment of a network of sister communities in the Diaspora and Israel. Other significant examples include People to People, the Israel Experience and Birthright.

On a regional level, the lack of an effective pan-European Jewish lobby and umbrella organization (other than the European Jewish Congress, and the European Council of Jewish Community Services) is of great concern, particularly in an era in which an expanded European Union is interested in playing an increasingly visible role in Middle East affairs and combating antisemitism.

Generally speaking, organizational pluralism and the absence of over-arching structures facilitates the expression of diverse sectors and interests. However, excess competition, scarce coordination and complex interaction patterns hinder the ability of a global Jewish organizational

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infrastructure to effectively serve the Jewish people.

6. Diaspora-Diaspora Interactions

The Talmudic notion of *kol yisrael arevim zeh lazeh* (all Jews bear responsibility for each other) rings strong within the Diaspora. This is clearly expressed in relations and support Jewish communities maintain for Israel. It is also expressed

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in the concern and assistance to Jewish communities in distress. Indeed, some of the major Jewish organizations were conceived from the concern for fellow Jews in crises, be it in Russia a hundred years ago or in central Europe in the aftermath of the Shoah.

The primary areas of current concern include the rehabilitation of Jewish communities in the FSU and Eastern Europe and the efforts to

cope with crises in South America. Many European and American communities and organizations have adopted communities in the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Assistance to the Argentinean Jews during the economic crisis in 2001–2002 was given in the form of money, community involvement and the sponsorship of Argentinean Jewish immigrants to western communities.

The major U.S.-based institutions have been particularly active in these countries, including: the JDC, HIAS, UJC, AJC, and ADL. Since the American Jewish community is the largest in the world and has a long-standing tradition of community voluntarism, it feels a greater sense of responsibility for fellow Jews. European Jewry is not less concerned, but does not share either the resources or the scope of voluntarism. One example of a European based organization is the World Jewish Relief, which is headquartered in London.

Prominent international Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Agency and Bnei Brith. Habad and other religious bodies are also actively involved in Jewish rescue and renaissance. The latter have systematically established international networks of rabbis, synagogues and educational institutions.

Antisemitism has traditionally been a common problem that brings Jews together both locally and internationally. American Jewry, while not a victim of antisemitism in any significant way, is highly concerned about recent events in Europe. The need to preserve the physical edifices of Jewish heritage such as synagogues, cemeteries, schools, museums that have fallen in disuse and artifacts is also becoming critical as small Jewish communities disappear from the communal map.

3

Jewish Communities Around the World: Thriving or Declining?

If we put aside the Jewish community of the State of Israel, which requires a different analytical framework that will be discussed at the end of this chapter, two distinct models of Jewish community organization exist. The centralized ‘European’ model reflects community patterns in Europe, South Africa, Latin America, and most of the re-emerging communities in the countries of the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Jewish communities are highly concentrated in a relatively small number of cities (usually the capital), and are structured in as centralized and hierarchical manner. Each community has a chief rabbi, one representative body (though there are differences in the degree of public recognition and political legitimacy), one major fundraising arm, one Zionist federation and so on.

The second model is the federated model prevalent in the United States. Jewish communities are dispersed in a number of cities and each local community has its own dominant organizational structure. There is no chief rabbi and while significant national organizations exist, such as UJC, AIPAC, the American Jewish Congress, there is considerable overlap in functions and responsibility. No single body speaks for the entire American Jewish community. Australian Jewry operates in a similar manner, while Canada falls somewhere between the European and U.S. models.

A. THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

U.S. and Canadian Jewry together represent the largest concentration of Jewish communities in the world. These two bordering communities are characterized by significant external acceptance and they both wield significant influence in the society at large. Yet, while the U.S. Jewish

community struggles to address problems of Jewish identity, assimilation, interfaith-marriage, and Jewish education, Canada’s Jewish community stands out as an international star of success in all the above areas.

1. United States

The American Jewish community is 5.2–5.3 million strong, the largest Jewish community outside of Israel. It is well established, with a strong infrastructure of community outreach, political advocacy, defense, philanthropic, and religious institutions. US Jews are by-in-large well educated – 55% having earned a bachelor’s degree and 24% a graduate degree – well off financially, with a medium income of \$50,000, and well accepted in American society. The majority, however, are only weakly affiliated with the Jewish community and a decreasing number identify themselves as Jewish.

The U.S. Jewish community is experiencing a dialectic dilemma. On the one hand, the Jewish community is enjoying a ‘crisis of comfort’. Involved in the highest echelons of U.S. society, American Jewry is characterized by the degree to which it has succeeded in sharing the

American dream. Success of Jewish integration is also witnessed by the degree to which traditionally Jewish concerns have been incorporated into national concerns and the extent to which Jewish culture is familiar to non-Jewish Americans.

This measure of success comes with a price tag. No longer forced upon them, Jewish identity has become a choice. The community is experiencing an alarming erosion of communal identity, with much

of its population doubting the need to maintain distinctiveness. Changing demographic and social patterns both reflect and perpetuate this trend. High levels of assimilation, noted by a

54% out-marriage rate, migration away from Jewish centers, and a negative balance between births and deaths are steadily depleting the population base upon which the Jewish community is built. At the same time, diminished propensities towards local community participation, and a long-term trend of distancing from Israel (which has been partially reversed in the past three years) weaken involvement in Jewish frameworks. These trends are particularly prevalent among the young. In addition, the relatively high cost of Jewish living in the United States constitutes a barrier to participation. Membership in Jewish institutions is declining, support of Jewish philanthropic institutions is, both in terms of donations and personal involvement, and the pool of Jewish leaders and educators is shrinking.

On the other hand, as a response to these trends, there appears to be an emergence of a new, more individualized form of Jewish identity, connection and expression. A significant minority of American Jews are turning towards affiliation, involvement, and education in order to combat the tide of assimilation.

2. Canada

If success in the Diaspora is defined by the bifurcated relationship of general integration and the maintenance of Jewish distinctiveness, Canada rates amongst the most successful of Diaspora communities. With a population of 370,000, up from 356,000 in 1991, it is one of the few growing Jewish communities. The Canadian Jewish community is characterized by strong Jewish identity, with 89% identifying themselves as Jews by religion and 11% ethnic Jews without religion.

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Despite initial red flags raised over the growth in interfaith marriage rate and a decline in the number of donations to Jewish Federation campaigns, indicators point to overall maintenance and even intensification of Jewish identity in Canada. The Canadian Jewish community has a strong Jewish education system, particularly in its day-schools.

Both positive and negative trends in Canadian society work to strengthen Jewish identity in Canada. Canadian multicultural policies contribute significantly to the success of the Jewish community. Migration towards Toronto, for employment and schooling, is bringing even greater centralization to the community. Growth in documented incidences of antisemitic magnified by the immigration of populations traditionally ignorant of, insensitive to, or in conflict with Jewish concerns, has fostered an increase in Jewish self awareness and a restructuring of Canada's Jewish institutions.

B. LATIN AMERICA

In 2003, the Jewish population of Latin America numbered some 400,000 in 2003, of which 52,000 reside in Central America and the Caribbean. Jewish communities are found primarily in 6 countries – Argentina (187,000), Brazil (97,000), Mexico (40,000), Chile (21,000), Uruguay (20,000), and Venezuela (16,000). Most Jews live in the capital cities except for Brazil where the majority reside in Sao Paulo.

The Jewish communities are well organized around synagogues, community centers, welfare and health institutions, youth, cultural and sport centers. There is an umbrella representa-

tive organization in each country and the Latin American Jewish Congress serves as pan-continental umbrella organization.

The primary community priority is education, although there has been some decline in enrollment in recent years due to economic pressures. Nevertheless, attendance rates at Jewish day schools are high reaching 60% in Argentina and 85% in Mexico.

There is rich Jewish life in the communities: theatre, music, art, sport and media. Most communities publish a Jewish newspaper and other periodicals and operate websites on Jewish matters. Jewish artists, writers and intellectuals have become part of the Latin American cultural scene. of Latin Americas in general.

The Jews of Latin America are well integrated in to the civic, economic and political life of their national communities but collectively do not constitute a focal point of political influence.

The main factors affecting Jewish life are:

- Demographic decline in most communities averaging 18% between 1980 and 2002, due to low fertility, emigration and interfaith marriage. This decline takes place at a time when the general population is growing considerably. The exception is the Mexican Jewish community which has expanded.
- The economic crisis that has befallen Argentina, and to a lesser degree, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela and Mexico has had a severe impact on the Jewish community.
- In response to this situation, international

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and American Jewish bodies have rallied to assist these communities. *Aliyah* has increased, rising from an average of 1,000 *Olim* per year to 6,000 in 2002. It has since leveled off, due in part to improved local conditions and in part to budget cuts that have reduced financial benefits awarded new *Olim* in Israel. There has also been migration of Latin Jews to the US, Canada and elsewhere.

- Antisemitism is a significant concern (especially in Brazil) and has increased since 2000 but not as dramatically as it has in Europe.
- A number of small communities e.g. in Guatemala, Cuba, Jamaica, Nicaragua, number less than a 1,000 Jews and are struggling to maintain Jewish community life. In contrast, the communities of Panama (5,000) and Costa Rica (2,500) are examples of small but vibrant Jewish communities.

The Mexican Jewish community represents a rather unique success story, having grown in size (due to both higher fertility rates and immigration), while enjoying a high socio-economic status and maintaining a relatively comprehensive communal infrastructure.

C. THE EUROPEAN UNION

The total Jewish population of the European Union, after its expansion on May 1, 2004, is estimated at 1,121,000. This is made up largely of three communities – France, the United Kingdom and Germany. There are another five EU countries with more than 10,000 Jews – Hungary (50,000), Belgium (32,000), Holland (30,000), Italy (29,000), Sweden (15,000), and Spain (12,000). Other non-EU countries with

over 10,000 Jews include Turkey (18,000), Switzerland (18,000), and Rumania (10,500).

Eight smaller EU communities have more than 1,000 Jews: Austria (9,000), Denmark (7,400), Greece (4,500), the Czech Republic (4,000), Poland (3,500), Slovakia (2,700), Finland (1,200), Ireland (1,000), and 4 non-EU communities: Bulgaria (2,200), Yugoslavia (1,500), Croatia (1,700), and Norway (1,200)

Most of the communities in Western Europe are well established and organized. Jews are well integrated into their national societies, have achieved relatively high economic and social status. Some hold positions of political power. A Jewish lobby exists, but its influence and impact is much weaker than that in North America.

Jewish life is largely centered around the synagogue and Orthodoxy is the predominant Jewish denomination, even though the majority of Europe's Jews are not observant.

The question of Jewish assets from the Nazi era is a significant issue in many countries and there are initiatives to legislate the return of property or provide compensation. Funds for these purposes have been established in some communities.

Six major trends can be identified:

- Demographic decline due to low birth rates, aging, *Aliyah* and interfaith marriage. Germany is an exception in this regard, thanks to immigration.
- Emergence of the Moslem community and its political influence. In some cases, like France there has been growing tension between Jews and Moslems.
- A rise in antisemitic incidents and sentiments. In many cases this is expressed

through extreme criticism of Israel and its actions.

- An increasing negative view of Israel in the media that is reflected in biased reporting. This has given license to the delegitimization of Israel in some sectors of French society, a trend which ultimately compromises the standing of the local Jewish community.
- A strong connection with Israel, as expressed by visits to Israel by a majority of Jews, fundraising and cultural activities. Despite external trends, solidarity with Israel has increased in recent years.
- Stronger Jewish identity as seen by a sharp rise in enrollment in Jewish schools in the UK and France.

The communities in Eastern Europe are much smaller and are engaged in a process of reconstruction. Interfaith marriage rates are unusually high. The economic status of most Jews is not high and many are supported financially.

The European Union has become a major force in Europe and its expansion to 25 member states means that it currently incorporate all of the major Jewish communities in Europe with the exclusion of the FSU. The EU has taken an interest in the battle against antisemitic activities in Europe is actively involved in efforts to solve the Israel-Palestine conflict.

1. France

France is the largest Jewish community in Europe, and the third worldwide after the U.S. and Israel, numbering about 500,000 Jews in 2003. The community grew after the Second World War as a result of immigration from North Africa, but has declined somewhat in recent years as a result of low natural growth,

aging, emigration and interfaith marriage. The rate of interfaith marriage is currently about 40%. Jews are concentrated in the greater Paris area with smaller communities in Marseilles, Lyon, Strasbourg, Toulouse, and several other locations.

The Jewish community is well organized and some 40% of the Jews belong to synagogues and other organizations. About half of French Jews view themselves as traditional, 7% as Haredi (growing), 5% as reform or conservative and 40% state no religious affiliation. Nevertheless, 30% attend synagogue regularly and another 52% occasionally. One notable trend in French Jewry is the rise in attendance at Jewish day schools. However, success in further expanding of Jewish school enrollment depends on the ability of the community to offer a wider range of Jewish educational programs beyond the current religious or Haredi orientation of most day schools.

French Jews are well integrated into the wider community and many have reached high political office. French Jewry does have considerable influence on political life, primarily through indirect means rather than organized lobbies. One major issue of recent years has been the government initiative to ban religious clothing at state schools. This primarily affects Moslems, but includes a ban on wearing a Kippah at school as well.

Jews are well off economically and largely middle class. There are significant pockets of poverty and some 25,000 Jews are registered with welfare services.

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French Jewry has a strong connection with Israel. A relatively high rate of *aliyah* prevails, with 70,000 French Jews immigrating to Israel

since 1948 and 1,800 Olim in 2003. Solidarity with Israel is steadfast and some 50,000 Jews demonstrated in favor of Israel in June 2002. Large groups of tourists and solidarity missions have visited Israel. These expressions of solidarity are in part a reaction to the strong (6 million) Moslem presence and expressions of anti-Israel sentiment. These are not limited to verbal attacks, but to acts of violence

directed against Jewish property and people. The government of France and its President have acted directly to suppress all acts of anti-semitism, and at the same time, have tried to alleviate the extent of the problem.

2. United Kingdom

The UK community has declined demographically, from over 400,000 in 1950 to 300,000 in 2002, mainly as an outcome of emigration, interfaith-marriage and the negative balance in natural population growth. British Jewry has become increasingly concentrated, and about 63% of the community is centered in the greater London. Other main communities are in Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Liverpool. Over 50,000 Jews are scattered in places with very small Jewish populations.

There has been a significant rise in interfaith-marriage, with 38 percent of all married men, and 50 percent of Jewish women less under 30 marrying non-Jewish partners.

British Jewry traditionally has centered on

synagogue membership and the major representative organizations reflect this trend. Most community activities take place around the synagogue.

British Jews have become increasingly involved with their Jewishness. More children attend Jewish day schools. Contemporary British Jews are better educated and better informed on Jewish matters, with enrollment now at 67% of primary school age children, reaching 80% in London and Manchester.

Three significant external factors influence the Jewish community:

- The number of British Moslems has swelled and currently accounts for 1.6 million
- The last decade has also seen an unprecedented rise in antisemitism. The incidence of antisemitism has risen dramatically both in number and nature. The greatest increase is in political antisemitism and closely linked to anti-Israel sentiments. Anti-Israeli academic boycott found fertile ground in the UK.
- The legitimacy and position of Israel have weakened in Britain, and so has the influence and stature of British Jewry. The British Jewish community, being Israel-centric, is vulnerable to the rise of anti-Israeli sentiment among the general population. To date, this has not affected the strong solidarity that British Jews feel toward Israel.

3. Germany

German Jewry stands out as the only large EU community that is growing. At the end of 2003 there were 108,000 Jews as compared with only 28,000 in 1990. The sharp rise is due mostly to immigration from the Former Soviet Union and,

to a lesser extent, Israel. In addition to the above, there are tens of thousands of immigrants from the FSU with partial Jewish identity and Jewish roots but not considered Jewish by *halachic* law. The policy of the German government is to encourage and assist immigrants in general. A number of factors encourage migration from the FSU – the much higher level of financial assistance than that awarded in Israel, the geographic proximity to home countries and the expectation of obtaining EU citizenship within seven years.

In contrast to other European Jewish communities, the Jewish population of Germany is scattered all over the country with a little less than half concentrated in the main cities of Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Cologne and Hamburg. Dispersion is largely a result of government policy, which funnels aid through German Länders (states) and some 86 local communal organizations.

The community is aging, both amongst the veterans and the newcomers. Interfaith marriage rates are relatively high and exceed 60%. German Jewry is in a unique situation whereby a little more than a quarter of its members are indigenous and the vast majority are newcomers. The newcomers have weak, if any, Jewish upbringing, little motivation for Jewish involvement, are of lower economic status and widely dispersed. Absence of critical mass hinders the development of Jewish community life. There is considerable tension between the veterans and the newcomers.

Jewish education is a concern, as there are only four schools in Berlin and little interest in day school education. However German Jewry does offer a varied and rich cultural life (including the new Jewish Museum in Berlin).

There has been a sharp rise in antisemitic acts including acts of violence against Jewish property and institutions and to persons. The government has taken a strong stand to combat antisemitic outbursts. The media has become increasingly antagonistic towards Israel and its policies although the government has maintained its support for Israel.

4. Other Countries in Western Europe

Most of the smaller communities in Western Europe are numerically declining, marked by high rates of assimilation and out-marriage. These communities are aging as well. There are significant problems of critical mass. As many communities decline in size, their ability to retain vibrant Jewish communal life and continuity lies very much in question.

The majority of Jews are well integrated into their societies, most are relatively well off and some hold positions of influence. Most are concentrated in capital and major cities, while the smaller and outlying communities are largely disappearing. The Jewish communities are well organized, operating under central umbrella organizations, a chief rabbi and relatively well established Jewish community infrastructure. The mainstream of most communities is nominally Orthodox, but most Jews are non-observant. The reform and conservative movements serve as smaller, yet growing alternatives.

Jewish schools can be found in most major cities, even though enrollment is lower than in the larger European communities of France and Britain.

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Expanding Moslem communities pose challenges for the declining Jewish minorities. As in

most places in Europe, antisemitic activity has increased in recent years and is often related to the antagonistic atmosphere expressed towards Israel in the media. Significant anti-Israel activity is taking place in university campuses.

Preserving the memory of the Shoah is an important activity. Similarly, initiatives to restore Jewish property are prevalent in most countries. Solidarity with

Israel remains steadfast; connections with Israel are strong although internally much criticism is being voiced.

5. Central and Eastern Europe

Two major and seemingly opposing processes characterize the former East-bloc Jewish communities. The first is demographic decline with aging, low fertility and high rates of interfaith marriage. The second is a modest renaissance of Jewish communal infrastructure, which is being rehabilitated since the collapse of the Iron curtain.

Most of the reconstruction process is carried out with outside assistance from international Jewish organizations, such as the JDC and the Lauder foundation. These activities include the construction of Jewish schools, restoration of synagogues and cemeteries, establishment of Jewish museums and cultural activities.

With the possible exception of Hungary, the small size of these communities means that it is difficult to maintain a sufficiently wide array of Jewish communal services for Jewish continuity.

The majority of Jews are not religious and most lack any Jewish background. As religious life is being restored, organizations such as Habad are active on the one side and the Reform and Conservative movements on the other.

Unlike Western Europe, Jews from the former communist bloc are not financially well off and many require assistance from the outside. Initiatives towards restoration of Jewish property from the Nazi era are being made in most countries with limited success so far. These actions are accompanied by tensions between Jewish interest groups as to the distribution of assets and monetary compensation.

There have been antisemitic incidents. Reaction of the authorities vary, but in general, all governments reject antisemitism and their commitment to combat it is on record.

D. THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

The Jews of the former Soviet Union (including the Baltic states) numbered only 413,000 in 2003, an enormous and rapid drop from a high of nearly 5 million prior to World War II. There were 252,000 Jews in Russia, 95,000 in Ukraine, 23,000 in Belarus, 15,500 in the Baltic states, 5,200 in Moldavia, and 23,000 in former Soviet Asia.

Since the end of 1989, some 1.5 millions Jews and members of their families have emigrated from the FSU – 61% to Israel and 39% to other countries, largely the U.S., Germany, Canada, and Australia. The Jewish communities are rapidly aging and declining demographically. Assimilation and interfaith marriage rates are among the highest in the Jewish world.

While the majority of the smaller Jewish

communities are depleting and dying out, one main center of Jewish community life stands out – Moscow. St. Petersburg, Kiev and some other cities provide an array of opportunities for the renewed Jewish community life, which attract Jews from elsewhere.

Jews today are permitted freedom of religion and freedom of expression. A slow process has begun of constructing an organizational and communal infrastructure to re-establish Jewish life. These efforts are primarily financed with the assistance of major Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Agency, JDC, the government of Israel and ultra-Orthodox groups like *Habad*. These bodies are split between those who see the future of FSU Jewry only through *aliyah* to Israel and those for whom the creation of a vibrant Jewish communal presence presents a viable alternative.

As part of the reconstruction, many new organizations have been conceived, with 230 organizations in Russia and 210 registered Jewish community organizations in Ukraine. The organizations in both Russia and Ukraine are largely associated and backed by wealthy Jewish leaders and and/or religious leaders. There is considerable competition between them over representation of Russian Jewry.

The vast majority of Jews do not participate in Jewish communal life. Most define themselves as secular and have little knowledge or interest in Jewish traditions or religion.

In 2003, there were 44 Jewish schools operating with Israeli assistance, eight technological schools operated by ORT and 186 Sunday schools. In addition there are many smaller religious schools run by ultra-Orthodox organizations.

The transition towards a capitalist economic system has created considerable wealth for a minority and Jews number among the wealthiest in the FSU. Jews are also occupying positions in the professions and in the growing middle class and their socio-economic status is improving. In contrast, the vast majority of Jews are poor and the existence of a relatively high proportion of elderly Jews constitutes a considerable burden on the Jewish organizations focusing on the provision of welfare services.

So far there has not been a visible rise of anti-semitism but the threat of antisemitism and violence lies under the surface. Antisemitism is not a main motivation for *aliyah*. Since 2000, extreme Moslem organizations have increased in strength. Their activities primarily target Russia and the local authorities, but also serve as a threat to Jews. Extreme Moslem groups are particularly prominent in the Asian republics and are responsible for precipitating acts of terror in Russia in particular.

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E. ASIA, AFRICA AND THE PACIFIC

The Jews of Asia (not including Israel and the Asiatic Republics of the FSU), Africa and the Pacific number 245,000 people. They are concentrated primarily in two countries – Australia and South Africa. There are five other countries in Asia with Jewish populations of over 1,000: Iran (with estimates ranging between 11,000 and 25,000), India (5,200), China and Hong Kong (1,000) and Japan (1,000). Other countries in these areas that host Jewish communities include Morocco (5,500), Tunisia (1,500) and New Zealand (6,800).

1. Australia

Australian Jewry is one of the few communities that has grown in recent years from 60,000 in 1961 to 100,000 in 2003. A major factor has been the immigration of Jews from South Africa and, to a lesser extent, from the FSU and Israel. Low fertility and interfaith marriage in the resident Jewish community have partially mitigated this growth and concern lingers regarding possible adverse impacts on Jewish community growth. The 22% rate of interfaith marriage is relatively low.

The Jewish community is well established. It is largely based at the state level, bearing a weaker national structure. Jewish populations tend to

concentrate in the major urban cities of Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. Jews are well integrated in the Australian society and benefit of the Australian government multicultural policies.

The mainstream of Jewish communities is nominally Orthodox, even though most members of Orthodox synagogues tend to be traditional and non-practicing.

Membership in synagogues and other Jewish organizations is high, with the synagogue serving as focal point of community life. The Orthodox sector is growing rapidly and Habad is particularly prominent in its activity. Enrollment in Jewish day schools is among the highest in the Diaspora, averaging 65% nationally, with higher rates in Melbourne and Sydney.

Australian Jewry is fiercely Zionist and pro-Israel. The majority of Jews have visited Israel and maintain strong close contact with Israel despite the considerable distance. Events in

Israel over the past few years have not weakened strong support for Israel, even if more criticism is being voiced.

There has been an increase in antisemitic activity, although less prevalent than in Europe. There is also an active Shoah denial movement. The relative proximity of Australia to Indonesia has given great cause for concern, since the bombing in Bali bombing, which sparked fears of a major Moslem terror attack.

2. South Africa

South Africa used to be cited as a striking example of a successful Jewish community. The key factor affecting the future of the Jews of South Africa is emigration, which affects all aspects of Jewish life. The decline in the Jewish population from 118,000 in 1970 to 72,000 in 2004 is expected to continue, though the pace of decline has slowed somewhat in 2001-2003. The country communities have largely emptied out and most families are currently concentrated in Johannesburg and Cape Town. The community is moving toward greater religiosity. The South African Jewish school system is among the most highly developed in the Diaspora with high levels of enrollment at 85% but currently falling somewhat.

Much of what happens to the Jewish community is a direct result of what happens in South Africa in general. The process of transition in the general society is progressing slowly. High rates of AIDS affliction, poor health, unemployment and totally inadequate housing constitute some of the factors that could lead to a climate of violence. The Jewish community has made serious attempts to reach out to the wider black African community.

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The South African government has moved strongly against Israel. There are fewer Jews of political public influence today, while Moslems are gaining power. The antagonism of the media towards Israel and Zionism is extreme. Until about ten years ago, there was little anti-Semitism. The community is concerned that anti-Semitism could precipitate severe violence and terror in the not- too-distant future.

South African Jewry has traditionally been among the staunchest supporters of Israel. However, if in the past, many South African Jews made *Aliyah* to Israel, most Jews considering immigration today prefer Australia and Canada.

3. Other Countries in Asia, Africa and the Pacific

The Jews in the other countries of Asia, Africa and the Pacific represent a tiny minority clustered in smaller communities. The Jewish communities are dispersed and, isolated from the major centers of world Jewry and surrounded by an increasingly alien and often hostile environment. Geographic distances constitute a significant barrier to communal, religious and cultural development.

The small size of these communities means that they have to struggle to maintain community life, especially those communities that have less than a few thousand members. Most communities are aging and younger Jews emigrate to larger Jewish centers or assimilate. There is a danger that many communities will cease to exist within the coming decade. Community life is centered around the synagogue.

Jews in Arab or Moslem countries, whose numbers are consistently shrinking, live under

constant fear for personal security, because of the bitter hatred towards Israel, which is often translated into hostility against Jews and Judaism.

F. ISRAEL

Zionism's mission has been to provide a Jewish and democratic answer to the dispersion, vulnerability and disenfranchisement of the Jewish people. Israel's mission is to provide a strong, stable, and culturally creative center for world Jewry. This ideal achievement requires two conditions – the aggregation of a growing share of world Jewry in Israel and the development of a viable independent economy and attractive cultural and spiritual center that is accessible to all Jews worldwide.

In its 56 years of independence, Israel's list of achievements is impressive, although radical reflection and innovative action in several key areas are imperative.

1. Security, Peace Process and Foreign Relations

In spite of Israel's vulnerability in key areas - such as demographic trends, the lack of strategic depth, isolation in its region, continuous terrorism, sensitivity to casualties - it is a major regional power possessing strategic assets contributing to its national strengths:

- The perception of non-conventional deterrence, an excellent air force, army and intelligence network;
- Strong Jewish moral values – religious, cultural and humanitarian – with Jerusalem as a focal point for Jewish prayer and the yearning for Jewish sovereignty;
- World Jewry constitutes demographic reser-

voir and source of soft power, solidarity and support for Israel. Especially remarkable is the influence of Jewish communities in North America;

- Israel has an edge in the quality of its educational system, science, technology, economy and democratic system;
- Territorial assets and its conventional civil and defense capabilities.

Key strategic concerns affecting not only Israel's regional and global standing, but also internal discourse in Israeli society include:

- The persistent Israeli-Palestinian conflict and aborted attempts of concluding a peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority;
- The prospect of a deterioration in the global geo-political situation. Despite the definite improvement on the Eastern front following U.S. operations in Iraq, global dynamics can create new opportunities;
- The impact of the war on terror on Israel's situation;
- The interrelation between military, economic and social trends in Israel.

Following the U.S. action in Iraq, Israel's strategic security has been significantly enhanced. The strategic resources at Israel's disposal, technological edge, the support of U.S. Jewry, etc. continue to improve. Israel is considered by defense experts to hold a strong military and technological edge over the combined military forces of all Arab countries. At the same time, however, Palestinian terrorist tactics have escalated, posing difficult problems regarding the methods of dealing with suicide bombings and other forms of violence. There has been some progress in

stemming the proliferation of nuclear weapons, with the turnabout of Libya and the international pressure placed on Iran. Despite these developments, however, long term dangers persists.

Foreign relations with the U.S. reached a significant landmark with Gorge Bush's declaration of no-return to June 1967 borders and no Palestinian right of return in the state of Israel. Despite disagreements, relations with the European Union remain stable and relations with key Asian countries continue to improve. Anti-Israeli actions in international fora are contained. However, stagnation of the peace process and escalating anti-Israeli sentiment, combined with anti-Americanism backed by terrorist threats and the proliferation of unconventional weapons, continue to pose long-term existential threats to Israel. This also threatens moderate Arab states and the West. Security issues and the conflict with the Palestinians continue to impact on all aspects of Israeli political, social and economic life.

Confronting these facets of its strategic position regionally and globally, while keeping an eye on possibly negative internal repercussions, Israel's main challenges in the longer term include:

- The achievement of geo-political arrangements that simultaneously promote peace and security;
- Maintenance of a credible deterrence while checking the proliferation of nuclear weapons in hostile and potentially hostile countries;
- Cultivation of its special relationship with the U.S. while strengthening relations with the European Union – a strategically important and involved neighbor – and other main powers;

- Creation of the security and peace conditions necessary to regenerate sustainable economic growth in the foreseeable future;
- Consolidation of relations with Diaspora Jewry pertaining to mutual security and foreign policy concerns.

2. Demography and Society

Since its inception, Israel's primary resource has been its human capital. Israel's success at multiplying its Jewish population nearly ten-fold since the end of World War II – from half a million to 5.2 million Jews in 2004 (in addition to another 300,000 non-Jewish immigrants) – and the absorption of nearly 3 million new immigrants is an achievement that has no equal in modern world history. Israel's demographic growth and development reflects the persistence of family values. This has resulted in relatively high fertility rates, which, in turn has led to rapid population growth and the creation of a comparatively young population.

Israeli society has had to cope with immense challenges stemming from the extreme diversity of the Jewish Diaspora, which has accumulated over hundreds years of history. From the outset, vast differences in the demographic, social, economic, and cultural characteristics of immigrant populations have prevailed. Two distinct developmental trends have dominated the scene with regards to Israel's Jewish majority: 1) convergence of the diverse backgrounds towards the creation of a common ground, and 2) parallel advancement while maintaining visibly different levels of status and achievement. The first trend fits observed demographic patterns that testify to a gradual reduction in fundamental differences in the age at marriage, number of children,

child mortality and life expectancy. Residential settlement patterns have become less influenced by country of origin, contributing to the steadily growing frequency of marriages across origin groups.

At the same time, socioeconomic status differentiation persists, and still reflect to a large extent continents of origin and time of immigration. Steady efforts in promoting compulsory education and expansion of the higher educational system have lessened preexisting educational differentials, but several more years of effort are required before full equality in opportunities and achievements is attained. Recent international comparisons that bring into question the educational achievements of Israeli children deserve urgent evaluation and treatment.

Regarding occupational structure and mobility, Jews of Asian and African origins lag behind Jews of European and American origins – despite steady upward mobility all across the board. Income levels, that used to starkly reflect sharp occupational disparities that highlighted ethno-cultural cleavages within the Jewish sector, tend now to be more normally distributed. One equalizer has been the relatively low income of a large body of predominantly European immigrants from the FSU who recently arrived to Israel.

Jewish-Arab schisms in Israel's society, that comprises a large, primarily Moslem non-Jewish minority, are robust and constitute a prominent source of internal tension. Substantially higher fertility rates and natural growth among the

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Israeli Arabs (not to mention the West Bank and Gaza) have kept the relative share of Arab population stable – 18% in 1948 vs. 17% in 2004 – despite 56 years of Jewish immigration. Persistence of these fertility differentials would bring the relative weight of the Israeli Arab minority (including East Jerusalem) to over 25-30% of the total population within a few tens of years.

There has been a growing tendency in recent years, especially among Israeli-Arab intellectuals, to demand “cultural autonomy”. Another tendency, expressed primarily by Israeli-Arab youth, is sympathy and solidarity with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Both tendencies are vehemently rejected by the Jewish majority and serve to increase the tension between Jewish and Arab Israelis.

The demographic problem takes on a much greater existential meaning if we add into the equation the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza. In 2004, taking a somewhat restrictive “core” defini-

tion of the Jewish population, and adding the non-Jewish fringe, factoring in the 1.2 million Israeli Arabs and the over 3 million Palestinians, as well as the partly documented 200-300,000 foreign workers, a total of over 10 million inhabitants is found between the Mediterranean shore and the Jordan River. Of these, approximately 50% are “core” Jews. Left to its natural course of high fertility, and assuming no more than a modest contribution from future international migration, a non-Jewish majority would prevail in Israel, West Bank and Gaza by 2010, growing to

nearly two thirds of the total population by the year 2050.

The crucial predicament facing Israel’s population and society concerns the trade-off between Jewishness, democracy, and territorial sovereignty.

3. Economic Structure

Israel ranks as the 22nd most affluent and developed economy in the world, based on per capita GDP. The economy has undergone radical economic transformation over the last 20 years, and export-oriented, knowledge-based industries currently constitute the main engine of the economy. Israel has also become a much more open economy, which is fully integrated into the world system.

The global economic recession and the fall in technological and web-based industries since 2000 contributed to the deep recession that Israel has experienced over the past four years. The other key contributor to Israel’s weak economy is the break down of the peace process and inception of the Palestinian *Intifada*. These events have flattened growth by lowering the aggregate demand for Israeli goods, and precipitating a collapse of the tourism industry and high unemployment. This in turn, led to drastic budget cuts, which had a profound effect on social security payments and the provision of social services, health and education.

In 2004 there have been initial indications that the economy is beginning to improve.

Aliyah has been a major factor driving economic growth since the establishment of the state. The period of accelerated growth that was generated in the 1990s was ignited by the wave of immigration of over one million *olim*. The

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potential for future large-scale aliyah is highly limited and the economy will have to rely on other drivers, such as investment in human resources to rekindle the cycle of growth.

One of the disturbing trends that has been observed in the last decade has been widening disparities between rich and poor. Transfer payments significantly reduce growing income inequality, but gaps remain substantial.

The dependency of the Israel economy on external assistance has been significantly reduced over the last 30 years, but U.S. aid and support from Jewish philanthropic sources is still significant and is a welcome expression of political and moral support.

4. Government and Politics

Israel continues to be a strong democracy with vigorous public discourse. Its judiciary system, and especially the Supreme Court, hold a strong and very influential position in the public sphere. The smooth transition of power between major parties over the years has established Israel as one of the world's mature democracies.

However, troubling questions, as in other countries, have been raised regarding relations between money and government. Periodically, senior politicians have been subjected to criminal investigation. More worrisome, however, is the political system's apparent inability to make critical choices on policies towards the Palestinians. For example, the failure of the Prime Minister in the May 2004 Likud party referendum on his Gaza disengagement plan exposed inherent weaknesses in the Israeli regimes capacity to govern. A crucial test is about to come if the day arrives when Israel can-

not postpone strategic decision-making concerning the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and Gaza any longer. Success will be measured by the ability to formulate and implement a comprehensive policy while containing public confrontation within the confines of law and order.

Repeated attempts to change parliamentary election laws unveiled widespread concern regarding the structural health of Israel's regime. New rules failed to stabilize the political system.

Recruitment of capable knowledgeable elites into the political party system is rare. The political discourse both inside and outside the Knesset frequently echoes the more extreme rather than moderate voices.

Government concern with issues pertaining to the Jewish people focus primarily on antisemitism and some important initiatives have been taken. The impact, however, of vital Israeli decisions on the Jewish

People receives only scant attention, and rarely advances beyond the level of lip-service.

5. Culture and Identity

The Israeli Jewish community is unique, being the only one in the world in which the Jewish community is not a minority. It is also the only community which does not face a significant threat of interfaith marriage. Additionally, unlike any other Jewish community, the state of Israel, by its very existence, offers its Jewish citizens the option of adopting a "passive" Jewish identity, which is not based on religion, culture and heritage, but on the mere fact of being born Jewish.

On the cultural level, the language of Israeli

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Jews is Hebrew. All Jewish children learn Bible and Jewish history as part of their standard education programme. Nevertheless, the major portion of cultural activity in Israel – e.g. literature, music, theatre, cinema etc. – is not distinctly Jewish.

As for religious identity, Israeli Jews can be divided into four groups: secular, traditional, orthodox and Haredim. If one looks beyond the simplistic characterizations of Israeli society as powerfully polarized along the religious-secular or anti-religious lines, one will find that the majority of Israelis fall somewhere in the middle range of 'traditional' to 'somewhat traditional'

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identities. Indeed, a majority of self-proclaimed secular Israelis hold a Seder every Passover and fast on Yom-Kippur.

Tension between these groups is manifested primarily at the political level. Israel does not have a formal constitution – although sporadic efforts have been made in this direction – precisely because of the reluctance of the founding fathers to

force a confrontation between the secular majority, supporting total separation of state and religion, and the Orthodox minority, which aspired to infuse theocratic elements into the Israeli polity. The result was not a consensus, but rather ongoing confrontation between the secular opposing perceived religious compulsion, and the Orthodox and Haredim, who deem themselves guardians of the "Jewish character" of the state. The *status quo* defines a tacit agreement between religious and secular constituencies on respective areas of influence and regulation in the public sphere. It should be noted, however,

that, despite periodic flare-ups, this issue is perceived by all groups as subordinate to the dispute surrounding the Arab-Israel conflict.

Virtually all Israeli Jews feel a strong partnership, common destiny and a degree of collective responsibility towards Jews all over the world. The Israeli media profusely report antisemitic incidents abroad. All Israeli governments have expressed a strong interest in the fate of Diaspora Jews, and acted to help them when called to do so. Generally speaking, Israeli Jews are keenly aware of the emotional, political and economic support they receive from the Diaspora, and the vast majority are grateful for it and for the sense of Jewish brotherhood that it implies.

Another important dimension to the Diaspora-Israel relationship is related to large-scale immigration, including the most recent wave of "Russian" immigrants in the 1990s. This wave of immigration has brought about far-reaching cultural changes, including a strong dose of ethnic pride. Gradually, though, the attraction of separate social and cultural frameworks to diminished, while new immigrants increasingly joined the Israeli mainstream.

According to a survey published in 2003, three years into the *Intifada* and in the middle of severe economic recession, 76% of Israelis stated they were satisfied with their social situation. Perhaps more surprisingly; 63% were satisfied with their economic situation. At the same time, 70% of Jewish parents expressed fear that there would be no future for their children in a country surrounded by enemies. These two outlooks – the optimist and the pessimist – amply indicate the way Israelis perceive the scope of opportunity and excruciating danger currently confronting Israel.

4 Strategic Assets, Critical Choice and Strategic Agenda

A. STRATEGIC ASSETS

The Report clearly shows that the Jewish people has large strategic assets which can be used to assure a thriving future. They include the factors working in favor of thriving mentioned above, particularly spiritual strength, shared awareness of a global mission, commitment, human resources; committed leadership; much “soft” power (especially in the USA) and “hard” power (mostly in Israel) and more. Added should be the staunch support by the only hyper-power and some other global powers, together with an increasingly common future with Western civilization, though not yet recognized as such by large parts of the West; and a shared sense of danger strengthened by the memory of the Shoah and increasing antisemitism and consequent willingness to make tremendous efforts to survive and thrive as Jews.

However, translation of these and other strategic assets into action fitting the seriousness of threats and the calling of opportunities is problematic. While many organizations are active in global and local Jewish affairs, overall the institutional structure is lacking important components. Mobilization of resources for collective Jewish needs is inadequate, efforts to

increase them are sporadic, and allocation of available resources between current needs and taking care of the future requires improvement. Too frequently, impacts of decisions on the Jewish people as a whole are not adequately taken into account in Israel. And decision-making on overall Jewish people issues tends to be dispersed, short range and unsystematic.

All this leads to the need to identify the most critical choices facing the Jewish people and to map an agenda of the main items requiring crafting of grand policies, together with indication of main recommended policy directions.

B. CRITICAL CHOICE

The one most critically acute choice facing Israel and the Jewish people involves **the policies that should be adopted with respect to the conflict with the Palestinians**. This issue and its linkages have far reaching implications, both direct and indirect, for values related to the Promised Land, the Jewish character of the state of Israel, its security and the security of the Jewish people as a whole. It also impacts on their moral and real-political standing.

The Palestinian issue poses tough and often tragic value and political dilemmas. It is a

quandary with profound uncertainties. The inherent instability of the region virtually precludes easy, clear-cut and stable “solutions”. Outstanding creative thinking and democratic determination are essential to craft promising

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policy options and implement them in the face of Palestinian realities and in a gauntlet of diverse dogmatic opinions in Israel emanating from the “left” and “right”.

Israel is on the “front line”, and her future essence and territory are at stake. The Israeli-Arab dispute, however, carries important implications for all Jews wherever they

reside. Therefore, innovative measures are required to involve the Jewish people as a whole in this critical choice, without undermining the prerogative of Israel to make its own choices.

C. STRATEGIC AGENDA

Together with pressing critical choices, deep processes within the Jewish people and its environments pose issues that require long-term policies to enable the Jewish people to thrive far into the future. These comprise the proposed strategic agenda as derived from the Report:

1. Thriving through historic ruptures

The key for understanding the fundamental predicaments of the Jewish people and of Judaism with their inherent opportunities and dangers is the ability to place them within historic ruptures. The enlightenment, the Shoah, the establishment of the State of Israel and its development and the emergence of a unique Jewish community in the U.S.A. add up to a rad-

ical mutation in the history of the Jewish people. Furthermore, these ruptures evolve within ruptures in human history as a whole, with humanity moving at unprecedented speed towards a radically new and largely inconceivable future.

As a result, the existential necessity to combine continuity with adjustment to dynamic situations, which has accompanied Judaism throughout its history, is more acute than ever. This perspective leads to at least five policy directions:

- Thinking and acting in terms of long time spans and multiple generations is a must, as far as humanly possible;
- Safeguarding the future should receive higher priority than coping with current needs. However, this is subject to moral imperatives to look after the hungry and the oppressed.
- In order to positively affect the future, critical masses of interventions with historic processes are a must. Most of the available limited resources should therefore be allocated to a select number of the most crucial issues.
- Creativity is essential. What seems to have worked in the past cannot be automatically assumed to work in the future. Instead, ‘creative destruction’ that challenges accepted “policy orthodoxies” is imperative.
- Jewish people institutions, decision making and leadership should be improved on the global as well as the community levels so as to facilitate the ability to act within long-term and holistic historic perspectives.

2. Fortifying the security and Jewish uniqueness of Israel

Israel is a strong country, in terms of spiritual and social resources and hard power. However,

its long term security is precarious, because of persistent hostility in Arab and other states to its very existence as a Jewish state, proliferation of mass killing weapons and the rise of fundamentalist Islam. Therefore assuring its security is a prime requirement which demands sustained effort by Jews in Israel and all over the world.

This is imperative not only because of inherent importance of Israel as a Jewish state and the increasingly growing proportion of the Jewish people living there, but also because – to consider the counter-factual and unthinkable – it is very doubtful if the Jewish people could survive should Israel fall.

However, at stake is not only the existence of the State of Israel but its Jewish uniqueness, dilution of which would be a tragedy in terms both of Jewish values and the long-term existence and thriving of the Jewish people as a whole. Therefore, fortification of the Jewish essence of Israel is critical. This requires all the more strenuous efforts as the future Jewish nature of Israel is not assured.

Demographic trends in Israel move in an ominous direction, both in the country as a whole and in the Negev and the Galil in particular. And, although Israel speaks Hebrew, the Bible plays an important role in education, interfaith marriages are marginal and so on, there is an actual danger that the country's "Jewishness" in culture and self-identity is being diluted.

Five policy directions illustrate needed decisions and action:

- Awareness of the dangers to the very existence of Israel and its Jewish nature and of the dire results for Jews everywhere should these dangers realize has to be passed on to the next generation of Jews in the various

communities, so as to strengthen continuous commitment to Israel and its Jewish nature.

- *Aliyah* continues to be not only a traditional Jewish commandment and Zionist value, but an existential necessity. Therefore also from Jewish communities not in danger, especially the U.S., should be encouraged up to a pan-Jewish Mega Project of large scale movement to Israel together with development of new modes of part-time living in Israel and steps to prevent damage to the coherence of communities from which *aliyah* takes place.
- Jewish money going to Israel should be devoted to assuring its long term future rather than meeting current needs.
- Demographic and other implications for the Jewish nature of Israel should serve as one of the main considerations in decisions on the future of the borders of Israel.
- Jewish leaders worldwide should demand from Israel steps to reinforce its Jewish nature in pluralistic ways, such as by regularizing the status of non-orthodox movements and by radically upgrading Jewish identity strengthening in the school system.

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3. Counteracting demographic decline

Harsh demographic trends seem to point to an unsavory future, both in major Jewish communities around the world and in Israel. Required courses of action are well recognized, such as efforts directed at the non-Jewish partners in interfaith-marriages and their children, helping families who want more children but are hin-

dered by economic circumstances from having them, and accelerated religious conversion procedures in Israel.

Ultimately, policies aimed at strengthening Jewish demography need to focus on sustaining the Jewish family, supporting international Jewish migration and immigrants' absorption, and maintaining a clear Jewish majority of Israel's population.

A different policy direction includes offsetting quantitative decline by fuller utilization of available and upgraded human resources.

Thus, encouraging and helping even larger proportions of Jewish youth to achieve high levels of education and knowledge, including also Jewish contents, is a must.

Another requirement is to reduce the costs of Jewish education and participation in Jewish community activities. The Report shows clearly a negative correlation between the costs of Jewish education and participation in it.

Therefore, as Jewish education is a main factor in assuring Jewish continuity and reducing exit, making it available to all is an essential step in counter-acting negative demographic trends.

4. Full utilization of cyberspace

Upgrading and expanding Jewish education is not only a matter of money but of making it more effective. This requires adjustments in contents so as to make it more relevant to the world of the youth, together with radical innovations in learning environments and methods.

A main way to move in this direction is provided by the potentials of cyberspace. Modern

computer, communication and information technologies are currently utilized to support traditional learning methods, instead of shifting to different pedagogic models appropriate to the "Net Generation"

The tremendous and constantly expanding potential of cyberspace, which despite some important initiatives are underutilized in Jewish people endeavor, reach far beyond education. For instance, they enable intensified and broadened interconnecting of the Jewish people and building up diverse Jewish epistemic communities.

All in all, cyberspace provides important opportunities well fitting the requirements of the Jewish people. Using them is a main challenge to Jewish leadership and creativity.

5. Leadership and high-elites development

The future of the Jewish people, including Israel, depends to a great extent on a relatively small number of leaders, entrepreneurs and other members of the community's upper echelons. Quite a number of initiatives try to develop Jewish people leadership and higher elites, but the Report reveals an urgent need to do more.

Promising policy directions in this matter include establishing a "Jewish People Leadership Academy", building up an open network of lay and professional leaders for shared learning, and stimulating production of position papers, studies and books on main Jewish people issues to improve policy discourse and enlighten leaders, elites and Jewish publics.

Also, focused efforts are needed to speed up a generation change in Jewish people leadership, as younger leaders have a better chance to

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“touch” Jewish youth and thus assure continuity combined with adjustments to rapidly changing situations.

6. Facilitating Jewish creativity

Creativity is another crucial factor in shaping the future of the Jewish people by providing spiritual and cultural contents preserving continuity while fitting global transformations. While creativity is a matter of individuals, much can be done to facilitate it, such as by encouraging pupils and students with outstanding creative potential, setting up institutes that serve as “hot houses” for Jewish creativity, supporting diffusion of novel creations to large Jewish audiences so as also to upgrade popular Jewish culture, and providing substantive support for cultural and spiritual learning and creativity.

7. Strengthening competitive exceptionalism

Living as a Jew and trying to have one’s children live as Jews is increasingly a matter of choice rather than a “given”. Therefore, Judaism must successfully compete with other civilizational-national identities in terms of the psychodynamics of individuals as influenced by twenty-first century post-modernity and emerging post-post-modernity.

Being different in significant high-quality respects is at the core of Jewish history and is necessary for keeping the loyalty of the wavering and having the young being proud of being a Jew. But the difference must be one that can compete in spiritual and cultural quality and in terms of providing meanings to life with other options, including out-marriage and disengagement.

This requires, as mentioned, much creativity. But some additional policy directions illustrate promising avenues of action:

- Emphasize the uniqueness of Judaism, including avoiding overstatements of similarities with other religions.
- Demonstrating the importance of uniquely Jewish values for humanity as a whole, in relation to Tikkun Olam initiatives as proposed below.
- Recognizing the opportunity provided by trends towards post-post-modernity with increasing search for spiritual and existential meaning of life, by better “marketing” the core answers provided by Judaism and the alternatives posed by different streams of Judaism.
- Make it easier to remain an active Jew and live as one, by making community activities more accessible, further proliferate Jewish dating services, further expand Jewish internet groups, make – as already mentioned – Jewish education cheaper, and so on.
- Especially important is the role of spiritual Jewish leadership in coping with the competition of non-Jewish cultural influences. Therefore, further to the policy direction above, development of outstanding Jewish spiritual leadership is a priority requirement, involving inter alia reconsideration of the training of Rabbis in Israel.

8. Supporting governmental multi-cultural policies

Comparative findings, as presented in the report, strongly indicate that governmental policies supporting multi-culturalism are beneficial for the Jewish people. Therefore, a main policy direction is to support them. Traditional Jewish views

opposing government support of religious schools in the U.S. and the support by the Jewish community of French governmental efforts to prohibit religious symbols in public schools require accordingly re-consideration.

9. Revising and strengthening Israel-Diaspora relations

The establishment of the state of Israel is a turning point in the history of the Jews. It will take generations for the relations between Israel and the Diaspora to evolve and reach a dynamic balance. This, however, does not justify the absence of serious discussion on that relationship.

It is first of all the duty of Israel to take the effort to be the core state of the Jewish people more seriously. This not only involves greater efforts to strengthening Jewish communities worldwide. It also implies that in Israeli decision-making much weight is given to impacts on the welfare of Diaspora communities and the future of the Jewish people as a whole.

It may be time to further institutionalize the value and ambition of Israel as the democratic state of the Jewish people, and not only its citizens. For starters, Israel should grant formal consultative status to a global Jewish body – based inter alia on existing organizations such as the Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress – that would be involved in Israeli decision making on issues bearing importance for the Jewish people and its future.

Diaspora Jewish communities too bear a heavy responsibility for revising and strengthening relations with Israel. This involves even more efforts to fortify the security of Israel and its Jewish uniqueness, such as by supporting

Aliya, as discussed. But the emphasis should be on partnerships, such as by shared projects to strengthening Jerusalem as the spiritual center of the Jewish people, to act strategically against antisemitism, and to advance together the various policy directions proposed in this chapter.

However, the main need is for a culture and understanding of joined responsibility for the future of the Jewish people and Judaism as a whole, without any shadow of domination. Competition for centrality in the Jewish people is legitimate and can spur creativity. But essential are shared recognition of the importance of both Diaspora communities and Israel for the future of the Jewish people and intensified cooperation in weaving a thriving future for the Jewish people at all its main locations.

10. Crafting a geopolitical grand-policy

The establishment of a Jewish state has put the Jewish people squarely into global geopolitics. This is particularly true, since Israel carries a lot of “hard” power and the Jewish community in the U.S. has a lot of “soft” power. Never before has the Jewish people had so much power.

Israel and the Jewish people, however, are targets of various forms of hostility and violence. This situation calls for novel policy directions. Thus:

- The dilemmas posed by the fact that Israel depends on Western support, while its ability to thrive in the long term depends on reaching accommodation with Islam should be recognized. A Jewish grand strategy with respect to Islam and Islamic organizations is therefore an urgent requirement. This strategy comes in addition to efforts to reach at least quasi-stabilization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- Shifts in global power structures require Jewish efforts to build bridges and improve the standing of the Jewish people and relations with Israel in countries becoming major global actors, such as China and India, and in new regional global actors, such as the European Union.
- Coping with antisemitism requires a more differentiated and multi-dimensional strategy, with special attention allotted to the more virulent forms.
- The Jewish people should occupy a high moral ground and reflect Prophetic values in its global actions. At the same time, the requirements of *realpolitik* must be satisfied to ensure survival. The dilemmas inherent in these often conflicting aims given the world and the Middle East as they are, need more explicit moral discourse together with better long-term statecraft in contrast to the prevalence of often very superficial treatments and ad hoc reactive decisions.
- Because of the likelihood of continuous global instability and violent turmoil in the Middle East, consolidation and increase of the “hard” and “soft” powers held by the Jewish people is of critical importance. Thus, European Jewry has to seek ways to accrue more soft power.

11. Tikkun Olam

The Jewish people should not aspire to becoming just another power player or having a “normal state”. This would constitute abandonment of fundamental values. While physical survival necessitates power-acting, spiritual survival requires not only efforts to practice moral behavior when not seriously contradicting crucial

statecraft needs, but also the initiation of efforts to ‘mend the world’, in line with the values and mission of “Tikkun Olam”.

This is not merely a matter of joining global and local initiatives on advancing human rights or protecting the environment, laudable as that may be. Rather, the emphasis in Jewish people “Tikkun Olam” activities should be on applying Jewish values to the increasingly perplexing moral dilemmas facing humanity. The uses of biotechnology and the meaning of justice in a world full with luxury on one hand and starving children on the other are but two examples where Jewish value contributions are urgently needed.

12. Reparations and restitutions

A major effort launched by the Jewish people is to receive reparations and restitution for assets usurped by the Nazis and their collaborators, as well as for the immeasurable sufferings of Jews during the Shoah and the terrible damage it caused to the Jewish people. Some of these activities have been very successful, but much remains to be done. And some of the salient major moral dimensions have not been fully considered.

No comprehensive coordinated reparations and restitution strategy has been crafted and systematically applied, despite the impressive work of major organizations dealing with the matter. Such a strategy is urgently needed, to deal with issues such as:

- Restoring ownership of Jewish property, including objects of art and real estate;
- Preserving Jewish physical heritage;
- The role of Israel in efforts to get reparations and restitutions has been ambiguous,

because of contradictions between foreign relation objectives, the need to confront governments reluctant to provide adequate reparation, and Israel's government own duty to provide economic support to needy Shoah survivors. Instead, more coordinated overall a Jewish strategy is required with a sub-division of labor fitting diverse priorities.

- The distribution of the reparations between survivors and their heirs and the Jewish people as a collective entity needs to be changed, with more emphasis on making up for the damage caused by the Shoah to the future of the Jewish people as a whole.

- The moral issues of accepting reparations in terms which are seen as means for countries to cleanse themselves of their historic guilt require serious thought.

13. Jewish people capacity building and systematic policy crafting

All of the strategic policy items generate a need to engage in Jewish people capacity building and systematic policy crafting. This is a sine qua non for taking up the strategic agenda and translating the proposed policy directions into operational decisions and concrete action, and for all crafting of policies assuring a thriving future for the Jewish people.

Taken together, the critical choice and the strategic agenda identify dangers and opportunities fateful for the future of the Jewish people and Judaism. They also demonstrate that the threats can be met and the opportunities can be used so that a thriving future can be assured if – and this is a great “if” – resources are used optimally for well-considered future-weaving efforts. But the findings also indicate that in the absence of such efforts the future of the Jewish people is in doubt.

הרשות נתונה: PERMISSION IS GIVEN

***This is the challenge posed
to Jewish leaders and institutions
by the findings and analyses
of this Report.***