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# **Jewish People Policy Planning Institute**

## **Annual Assessment**

### **2005**

EXECUTIVE REPORT

### ***FACING A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD***

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## FOREWORD

The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute inaugurated an annual assessment of the state of the Jewish People in 2004. Its initial assessment outlined the status of Jewish communities worldwide, including in Israel; described trends that should be a source of concern; and proposed remedies for problem areas. While comprehensive in scope, the 2004 assessment was designed not to be replicated each year but to provide a baseline for subsequent comparison.

The 2005 assessment meets that purpose. It updates the geopolitical context in which world Jewry and Israel operates. It highlights critical changes in key communities, focusing on new challenges for French Jewry and the Jews of the former Soviet Union and Poland. It draws attention to trends, particularly demographic trends that have become more troubling. It reviews how globalization and science and technology can provide new opportunities to promote greater cohesion and education of Jewish people internationally. And, of course, the 2005 JPPPI assessment makes recommendations.

Some of the recommendations are new and others, not surprisingly, build on last year's proposals. The recommendations fall into a number of different categories. One set of recommendations is urgent, responding to the historic decision of the Israeli government to disengage from Gaza and a small part of the West Bank. Taking note of the controversy and the possible trauma over the evacuation of twenty one settlements in Gaza and four in the northern part of the West Bank, the assessment calls on Jewish leaders in the Diaspora to make strong declarations against violence, disobedience and violations of law that could be the response to the withdrawal. Similarly, world Jewry is called on to participate in the development of the Negev and the Galilee both to assist in the absorption of evacuated Jewish settlers and to shift the demographic balance in these areas.

Other categories of recommendations include those on demography, on Diaspora-relations, on Jewish people leadership (enhancing quality and accelerating generational change), on crafting geopolitical grand strategies, and on fully utilizing cyberspace to take advantage of the global nature of the Jewish People. Suffice it to say that many of the recommendations will generate their own controversy, but the demographic trends, among other problems, demand serious responses and those to date have had limited effect. Whether on demography, or affecting generational change in Jewish leadership, or investing in Jewish education, or better integrating the Jewish People as a whole, it is clear that a hardheaded look at priorities is essential.

If nothing else, this year's recommendations should trigger such discussion. However, the measure of the assessment is not the discussion but the actions that result from them. World Jewry and leaders in Israel need to reflect on the recommendations and show how they are responding to them — or at least how their responses are addressing the challenges outlined in the assessment.

**Ambassador Dennis Ross**

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

## Introduction

The Jewish People is a very complex entity; therefore the best way to observe and analyze it is by applying multiple perspectives. The perspective of the 2004 Assessment was “between thriving and decline,” whereas the perspective of the 2005 assessment is “interaction with a rapidly changing world.” A rapidly changing world requires the Jewish People to develop a combination of preserving continuity and creative adjustments to external and internal changes together with efforts to influence them.

The Assessment focuses on “significant changes” (in professional terminology — “delta”), i.e. events and trend changes that are likely to make a difference. But identifying delta developments is not sufficient. When ominous trends combine with missed opportunities, the absence of adequate responses by the Jewish People is *per se* a very significant “non-act,” to which the Assessment pays attention.

A few illustrations will clarify the perspective:

- On the Palestinian issue, important adjustments have been made to changing realities, e.g. the death of Arafat, the election of Abu Mazen, the re-election of George W. Bush, shifts in Israeli public opinion and re-evalu-

ation of strategies by Israel’s leadership. The Israeli government adopted a strategy tailored to changing realities, as expressed in its acceptance of the Road Map, and adopted the decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip along with continued building of the main parts of the security fence. Israel succeeded in reducing terrorism, achieved some level of cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, and improved its global standing and coordination with the US’s democratization policies. Yet what lies ahead after the disengagement remains open, and disagreements on the issue persist and are likely to intensify.

- Israel’s initiatives have resulted in acute domestic disagreements, of which the most ominous are calls to disobey orders in the IDF and to take up massive physical resistance to the disengagement. Even more serious may be post-disengagement traumas and feelings of defeat among sectors of the population. The government is trying to cope by implementing various measures, such as offering incentives to settlers who agree to leave the Gaza Strip; however, overall strategies for dealing with disengagement traumas are underdeveloped.

- A major initiative, which aspires to improve Israel-Diaspora discourse and institutional structures, was taken by the President of Israel. The JPPPI prepared a position paper including detailed recommendations, some of which are being acted upon.
- Nothing of major significance related to assimilation and demography occurred in 2005. Essentially, the Jewish People continue a steady skidding down on a slippery slope. There is an acute need for radical and innovative counter measures, and the present absence of such measures is a significant negative finding of this assessment. Outreach efforts and the approach to broader demographic issues in the Diaspora continue to be fragmented and seem unable to reach a critical mass that could make a real difference. In Israel, a number of initiatives are under consideration for coping with demographic issues, but it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness.
- On antisemitism, Jewish efforts to encourage major actors, such as the UN and the European Union, to take more determined steps have been fairly successful. Israel has also taken steps to enhance awareness of the Shoah and its significance, e.g. the opening of the new Yad Vashem Museum, and worldwide participation in the commemoration of 60 years since the liberation of the death camps. However, no Jewish strategies have been developed in response to the fundamental issue of relations with Islamic actors, including the growing Moslem populations in many Western countries.
- An important geo-strategic development in 2005 is the recognition of the rapid economic growth in increasing global importance of China and India, both of which do not have antisemitic traditions and hold basically positive attitudes towards Israel and Jewish civilization. Israel and certain Jewish actors took advantage of some of the opportunities offered by China and India in the economic and technological fields. The JPPPI submitted recommendations for improving the Jewish People-China relationship, but these have not yet been implemented.
- The war in Iraq may negatively impact the Jewish People. Public opinion polls in Western countries and domestic political developments in many of them indicate that it is increasingly unlikely that the use of force and the endangerment of soldiers will be supported, even for goals such as the prevention of genocide, the halting of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the advancement of democratization. The weak response to the mass-killings in Darfur clearly demonstrates these trends. This means that countries or regions under threat cannot rely upon the West for aid, which has potentially serious implications for the long-term security of Israel and of Jews in regions of instability. Nevertheless, no protests were recorded by institutions of the Jewish People against such short-sighted and egocentric trends in major Western countries.
- The Israeli government, aiming to bolster claims for restitutions, prepared the innovative First Global Report on Restitution of Jewish Property 1952–2004. The report shows that much work in this area remains, and demonstrates the need for expanding demands for reparations to compensate for

the losses that threaten the future of the Jewish People as a whole, as distinct from personal injuries and properties. It is not yet clear whether this report will stimulate determined action by the Jewish People, or will gather dust on a shelf.

- Globalization poses an overall great opportunity as well as grave dangers to the Jewish People. This trend enhances the importance of “intellectual capital” and global networking, in which the Jewish People has a historic and contemporary advantage. But globalization increases competition with Asian cultures for dominance in science and technology, and offers more options of competing lifestyles to active belonging with the Jewish People. Israel’s economy has undergone positive structural changes, but there is a lack of adequate efforts to assure the long-term global excellence of Israeli science and

technology. Regrettably, the 2005 Assessment is unable to report that the opportunities and dangers of globalization are sufficiently grasped by Jewish People organizations.

- Likewise, no breakthrough can be cited for utilizing the vast and constantly expanding potential of cyberspace for Jewish networking, education and identity strengthening.
- Probably most important of all, the dangers of a profound gap in respect to Jewish continuity and Diaspora-Israeli relations between the older generations who lived through traumatic events and “post-revolutionary” generations for whom what happened is “history” and who grow up in a radically different world, are not understood in depth nor adequately coped with.



This year a number of ominous trends in the Jewish People continue unabated while changes in the external environment move in both positive and negative directions, as well as remaining in part open-ended. Major Jewish People responses have included Israeli policies towards the Palestinians and an initiative to invigorate Jewish global forums. But overall Jewish People actions during 2005 were inadequate to cope with negative internal and external trends, and emerging opportunities as being missed.

**Yehezkel Dror**

Founding President,  
The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute

## Summary Overview

2004–5 was marked by important changes and shifts in the backdrop within which the Jewish People exist and operate. Significant events and trends also took place within the internal Jewish scene. The following sums up the major recent trends and changes:

### A. THE MIDDLE EAST AND ISRAEL

- Significant events concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict included the death of Yasser Arafat, the election of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), the re-election of President George W. Bush, shifts in Israeli public opinion, and re-evaluation of strategies by Israel's leadership.
- Following a difficult debate, Israel formally adopted the disengagement plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip. The government continued building the security fence, particularly in the northern West Bank and around Jerusalem, despite The Hague's International Court of Justice ruling. Terror was reduced, and the general atmosphere in Israel improved. Some cooperation was achieved with the Palestinian Authority, and Israel improved its global standing and

adjusted to US democratization policies in the Middle East.

- The new Israeli policies resulted in grave domestic disagreements, although it seems clear that the majority supports withdrawal from Gaza. The overall effect of implementation of the disengagement plan cannot yet be evaluated, but should there be an outbreak of violence the result could be a very painful and long-term national trauma.

### B. THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

- While the military and political situation in Iraq remained unstable, Israel continued to enjoy a quiet Eastern front.
- It became evident that aside from the US, most Western countries are reluctant to use military force overseas, even when the goals of such interventions are not in dispute. This neo-isolationism bears serious implications for the long-term security of Israel and of Jews in unstable countries and regions.
- Terror attacks in Beslan and Taba served as warnings that terrorism is still both a global threat and a threat to Israel and the Jewish People.
- Concern over Iran's nuclear development

continued as further steps were made toward acquiring the capabilities necessary for the production of nuclear weapons.

- The US exerted effective pressures on Syria to reduce its presence in Lebanon.
- In the US, a majority of the Jewish vote still preferred the Democratic candidate, but the 2004 results showed a gradual shift to more conservative politics amongst Jews, particularly the Orthodox. This followed a more pronounced trend of conservatism among most European Jews, as demonstrated in the general elections in the UK and elsewhere.
- The AIPAC affair led to some uneasiness in formal US-Israel institutional relations, and concerns of accusations of dual loyalties.
- The resounding *No* vote by the French and Dutch electorates in May-June 2005 against ratification of the new European Constitution caused serious damage to the process of European integration. While mainly motivated by domestic politics rather than by authentic anti-European sentiments, the vote signaled intolerance towards a more pluralistic concept of European society, and also embarrassed some European Jews who viewed an integrated, pluralistic and strong Europe as a prerequisite for their own security and prosperity.
- The number of antisemitic incidents in France leveled off, but rose in Britain, Russia and elsewhere, despite the improvements in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Jewish efforts to engage major actors such as the UN and the European Union in taking more determined steps against antisemitism were fairly successful.
- Antisemitism in Europe tended to shift

from transient attacks reflecting events in the Middle East, to a more structured semi-permanent pattern. Part of this shift was demonstrated in the increase in public statements minimizing the Shoah, as well as outright antisemitic statements. A new worrying trend has appeared in the acceptance of such expressions within the public discourse.

- Anti-Israelism gained support in some campuses as observed in incidents at Columbia University, in Toronto, and the boycott (since rescinded) of two Israeli universities of the British Association of University Teachers.
- The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations, with conspicuous Israeli participation, of the end of WWII and the liberation of the death camps, as well as the opening of the new Holocaust Memorial in Berlin and the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem, attracted extremely wide media coverage and served to increase awareness of the Shoah and the dangers of racism and antisemitism.
- Regrettably, no strategic Jewish People responses were generated with regard to the fundamental problems of relations with Islam, including the growing Moslem populations in numerous Western countries.
- The death of Pope John II and the election of Benedict XVI suggested a possible continuation of a conservative line by the Holy See, and hopefully also the continuation of rapprochement towards the Jewish People.
- In the Protestant sphere, the US Presbyterian Church took a strong anti-Israel position. Calls for similar steps were heard in other Protestant denominations but not as

yet approved, whilst others within the Presbyterian Church demanded a more even-handed policy.

- Recent political developments in Latin America brought the vast majority of Jews under the governance of leftist governments.
- In the Former Soviet Union the number of Jews continued to shrink, but the remaining Jewish community enjoyed a measure of revival of Jewish life.
- Globalization continued to enhance the importance of “intellectual capital” and global networking, in which the Jewish People has a historic and contemporary advantage, but also brought with it new temptations which could threaten the long-term willingness to identify as a Jew.
- Israel moved up to 17<sup>th</sup> place out of a total of 62 countries in the Globalization Index for 2005, up five places from 2004. In terms of personal globalization Israel ranked even higher at ninth place.

### C. THE INTERNAL SCENE

- Political developments in the Middle East contributed to more positive moods in Israel, and affected the climate of most Jewish communities in the Diaspora.
- Israel’s economy recuperated, with renewed tourism, GDP growth, increasing exports, decreasing unemployment and so on.
- Nothing of major significance took place concerning trends of Jewish demographics and assimilation. In the absence of radical and innovative counter-measures, the continuing slippery slope reinforced previous worrying trends.

- Outreach efforts and the approach to broader demographic issues in the Diaspora continued to be fragmented and seemed insufficient for a critical mass.
- In Israel, research on family and childbearing ideals and expectations among the Jewish married population produced some new insights on a possibly strong public support for policy initiatives for coping with demographic issues.
- *Aliyah* figures again reached a low point; even rising antisemitism in France has so far had little immediate impact. New regulations in Germany were expected to somewhat stem the flow of immigrating Jews.
- Likewise, lower emigration of Jews from South Africa to Australia suggested a reduction in South African migration, and a slight reduction in the attractiveness of the multicultural Jewish communities (Australia, Canada and the US).
- No breakthrough was achieved in utilizing the vast and constantly expanding potentials of cyberspace to expand Jewish networking, improve Jewish education and strengthen Jewish identity.
- Israel’s President Moshe Katzav launched a high-profile initiative to respond to issues in Israel-Diaspora relations.
- The Israeli government prepared the First Global Report on Restitution of Jewish Property 1952–2004, representing an innovative policy and demonstrating the need to bolster demands for reparations to compensate for the damage caused to the future of the Jewish People as a whole.

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In addition to the overall assessment of global trends and the review of main events at the regional level in 2004–2005, this Report focuses on a number of major issues of particular relevance for Jewish People policy planning. Some of the issues reflect the changing situation of specific Jewish communities in their respective societal contexts; others cut across the complex interactions between major issues and the different components of the Jewish People as a whole.

- The extraordinary progress of Science and Technology in contemporary society has been related to a significant presence of Jewish actors. But S&T can also be seen as a powerful opportunity to strengthen the standing of the Jews and their interaction with society at large.
  - Since the year 2000, French Jewry has been confronted with one of the harshest periods in their history. Repeated cases of external aggression not only stimulated a re-definition of their Jewish identity and community system, but also increasingly called into question the founding principles of French civil society. The French vote against ratification of the European Constitution raised new
- questions about the future of a successful Jewish integration in an open and pluralistic European space.
- Similar challenges, in a much different context, faced the Jews who remain in Eastern Europe. If in the larger communities in the Former Soviet Union Jewish decline and revival compete in daily life, in Poland the minute remnants of the once largest Jewish population center struggle with the realities and dilemmas of an irreversible twilight.
  - Recent Jewish population trends in the US indicated a decline and demand an evaluation of the interaction of the American ethos and society with its Jews. Different US Jewish outreach approaches to the out-married illustrate the deliberations now under way, their challenges and partial successes.
  - Israel seems to be paying more attention to its responsibility toward world Jewry. However, a JPPPI study of government decision-making shows that progress must still be made in the consideration of the implications of the Israeli government's decisions on the Jewish People.

## Selected Indicators on World Jewry

Country	Jewish Population (Core Definition)			Index of Human Development		Jewish Day-school Attendance Rate (%)	Recent Out- marriage Rate (%)	Ever Visited Israel (% of Jew. Pop.)	Aliyah	Tourists to Israel	Violent Antisemitic Incidents
				Value	World Rank						
	1970 <sup>a</sup>	2005 <sup>b</sup>	Projected 2020 <sup>c</sup>	2002 <sup>d</sup>	2002 <sup>d</sup>	Most recent <sup>t</sup>	Most recent <sup>t</sup>	Most recent <sup>t</sup>	2004 <sup>e</sup>	2004 <sup>e</sup>	2004 <sup>f</sup>
World	12,633,000	13,033,000	13,558,000	.956-.273	1-177				20,893 <sup>g</sup>	1,505,606 <sup>g</sup>	
Israel	2,582,000	5,235,000	6,228,000	.908	22	97	5	-			
North America	5,686,000	5,652,000	5,581,000	.939-.943	4-8				2,132	422,700	
United States	5,400,000	5,280,000	5,200,000 <sup>h</sup>	.939	8	29 <sup>i</sup>	54	35	1,890	379,127	17
Canada	286,000	372,000	381,000	.943	4	55	35	66	242	43,573	52
Latin America	514,000	398,000	364,000	.888-.463	29-153				1,238	63,784	
Argentina	282,000	185,000	162,000 <sup>j</sup>	.853	34	50-55	45	>50	458	11,734	8
Brazil	90,000	97,000	90,000 <sup>j</sup>	.775	72	71	45	>50	237	11,414	5
Mexico	35,000	40,000	42,000	.802	53	85	10	>70	53	14,668	..
Other countries	107,000	76,000	70,000 <sup>j</sup>	.888-.463	29-153	75	15-95	>50	490	25,968	..
Europe non-FSU	1,331,000	1,161,000	1,030,000	.956-.734	1-88				3,174	751,254 <sup>g</sup>	
France	530,000	494,000	482,000	.925	16	40	40-45	>70	2,003	257,484	96
United Kingdom	390,000	298,000	238,000	.930	12	60	40-45	78	363	146,482	84
Germany	30,000	115,000	108,000	.921	19	<20	>60	>50	85	75,895	50
Hungary	70,000	50,000	34,000	.837	38	<15	60	..	112	6,868	3
Other EU <sup>k</sup>	171,000	150,000	134,000	.946-.842	2-42	10-25	33-75	>50	314	205,551	..
Other non-EU <sup>l</sup>	140,000	54,000	34,000	.956-.751	1-88	5-20	50-80	..	297	57,449	..
FSU <sup>m</sup>	2,151,000	380,000	173,000	.853-.671	36-116				10,127	100,010 <sup>g</sup>	
Russia	808,000	235,000	130,000 <sup>j</sup>	.795	57	<15	80	..	3,982	55,702	45
Ukraine	777,000	84,000	25,000 <sup>j</sup>	.777	70	<15	80	..	3,055	24,207	16
Rest FSU Europe	312,000	40,000	15,000 <sup>j</sup>	.853-.681	36-113	<15	65-75	..	984	8,619	..
FSU Asia	254,000	21,000	3,000	.766-.671	78-116	<15	50-75	..	2,106	8,795	..
Asia (rest) <sup>n</sup>	104,000	19,000	21,000	.938-.482	9-149				285	95,208	
Africa	195,000	79,000	60,000	.853-.273	35-177				3,880	43,367	
South Africa	118,000	73,000	57,000	.666	119	85	20	70	82	12,609	5
Oceania	70,000	109,000	101,000	.946-.542	3-133				56	17,226	
Australia	65,000	102,000	95,000	.946	3	65	22		54	14,871	16

a Source: Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, The A. Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

b Source: DellaPergola, American Jewish Year Book (2005). Provisional data.

c Source: adapted from DellaPergola, Rebhun, Tolts (2000), medium variant.

d A measure of a country's public health, educa-

tional attainment, and economic standard of living. Source: United Nations Development Programme (2004).

e Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2005).

f Tel Aviv University Center for the Study of Antisemitism (2004).

g Including countries not reported.

h After downward reduction following NJPS 2001.

i Based on incomplete sample from NJPS 2001.

j Revised population projections for 2020.

k Without Baltic states.

l Including Turkey.

m With Baltic states.

n Without Israel, FSU and Turkey.

# Recommendations and Strategic Agenda

## A. COPING WITH A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

Both the external environments and the internal dynamics of the Jewish People are changing. Thriving within radical transformations requires innovative policies that simultaneously preserve continuity and adapt to new situations in ways that make the most of novel opportunities while warding off growing dangers, together with efforts to influence emerging realities as far as a small people can do so.

The policy directions outlined here provide guidelines based on the findings included in this Assessment and other JPPPI studies.

Five main conditions must be met in order to successfully cope with a rapidly changing world:

- The “tyranny of the status quo” must be overcome. Past and outdated policy orthodoxies, organizational inertia and vested interests must not hinder essential policy creativity, organizational renewal and leadership rotation;
- Longer-range strategies are necessary to deal with fundamental problems, with greater

emphasis on proactive rather than reactive policies;

- More resources for Jewish people policies must be mobilized, both within the Jewish People and from external resources, such as new types of reparations and governmental assistance within multicultural policies;
- Allocation of resources has to be reconsidered, so as to achieve critical masses of efforts focused on the most important long-term needs;
- Better coordination of Jewish communities, organizations and leaders is vital for the enhancement of synergetic effects.

## B. TURNING A TRAUMA INTO A PLATFORM FOR TAKE-OFF

The disengagement from Gaza is the latest in a long string of potentially traumatic events that have accompanied Israel from its inception. Such traumas should be seen as turning points and used as opportunities for policy renewal.

In addition to creative statesmanship and using the momentum of the disengagement for the promotion of stability and achievement of a peace agreement, attention should be focused

on the new gaping schisms in Israeli society, namely:

- An alienation towards the State of Israel and its institutions among many Israeli Jews who feel betrayed;
- An aggravating confrontation between the secular-institutional authority of state and secular law and the spiritual-religious authority of certain rabbis;
- Potential disobedience among IDF and police ranks;
- A growing fear among settlers and their supporters, both in Israel and the Diaspora, of serious threats to the future of the remaining Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

The trauma will be directly influenced by the level of violence involved in the evacuation. All actions and expressions must be guided by the primary need to implement democratic decisions while preserving the nation's unity, and simultaneously ensuring freedom of expression and protest, sacred to democratic regimes. Jewish leaders of the Diaspora should make strong declarations against violence and violations of the law.

In the comprehensive context of the Jewish People, the following issues should be particularly attended to:

- Involvement of world Jewry in the subsequent rehabilitation and assistance for coping with traumas;
- Participation in the development of the Negev and the Galilee, and perception of the project as a challenge that may enhance Jewish solidarity and Israeli-Diaspora cooperation. The project should be based on a comprehensive

concept of further developing Israel, also including emphasis on Jerusalem and its role for the Jewish People;

- Potential implications of the traumatic event on the attractiveness of Israel for World Jewry;
- Assessment of the demographic implications of the disengagement plan;
- Learning the lessons from the present disengagement should future similar operations, graver both in quantity (involving more people) and quality (evacuation of regions dearer than Gaza to Jews and Judaism) — await Israel.

### C. DEMOGRAPHY

Demographic trends generate the basic human capital, and critically affect all internal relations within the Jewish People and its interactions with outside society. In the case of the State of Israel — the “core” country of world Jewry — it is a primary policy goal to preserve a clear Jewish cultural configuration and population majority, while respecting the rules of democratic society and minority rights. JPPPI policy recommendations being prepared are naturally greatly influenced by considerations of the majority vs. minority condition of Jewish populations.

#### The Diaspora

As illustrated by the case of US Jewry, but applicable to all Diaspora communities, most major drivers of population change are out of control of the Jewish minority. Political and macro-economic trends and the broader cultural framework are governed by external forces.

Moreover, the drive towards individual social mobility cannot be expected to be subordinated to community considerations. Therefore the primary relevant avenue for affecting population trends pertains to the domain of culture and identification.

A highly interrelated complex of variables includes:

- Marrying, possibly at a comparatively younger age with a Jewish partner, or a non-Jewish partner who joins Judaism, or at least allowing for raising the children Jewishly;
- Having a larger number of Jewish children that at least achieve generation replacement, and providing incentives for achieving this minimal goal.
- By far, the best predictor of each of these outcomes is the salience of Jewish identity which, in turn, consists of a highly articulated complex of particular knowledge, beliefs, norms, activities, and social interactions.

### 1. Impact of Jewish identification on population trends.

Occasions for absorbing and manifesting Jewish identification are continuously spread over the entire lifecycle. Overall identity reflects the accumulation of different Jewish exposures over this lifecycle. Programs should be developed that aim at strengthening the following avenues:

- Jewish awareness in parental homes;
- Formal education of children via the Jewish day-school system;
- Jewish informal education activities;
- Participation in Jewish programs through higher education;

- Experiences and contacts with Israel as the Jewish “core” country;
- In-marriage, or at least encouraging the out-married to stay within the Jewish community;
- Having children, and encouraging out-married families to raise their children within the Jewish fold.

### 2. Perceptions of and response to population trends.

Central Jewish community organizations should monitor trends in demography and Jewish identification in their respective countries.

- The topic should be attributed a central place in community discourse and strategic planning;
- Sufficient resources should be devoted to documentation and research;
- Attention should be paid to this issue in Jewish educational programs.

## Israel

In Israel, the very structure of the state allows for the articulation of Jewish policies, while preserving full and equal rights of all citizens.

### 1. Marriage and fertility.

Continuing the effort to reduce mortality and lengthen life expectancy is an obvious prerequisite of every developed society. But support of family formation and birthrates sustaining growth, or at least maintaining the population, is less taken for granted in contemporary societies. Recent

**Surveys demonstrate the continuing strength of family values among Israel's Jewish population**

**It is recommended to reconsider economic policies that can encourage families to have more children they actually desire**

survey data demonstrate the continuing strength of family and child-oriented values among

Israel's Jewish population. It is recommended to promptly reconsider economic policies that can encourage families to have the higher number of children they actually desire. Emphasis should be on the large pool of medium-size families who now have 2–3 children and would like to have 3–4, rather than on very large families. The building blocks of a potentially influential family policy should include dealing with housing costs, a taxation system sensitive to family size, educational facilities for pre-school age

children and consideration of later educational costs, and more flexibility in women's working conditions.

## **2. Migration.**

Initiation of a Jewish People project on *aliyah* should be considered, provided it relies on novel ideas, as “more of the same” will not draw large-scale immigration from the West. Such a project should focus on reducing emigration of new Jewish immigrants, assuring suitable employment and housing and enabling new forms of “partial *aliyah*” befitting globalization. Special attention should be given to persons engaged in scientific, technological and cultural activities.

## **3. Israelis abroad.**

An overall strategy is needed for Israelis living abroad, so as to enhance their ties to Israel, encourage at least part-time residence in Israel and, in particular, strengthen the connection to Israel of children of Israelis born abroad.

## **4. Non-Jewish immigration and naturalization.**

In consonance with the National Security Council and the Pines-Paz Committee, the rules should be revised so as to inhibit inflow of non-Jewish immigrants.

## **5. Law of Return and conversions.**

Prudence is recommended with proposals to amend the Law of Return, which could easily cause much more damage than benefit. Efforts should be made to adopt other means to meet demographic requirements, e.g. openness towards non-Jews coming to Israel under the Law of Return and willing to be absorbed into the Jewish People.

## **6. Territory and borders.**

As increasingly accepted globally, demographics should be seriously considered in setting the borders of Israel, either by agreement or through unilateral action. An essential step is to reach a research-based reliable estimate on the relevant numbers of Palestinians which is unbiased by ideological beliefs and wishful thinking.

All these and other aspects of a demographic policy require consideration, creative policy option development and resource allocation within a holistic perspective.

## **D. BETTER INTEGRATING THE JEWISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE**

Full adjustment of the Jewish People to the existence of a Jewish state where a majority of Jews live is a multi-generational process. However, there are fundamental differences between

living as a Jew in the Jewish State and living as a Jew in the Diaspora, and the change of generations in both Israel and the Diaspora may also undermine Israel-Diaspora integration.

In 2004 the President of Israel, Mr. Moshe Katzav, proposed the establishment of a new type of Jewish People Forum. JPPPI prepared a position paper on this very important initiative of the President,<sup>1</sup> the main recommendations of which were accepted in principle by the President, while others require further deliberation. The position paper presents the following recommendations:

- JPPPI recommends enhancing Israeli staff work on implications of Israeli decisions on the Jewish People. Within this activity, Jewish leaders, organizations and thinkers should be consulted more often, on an informal basis, as appropriate.
- A “Forum of the Heads of Organizations of the Jewish People”, should be established. It should be compact so as to ensure efficiency of its operation. There should be no more than one or two leaders participating from each of the main organizations. Working groups, including other participants, can be set up alongside as decided. This forum should meet at least twice a year to discuss shared problems, exchange information and opinions, and to seek avenues for better coordination.
- JPPPI recommends utilizing the Government of Israel-Jewish Agency Coordinating Committee, based on its statutory standing,

for consultations between Jewish Diaspora leaders with the Government of Israel. To do so, it is recommended to enlarge the Coordinating Committee and to include within it the Forum of Heads of Organizations of the Jewish People.

- JPPPI recommends organizing a first global Jewish People Conference devoted to strengthening inter-generational continuity. It should be carefully prepared to assure in-depth high-quality discourse, within the plenum and working groups alike. The President of Israel together with the heads of global Jewish People organizations will sponsor this activity. Following the first conference, and after consultation and an affirmative decision to do so, additional conferences should be held, with participants adjusted in part according to the subjects of the agenda. Working groups should be set up for continuous discourse between conferences. A presidium and small staff should take charge of convening and preparing the conferences.
- JPPPI regards the initiative to set up a global Jewish People Organization as very significant. However, JPPPI recommends not establishing at present a new organization, which could complicate the present organizational map in counterproductive ways. Also, consensus essential for establishing such an organization is lacking. Therefore, JPPPI recommends moving ahead with other options and exploring, after experience is attained through annual conferences, possibilities to move towards additional, more structured forms of global Jewish People forums/organi-

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<sup>1</sup> *Jewish People Global Forum*, March 2005, available on [www.jpppi.org.il](http://www.jpppi.org.il)

zations to meet unfulfilled needs. Premature action, however, should be avoided.

- There should be a move towards the setting-up of a Global Forum of Young Jewish Activists (up to 35 years old).
  - (a) The idea of setting up a Global Jewish Young Activist Forum should be viewed positively in principle. It should be studied urgently, elaborated, evaluated and prepared for implementation, in close cooperation with existing Jewish youth forums and grassroots leaders.
  - (b) The age composition of the governing bodies of main Jewish organizations should be studied and efforts made to assure that a representation of at least twenty-five to thirty-five percent of members be below the age of thirty-five.

## E. POLAND AS POSING A PARADIGMATIC POLICY DILEMMA

The chapter on Poland poses paradigmatically an important moral dilemma of future-shaping significance: whether to support and maintain communities which hold great Jewish historical assets and heritage, but may serve more as “living museums” and serve — as Emil Fackenheim puts it — “not to let Hitler win”,

**“do not let  
Hitler win”**

but have little chance to function as flourishing Jewish communities, or whether to facilitate their migration to other Jewish centers. The main Jewish organizations should explicitly consider this dilemma and make a strategic choice.

## F. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2004–2005 ASSESSMENT REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ACTION

The following four policy directives based on the full version of the 2004–2005 Assessment are born out by developments during 2005 and require urgent action:

### 1. Leadership Development

The future of the Jewish People, including Israel, depends to a great extent on a relatively small number of leaders, creators, scholars, inventors and entrepreneurs, who form the “guidance cluster,” constitute the “culture makers” and are the “high elite.” This type of leadership is especially pronounced in the Jewish People, with its emphasis on “teachers” and sages who form and dissipate the spiritual and civilizational core of Judaism.

Facilitating and developing high quality leadership is therefore a critical strategic agenda item. Weaknesses in contemporary Jewish People leadership, as pointed out in the Report, make this all the more important, as are acute problems of aging of the present leadership and difficulties in transferring responsibility to a younger generation. Also missing are efforts to develop an overall Jewish people leadership.

- Relevant policy directions include broadening and extending programs geared at developing Jewish people leadership, both on community and overall Jewish people levels. Thus:
  - (a) A “Jewish People Leadership Academy” should be established, preferably in Jerusalem, to provide discourse and

learning opportunities for leaders (of 1–6 weeks duration), on the model of “Aspen” and executive training programs;

- (b) An open network for shared learning of lay and professional leaders should be established, fully utilizing the potential of cyberspace;
- (c) Preparation and diffusion of strategy papers, books and studies on main Jewish people issues should be initiated and supported.
- Special efforts are needed to help the development of spiritual and religious leadership, e.g. new types of training for rabbis both in Israel and the Diaspora, with a solid basis in contemporary thinking and relevant general disciplines.
- Focused action is required to speed up a generational change in the Jewish People leadership so as to assure continuity combined with adjustments to rapidly changing situations. Recommended are: Special programs for young leaders and leadership candidates in the Jewish People Leadership Academy proposed above; and targeted interdisciplinary graduate university programs in Jewish studies, social sciences, public policy and leadership.

## 2. Supporting Governmental Multicultural Policies

Comparative findings strongly indicate that governmental policies facilitating multiculturalism are beneficial to the Jewish People. Therefore, such policies should be supported. This is a clear example of the need to reevaluate policy orthodoxies that, while helpful in the past, are

increasingly counter-productive in the present and possibly in the future. Such changes are necessary for thriving under changing conditions.

To sum up main salient policy directions:

- Policies should aim at making Jewish education and community activities accessible to all. This requires government financial support of such activities.
- Beyond financing, governmental multicultural policies may often be very helpful for long term Jewish thriving.
- Clinging to a strict separation of state and religion and resisting governmental support of religious activities, justified in the past, should be reconsidered. The present question is what will be most conducive to a thriving future of the Jewish People, as distinct from what was justified in the past.

## 3. Crafting Geopolitical Grand Strategies

The establishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land has put the Jewish People back in the realm of global geopolitics. The lasting, and at times bloody conflict in which Israel is embroiled, and its intensifying linkages with global, indeed civilizational conflicts, add to the intense involvement of Israel, and with it the Jewish People, in global geopolitics, particularly in terms of relations with Islam. The dangers of violent antisemitism as a new “war against the Jews” and of mega-terror with weapons of mass destruction, the confrontations against some United Nations

***The Jewish State has put the Jewish People back in the realm of global geopolitics***

agencies and global judicial bodies, the changing global power maps — these illustrate a few of the aspects of geopolitics that make it so important for Israel and the Jewish People, much more so than in the case of other small-sized nations.

At present, the Jewish People has a Jewish state with much hard power and a Jewish community in the US with a lot of political influence and other forms of soft power. This unprecedented power in Jewish hands opens the way for long-range and comprehensive Jewish people grand-strategies, correlated but different from Israeli grand-strategies.

Main directions for such grand-strategies include the following:

- The fact that Israel depends on Western support, but in the long run will need an accommodation with Islam, should be recognized as a critical issue requiring a Jewish grand-strategy with respect to Islam and Islamic actors, plus renewed 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 in countries becoming major global actors, particularly super-powers without Biblical traditions such as China, and new global actors such as the European Union.
- Coping with antisemitism demands a holistic, long-term, differentiated and multi-dimensional strategy.
- The “image policy” of the Jewish People as a whole and of Israel in particular needs radical reconfiguration. More emphasis should be placed on:

- (a) Presenting and explaining values and the survival needs of the Jewish People within historic perspectives;
- (b) Highlighting the uniqueness of the situations faced by Israel and the Jewish People; and
- (c) Stressing their linkages with the long-term challenges facing Western civilization.

- The Jewish people should adopt a high moral ground and disseminate prophetic values in their global actions, in conjunction with *Tikkun Olam* (Mending the World). At the same time, realpolitik requirements must be satisfied in order to ensure survival and thriving.
- Due to the likelihood of continuous global instability and violent turmoil in the Middle East, consolidation and reinforcement of the “hard,” the political and the “soft” power of the Jewish People is essential.

#### 4. Full Utilization of Cyberspace

The rapid development of cyberspace provides tremendous opportunities well suited to the global nature of the Jewish People. It provides a major instrument for intensifying and deepening Jewish people cohesion and interaction, radically upgrading and expanding Jewish education, facilitating in-marriage, and much more. Significant efforts are being made to utilize cyberspace in Jewish People endeavors, but imaginative ideas and large-scale innovations are in their infancy.

It is therefore recommended to initiate a project for the Jewish People aimed to achieve a quantum leap in the utilization of cyberspace for Jewish networking, education and cohesion.

## The Year 2004-5 in Review

### A. THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

#### Geopolitical

Elections in Iraq failed to reduce the level of the conflict, although the related anti-Jewish and anti-American rhetoric have somewhat subsided. The strong American military presence in Iraq, and pressure on Syria and other terror-supporting states, contributed to easing tensions to some extent on Israel's eastern front. On the other hand, nuclear efforts in Iran were a destabilizing factor and led to speculation over a possible Israeli strike on Iran, which was denied by Israel's Prime Minister.

Extremist Moslem activities continued in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, posing a threat to the current regimes.

The reelection of George W. Bush and the appointment of Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State were seen as ensuring continued US support for Israel, particularly regarding the disengagement plan and the Road Map. At the same time, the US administration criticized Israel's settlement policy, especially the expansion of Ma'ale Adumim towards Jerusalem. The death of Arafat and the election of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) brought hope for the revival

of the peace process, a reduction in Palestinian terror and an increased sense of security within Israel, corroborated by the building of the security fence.

Whilst the visit of Russian President Putin to Israel was meant to strengthen ties with Israel and emphasize Russia's more active role as a member of the "quartet," Israel raised its concerns regarding Russian arm sales to Syria at such a delicate time. To win Israeli confidence, Putin promised that as long as he was president, Russia would do nothing to harm Israel.

Since his re-election, George Bush stressed the need for democratization in general, and to fight terrorism in the Middle East in particular. He has quoted Natan Sharansky and his recent book as the basis for his policy's perspective.

The wave of international terrorism did not abate, nor were fears allayed on the issue. The massacre of 350 Children at a school in Beslan, Russia, shook the world in September 2004. In Israel-related terror, 32 people were killed, including 12 Israelis, after a terrorist attack in Sinai at the Taba Hilton hotel and the Ras-a - Satan resort a month later.

The decision of the International Court of Justice at The Hague against Israel on the issue of the security fence did not lead to sanc-

tions against Israel, as suggested by the Court. Nevertheless, this decision was part of a movement of continuing hostility against Israel in UN-related institutions and international NGOs.

The Asia Tsunami was one of the world's largest natural disasters since World War II, killing 250–350 thousand people. Jewish individuals and organizations around the world sent support, aid and finances. However, there was no organized response of the Jewish people.

Around the world rising oil prices brought the Middle East and its crises into sharper public focus which could have repercussions for both the Israeli economy and Jewish entrepreneurs. Rising oil prices also provided additional reasons for governments to pay renewed attention to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

### Antisemitism

The year 2004 was marked by a continued rise in antisemitic incidents, as indicated by 282 violent incidents reported in 2004 compared to 234 in the previous year. Many of the attacks were carried out by Arabs and Muslims, while only a few were carried out by extreme right-wingers, as reported by the Global Forum Against Antisemitism. A significant increase took place in Britain with 77 violent incidents in 2004 compared with 55 in 2003. Also of concern was antisemitism in Russia and Ukraine, with a sharp rise from 35 violent incidents to 110 in 2004. In France, however, the number of incidents seemed to have leveled off, though they have not declined, possibly due to strong pro-active measures taken by the French govern-

ment. Rises in incidents were also recorded in Sweden and the Czech Republic.

The Tel Aviv University Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism reported that “virulent anti-Israel propaganda and anti-Americanism accompanied by antisemitic motifs continue to be the main factors inciting anti-Jewish violence”. Even in the US where antisemitism was at much lower levels, the number of recorded incidents rose in 2004 by 17%, although an ADL poll showed a decrease in antisemitic sentiments.

In Europe, the European Commission expressed willingness to explore the banning of Nazi insignia. The idea was dropped due to concerns over limiting freedom of expression.

### Jewish Imagery and Memory

On January 27, 2005, world leaders joined elderly Shoah survivors at the site of the main death factory to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp Auschwitz. Many heads of state attended and placed candles on the memorial site, including Israel's President Katzav, Russia's President Putin and France's President Chirac.

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps was commemorated at the UN General Assembly's 28<sup>th</sup> special session. It was the first time ever that the Israeli national anthem was played at the UN, with the UN Secretary General saying that the institution was created as a direct response to the Shoah.

### Religions

The death of John Paul II in April 2005 attracted

speculation on whether the successor of “the Pope of the Jews” will follow a similar line. During his papacy, John Paul II developed an impressive array of initiatives toward the Jewish world. Among the main landmarks were his visits to the Auschwitz extermination camp in 1979, the main Synagogue in Rome in 1986, and Israel in 2000, pursuing forgiveness at the Yad Vashem memorial and placing a message at the Western Wall addressed “to all sons of Abraham.” Many of the Pope’s actions had strong reverberations: his definition of the Jews as “elder brothers,” the establishment of diplomatic relations with the State of Israel in 1994, the speech in 1997 on the failure of Christians during the Shoah, and the mentioning of “the Rabbi of Rome” (Rabbi Elio Toaff) in his testament.

Beyond the many media impressions and images, to understand this outstanding Pope calls for careful reading of the deeper meaning in the messages he wrote and decisions he made. John Paul II displayed exceptional interest in Judaism and unique warmth toward Jews. However, he was extremely cautious not to undertake revolutionary steps concerning deep-felt Catholic theological doctrines toward Jews and Judaism:

- The papal document “We remember” stated that the roots of antisemitism and the Shoah were outside the Church, thus ignoring the Church’s history of anti-Jewish persecution. At Yad Vashem, John Paul II said that the Church was profoundly “saddened” by the results of antisemitism, which he attributed to a Godless ideology.
- The Holy See recognized Israel only after the 1991 Madrid Conference and the unfolding of the Oslo peace process.

- Election to the papacy of the Prefect of the Doctrine of Catholic Faith, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, as Benedict XVI, suggested a continuing conservative stance of the Catholic Church toward the challenges of modernity.

The Presbyterian Church in the US passed a resolution calling for divestment from companies doing business with Israel. This was the first time a church organization acted in such manner. A number of Protestant churches were also considering sanctions against Israel. The Episcopal Church voted to consider corporate sanctions in November 2004. In April 2005, the board of the United Methodist Church voted to conduct a study to consider divestment, and the United Church of Christ planned to debate such a move in July 2005. The divestment move was not confined to America. The Geneva-based World Council of Churches passed a resolution on February 2005 encouraging churches to follow the initiative.

As a Jewish reaction to the divestment trend, a strong letter was sent out in April to the Protestant churches by mainstream Jewish defense groups, and the three main Jewish religious streams threatened to abandon interfaith dialogue.

## Science and Technology

In the sciences of life, the sequencing of genomes continued to improve the ability to track evolution and look for causes of disease. These advances could hold importance for large sections of the Jewish population susceptible to genetically influenced diseases. Genomics could

also contribute to a better understanding of the history of Jewish migrations and conversions.

Biodefense research increased in the United States, while the inability to eradicate Asian bird flu reinforced fears of major pandemics resulting in millions of casualties. Bio terrorism and infectious disease pandemics would mostly affect large urban population centers, where 90–95% of world Jewry lives.

Technion scientists Avraham Hershko and Aharon Ciechanover were the first Israelis living in Israel to win the Nobel Prize (in Chemistry) for their discovery of how the human body marks faulty proteins for destruction in order to defend itself from illnesses such as cancer.

## Culture

The declining image of Israel and its demonization filtered into the world of culture and arts in particular. Exhibitions held recently in Australia, Switzerland, Sweden and elsewhere presented Israel and Israelis in a stark and unfavorable manner. On the other hand, Shoah memorials, exhibitions and art abounded and tended to become an essential part of the Western cultural narrative. Objective interest in Jews, Judaism, Jewish history and culture kept growing in the West and other parts of the world.

## B. THE INTERNAL JEWISH SCENE

### Demography

During 2004, Jewish demographic trends continued the well-established patterns of recent years, namely virtually zero population growth (+0.3 percent) and a gradual increase of Israel's

share in the total of World Jewry (40.2 percent at the beginning of 2005). Israel's Jewish population grew to 5,235,000 (an annual increase of 1.3 percent), to which may be added 290,000 non-Jewish members of Jewish immigrant households for an *enlarged* total of 5,525,000. The aggregate of the Jewish Diaspora population at the beginning of 2005 was estimated at 7,798,000 (an annual decrease of 0.3 percent). While this figure refers to the *core* Jewish population, the *enlarged* figure inclusive of non-Jewish household members would be several millions larger.

In the US, along with a *core* Jewish population in the range of 5,250,000–5,300,000, non-Jewish close relatives amounted to another 3.5 million at least. In the FSU, where the declining total *core* Jewish population was estimated at 380,000, the *enlarged* figure of all household members was twice as high and the total number of persons eligible for the Law of Return, inclusive of the third generation and collaterals, tended to be three times as high. *Core* Jewish populations were estimated at 1.1–1.2 million in the EU and other non-FSU European countries, 400,000 in Latin America, and 210,000 in Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

Of the total Diaspora Jewish population, 6,809,000 (87%) reside in countries with a standard of living (as measured through the United Nations' Human Development Index — HDI) higher than Israel's.

### Israel-diaspora Relations

The positive changes following the death of Arafat, the election of Abu Mazen, the disengagement plan and the decrease in Palestinian

terrorist acts together resulted in lessened Jewish criticism of Israel and increased solidarity. Jewish tourism to Israel grew, particularly due to the improved security situation.

Participants in both short term and long term programs to Israel also were at their highest levels. Since its inception and till the end of 2004, some 85,000 young Jews participated in “Birthright” programs. The *MASA* (“Journey”) project was approved which aims to bring 20,000 young Jews yearly for a semester to a year of studying and volunteering in Israel. *MASA* is a joint project of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Government of Israel, United Jewish Communities and Keren Hayesod.

*Aliyah* to Israel fell to 20,900 in 2004 and was 10 percent less than in 2003. Of these, over 10,000 came from the FSU, 3,800 from Ethiopia (mostly from the Falashmura group that must undergo a formal conversion procedure), 2,100 from North America, 2,000 from France, 1,200 from other European countries, and 1,200 from Latin America. Israel was unable to attract large scale Jewish migration from the major developed countries.

Despite concerns over antisemitism, *aliyah* from France recorded only a moderate 12% increase versus 2003.

Two out of every three FSU Jews and eligible relatives immigrated to Germany rather than to Israel. The division of FSU migrants between Germany and Israel could be altered in the future due to the change in regulations of the German Federal government’s aid to immigrants.

The government of Israel decided to bring the remaining 20,000 Falashmura from Ethiopia to Israel by the end of 2007.

The President of Israel, Moshe Katzav,

pushed forward his initiative to set up a “Second House” representing leaders and thinkers from both the Diaspora and Israel. The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute released a policy paper in March 2005 on the establishment of a Jewish People Forum. (See below, Section 4 of this Report).

The issue of reparations to Jewish Shoah survivors and their descendants continued to hold prominence on the public agenda, especially in relation to Swiss Banks’ assets. In the US, New York District Judge Edward R. Korman actively pursued the identification of account owners and their heirs. He dealt with the issue of funds unclaimed by their owners, decided to allocate available funds to the neediest survivors and, based on evidence provided by Jewish institutions, suggested a key for distribution. Despite attempts to coordinate efforts through the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO), the major world Jewish organizations were unable to submit to the Court an agreed concept for resource allocation.

## Institutional Setting

Both the United Jewish Communities (UJC) in the United States and the Jewish Agency underwent significant changes in their staff at a time when the largest philanthropists preferred to set up their own foundations, some giving to largely secular and non-Jewish causes, and others choosing to donate to specific Jewish causes rather than the general appeals such as UJC Federations and Keren Hayesod.

Two significant Jewish leaders with prominent Israel-Diaspora involvement resigned: Natan Sharansky as Minister for Jerusalem and

Diaspora Affairs, and Sallai Meridor as Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency.

Work on reorganization of the World Jewish Congress continued following a report by Professor Yoram Dinstein.

In Europe, the European Council for Jewish Communities held its General Assembly in Budapest in May 2004. A new leadership was elected and the headquarters of the organization moved to London. The strengthened organization is expected to provide more effective leadership for the communities of Europe.

## Religion

About 120,000 Jews around the globe — in New York, London and 19 other major cities — celebrated the 11<sup>th</sup> completion of the cycle of the Talmud — *daf yomi* — a ritual of studying one page of the Talmud every day.

## C. NORTH AMERICA

### United States

Tensions in the US ran high in 2004, particularly due to the War in Iraq and the presidential election, and were mirrored in the Jewish community. Among Jews, 66% opposed the war in Iraq, compared to 56% in the broader US. Yet the growing neo-conservative segment of the community, as well as many of the staunchly pro-Israel, supported the war as part of the larger war against terror. However, even amongst the latter group, support was dwindling due to the lack of a disengagement plan from Iraq.

Campaigns and the subsequent elections of 2004 highlighted these tensions even further,

while also underscoring the acceptance of Jews in the US. In the presidential election, Jews overall remained loyal to the traditional liberal position, with 76% favoring Democratic candidate Senator John Kerry. However, there was a significant voting difference amongst denominations: 69% of Orthodox Jewish voters preferred Bush, compared with 23% of Conservative and 15% of Reform Jewish voters. Such divisions raised concerns that US Jews were aligning along religious, political, age and gender fault lines, building into a potential *kulturkampf* environment.

The rift between pro-Israel activists and the Orthodox on one side and the traditionally more liberal majority of the community was deeper than ever. This rift spilled over to the local operations of Jewish communities with partisans of both sides believing that the “community’s leaders” were too Republican or Democratic.

The US Jewish community was also bound to examine its new positioning in an increasingly religious America, as well as the implications of growing conservatism within the community. The combination of growing assimilation amongst the traditionally liberal, demographic growth amongst the often Republican leaning Orthodox, and the growth of conservatism amongst young Jews, could indicate a long-term shift from the traditional liberalism of the Jewish community.

All major candidates of the Democratic Party during the presidential campaign of 2004 were identified as having some Jewish familial connection, and candidates used this to increase support and lure the Jewish vote. The 2004 elections sent to Congress 11 Jewish Senators and 26 Jewish Congressmen/women. These developments, the

result of long-term processes, probably heightened the sense of comfort by American Jews, and contributed further to assimilationist trends currently underway. But they also presented an opportunity to encourage strong Jewish connectedness within a strong American identity in the current US culture of hyphenated identities.

The campaign highlighted further the impact of key minority groups in major electoral states as well as population shifts that could potentially weigh on Jewish political influence. Immediately following the presidential election, the American Jewish Congress hosted a forum in January 2005 entitled “The 2004 Election: A New Path for Latinos and Jews,” discussing present and future implications for the collaborative agenda between the two groups. The Arab community, traditionally at odds with Jewish interests particularly due to clashing perspectives on the Middle East, also grew in political organization and activism, moving slowly from the periphery to a more central political stage. But the number of Americans of Arab origin was relatively small — 1.2 million according to a recent assessment. The Asian community’s voter activism increased, the Asians voting 22% more than in the 2000 elections. With most American Jews seeing the Asian community as the least antisemitic amongst most major groups in US, and in view of the growing soft power of Asians in the US, the Asian community could be a potential serious coalition partner in the future.

Numerous events were disconcerting to the community, motivating examination, possible reorganization, and a potential indication of a backlash of Jewish acceptance in the midst of America’s own examination of self-identity. AIPAC, an organization not identifying itself as

a Jewish organization but rather as pro-Israel, came under investigation for transferring confidential material between a State Department official and the Israeli government. In May 2005 Pentagon analyst Larry Franklin was arrested and charged with passing classified military information to unauthorized persons. In this context, two senior AIPAC officials were suspended in an effort of the organization to distance itself from the allegations.

Although AIPAC and many Jewish organizational heads dismissed the allegations, overall these events might also reflect an attempt — from some circles in the Administration — to reduce Jewish influence in the US, and raised feelings of discomfort regarding contact of Jewish organizations with Israelis, especially in the security environment.

Antisemitism was evident in its traditional and anti-Israel form, and perception of antisemitism amongst Jews remained high — 94% of American Jews felt antisemitism was either very serious or a serious problem in the United States, 90% felt the same about antisemitism on college campuses, and 41% believed that antisemitism will increase in the next several years. The ADL revealed that one in every three Americans believed American Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the US.

The release of the Mel Gibson movie “The Passion of the Christ,” depicting Jews killing Jesus, raised concern for increased traditional antisemitism. Instead, the movie motivated a host of Christian-Jewish dialogue as well as greater interest amongst believers.

Anti-Israel sentiment and propaganda continued on college campuses. In reaction to anti-Israel activism, Jewish students with the

potential for leadership became increasingly vocal and organized.

## Canada

In Canada, the election in June 2004 gave a victory to the Liberal party, yet created a minority government for the first time in 20 years. This situation gave special interests a louder voice. With both the Jewish and Muslim communities traditionally situated in the Liberal party, they became competing voices vying for attention by the minority government. Jews were appointed to several key positions in the government, including Irwin Cotler as Minister of Justice, and Rosalée Abella to the Canadian Supreme Court.

The 2003 creation of the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA) aimed to make it a more effective lobbying body with significant financial backing behind it. However, tensions between CIJA, in conjunction with UIA-Federations Canada, and Bnei Brith — the two major Jewish umbrella organizations — risked presenting a divided front to policy makers and broader Canada.

Tensions in the bilateral relationship with the US impacted the Jewish community and magnified the interrelationship between various Jewish communities in the Diaspora and Israel, and the need for a broad, inclusive global perspective when creating or relating to policy.

Internally, a setback over school funding in Quebec re-ignited anti-private school sentiment, and raised anew the question of government funding to religious/ethnic schools. Interestingly, the Muslim community, which also received funding, supported the Jewish position, opening

up room for potential coalition building on this matter. Pressure from global terrorism put Canada's policy of a multicultural society, currently a barrier slowing Jewish assimilation, into question.

## D. LATIN AMERICA

The recent election of Ramón Tabaré Vázquez as the President of Uruguay underlined the political inclination of the Latin American continent towards the left. With Vázquez's election, nearly 85% of Latin American Jews (including the communities of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Venezuela) came to live under leftist or socialist governments.

Latin American countries improved relations with the Arab world, China and Korea, in spite of the problematic effects Asian exports might bear for Latin American industry. Whereas Arab leaders invested efforts in boosting these relations, such efforts were scarce on the part of Israel, and indeed concerns were raised about Israel's missed opportunities in Latin America.

Brazil's President Ignacio Lula da Silva aspired to gain a seat in the Security Council of the UN through courting the Arab vote, and to build a South-South (Africa, Asia, South America) cooperation challenging the dominance of the North (North America-Europe).

At the Arab-Latin summit in Brazil in May 2005, the leaders of 12 South American and 22 Arab nations approved a "Declaration of Brasilia". The declaration denounced US economic sanctions against Syria; demanded that Israel disband settlements and retreat to its borders before the 1967 war, and rejected terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations."

Jewish communities in Latin America participated in the fight against poverty. The Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) together with the Inter American Development Bank and the Latin American Jewish Congress sponsored an International Conference on civil society and the fight to reduce poverty.

The fight against antisemitism saw positive signs in Mexico after the Mexican Senate approved the Federal Law to prevent and eliminate discrimination. The law recognized antisemitism as discriminatory conduct. Regrettably, tireless efforts of the Jewish community of Chile did not achieve similar results.

In December 2004, Argentina's President Néstor Carlos Kirchner lit the first Chanukah candle at AMIA. At this unprecedented event, the Jewish community evoked and honored the almost 1900 Jewish *desaparecidos* (those who "disappeared") of the military repression of the 1970s.

The terrorist attack in which the AMIA building was destroyed in 1994 continued to represent a central influencing factor in shaping Argentinean Jewish identity. The community commemorated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the terrorist attack. Acquittal of all 22 detainees charged in the attack brought the Jewish community, once again, to gather in the streets to express their discontent with the decision. The Kirchner's government denounced the previous governments for destruction of evidence and obstruction of justice, and recognized that Argentina did not do enough to prevent the terrorist attack.

A survey of the Jewish Community in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires conducted by the American Jewish Joint Distribution

Committee (JDC) estimated that there are 312,000 individuals living in Jewish households, among them 244,000 of Jewish origin. Of these, only 161,000 identified themselves as Jews or half Jews. The survey pointed to high levels of out-marriage.

On the other hand, the appeal of Jewish traditionalism was on the rise, too, as Chabad and other Haredi organizations expanded their activities. One example was the "Keter Torah" Yeshiva projected to become the largest Jewish school in Mexico.

Latin American *aliyah* in 2004 sank to its lowest levels since 1998, with a total of only 1,238 new *olim*. The reduction of about 65% in the number of immigrants from Argentina was explained by the cancellation of special assistance offered by the Jewish Agency, as well as by the stabilization of the Argentinean economy.

## E. EUROPE

### The European Union

In June 2004, EU leaders approved the Treaty for establishing a Constitution for Europe. During the preparatory efforts, an animated debate developed over the definition of the spiritual roots of European civilization, and the role of religion in particular. The suggestion of Christian roots to European culture and society was eventually abandoned. Thus, a more generic reference to Europe's religious and secular origins appears in the constitution's final text.

Although nine countries have ratified the constitution, on May 29, 2005 the French people rejected the European Constitution with a substantial majority (55%) and an unusually low

rate of abstentions (30%). This was immediately followed by a 62%-38% negative vote in the Netherlands. The United Kingdom government announced that it would not conduct the referendum planned for 2006. While Germany and other countries affirmed their intention to continue with the ratification process, the negative vote on the constitution raised serious questions as to the future and direction of European integration.

Previously, in addition to the election of a new Parliament and the appointment of a new European Commission, the year had been marked by three other major events:

- On May 1, 2004 ten new states joined the EU, which now comprises 25 member states and a total of 456 million citizens;
- In July 2004 the Council established the European Defense Agency, designed to improve the EU's defense capabilities, and hinting at a more assertive European role in future international affairs, which could turn out to be have been a bit premature in view of the French referendum;
- In December 2004 the EU-Israel Association Council endorsed the EU-Israel Action Plan within the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). The objective of the Policy was to share the EU's stability, security and prosperity with neighboring countries, among them Israel, in a manner distinctly different from EU membership. The Action Plan was a political document tailored to Israel's economic and political situation, which outlined the strategic objectives of cooperation between Israel and the EU until the end of 2007. The Action Plan

stipulated that the parties will focus on fighting antisemitism. For the first time, the parties agreed to focus on actions to protect two historic languages of European Jewish communities, Yiddish and Ladino.

In February 2004 the European Commission, together with the European Jewish Congress and the Congress of European Rabbis, held for the first time ever a seminar on antisemitism in the EU. Romano Prodi, then President of the European Commission, proposed an action plan aiming at strengthening existing EU legislation making antisemitism and denial of the *Shoah* criminal offences across the EU.

In March 2004 the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) published the most comprehensive report ever on antisemitism in Europe. Titled "*Manifestations of Antisemitism in the EU 2002–2003*," the report not only detailed manifestations of antisemitism in the EU over a two-year period, but outlined recommendations to counter it. The report showed that the largest group of perpetrators of anti-semitic activities comprised young, disaffected, white Europeans. However, such activities also stemmed from the extremist fringe of a rapidly growing Muslim minority.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, in cooperation with the EU, held two conferences on antisemitism, racism, xenophobia and discrimination. Held in Berlin (April 2004) and Brussels (September 2004), the meetings condemned the increase in biased incidents and urged authorities to investigate acts of violence.

Of all these events, the rejection of the

European Constitution could turn out to have the most far-reaching consequences. What Europe's ruling political elites, most intellectuals and quality papers had praised as the indispensable and best legal-political foundation of the new supra-national Europe, could be killed by the will of the people. Only time will tell whether this was the beginning of the end of an epoch, as many commentators concluded immediately after the rejections, or a temporary delay in an irreversible process of unification.

For the Jews of Europe, who as a group, began to interact with the European institutions only recently, as reluctant late-comers and prodded by American Jewish organizations, few changes were expected. The fight against antisemitism that European institutions committed themselves to pursue is likely to go on and in any event, could be pursued with equal if not greater vigor at national levels. For Israel, the consequences could be complex and mixed. Much will depend on whether Israel and the Jewish people can grasp the new opportunities that might be opening up. The reasons for the rejections were shared by public opinion in many member countries. They comprised fear of globalization, opposition to the entry of new members, particularly Turkey, and a pervasive popular distaste of the perceived undemocratic, elitist and centralizing nature of the European decision-making processes.

At the political level, the consequences could be quite positive. For a time at least, European foreign policy might become more subdued, which could mean relief from the traditional pressure on and admonition of Israel, and reduction in the pressure on the US to become more "even-handed" in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

If the rejections were to lead to a democratization of European decision-making, there could be a new chance for Israel and the Jewish people to reach out to European public opinion.

## France

In France, antisemitic aggressions of all kinds continued in the years 2004–2005. The annual report of the National Consultative Committee of Human Rights (March 2005) estimated that racist and antisemitic acts reached exceptional and disturbing levels in 2004, although the number of incidents leveled off recently. The commissioners estimated that this was no longer a temporary phenomenon, related to the Middle East conflict, but rather a well-established element bound to stay in the longer term.

Contrary to the past, the French government adopted more active policies against antisemitic acts.

Two reservations need to be mentioned:

- In spite of very clear, even stringent laws regarding such acts, the judicial system encountered difficulties in prosecuting and punishing the aggressors or those who expressed antisemitic opinions;
- Moreover, anti-Jewish aggressions practically ceased to receive any media coverage since the scandal of the simulation of antisemitic aggression in the subway on July 9, 2004 by a psychologically disturbed, non-Jewish woman.

The declaration (July 7, 2004) by the President of the Republic summed up the government policy of solemn condemnation of antisemitism. President Chirac made a significant connection

between this condemnation and the Shoah, Islamophobia, as well as any form of racism.

A few days later, on July 18, considerable objections erupted following the appeal to *aliyah* launched from Jerusalem by Israel's Prime Minister to French Jews as victims of antisemitism. The high-profile public reaction that resulted represented, from two points of view, a significant event. First, it highlighted the extent to which the issue of antisemitism was perceived by the French government elite as a problem and raised questions regarding its entire policy. It stressed the extent to which this largely internal issue was intimately related to Middle East affairs and the tensions between France and the US. Second; it undermined the unity and stature of Jewish community institutions. Indeed, for the first time representatives of Jewish community institutions publicly criticized Israel.

According to a poll reported in the *Tribune Juive* (15.11.04), 60 % of French citizens thought that France's Arab policy constituted an effective response to the impact of immigration on France. Among events that underscored this

pattern was the hospitalization of Yasser Arafat in a French military hospital and the military honors given to his coffin, in the presence of the Prime Minister.

The Jewish institutions found themselves in the awkward position of being asked by the government to defend France's efforts in the fight against antisemitism, both on the scene of world Jewry and also in

France itself. Patently not all French Jews were in support of this line.

**60% of antisemitic incidents in the UK were instigated by Moslems**

## United Kingdom

Continued demographic decline and aging of the community remained the main issues affecting UK Jewry. Whilst the 2001 census results suggested a population of about 300,000 Jews, a figure higher than previously estimated, low natural growth, late marriages, out-marriage and emigration continued to affect decline.

Of particular concern was the rise in anti-semitism in Britain. Whereas in other European countries the number of antisemitic incidents fell somewhat since the peaks of 2002 and 2003, in the UK it rose dramatically by 42%, from 375 in 2003 to 532 in 2004. Violent incidents against individuals increased by 54%, but violence against institutions decreased, probably due to improved security. The Community Security Trust (CST) noted that Moslems instigated 60% of incidents and radical right-wingers caused the other 40%.

At the same time, a number of well-publicized incidents occurred, which taken one by one were not significant but together indicate a worrying pattern:

- Prince Harry came to a fancy dress party in Nazi uniform. He was pressured to apologize.
- London Mayor Ken Livingstone accused a Jewish journalist of behaving like a concentration camp guard, and later called Ariel Sharon "a war criminal."
- Labour Party chiefs used a "flying pigs" metaphor to describe Jewish opposition leader Michael Howard and the Jewish shadow chancellor Oliver Letwin. They also published caricatures of Howard as Shylock.

Later, they admitted their behavior was “insensitive” and apologized.

- The “Daily Telegraph” published a poll indicating that the British public considers Israel one of the least attractive countries in the world.

All the above were followed by strong public criticism and declarations of support for Jews and Israel by Tony Blair and others, with the notable exception of the Mayor of London. Blair as the guest of honor at the annual Community Security Trust dinner made a strong condemnation of antisemitism and demonstrated warm support for the Jewish community.

Anti-Israel actions became common especially in the British academic establishment. The Association of University Teachers (AUT) declared a boycott of Israeli academics and of two Israeli universities. However, such boycott calls, repeated in spring 2005, also triggered vigorous counter-protests by Jewish as well as non-Jewish scientists and even a Times editorial condemning the act. The boycott was subsequently repealed after the decision was overturned by a two-thirds majority of AUT members.

Other acute anti-Israeli manifestations included:

- The resignation of two prominent Jewish members of the Executive of the National Union of Students due to the NUS’ overt and unilateral anti-Israel actions and the distribution of antisemitic leaflets at the annual conference;
- A conference at the School of Oriental and African Studies entitled “Resisting Israeli apartheid”;

- The election of Mordechai Vanunu, convicted and imprisoned for crimes against Israel’s security, as Rector of Glasgow University.

Some commentators believed these were a collection of unrelated coincidental events, but others were concerned about what they saw as a growing pattern of prejudice and racism. They asserted that the very existence of such cases demonstrates that antisemitic and anti-Israel sentiments have now become structural in some places rather than transient.

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz was widely reported in the media with the biggest ever assembly of Shoah survivors and attended by the Queen, and the organization of special programs in the schools.

The growth of Jewish day school education continued with high enrolment levels of over 60% of school age children as demand outstripped supply in the Greater London area. At the same time, provincial schools suffered from a decline in demand and thus were taking in more non-Jewish children.

## Germany

Germany continued to host one of the fastest growing Jewish communities. Jewish immigrants to Germany are attracted by the country’s favorable policies. However, the decision of the government to change the rules of immigration and eligibility for all immigrants could affect the future pace of migration of Jews.

Around the time of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, the national Shoah Memorial opened on May 10, 2005 in Berlin after decades of dispute and delay,

and is Germany's first monument dedicated to all the Jews murdered across Nazi-occupied Europe. The memorial is a project of the government and German non-Jews designed to show the world and the German people that the atrocious crimes shall forever be represented in the heart of the city so that they are never forgotten.

## F. THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

The major changes that occurred following the fall of the Iron Curtain continued to affect the post-Soviet scene fifteen years later. The Russian Republic was at the forefront of the radical changes at the end of the 1980s, and serves today as a regional anchor striving to preserve its hegemony over the other republics with mixed results.

General trends and events often overlapped within the Jewish communal organizations, their leadership, and Jewish politics. The FEOR organization, closely related to the Chabad movement, tried to position itself as an umbrella Jewish organization for Jews in the whole of the FSU, based on its solid standing in Russia. Organizations in other FSU countries not aligned with Chabad aspired to strengthen their own status, such as the Eurasian Jewish Congress headed by oligarch Alexander Mashkevitz.

**Putin: Russia cares for Israel's safety because it is concerned about Russian Jews there**

The Yukos case, the trial and condemnation of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, blatantly identified as a Jew, and the flight abroad of other Jewish oligarchs, some of them to Israel, directly linked to both economic and financial

instability in Russia, political power interests and also organized crime activities, are a source for growing concern.

President Putin went out of his way to demonstrate his active sympathy and support for Russia's Jewish community, its religious and other institutions, and its rabbis, and to express his opposition to all forms of antisemitism. His high profile visit to Israel in May 2005 was related in part to his support for the Jewish community but also to his desire to be involved in the Middle East. Indeed, Putin's declaration in Israel that Russia cares greatly about Israel's safety because it is concerned for the safety of the Russian Jews there was quite unique. It should be noted, though, that Russia is selling anti-aircraft missiles to Syria, despite the vociferous objections of Israel.

Whilst the main emphasis of the Jewish community in the FSU was either related to *aliyah* and family in Israel, or to strengthening the socio-economic status of Jews who prefer to stay and integrate in the local society, a minority was actively involved in the renaissance of Jewish life. Cultural, educational and even religious activities abounded, albeit attracting only a small percentage of the Jewish population. Much was generated locally but it was also supported by international Jewish bodies such as the Jewish Agency, the Joint Distribution Committee, Nativ, and Chabad, the Lauder and Leviev foundations and others. A strong sense of community is particularly felt in the main urban centers of Moscow, St. Petersburg in Russia and Kiev in Ukraine, where there exists an adequate infrastructure to support Jewish communal life. Peripheral communities lacking critical mass tended to decline.

Antisemitic expressions in Russia — decidedly not originated or encouraged by the government — were increasing from right-wing movements, individual public figures, and latent popular antisemitism rooted in old Slavic tradition. 45 violent antisemitic incidents were recorded in 2004, and Jewish oligarchs have been accused of “looting Mother Russia”.

Turmoil in the Russian Caucasus and the diffusion of terrorist activity in Russia has resulted in a feeling of insecurity among citizens. For Jews, this was a stimulating factor in considering the option of *aliyah*.

**Ukraine** experienced political upheavals at the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005. It positioned itself as a democratic country willing to belong to Europe and is searching for a way that will enable it to exist and prosper between two blocs, the West on the one side, and the big Russian neighbor on the other.

The Ukrainian Jewish community is built of different bodies and organizations that in part are in mutual conflict. During the stormy presidential elections, the community succeeded in preserving a low profile and did not draw criticism and public attention from either the government or the local population. The standing of the Jewish community in Eastern Ukraine could suffer, though, if the government persecutes Jewish moguls such as Pinchuk who gave significant support to the community.

In **Belarus**, the existing regime, reminiscent of the Soviet period, succeeded despite the Western boycott in maintaining a minimum standard of living for its citizens. Jews enjoy religious freedom and are permitted to immigrate. Some Jewish leaders were very critical of the current situation.

Since joining the European Union, the Baltic States — **Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia** — underwent a transformation from post-Soviet to Western entities. Indeed the standard of living is still far from that of Western Europe, but the option of individual free access and the connection with the European Union granted these countries a position of privilege in the region. *Aliyah* was expected to diminish.

Political changes of power occurred in the Central Asian republics of **Azerbaijan, Georgia** and **Kyrgyzstan**. All such changes prevent the Russian minority — and the Jews too — from reaching key positions.

The bloody incidents that took place in **Uzbekistan** in May 2005 were the most violent in the country since it gained independence and could carry serious repercussions for the Jewish population now numbering less than 10,000, with the main concentrations in Bukhara and Tashkent. The current government protected the Jewish community and maintained good relations with Israel.

Moslem fundamentalism and terrorist acts increased in the Central Asian republics.

**Moslem fundamentalism and terrorist acts increased in the Central Asian republics**

## G. ASIA, AFRICA AND THE PACIFIC

### Australia

With the reelection of John Howard as Prime Minister, the Australian government remained one of the staunchest supporters of Israel. The publicized visit by Israel’s President Katzav underscored how firm the support for Israel was

among government and opposition leaders alike. The media too continued to have a relatively positive attitude towards Israel, especially since the election of Abu Mazen.

Diplomatic tension between Israel and Australia continued even though both governments defined the various incidents as “very low level.” Ami Lahat, an Israeli diplomat, was expelled just before the Katzav visit with no explanation but ample speculation.

Levels of antisemitism were low in Australia but still constituted a cause for concern. 450 incidents were reported in the 12 months ending 30 September 2004 — less than in previous years. Antisemitism, mostly perpetrated by individuals, consisted mainly of graffiti and verbal accusations. Nevertheless security became a community priority, and there was concern regarding the cost. Shoah denial was still strong in Australia, and the Federal legal system proved too weak to deal with the problem. Frederic Tobin, a well-known Shoah denier, lost his case in court but nevertheless continued to post his materials on the Internet. Motions against antisemitism were passed both in the national parliament and in the Victoria assembly in September 2004. The need to improve federal legislation against racist hate crimes remains an urgent priority.

Australian Jewry has been one of the few growing communities in the Diaspora, but recently this growth slowed down. Retention of government support for immigrants from the FSU brought this stream of immigration almost to a halt. Similarly, as conditions gradually improved in South Africa, immigration to Australia by South African Jews decreased. Internal natural growth, stable or even negative, was reflected in lower rates of enrolment at

Jewish day schools. Another cause for concern is the high cost of Jewish education.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry moved to Melbourne following the election of Grahame Leonard as its President. The successful Limmud Oz in Sydney expanded to Melbourne and was attended by over 900 people.

The Maccabiah games scheduled to take place in Israel in July 2005 anticipated Australia’s largest delegation ever of 500 sportsmen and women. Support for Israel remained very strong despite the bitterness created over the “bridge disaster,” which killed and wounded Australian-Jewish delegates at the former Maccabiah.

## South Africa

Relations between South Africa and Israel were tense as the South African government strongly supported the Palestinian cause. However, recently this trend somewhat changed. The new Palestinian leadership was well received, as also the Sharon overtures to the Palestinians and the disengagement plan. The government made clear efforts to move closer to Israel. A Likud delegation was invited by the government to South Africa in September 2004, and was given the red carpet treatment, including a reception by President Mbeki. This despite Moslem pressure to cut off ties with Israel.

The positive change in attitude of the government was also reflected in the media which was less hostile than before.

There was much fear and concern about antisemitism, but the actual number of incidents remained low and only slightly increased to 37 in 2004, with no incidents of actual violence

despite the strong Moslem presence and anti-Israeli sentiments within the government.

Jewish emigration fell off at a ten year low of only 400–500 persons in 2004. *Aliyah* was stable at about 200 per year. Recently Jews, particularly Haredim from the US, UK and Israel, renewed immigration to South Africa.

34 year old Rabbi Warren Goldstein was appointed Chief Rabbi, as part of the general trend of a younger leadership. He is the first local born Chief Rabbi, holds a Ph.D in human rights law and co-authored a book with the grandson of Nelson Mandela. President Mbeki attended his inauguration and spoke of his appreciation of the Jewish community.

The main issues currently facing the community remain:

- The need to contain emigration and even reverse it;
- The need to tap the wealth of the Jewish community, to keep the communal house in order and continue organizational improvement;
- The need for greater participation in South African democracy and a more active role in the nation-building exercise.

### Other Countries

The Asia Pacific Jewish Association was set up to bring about an improved understanding of Israel in countries of the region, such as Indonesia.

In New Zealand, Prime Minister Helen Clark, still awaiting an official apology from Israel for dispatching alleged Mossad agents there to obtain a forged passport, made a significant gesture by modifying her schedule in order to

visit two Jewish monuments on her April 2005 trip to Poland and Germany. Clark earlier suspended a former minister for saying that he was “sick and tired” of hearing how many Jews were gassed in the Shoah.

In other countries in Asia and Africa, the mood vis-à-vis Israel and the Jewish people improved somewhat since the death of Arafat and renewed peace efforts in the Middle East. Concern about antisemitism, violence and even terror was still prominent, particularly in countries with a strong Moslem presence.

### H. ISRAEL

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s plan to disengage from the Gaza Strip, and the preparations for its implementation, drew most attention this year. Deployment for the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza placed the Zionist movement at a historical turning point. Having been a prime architect of the settlement project in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, the Prime Minister has now expressed a willingness to implement the ideological concept of “territories for peace,” officially adopted by the left upon the signing of the Oslo accords. While Sharon currently adopted a limited view focusing only on Gaza and Northern Samaria, his decision to dismantle settlements and transfer settlers was harshly criticized as contradicting the traditional tenets of activist Zionism and confounded the settlement project as a whole.

The Prime Minister was able to dictate a political agenda that overshadowed the political programs formulated by the opposition in the vacuum created in the political process during the Intifada years. He was successful in warding off resolutions against the plan which were

**The Treasury's policy of pushing towards adaptation to international competition helped to renew growth**

received at the Likud Party caucus, and defeated the demands for a referendum, causing considerable shifts in the political map. Sharon invited the Labor party into his coalition government and promoted his plan through the support of the left and Israeli Arabs, in the face of adamant opposition within his own party, and while neutralizing the right, primarily the Religious-

National Party (Mafdal). His success was also aided by external circumstances, primarily the demise of Yasser Arafat, who was increasingly regarded as a hindrance to any agreement and other developments in the Middle East, including the US's intensifying involvement in Iraq.

The immediate gains for Israel were: strategic understandings with the US, such as the rejection of the Palestinian demand for the refugees' right of return to Israel within the Green Line, and the "acknowledgment of the new demographic reality," a phrase coined by President Bush and interpreted by Israel as a recognition of the large settlement blocs; an improved relationship with Europe and the decision by European Union institutions to define as manifestations of modern day anti-semitism any expressions against Israel's right to exist as the state of the Jewish people, Shoah denial, and charging the Jews with dual loyalty. Some rapprochement was noticed in relations with Egypt and Jordan, indicated by the reinstatement of both countries' ambassadors to Israel.

In the face of all these, the disengagement raised a number of important issues:

- The impact of this step, in view of Hamas' declaration that the disengagement decision was forced upon Israel as a result of the intifada and the deterrence effect against the Palestinians and the Arab states in the context of the unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000;
- The danger of an aggravated internal conflict in Israel between supporters and opponents of the disengagement, the scope of military service refusal, the mobilization of parts of the rabbinical establishment against the plan, and the growing fears of national trauma resulting from a sense of defeat and the disintegration of national consensus among parts of the public;
- The nature of the Israel-Diaspora relationship in an era of prolonged calm, if the move proved successful.

Domestically, there was renewed economic growth, on the backdrop of the Treasury's policy of pushing towards adaptation to globalization and international competition, despite the disturbing scope of poverty.

The rates of immigration to Israel steadily fell, due to the shrinking reservoir of Jews residing in distressed countries.

Also noteworthy was the initiative of the Jewish Agency in collaboration with the Israeli government to promote the *Masa* (Journey) project to bring Jewish youth from the Diaspora for long-term educational Zionist programs in Israel, and the recovery of the tourism industry in light of the improved security situation.

Beyond the security-military threats, Israeli society continued to be exposed to dangers: the negative demographic trend mainly reflecting

the high fertility rates in the Muslim population, despite the fact that the fertility rate of the Jewish population in Israel remained among the highest in the West; and the increased proportion of non-Jews among the new immigrants.

The public atmosphere was exacerbated by a sense of rampant corruption in the public sector and increased violence, particularly among youngsters.

## Security

Israel's security situation improved following the diminished possibility of an eastern front due to the American involvement in Iraq and the US's hostile attitude towards the Syrian regime led by President Bashar Assad. On the other hand, other significant challenges faced the Israeli defense system in 2005:

- The continued progress of the Iranian nuclear program. Although European countries became more alert to the Iranian threat than before, and there are signs of US willingness to lead an embargo against Teheran, official statements by the heads of the Israeli defense system claim these developments are not sufficient to free Israel from the need to keep its options for independent action open;
- Rehabilitation of the relationship and cooperation between Israel and the US's defense establishments, which were badly damaged following suspicions in Washington regarding the alleged transfer of classified technologies from Israel to China.
- The charges brought against a Pentagon analyst who was accused of exposing classified information to AIPAC officials, and

the suspicion that classified information was transferred through these officials to Israel.

- Adapting to military conflicts of limited intensity, which according to defense experts would characterize the defense reality in the coming years, formulating appropriate conceptions and developing technological infrastructures and tools to successfully cope with this reality.

## The Conflict and the Political Process

In 2005, the disengagement plan progressed towards implementation, after the right-wing parties — The National Union and the Mafdal — left the government, and Minister for Diaspora Affairs Natan Sharansky (Likud) resigned. Inviting the Labor Party to his coalition enabled Sharon to overcome the parliamentary hurdles placed by disengagement opponents.

The Prime Minister managed to muster unprecedented public support for the disengagement move, based among other things on extra-parliamentary support in the judiciary and the media, while outflanking the majority of the Likud who demanded a referendum. The public support stemmed to a large degree from the tiredness of the majority as a result of the ongoing national struggle, the recognition of demographic processes as a major threat to the Jewish character of the state, and the hope that withdrawal would bring about positive developments, while providing renewed momentum for the Zionist endeavor within the Green Line, the settlement of the Galilee and the Negev, and respite among Israeli Arab minorities.

On the other hand, withdrawal following the Palestinians' violent struggle aroused fears of

eroded deterrence, a sense of defeat among parts of the public as a result of jeopardizing the status of the settlement project as the cornerstone of the Zionist movement, and the fear of trauma among settlers forced to leave their homes.

The disengagement plan is accompanied by empathy and concern over the settlers' distress, which goes far beyond their natural support group. Nevertheless, those about to be evacuated found themselves politically isolated and labeled "outside the camp." Their attempts to link the Prime Minister's initiative with the criminal investigation conducted against him and his sons did not gain any significant momentum, especially due to the media's enthusiastic support for the disengagement.

Hamas' victory in the Palestinian municipal elections on May 5, 2005, especially in the Gaza Strip, could affect the result of the future elections to the Palestinian Parliament. The strengthening of Hamas and its control of Gaza could reinforce Israeli elements opposed to unilateral withdrawal. Influenced by some rabbis, such elements already initiated a concerted effort to encourage disobedience and even desertion among IDF soldiers.

On the eve of disengagement, high-ranking experts in the defense establishment were expressing doubts about the chances of success of this move. Some warned against the renewal of violent struggle stemming from a feeling on the Palestinian side that only resistance ever led to Israeli concessions. The decision of the defense minister, supported by the Prime Minister, not to extend the IDF Chief of Staff term, was due, among other things, to General Yaalon's utterances about the dangers inherent in this unilateral move. But while the majority

of the public was against what was perceived as disgraceful sacking, it failed to affect the Prime Minister's support rating. The head of the General Security Service was also given notice — despite the successes achieved in preventing terrorist attacks — probably due to his warnings against a takeover by Hamas, whose official charter endorses a call to murder Jews.

The death of Arafat, for decades the leader identified with the Palestinian cause, and the appointment of Mahmoud Abbas as his successor, marked the beginning of a new era, in which the ability of future leaders to unify the Palestinian public was seriously in doubt. The new generation of PA leaders demanded far-reaching reforms.

The last year saw a significant decline in violence and terror following Abu Mazen's success, aided by Egypt, in reaching a pact with Hamas. Hamas' decision to take part in the elections of the Palestinian parliament and even consider the possibility of participating in the PA's governmental systems posed a highly risky gamble for Chairman Abu Mazen.

George W. Bush's administration increased to some extent its involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, also somewhat clarifying its position regarding the nature of the solution to the conflict. In April 2004 Bush promised Sharon that the US would object to refugees' return to Israel, that there would be no retreat to the 1949 ceasefire lines, and that the borders, to be mutually agreed upon, should reflect the reality of the existence of large concentrations of Jewish population in the West Bank. Nevertheless, during the Bush-Sharon meeting in May 2005, and again at the Bush-Abu Mazen meeting, the dispute was clearly outlined: the

US objects to the expansion of Jewish settlements and strongly demands the evacuation of unauthorized outposts.

### **Government and Regime**

The coalition built by Sharon at the beginning of his term in office, based on the Likud, Shinui, Mafdal and the National Union, pushing Shas and the Orthodox factions to the opposition benches, collapsed. Inside the Likud, a strong ideological bloc emerged, opposing the unilateral disengagement plan and enjoying strong support at the party's central committee.

There was a widespread sense of public distress with the scope of corruption in the public sector and the efforts of politicians to legitimize this phenomenon. Improper political appointments and illegal fundraising for partisan power struggles were on the increase.

Criminal procedures against senior public officials reached a new high with the conviction of a former minister for drug trafficking and misuse of his diplomatic passport, and indictments of the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi and family members of the Sephardi Chief Rabbi for wrongdoings.

Violence among youth increased, as a number of youngsters were stabbed to death in nightclubs, and many were injured in violent fights.

### **Economy, Globalization and Society**

In the last year a real improvement in Israel's economic situation was achieved; the result of steps taken by the government in an effort to adapt to globalization and the laws of competition in international markets. These involved the

changing of foreign currency rules, large-scale privatization and cuts in public expenditure.

The stabilization of the economy was assisted also by guarantees from the US, the improvement in the global economy, the renewed growth of high-tech industries, and the more stable security situation. During 2004 the GNP rose 4.3%, while the business sector scored an even higher 6.2% growth; private consumption rose by 5.2%, while public consumption fell by 2% as a result of cuts in the civil and defense sectors.

However, the Israeli economy still stood a long way from being economically independent, and continued to rely on American aid. The scope of poverty and the spread of social gaps continued to be alarming.

### **Demography and the 'Who is a Jew' Issue**

Demographic issues and the dangers inherent in the high growth rate among the Muslim minority increasingly occupied public debate. In addition, the growing rate of non-Jews among immigrants to Israel under the Law of Return, and the number of foreign workers, along with recurrent requests by Arabs to allow for family unification, i.e. absorbing Palestinians in Israel, all heightened awareness of an accelerated erosion of the Jewish majority in Israel. The government appointed a committee headed by the Minister of the Interior to propose stricter immigration laws based on the experience of European countries, with a view to reduce the number of non-Jewish immigrants to Israel.

A significant development concerning the "Who is a Jew" issue occurred in 2004, when

the Supreme Court decided that according to the Law of Return citizenship cannot be denied to graduates of “leap-frog conversions” — i.e. non-Orthodox conversion. Such converts went through a special procedure in which they studied and trained in Israel, went on a short trip abroad only for the conversion ceremony, and promptly returned to Israel. The Court’s resolution prompted many animated responses, some outraged, but its direct practical implication was limited, firstly because the number of actual beneficiaries was tiny, and secondly, because the Supreme Court left it to the state’s discretion to designate additional procedures to regulate the recognition of such converts as entitled to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return.

The appointment of Professor Stanley Fischer, a world-renowned economist, to Governor of the Bank of Israel, and his decision to immigrate to Israel, were particularly significant for a number of reasons. First, although a single case, it might make for an inspiring personal example, mainly since Fischer’s decision involved a personal sacrifice in view of his position as deputy chairman of Citigroup and his high standing in the US finance world; second, it was an expression of the shared destiny between Israel and the Diaspora.

### **Education, Science and Technology**

The educational system in Israel underwent major upheavals as a result of the Dovrat Commission’s recommendations. Sweeping reforms included the introduction of an extended school day in conjunction with shortening the school week to five days, and the attempted dismissal of thousands of teachers.

The academic community in Israel continued to face hostile elements in some Western countries. While attempts at academic boycott were averted, the pressure on Israel from academic circles in Europe was expected to continue.

The Israeli scientific community got a boost with the award of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry to two Technion scientists. Nevertheless, many scientists, including the two winners, argued that the prize reflected research investments that were made decades ago, whereas recent large budget cuts were endangering the future of science and research infrastructure in Israel.

At the Athens Olympic Games, Israel achieved its first gold medal ever with Gal Friedman in windsurfing.

### **Israel and the Memory of the Shoah**

In a huge demonstration of identification with the Jewish people and the memory of the Shoah, a delegation of 40 heads of states, headed by UN Secretary General Kofi Anan, attended the inauguration ceremony of the New Shoah History Museum at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

### **Arabs In Israel**

Oscar Abu Razaq was appointed Director General of the Ministry of the Interior. This was the first time an Arab citizen was appointed the chief executive of a key government ministry.

The discussion about Israel’s character as both a Jewish and democratic state and the status of minorities within it regained momentum with the Supreme Court’s decision to allow the sale of Jewish National Fund lands to non-Jewish Israeli citizens.

## Special Issue Analyses

### A. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

#### JEWIS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY — A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

##### 1. Jewish Contributions to 20th Century S&T

Biblical and post-biblical Judaism appreciate the beauty of the physical world, seen as a Divine creation, and attach great value to human life and health — attitudes that are highly compatible with modern scientific endeavors. Is there a link between this heritage and the Jewish performance in S&T in modern times?

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jews contributed to the advancement of S&T more than any other small minority or religious group. Although in modern times they have never represented more than 0.6% of the world population (today 0.2%), between 1901 and 2004 they were awarded almost 30% of all Nobel Prizes in science and economics. Jews have made a large number of exceptional contributions to S&T in the two countries that were or are world leaders in these

fields: Germany between 1880 and 1933, and the United States from the 1940s until today. Hence, without any pre-planning, Jews played a significant role in the rise of the two countries to a status of power.

At the same time, S&T has had a dramatic impact on the history of Jews themselves. It has accorded them professional status, new sources of income, and sometimes even political influence. Many Jewish thinkers, e.g. Marx and Freud, have helped to radically change the intellectual and political landscape of the modern era. Their link with their true or assumed Jewish heritage has been the subject of much research and speculation. However, the following reflections are limited to the physical sciences and technologies.

##### 2. The Jewish Impact on S&T versus the Impacts of S&T on Jews

The relationship between Jews and S&T is not linear, but dialectic; S&T affects Jews and Jews

in turn affect S&T. The higher the scientific and technological literacy of a people, the greater their ability to benefit from S&T progress, their capacity to deal with threats increases, and they have the power to use S&T for economic growth, public health, military power and education. Nations with a low degree of S&T literacy may try to follow suit and benefit from the advances elsewhere, but they will also increasingly bear the brunt of developments they might deem less desirable, and remain unable to anticipate or shape them to their own advantage.

## COMPLEXITY OF S&T IMPACTS

S&T can affect people and nations in extremely diverse ways, and their impact can be analyzed from different perspectives. Such impacts can be *global*, linked to problems and solutions shared by most of mankind; they can be *specific but indirect*, related to the *geopolitical* weight of the nations that are of great consequence for the Jews; or they can be *specific and direct*, applying mainly, or in a very significant way, to Jews.

### 1. Global Issues

The global issues are often long-term, and they include energy and water shortages, climate change, infectious diseases and epidemics, and terror and weapons of mass destruction. Each of these could turn into crises with major consequences for the Jewish People, as well as for others. Coping with these crises requires an international effort. S&T is a key element in each of

**New energy sources will begin to supplement oil**

the issues, both as their source and as an indispensable element of the response.

The complexity of the nexus between global issues and S&T can be shown in the case of energy. The global energy balance, the power of the Middle Eastern oil producers, the growing oil-dependence of countries such as China and India, and the possible long-term effects of S&T on all these issues are key questions of strategic importance for the future of the Jewish People. New energy sources will certainly begin to supplement and ultimately replace oil; Jews might be able to influence some of the policy trends, by scientific and/or political efforts.

### 2. The Geopolitics of S&T

A second group of impact factors is linked to geopolitics. S&T plays a major role in geopolitical changes because it is central both to “hard” and “soft” power. S&T will touch both friends and foes of the Jewish People, and can strengthen or weaken either of them. One of the most important long-term issues concerning the position of the Jewish People in the international S&T power balance is whether the United States will retain the global leadership in S&T. Since World War II, S&T has been an indispensable, and sometimes the single most important source of America’s military superiority, its economic competitiveness, and to a significant degree, also its worldwide intellectual and cultural influence. This dominance has been essential not only to the well-being of the 40% of the Jewish people who live in the US, but also to Israel’s survival and its S&T performance.

It is reasonable to assume that the United States will continue to lead in S&T for the fore-

seeable future. But this is not a zero-sum game. Scientific and technological advances of other countries and continents, particularly Europe and Japan, and before long China and India, will be beneficial for the Jewish People if they lead, as appears to be the case, to greater international cooperation. These countries and many of their scientists seek closer cooperation with Israel. The Israeli level of performance in S&T in the coming years will be one of the determinants of Israel's place in the great international power alignments that lie ahead.

## DIRECT IMPACT ON THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The direct impact can be categorized into four sub-groups:

### 1. The revolution in military technologies and physical security

Israel's defense posture in the Middle East and its military credibility will remain key determinants of the future survival and thriving of the Jewish People. This defense posture is, among other things, a direct result of Israel's scientific and technological capabilities. The dominant scientific and technological characteristic of the Arab-Israeli military confrontation is that the technology gap between the two sides has kept growing in Israel's favor. But the appearance of radical terrorist groups, the efforts of some enemies of Israel to acquire weapons of mass-destruction (WMDs), and the danger that these weapons might fall into the hands of terror groups, forces a re-examination of earlier assumptions linked to the technology gap. A

new situation has been created by the progress and spread of S&T. The capacity of fewer and fewer to kill more and more people calls not only for renewed and greater research efforts, but also for new deterrence systems and defense doctrines.

### 2. The bio-medical revolution and its impact on health and longevity

If the Jewish People were not facing existential dangers, many Jews would consider the S&T impact on health and longevity as the single most cherished contribution of S&T to their life. Research and development in the life sciences mobilizes today more than half of the world's R&D manpower. The revolution in the bio-medical fields includes research of the most basic mechanisms of life found at the level of the atom (nano-technology). The ongoing bio-medical revolution will have profound socio-economic consequences for the Jewish People.

Already today, the average age of Jews is greater than that of the general population. The reason is not only lower fertility, but also the fact that Jews tend to have a longer life expectancy than non-Jews. During the coming decades, bio-medical research will lead to further great advances in the prevention and treatment of the main health problems of the elderly, including frailty and cognitive impairment (e.g. Alzheimer). The percentage of older Jews in proportion to the whole Jewish People will continue to grow. Jewish People policies must start looking at the growing pool of retired, but mentally and

**The bio-medical revolution will have profound consequences for the Jewish People**

physically able Jews as a great potential asset to the Jewish People that must be organized and utilized. However, aging could also lead to social tensions, and impose difficult choices between competing claims for resources, i.e. whether to shift resources from education of the young to the support of the old.

Biomedical advances will contribute to address many health problems that preoccupy Jews even if they are not specific to Jews alone, from genetic diseases to the danger of bio-terrorism.

### 3. The revolution in information technologies and its impact on everyday life

New Information and Telecommunication technologies (ITs) have in the last thirty years invaded every sector of the economy and society, and transformed every human activity.

**Cyberspace has radically changed the meaning of distance**

For most Jews, ITs have become indispensable in conducting their personal life and for functioning both professionally and socially. ITs have enhanced communication within and between Jewish organizations and branches of the Jewish People. They allow friends, families and business partners to stay in contact across continents. Cyberspace has radically changed the meaning of distance and the pursuit of knowledge, by introducing remote search and learning. The computer can reward both individualism and social cohesion, the first because it frees people from fixed working places and times, the second because it has the potential to address the most obvious disadvantage of Jews

in the modern world: their small numbers and their lack of critical mass.

However, Jews have not fully exploited the new opportunities. Their interaction and cohesion have not improved at the same rate as the technology. All through history, Jews have been well-connected and widely traveled. The Jewish Diaspora was a very efficient “networking” system that gave the Jews a competitive economic advantage, but today many other “diasporas” are emerging, and all have access to the same networking technologies. Terrorists and antisemites are using cyberspace as efficiently as Jews, if not more so. Jews will maintain a competitive advantage in the acquisition and transfer of information only if their education and know-how is at least as advanced as that of others and if they keep improving.

### 4. Knowledge-based economy and Jewish professional achievements and wealth

The emergence of the knowledge-based sectors in the economies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century coincided with the elimination of the barriers that had limited the access of Jews to universities and industrial positions in the past. A kind of causal relationship between the new socio-economic mobility of the Jews and the new technology-based economy began to develop. Information technology is one of several sectors where Jews have lead roles. The fast change in ITs — their short product cycle — represents a permanent chance for new actors to enter the field. This favors players who are ambitious, but do not necessarily originate from old established families and industries. Jews have made full

use of this opportunity. The knowledge-based economy has helped to create many Jewish — including Israeli — fortunes, not to mention professional accomplishments.

Science-based technologies will continue to expand via the world economy. Jews will probably continue to be founders, research directors, marketing executives and venture capital providers of high-tech companies, because opportunities for professional advancement and wealth-creation will remain attractive.

A serious issue is the degree of Jewish commitment these Jews will have, if any. S&T is international. Science-based companies are global. High-tech entrepreneurs look at the whole world, not at their own national or religious origins. The next years are likely to reinforce the international outlook of the drivers of the high-tech sectors.

## SHAPING THE FUTURE

Above, the question was raised whether there was some link between the contribution of Jews to 20<sup>th</sup> century S&T and Jewish values. Whatever the answer, it is clear that cultural reasons alone cannot explain this contribution. Sociological factors were at work as well. These included the wish to escape discrimination, a spirit of

“creative skepticism” that was crucial for scientific innovation and widespread among Jews, and the very high regard in which S&T was held by the general public and governments in Germany, the United States and other advanced countries. In Israel, military threats were a main factor in pushing S&T ahead.

But many of these sociological reasons have weakened or disappeared, except the threats hanging over Israel. In the US, there are indications of a decline in scientific-technological interest among young Jews. In Israel there was a leveling-off, if not decline, in scientific research after 2000 due to severe budget cuts. This does not bode well for the future, particularly if it is also compounded by a lack of respect for education in general and a “get-rich-quick” mentality of many youth. Most Jewish policy makers and leaders are unfamiliar with S&T and do not see it as a priority. There is a need for Jewish People policies to strengthen creativity in S&T.

Last but not least, there are other important ways for Judaism to interact with S&T. S&T continues to raise moral and ethical issues in many fields, from the life sciences to counter-terrorism. Judaism has a lot to contribute to the current ethical questions and controversies. Will it do so, how can it do so, and will the world listen?

## B. FRENCH JEWRY — THE END OF AN ERA

### JUDAISM IN THE CITY

In post-war France Jewish identity blossomed, achieving its peak in the 1970s. Certain community figures defined this new identity as “Judaism in the City,” referring to a Jewish identity which did not remain confined to the religious sphere and the synagogue. Without negating these, “Judaism in the City” affirmed and represented itself in culture, public debate, and intellectual discussion, while assuming the rights and obligations of citizenship.

This affirmation within France’s general society meant that the position of Jews was taking on a collective dimension, both symbolically and institutionally. Two new organizations demonstrated this evolution: the United Jewish Social Fund (FSJU) in the social domain, and the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (CRIF) in the political realm. The *Consistoire Central*, the religious institution created by Napoleon which had been the main institution of French Jewry, remained the hub of this institutional thriving because its president also functioned as president of the CRIF (until 1981).

This was a new situation for the Jews of France. Change was smooth because general French society had also evolved under the shock of the war. The 1968 crisis (the student revolt and the political crisis which resulted and contributed to the demise of General de Gaulle) enhanced this evolution.

A major change occurred in the 1960s. By

1962 the bulk of North African Jewry had moved to France. The consequent demographic growth provided new vigor to the Jewish community, which became evident during the Six Day War. The massive street demonstrations in support of Israel signaled the conspicuous entry of the community into the public arena and the identification of this change with Israel and with Zionism.

Israel’s prominence in the consciousness of French Jewry illustrated the extent to which collective identification in France was a product of their identification with Israel. However, they were to have trouble finding the necessary justification for this new pattern in the French political culture because, in its most classic form, French centralism cannot co-habit with such identification. Thus, the development of post-war Jewish life possibly represented an exceptional — though short-lived — improvement. It was explained by the emergence of what was called *laïcité ouverte* (open secularism) — a new concept of the relationship between State and religion which, beginning after the war, saw the courts recognizing religions as legal entities, a sign of their new place in society.

De Gaulle’s remark in 1967 about “The Jewish people, elitist, self-assured and domineering” was the first sign of crisis. However, the events of 1968 which were to sweep De Gaulle’s leadership away in 1969 would delay the full onset of this crisis.

In the meantime, the ideology of the 1968 uprising produced a fundamental transformation

of French political culture. For Jews it became legitimate to cultivate their own distinctiveness within a republican citizenship that until then had been monolithic.

The 1970s saw the development of Jewish life and its institutions. The rapid growth of Jewish day-schools was one of its most remarkable aspects. During that decade, a large segment of the Jewish community's intellectual leadership made *aliyah*, while a virulent third-world anti-Zionism exploded in universities and intellectual circles.

### NEGATIVE TURNING POINTS

The 1980s marked a negative turning point, with the degrading of the legitimacy of a Jewish community which until then had developed in tune with the changes of the general socio-political environment. The consequences of the 1968 crisis were felt with the transfer of power to the Socialists. Post-war France started a process of returning to the past, at the same time as the Jewish identity model, which was supported by this post-war France, was beginning to experience setbacks and problems.

The bombing of the Rue Copernic synagogue in Paris in 1980 was the signal. Attributed to the extreme right, it was in fact perpetrated by Palestinians and marked the beginning of a politicization of the Jewish community. The Left, courting the "Jewish Vote," accused the right-wing factions of being indifferent to Israel. Thus, the Jewish community became an important political asset in the political parties' game. In his second term, President François Mitterrand implemented a new anti-Fascist strategy, confronting the danger of the extreme right (the

Le Pen phenomenon) whose threat was greatly exaggerated. The Jewish community's support was required in order to give credence to this alleged threat.

During the same period, Arab/Moslem immigration became a national problem, both as a target for attack by the extreme right, but also as an instrument in the service of Mitterrand's politics. The cause of Israel became blurred, notably since its involvement in the Lebanon war of 1982 and its public stigmatization in France. French public opinion ceased to be universally pro-Israel. The anti-racism and human rights causes became the dominant ideology of the Jewish community. At the same time, the unity of the community, which characterized Jewish identity since World War II, dissolved: consensus Judaism weakened, Haredization entered the picture, Israel-style divisions (such as secular/religious) conquered the community. Simultaneously, the anti-Fascist strategy effectively invoked the memory of the Shoah in France, which Gaullist France and the myth of the French resistance had tried to suppress. Efforts were invested to create an atmosphere which attributed credence to the threat of anti-semitism and even compared the present era to the horrible years of Nazi occupied France. A series of incidents and scandals were used to back up these tales. France was traumatized by the full exposure of its Vichy past. Yet issues of looting of Jewish property, as well as the question of adequate reparations, revived ancient images linking Jews and money, and enhanced a victim mentality. Throughout the 1980s the struggle against antisemitism was

**France was  
traumatized  
by the full  
exposure of  
its Vichy past**

at the forefront of the new ideology of human rights.

The end of the 1980s witnessed the transformation of the immigration issue into the central hub of French politics once the theme of the “Fascist threat” was discarded. The mood changed from pro-immigrant and anti-Le Pen declarations, typical of Mitterrand’s second term, to accusations of tribalism (or *communautarisme* in French). 1989 saw the first “scarf affair,” pitting Moslem immigrants against the “native” French. Tribalism replaced Fascism among a large segment of the French elites as the principal threat hovering over the Republic.

**Tribalism replaced Fascism among the French elites as the principal threat hovering over the Republic**

In certain circles the Jewish community, which had been pinpointed as a guarantee against Fascism and as an authentic reminder of its dangers, was transformed in the new configuration of the 1990s into a threat to the Republic, so much so that the pro-Socialist movement “S.O.S. Racism” that was fighting against these attitudes chose as its favored slogan “Immigrants are Jews”.

Wishing to remain politically correct, the attacks on Islam actually went hand in hand with attacks on all religions. Hence, public opinion leaders felt above all obliged to criticize the Jewish community for its “fundamentalism” and *communautarisme*. There was also an intention to transmit the message that the French guilt stemming from a colonial past will stand to protect Islam. It was the beginning of an ambiguous language, absolving Islam and criticizing Judaism as a matter of principle and as proof that criticism of Islam was not discriminatory or racist.

## A NEW STAGE

The second Intifada and especially 9/11 marked a new stage. The acquittal of Islam became predominant in the media and among political elites, while stigmatization of the Jewish community increased due to its commitment to an intensely criticized Israel. The publicity given by the Jewish community to antisemitic Arab-Moslem acts was perceived as a gesture of aggression and racism on the part of Jews. At the same time, the Arab-Moslem community targeted the Jewish community, and exploited the vehement anti-Zionist sentiments which became dominant in France. Thus, Arab-Moslem activism had gained legitimacy, and was even able to rise to the center stage of French politics.

The Moslem fundamentalists used the existence of a Jewish community, and notably the CRIF, as a pretext for claiming a similar status for themselves, but in actuality demanded exorbitant privileges. At the same time, a great paradox had evolved: the Jewish community, victim of antisemitic attacks, came to be accused of racism, whilst the Arab-Moslem community was absolved.

The last leg of the gradual decline of the symbolic status of the Jewish community was demonstrated in the affair of the French hostages in Iraq. It ostensibly indicated that the Moslem community, through its three streams represented in the French Council of Moslem Cult, had been incorporated into the official image of France to the point that the French Foreign Ministry asked for its intervention — almost officially on France’s behalf — in the domain of foreign affairs pertaining to the Arab world.

Such intervention empowered the French

Arab-Moslem community to negotiate with foreign countries, and halted the effort to separate the Moslem religion from politics, which was the very motive behind the formation of the French Council of Moslem Cult. In contrast, it is hard to imagine that the Jewish community could expect similar political treatment. Only in relation to the memory of Shoah can one discern empathy with the Jewish community, as demonstrated by the huge commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The recent establishment of the *Foundation for Remembrance of the Shoah* must be mentioned. It is financed by reparations paid for Jewish sufferings at the time of the Vichy regime. With this foundation, and the establishment of a national Museum of Art and History of Judaism, Jewish life in France enters a new phase, which may change its voluntary character by incorporating it within a new national political framework, yet simultaneously raising questions about its internal equilibrium.

Thus, the external environment of the Jewish community in France has radically changed, to the point where the question is being posed again of the legitimacy of its existence and, for some, of its existence at all. The Jewish community has, however, a long history in France. The Napoleonic Sanhedrin institutionalized the Jewish religion in the French national scheme, and the Jews have evolved along with contemporary French society. They are not newcomers to French citizenry and culture. But the new era which began in the 1950s is clearly over. The Jewish community has left the French consensus. The Jewish identity counter is reset to zero.

## THE INTERNAL SCENE

The changes in the French political arena had greatly influenced the internal life and the make-up of the Jewish community. Up until the 80s, the Jewish community of France, as opposed to that of the US, was centralized and centralizing. CRIF represented all associations and organizations with the central *Consistoire* (which chaired it) as its core. The diversity of the religious movements was very limited and liberal Judaism had not yet truly developed. This unity, which ran parallel to French political centralism, no longer exists.

In the opinion of some observers and members of the community, the sympathy towards ultra-Orthodoxy taken by the Chief Rabbinate contributed to the fragmentation of the Jewish life.

The 80s saw communal centers and institutions which had supported an ideology of putting up a united front, based on a culturalist approach to Judaism, decline whilst the core of Jewish life turned to the synagogue.

However, during this period a number of major trends have been noted:

The Jewish school system grew considerably, but the impact of the expansion in education on the continuity of Jewish life is still unknown.

According to some sociologists the present rate of out-marriage is over 50%.

The relative absence of the social elites from the life of the Jewish community may be the most conspicuous characteristic of French Jewry.

## C. JEWS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION (FSU) – CHANGES AND DYNAMICS

The last two decades witnessed far-reaching changes in the Jewish dispersal in the FSU. Conditions in the new republics, established on the ruins of the former empire, differ considerably, but certain phenomena can be found, to varying degrees, across all these communities. Following is an examination of some of these phenomena from three angles: the Jewish population, the surrounding society, and the authorities.

### THE JEWISH POPULATION

#### 1. Shifts in frame of reference

Since the 1917 Revolution, most Soviet Jews traditionally regarded themselves as Jews of the Soviet Union, which in terms of language and culture was anchored in Russia, regardless of their actual place of residence. With the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the establishment of independent nation-states, an accelerated process took place of shifting the frame of reference from the entire formerly Soviet geopolitical space to the boundaries of the new states.

#### 2. Shifts in geographical dispersal

Since the collapse of the USSR, major changes have occurred in the geographical dispersal of the Jewish population, both between various states and within them. Certain states experienced intense emigration waves, which caused the number of Jews to decrease considerably.

Within the individual states there is a strong trend of internal Jewish immigration, and the communities are concentrated in a number of central cities where the standard of living is usually higher. As a result, many communities lack that ‘critical mass’ necessary for substantial Jewish life, although Jewish organizations do exist, at least on paper.

#### 3. Shifts in socio-economic stratification

In addition to the great decrease in the number of Jews in the geographical space of the FSU, there is increasing economic and social polarization among various strata of the Jewish population. On the one hand, a thin layer of entrepreneurs in their thirties or forties has emerged (aside from the notorious “oligarchs”) who made their fortunes very rapidly. Of these, quite a number donate funds to Jewish activity, since philanthropy bestows status and prestige on the donor. At the same time, a large number of older Jews lost their sources of income.

#### 4. Organization

The number of Jewish organizations in the FSU is highly disproportionate to the actual number of Jews. Some of these organizations exist on paper only and their activity is scarce. International Jewish organizations and/or organizations centered outside the FSU space are also active in most of the new states. All these

organizations involve only a tiny fraction of the Jewish population. A fierce competition — both ideological and material — is being waged between the various organizations.

## 5. Education and higher learning

- **Education.** Just a tiny fraction of Jewish children and youth receive Jewish education of any kind. In light of the broad ‘market’ of educational frameworks, Jewish schools and/or programs are facing strong competition and even parents who identify themselves as Jews prefer schools and curricula of higher caliber and prestige.
- **Higher learning.** Jewish subjects have become a legitimate part of most institutions of higher learning, at least in the European regions of the FSU. Indeed, in many of these institutions research is carried out on Jewish history and culture, mainly from the regional-local aspect. A number of higher learning institutions are offering dedicated Judaic programs.

## 6. Contacts with World Jewry (including Israel)

In the past, emigration from the Soviet Union involved an almost complete cut-off from the mother country and indirectly, to a certain extent, from its culture and lifestyle. This aspect has undergone a remarkable change in the last twenty years.

In the private domain, almost all Jewish families or individuals who immigrated from the FSU maintain intensive contacts with relatives who stayed behind. Mutual visits are very

common, and the cultural-intellectual boundaries between Jews living in FSU states and Jews living abroad have been blurred considerably. Authorities usually encourage these contacts (not only among Jews), for economic and political reasons, and as a means of gaining influence and disseminating culture.

In the public-institutional domain, representatives of FSU Jewry participate in international Jewish bodies, although their participation is not necessarily an indication of their actual influence or activity within the Jewish population they supposedly represent, but stems rather from their personal connections, wealth, etc.

## 7. Assimilation

In the Slavic areas of the FSU where the majority of Jews reside, assimilation is spreading, manifested in the growing rate of out-marriage and reduced participation in Jewish events.

**Assimilation is spreading in the Slavic areas of the FSU where the majority of Jews reside**

## THE SURROUNDING SOCIETY

### 1. Nationalistic sentiments

In all of the new states established over the ruins of the Soviet Union, nationalistic sentiments are on the rise. In formerly peripheral states, such trends serve to justify the very existence of a nation-state, while in the center — Russia — these feelings stem from a deep sense of humiliation, having sunk from the prestigious status of a superpower and an Empire.

## 2. The construction of nationality and the religious factor

The religious factor plays a significant societal role in constructing nationality on the basis of new foundations. In contrast with the Catholic Church, the Pravoslavnic Church and the Muslim leadership have not gone through the process of recognition and reconciliation with the Jewish People, and consequently many mosques and churches are currently spreading hostility towards Jews and Judaism.

## 3. Anti-Americanism

Attitudes towards the US among the general public, and in certain segments of the intelligentsia, are ambivalent and fraught with contradictions. On the one hand there is a desire to imitate the American lifestyle, particularly the material affluence as reflected on TV and cinema screens; on the other hand, there are strong reservations and even hostility regarding American "Cultural Imperialism."

Jews, viewed as aliens to the "authentic" national spirit, are often accused of being carriers of Americanism.

## 4. Envy

The disproportionate presence of Jews in the thin layer of the newly-rich, along with the aid received by needy Jews from international Jewish bodies and/or from local Jewish philanthropists, create considerable envy on the part of large numbers of the public.

## 5. Summary

As a result of these factors, it seems safe to state that hostility towards the Jews in broad circles of the surrounding society is spreading and deepening, although the situation in Baltic and Central Asian Moslem states is not necessarily identical. Also, the future attitude to Jews will be strongly influenced by unpredictable external factors, such as economic development, which varies greatly even between the Slavic states, the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, and in the case of the Baltic states, their growing integration with the European Union and NATO countries. Certain intelligentsia circles express their reservations about Jews in subtle and sophisticated ways. Such hostility, however, is not sufficient to put the Jewish population in physical danger.

## THE AUTHORITIES

Jewish interaction with the authorities in the FSU is both relatively uniform, as a result of the countries' common history, and considerably diverse due to the differences between the more democratic, the more autocratic and the more traditional states.

### 1. Central authorities

The attitudes of the authorities toward the Jews, particularly central governments in the new states, are ambivalent and influenced by international and internal political factors, of which the main ones are:

**Jews are often accused of being carriers of Americanism**

- The wish to secure a positive attitude in the international arena.
- A generally positive attitude toward the State of Israel in appreciation of its perceived influence on US policies (often beyond Israel's actual power). Nevertheless, the attitude towards Israel as a regional power and the attitude towards Jews should not be regarded as invariably identical.
- Nationalistic elements of the public are mostly unsympathetic or even hostile to Jews. As a result, the authorities generally try to avoid directly condemning or aggressively reacting to manifestations of antisemitism. This conduct also characterizes large parts of the bureaucracy, including segments of the security services. A notable exception is Putin's pronouncement of concern for the safety of all Jews.
- Using wealthy Jews as tools for internal politics.

The resulting trend is an attempt to refrain from emphasizing the Jewish issue on the one hand, while on the other hand making sure that there

are always Jews and representatives of Jewish institutions that are accommodating to the authorities. Thus, there is often indirect involvement and intervention in the appointment of an accommodating Jewish leadership, to which various gestures are made designed to increase their prestige in the Jewish population.

## 2. Local authorities

unrestrained by concerns of international politics and not necessarily reliant on Jewish money, are more in touch with their public's mood and are often more uninhibited in their expression of distinctly anti-Jewish sentiments.

## 3. Antisemitism as part of the political platform

In some FSU states there are certain political groups, some extra-parliamentary and others even inside the legislative bodies, both left- and right-wing, for whom the struggle against the Jews and their past and present influence is an integral part of the political worldview.

## **D. THE JEWS OF POLAND: YESTERDAY'S SHADOW, TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES**

### **BACKGROUND**

The fate of the Jews in Poland is a dramatic instance of “rise and decline,” and even “existence and annihilation.” The Jewish community gradually developed into a thriving center of Jewish creativity, only to be rapidly and totally obliterated by the Nazis, who were actively aided by many, although not the majority of the Polish people.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, and especially during the last two decades, a new Jewish community has arisen in Poland. But it is very small and weak, its sustainability is in question, and it does not get much support from Jewish global organizations. This situation poses a difficult hypothetical dilemma: when considering the investment of resources in assuring a thriving future for the Jewish People as a whole, it might make sense not to invest great resources in maintaining a Jewish community in Poland which may be below the critical mass required for long-term viability. However, if one takes seriously the “614<sup>th</sup> commandment” proposed by Emil L. Fackenheim forbidding Jews to give Hitler posthumous victories, then maintaining a Jewish community in Poland and helping it to become sustainable and achieve meaningful levels of cultural creativity is imperative. Similarly, the Jewish community’s modest cultural activity has more than once attracted and provided information to Poles who are, or believe they are, of Jewish or part-Jewish origin.

This dilemma is hypothetical, unless and

until the Jewish People develops the will and capacity to make such tragic choices; even then, it may be a better choice, morally, to leave the future of Jewish life in Poland to spontaneous, “natural” historic processes rather than some kind of deliberate decision. But it is this dilemma, as posed by the realities of present Jewish life in Poland, which must always be kept in mind.

### **TWO NUMBERS**

Two numbers express the terrible tragedy of the catastrophe of the Jews of Europe, and of Poland’s Jewry in particular: in the mid-1930s, there were 3,351,000 Jews living in Poland, comprising about a tenth of the general population. In the population census that took place in Poland in 2003, only 1,100 citizens stated they were Jewish.

It is safe to assume that in the summer of 1939, on the eve of WWII, their number was edging towards 3.5 million people. It was the largest Jewish community in Europe, and the second largest in the world, after the Jewish community in the USA. Some 4 million Jews were murdered on Polish soil during WWII; over 3 million resided in Poland.

By the end of the war some 50–80,000 Jews remained on Polish territory. Many who had survived the Shoah in Russia returned to Poland, and by the summer of 1946 the number of Jews in Poland was estimated at about 250,000 people. The Polish population did not welcome the returning Jews with open arms, to say the

least, and in certain locations pogroms broke out, killing dozens of Jews. As a result, Jews began to leave the country in large numbers.

In the mid-1950s the Communist government allowed Jews to emigrate, and hundreds of thousands of them seized the opportunity and moved to Israel. Overt antisemitism has existed in Poland throughout the Communist regime years, linked with an anti-Zionist and anti-Israel policy. That policy was exacerbated following the Six Day War, resulting in the emigration to Israel of an additional 30,000 Jews and reducing the number of Jews in Poland to a few thousand. Only in 1989, with the downfall of the Communist bloc and the establishment of a democratic regime in Poland, was there a revival of the Jewish life.

Organized Jewish communities in Poland re-emerged on the backdrop of the enactment of a bill to return public Jewish property by the end of the 1990s. The bill stipulated that public property is to be returned to the communities and to the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO).

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN POLAND TODAY

It is estimated that in addition to those 1,100 citizens who were self-declared Jews in 2003, there are some 10 to 15 thousand persons of Jewish origin. Records of the Jewish organizations, however, show only 3,000 members. These numbers clearly suggest that a considerable segment of Polish citizens of Jewish descent prefer to hide their identity for the time being. The reasons for this are complex, but antisemitism is very likely to be one of them.

Thirteen Jewish communities are active in Poland, including the cities of Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz, Wrocław, Wolbich, Bielsko-Biała, Gdansk, Katowice, Szczecin, Poznan, a sub-community in Lublin and another community of self-designated “Israelites” in Gdansk. Based on this structure, Poland has been divided into regions, with the main community in each region responsible for the activities and processes of property restitution.

The life of the thirteen Jewish communities in Poland and their umbrella organization revolves around the following themes:

- Religious ceremonies (only eight of the thirteen communities have a place of prayer);
- Memorials and commemoration rallies;
- Provision of Kosher restaurants for community members (in Warsaw, Lodz and Krakow);
- Cultural activity around Jewish holidays (mainly Rosh Hashanah, a traditional “Seder” on Pesach and occasional Purim activities);
- Maintaining contacts with the surrounding Polish environment, including municipal and district authorities;
- Welfare activities, including soup kitchens for the needy;
- Summer camps for families and children, sponsored mainly by Chabad;
- Activity involving the two Jewish schools funded and managed by the Lauder Foundation in Warsaw and Wrocław;
- Contacts with the Israeli Embassy, including attending embassy ceremonies ;
- Joint cultural activity.

Several local Jewish organizations are currently

active in Poland, including, among others, the Jewish community, the Jewish Association for Culture and Society, Children of the Holocaust Organization, Veteran Soldiers and Nazi Victims Association, and the Jewish Students Organization. Three Jewish monthlies are published in Poland. In addition, global Jewish organizations operate in Poland, including the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Jewish Agency and the Lauder Foundation.

## THE ISSUE OF JEWISH PROPERTY IN POLAND

The Jewish public property restitution process has exacerbated the tendency for fragmentation, the struggles for control over the returned property and the related gains.

The value of Jewish property in Poland — both private and public — is estimated by WJRO sources at some \$40 billion. An unofficial Polish

**The value of Jewish property in Poland is estimated at some \$40 billion**

estimate claims the sum is closer to \$20 billion. These assets were expropriated by the Communist regime. The legalities concerning their return are extremely complicated. The present regime, led by the Social-Democratic Party, maintains that compensation should be paid to anyone who can prove rights of ownership, and was a Polish citizen when the expropriation took effect,

or to their heirs. Furthermore, according to the “re-privatization” proposal (the restitution of private property), Poland will *a-priori* limit the sum it is willing to pay, and that sum will be paid to those entitled in the form of long-term

government bonds. This proposal has yet to be ratified. US Jewry is actively involved in this struggle, with several of its agencies exerting political pressure on the Polish government.

In 1997 Poland ratified a bill for the restitution of public Jewish property to the then-existing seven Jewish communities in Poland (since then the number has grown to 13, but a number of the new communities exist mainly on paper). The reclaimed property includes synagogues and others houses of prayer, cemeteries, schools, *Mikveh* (ritual baths), slaughterhouses, libraries, communal offices/chambers, children’s institutions and others. Following a period of friction, a cooperation formula was finally reached in a meeting that took place in 2002, stipulating a manner of distribution between the communities and WJRO. The fact of the matter is, however, that there is not much to distribute. The restituted properties include synagogues, cemeteries and public institutions that are for the most part ruined, abandoned and derelict. Complete reconstruction of all properties is practically impossible because it would require expenditures of huge sums of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Many Shoah survivors and their heirs have encountered great difficulties when attempting to reclaim their property. The reasons for these difficulties include:

- Loss of official documents proving their ownership of the reclaimed properties;
- Since many of the assets expropriated from Jews before the Shoah were purchased by private parties in good faith, it is impossible to demand restitution, leaving only the option of suing for monetary compensation.

There is currently no clear-cut policy regarding such compensations;

- In many cases, the cost involved in legal procedures to ascertain claims is higher than the value of the properties in question;
- Polish law makes it especially difficult for non-Polish citizens to sue.

Individual and collective Jewish efforts to reclaim Jewish property have been a source of great apprehension and increased anti-Semitism in a population still suffering from severe housing shortages and unemployment.

## WORLD JEWRY AND POLAND

World Jewry is highly concerned about developments in Poland, public and private Jewish property restitution, and the nature of commemoration. A representative of US Jewry is a member of the “Auschwitz Council,” which directs commemoration policy.

The JDC is regularly involved in Poland, offering aid via the communities and helping most Jews in need.

World Jewry is active in fundraising activities to establish a museum of the history of Polish Jewry, slated for the Ghetto Square in Warsaw.

The Lauder Foundation is active in Poland, through the operation of the two aforementioned schools in Warsaw and Wrocław. US Jewry and the Lauder Foundation are funding the employment of two rabbis. There is considerable activity by other Jewish organizations focused on the preservation of memorial sites and cemeteries. Chabad followers hold religious activities, mostly in Warsaw and Krakow.

## CURRENT POLAND-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIPS

Democratic Poland, established in 1989, has made a major effort to strengthen its relationship with Israel. Economic and trade ties between the two countries, including Israeli exports of military equipment, are highly developed, and official statistics do not seem to reflect the full range of economic activity between them.

Two Polish presidents have publicly asked for the forgiveness of the Jewish people for the atrocities that took place on Polish soil. The government of Poland has officially promised Israel that it will oppose any anti-Zionist resolutions in “anti-racist conferences.”

One field in which Israel expects significant support from Poland is in connection with the EU, of which Poland has recently become a member. Senior Polish officials have assured Israeli diplomats of this support.

For the last 15 years or so, thousands of Jewish youngsters from Israel and the Diaspora have assembled for the “March of the Living” at the grounds of the Auschwitz Camp around Shoah Memorial Day.

There are still, however, antisemitic elements in the Polish population today, some of which play a role in the Catholic Church, while others have flocked to the right-wing parties. It is nevertheless noteworthy that left-wing and center parties, Poland’s elites, and the majority of the media, strongly oppose antisemitism and regard it as an unacceptable and contemptible phenomenon.

## **E. THE SOCIETAL BACKGROUND OF AMERICAN JEWISH POPULATION TRENDS**

### **THE 2001 NATIONAL JEWISH POPULATION SURVEY (NJPS) AS A CATALYST FOR DISCOURSE**

Beyond the basic socio-demographics, large scale national population surveys conducted in the US paint a portrait of “the state of the nation” along with an anchor for collective identity and awareness, within and beyond the Jewish public. Given the ongoing spirited debate about the revival or erosion of identity amongst American Jewry, it was to be expected that the 2000–2001 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) would spark controversy.

The number of Jews living in the US is not the main point of the NJPS. But numbers do unveil patterns of growth, resilience, or decline from a historical perspective, and indicate the shifting nature of mutual relations between Jews and the majority of American society. The size and composition of US Jews reflect biological-demographic and cultural-identificational determinants, namely: (a) how many newborn babies are identified as Jews by their parents and how many Jews die; (b) how many Jews immigrate or emigrate; and (c) how many join and how many sever their links with Judaism in one manner or another.

Since World War II, major national surveys have regularly indicated smaller Jewish populations than implied by local data figures. The American Jewish Year Book estimate of 6.1–6.2 million Jews for 2002 is significantly higher than an NJPS (and the American Jewish Identity

Study — AJIS) estimate of 5.2–5.3 million for 2001. Such a low figure had been quite accurately predicted by projections based on both the 1970 and the 1990 NJPSs.

Important determinants of demographic change among US Jewry are fewer adults marrying (or marrying later), a growing preference for non-Jewish marriage partners, low fertility rates, low retention within a Jewish framework of children of intermarriage, aging, a weak balance of accessions into and secessions out of Judaism, and — recently — decreasing international migration. The gradual “flattening” of the baby boom generation led to weaker propensities to identify Jewishly, even according to the loose definitional criteria of the 2001 NJPS, and/or problems related to survey coverage of the relevant age cohorts of that generation. The predominance of Jewish elderly as opposed to Jewish children is a symptom of a declining population.

### **VARIABLE BOUNDARIES OF AMERICAN JEWRY**

The Jewish case illustrates the complications in defining, identifying, and reaching ethno-religious constituencies in an American environment characterized by the growing looseness of group boundaries. Relativist or postmodernist arguments emphasize a group’s ability to shape, envisage or reinvent its own sense of personal and collective belonging and solidarity, regardless of the rigid constraints of past behaviors,

social norms, or genealogy. A similar argument has been applied to the Jewish community's calls for redefining both Jewish boundaries and content. Perceptions of the meaning of Jewish identification have shifted from a conventional notion of a stable mode of *being* intimately related to a given set of beliefs, behaviors and institutions, to occasional expressions of *connecting* and *journeying*, or even *surfing* and *zapping* — meaning eclectic, selective, and subjective reconstruction of the relevant subject matter and symbolic contents. What implications does this hold for the size of the Jewish community?

American Jewry in 2001 clearly is not a homogeneous group:

- The relatively small, more traditional and partly self-segregated Orthodox sector was evaluated at 500 to 600 thousand individuals and growing.
- The total of those of any persuasion who effectively volunteer to join the Jewish community has declined to 1.5 million.
- Those affiliated with any of the many existing Jewish organizations — mainly synagogues, but also other recreational, social and communal institutions -reaches about 3 million persons, again declining.
- A diminishing 4.3 to 4.4 million are reported to be Jewish, regardless of ideological orientation.
- The standard demographic *core* Jewish population — a composite of those who in surveys declare themselves to be Jewish or declare no preference but have Jewish parents — amounted to 5.2 to 5.3 million, and is shrinking.

- A growing 6.7 million Americans reported a Jewish parent.
- The *enlarged* population of all members in households including at least one core Jew was estimated at 8.8 million and growing.
- Israel's *Law of Return*, which broadly defines those who are eligible for migration to Israel and automatic citizenship, is applicable to over 10 million persons.

## PROS AND CONS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE

Recent Jewish population trends are representative of the debate on the twilight, or revival, of ethno-religious group identities in the US. To the extent that the Jewish socio-historical experience unfolded along parallel lines in most western countries, any differences between Jews in the US and in other societies are a result of the unique influences of the American environment on Jews. Examples of the differences between US and other Diaspora Jews include a high percentage of university trainees in the Jewish labor force, the highly visible role of Jews in national executive elites, the prominent role of religious denominations in the Jewish community, and low enrolment of children in Jewish day schools (though the overall exposure to *any* form of Jewish education is not very different from other countries, and is unequivocally not low).

To foreign eyes, the American way of life seems to be encapsulated by the motto *E pluribus unum*, and by the Declaration of Independence's stated goals of *Life, liberty, and*

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*the pursuit of happiness.* In its extreme form, the process of nation-building implied dissolution of the separate components into a collective of higher order, while the individual right to self-fulfillment was normatively supported as part of national ethos. While America tolerated community diversity more than other societies — at least for some groups — it also promoted individual gratification, an aspiration which had the opposite effect. It is also through the distinctive

**Religion's role in America is more pervasive than in most other Western countries**

premium awarded to self-centeredness over community connectedness that assimilation became the default process in America, at least where it was not prevented due to powerful social barriers.

Consistent with the saying, “*In God we trust,*” religion plays a more pervasive role in civil society in America than in most other western societies. Religious organizations

found ample public space, and more than elsewhere were able to incorporate materials and attitudes from the lay culture and blend them into new syntheses, thus conveying a religious product of widespread relevance. Jewish religious movements were part of this dynamic evolution.

Pervasive religious influences in American society are supplemented by significant secular ritualism. Besides a local brand of “American civil religion” within the Jewish community, elaborate folkways regulate the secular life and aspirations of individuals and organizations, and impart an element of predictability and conservatism to the fabric of an apparently informal American society. American society’s mode of emancipation, tolerance of a diffuse religious

presence, pluralism, and a tendency to codify roles and institutions, all provided support for a legitimate, quasi-statutory role for Judaism and Jews in the US.

On the other hand, residential and occupational mobility are high in the US in comparison with international standards. High divorce rates in America probably reflect conflicts between diverging personal economic and affective goals. Frequent migration may be disruptive to the steady functioning of family and community. A more eclectic reconstruction of religious meanings goes hand in hand with increasingly subjective, negotiated, segmented, and multiple definitions of ethno-cultural identities. The relativization of faith and flexibility and porosity of binding standards may be associated with less stable and robust relations between individual and community.

Viewed together, these diverse traits of American culture and society exert a mixed effect on Jewish identification and continuity. Some aspects hinder Jewish community continuity; others enhance it.

**EMERGING PATTERNS OF JEWISH IDENTIFICATION**

What then is a “good” Jew in America? According to the 2001 NJPS, identificational consensus concerns broad and abstract normative perceptions, more than the group’s particularistic norms. *Remembering the Shoah* — a uniquely important manifestation of Jewish identification, but also an increasing part of humankind’s legacy — attracts the broadest support. *Countering antisemitism* — whether or not personally incurred — also attracts broad

consensus. Several other more frequent choices (*Leading an ethical and moral life; Believing in God; Making the world a better place (Tikkun Olam); Connecting to your family heritage; and also Having a rich spiritual life*), while all related to original Jewish concepts, also appropriately correlate to the American normative system and the “good” American in general. More particularistic norms such as *Celebrating Jewish Holidays; Learning about Jewish culture; Caring for and giving your children Jewish education; and Caring about Israel* follow at a respectable distance. The low level attributed options such as *Observing Jewish law and Attending synagogue* indicate an ongoing and not unexpected process of secularization. But most significant is the low consensus garnered *Being part of a Jewish community and Supporting Jewish organizations*, pointing to weakening voluntarism and community cohesion.

The transformation of Jewish identification from particularistic and community centered to universalistic and/or individualistic is consonant with developments in mainstream American society. The more the central values shared by Jews conform with broadly accepted American norms, the less the need for a separate (and quite expensive) community infrastructure.

## EMERGING POLICY CHALLENGES

A smaller Jewish community, even if successful at preserving its own high-quality human capital, will face greater challenges when competing within an expanding, diverse, and assertive American population. Two overarching policy issues emerge from these trends:

- The impact of group identification on population size, and
- Perceptions of, and the response to, ongoing trends.

Research on American Jews provides indications of the main mechanisms of group identity formation and transmission, hence the avenues through which future policy interventions might be channeled. Group identification can be expressed by **a great variety of individual identity and/or activity measures**. These coalesce into:

- Knowledge of the Jewish cultural legacy;
- Positive Jewish-oriented attitudes;
- Frequent practice of traditional Jewish custom and involvement in other less traditional community engagements;
- Predominantly Jewish social networks.

Behind each of these demonstrations of Jewish identification stand several primary drivers which operate alone or, more often, in combination:

- The parental home’s level of Jewish identification;
- The family’s socio-economic status;
- The prevailing model of interaction of general society (in this case, America) with its Jewish community;
- Epochal events (of which 9/11/2001, or for that matter the Shoah or Israel’s Six Day War, provide vivid illustrations).

These drivers are each responsible for several intervening processes which will affect the eventual outcome of the issue of Jewish identity:

- Intensive exposure to Jewish education and other socialization and support frameworks;
- The amount of pride related to Jewish identification;
- Involvement in an in-marriage or an out-marriage.

Therefore, the process of identification construction, maintenance and transmission is highly conditional upon the amount and overlap of exposure to various possible socialization frameworks over a person's lifecycle. These include a person's parents, formal education via the Jewish school system, Jewish informal educational activities such as youth groups and the like, experiences and contacts with Israel as the "core" Jewish country, participation in Jewish programs during college or university, in-marriage, and Jewish children. At each lifecycle stage, exposure to in-group experiences will expectedly raise the chances of the continuation of a strong Jewish identity at the next stage.

Jewish identity in America is undergoing a

transition from naturally inherited, fixed, biologically or administratively transmitted, to greater flexibility in principle and mediated through voluntary processes of socialization. In a sense, today not only converts to Judaism, but every Jew in America, is a "Jew by choice."

When faced with a pessimistic outlook, Jewish leaders and organizations have responded with investments in new educational and cultural initiatives aimed at enhancing community identification. This has probably already stimulated a moderate upturn against the prevailing tendency. To counteract assimilation, the Jewish community might also contemplate further investments in residential, economic and social self-segregation. But such a strategic line, successfully adopted by the Orthodox community, defies the accepted consensus among the majority of American Jews about what it means to be an American and share America's promise of freedom, openness, equal opportunity, and happiness.

## F. RESPONDING TO THE OUT-MARRIED IN THE UNITED STATES

### OUTREACH: THE BACKGROUND

Addressing the issue of Jews by birth currently married to a non-Jewish spouse, i.e. the out-married, has become one of the foremost issues on the US Jewish communal agenda since the out-marriage rate was revealed in 1990 to be 52%. Communal alarm derives particularly from the decline amongst the out-married in Jewish identification and connectedness, the breakdown of generational transfer of Jewish identity, and the weakening of Jewish philanthropy.

The community has worked primarily through a three-pronged approach of prevention, conversion, and outreach, with an emphasis on outreach policy, while discussing issues of the costs and benefit of such a policy, and the ramifications on the other policy approaches.

Outreach takes on various forms: inviting the target audience to programs specially designed for it, such as “Judaism for Beginners,” discussing issues concerning the intermarried, and distributing educational pamphlets and flyers in gateway institutions. A favored vehicle for reaching the target population is through the media. Yet this demands significant financial resources. Jewish organizations are just starting to utilize the Internet to publicize events on mainstream sites, though such efforts are minimal when considering the relatively low cost and high visibility of this sort of advertising. While carried out primarily, though not exclusively, through the various denominations, outreach policies are in the process of transition.

### DENOMINATIONAL APPROACHES

**The Reform movement** is the foremost leader with its outreach to out-marrieds program created under the leadership of Rabbi Alexander Schindler in 1978 as part of a three-pronged policy for increasing sensitivity to converts, engaging non-Jewish spouses, and drawing America’s “unchurched” into Judaism. Since that time the Reform movement has pioneered in addressing issues involving interfaith couples: the lineage issue, which was addressed in the 1983 decision to accept patrilineal descent; the rate of communal and ritual participation, i.e. to what extent can a non-Jew partake in synagogue ritual life; and educational programming, with the largest program, “Taste of Judaism,” having enrolled 65,000 participants since its launch in 1994. Activism in this area, however, may also be due in part to necessity, since 15.4% of the Reform’s total membership units are interfaith, and approximately 50% of students enrolled in Reform schools come from interfaith homes.

The Reform Movement’s 1983 decision to accept patrilineal descent has negatively impacted the conversion rate in intermarried couples, which is down from 20% of interfaith marriages to 5% of those married between 1985 and 1990, since conversion is no longer necessary where the Jewish identity of children is

**50% of students enrolled in Reform schools come from interfaith homes**

guaranteed by one Jewish parent at least by part of the community.

Perceiving its original goal of outreach as an affirmed principle in the American Jewish community, the Reform movement is increasingly turning to conversion and deeper integration of the outreached, a move reflected in the 2002 merging of the outreach program into the Commission on Outreach and Synagogue Community, along with subsequent budget cuts, and greater lay leader involvement in these areas. The move is partially in reaction to a sense of neglect in these areas over the past twenty years, and the fact that for many of the out-married, Reform identification is one step before total disengagement/assimilation. The Reform leadership estimates that 25–30% of those outreached are fleetingly partaking in programming, with 70% affiliating at some point.

**The Conservative movement**, with its formally stricter loyalty to traditional Judaism yet with a population base significantly impacted by out-marriage (28% between the ages of 34–54), has increasingly walked between welcoming and disapproving of out-marriage through its double-sided policy. It maintains loyalty to matrilineal descent, limited formal and informal institutional membership and participation of the non-Jewish partner, and enrolment of children with non-Jewish mothers in Conservative day and supplementary schools only until the age of 13 unless converted. Whilst the major focus in responding to the out-married has traditionally been on conversion, in practice the policies vary.

The policy of the Conservative movement, however, is under serious revision, in an effort to create a friendlier environment for the out-

married. Transformation has been underway for several years, evident in programs like the *Keruv* Initiative in Boston created in 1997, with courses geared to interfaith couples, and with staff and annual funding in 2004–5 of \$40,000. A major announcement is due at the Movement's annual conference in December 2005 which will publicize a *Keruv* effort directed at out-married couples, and the establishment of a task force for the creation of new policies within certain set boundaries. The movement will need to be innovative in order to both attract the out-married population and maintain loyalty to the bounds of Jewish law.

Amongst **the Orthodox**, there is a cross-denominational sense that little investment or effort is placed on the out-married, likely the result of a residual 6% internal out-marriage rate (after discounting others who out-married and left the denomination). However, engagement of the out-married as part of a holistic outreach effort has increased dramatically since the 1970s, particularly amongst the ultra-Orthodox and to a much lesser extent among the modern Orthodox. The Orthodox maintain a hierarchy of Jewish law, public policy and private policy in dealing with the out-married.

Chabad is explicit in its *a-priori* rejection of out-marriage, as evident in the letters and addresses of the Lubavitcher Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, whose instruction sets the public policy for this subgroup. Out-marriage is perceived as a blunt expression of assimilation.

Non-Chabad Haredim have increased outreach programs, stemming heavily from yeshiva bases.

The modern Orthodox community centrally rejects out-marriage and the out-married, and

practices little to no outreach. Modern and ultra-Orthodox central bodies, such as the Rabbinical Council of American (RCA) and Agudath Israel of America, have debated the issue of excommunication, or *niddui*, of a Jew who intermarries; Chabad rejects the notion.

## VARIABLES ASSOCIATED WITH OUTREACH

Leadership, affiliation rates, and donor funding are integral to the creation of central policy. Numerous variables influence the implementation of outreach on the ground, creating a seeming discrepancy between policy declarations and practical implementation. Included amongst these are:

- **The cultural and social climate in the Jewish community and broader United States;**
- The process of **geographic migration** amongst US Jews: as Jews move away from primary Jewish centers to areas of low Jewish density, organizations and institutions are looking to attract Jewish participation in any way possible;
- **The size of the community** is a motivating factor for outreach to a critical mass that is needed for ritual and communal life, resources, etc.;
- **Communal makeup:** the larger the percentage of young, unaffiliated, and/or out-married in the community, the more likely they are to be targeted in outreach programs as communities recognize the need to address this reality;
- **Religious culture** of the Jewish community often bears influence, not on outreach

to the out-married, but rather on whether this outreach will take a specific or holistic approach to the out-married, as well as determining the distinction between public versus private policies in working with out-married families and the extent of the accepted ritual participation of the non-Jew in the synagogue;

- **Gender** is a factor as more women tend to join Judaism than men; women are the primary transmitters of religious identity to the next generation in the US and are the official transmitters of Jewish identity according to Jewish law. This makes women an important population target in outreach efforts across denominations, yet Conservative and Orthodox efforts reflect this need more than those of the Reform.

## INVESTMENTS AND RESOURCES

Independent organizations and bodies are also working on outreach, often in cooperation with communities, and to a lesser extent with denominations. The Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI), a research based institute created in 1980, pilots programs of outreach to the out-married including addressing issues of non-Jewish women raising Jewish children, thus creating an “open door” or more welcoming Jewish community. These programs also create public space Judaism and bring Jewish events to areas that are not specifically recognized as Jewish. JOI identifies barriers hindering the involvement of the out-married, including limited ritual and lifecycle involvement, leadership roles, cost, literacy, the perceived endogamy preference of the Jewish community, and uses research and program-

ming to overcome these obstacles and increase involvement of the out-marrieds.

The website [www.interfaithfamily.com](http://www.interfaithfamily.com) is the primary example of the use of online technologies for the engagement of out-married couples, as well as for promoting a policy of welcoming interfaith couples to the Jewish community. The website has a budget of \$290,000, and in December 2004 had 27,000 hits and is growing at a rate of approximately 40% per year. Interfaithfamily.com is one of the few efforts that have moved away from the core-periphery model of Jewish involvement to a more networked Judaism, or a more interest-based model.

Local communities have also become active in outreach, whether through the targeted or holistic approach, by working with various denominations and bodies. Boston's Combined Jewish Philanthropies is a national leader in specific outreach, and have an allocated budget of \$275,000 annually.

Numerous communities choose to outreach to the out-married as part of a holistic approach, since they maintain that out-married focus

**Analysis is needed of the variables influencing Jewish involvement with the out-married**

groups prefer not to be singled out, but rather desire to be included as part of the overall community. The decision to apply the holistic method of outreach is influenced by some of the variables affecting implementation, particularly community make-up and religious culture. One such community is Baltimore, the most traditional community in the US with 17% identifying as Orthodox. While the community's out-marriage rate between 1990

and 1999 was 37%, 62% of children of out-marrieds in Baltimore are raised Jewish, almost double the national average (33%). Local federation officials attribute this discrepancy to a high Jewish density factor (including traditional Jews with visible Jewish symbols) and Jewish acculturation that apply positive pressures on out-married families to raise children as Jews.

## PENDING ISSUES

Despite the investment, little evaluation of outreach exists, both on a national and international scale. The dearth of information, such as fieldwork and analysis, leaves many policy makers ill-equipped. The evaluations that do exist are conducted by the organizations themselves, containing a risk of bias among those exerting pressure to continue outreach policy.

Clearly missing from policy perspectives are data tracking the progress of outreach efforts, such as follow up data and external auditing of outreach policies. Independent bodies need to take a critical look at what is being done. Moreover, analysis is needed of the variables influencing Jewish involvement with the out-married and their offspring, including Jewish acculturation, the Jewish density factor, exposure to visual Jewish customs and traditions, the gender of the non-Jewish spouse, and particularly the role of women in out-married families and the impact of the patrilineal descent decision. In addition, the influence of broader US society, including the increased religiosity of the United States, the increasing identification of the US as a Christian country, the search for spirituality, and the trends amongst inter-ethnic and inter-racial couples, should be examined.

## G. JEWISH PEOPLE CONSIDERATIONS IN ISRAELI GOVERNMENT DECISIONS

### BACKGROUND

If Israel is indeed the State of the Jewish People, not merely the state of Israelis, then its own strategic choices and policy decisions must be somehow guided by a concern for the well-being, not only of its own citizens, but also of Jews around the world who are citizens of their own countries. It can be expected of Israel's government to try and be aware of the potential ramifications that its decisions and actions might have on the Jewish People as a whole.

A primary question is to what extent, if any, are possible impacts on the Jewish People considered? If the answer is positive, then the second question is — what weight is given to such an impact in the final decision? An example is the Israeli decision to engage in an action against Hezbollah in Lebanon (the killing of their leader, Sheikh Moussavi, with his wife and son), which may have contributed to the lethal terrorist attacks against the Jewish community in Buenos Aires in 1994. It seems that the question whether the Israeli action might trigger an attack on Jewish People targets was not considered.

This chapter does not examine whether Jewish People considerations are occasionally present in decisional processes, but whether such considerations are systematically taken into account. This is more a question of context: not whether, but how, and in what context, did Jewish People considerations enter decision-making processes.

The conclusions of this chapter are based on

a study of a number of cases where government decision-making touched directly or indirectly on issues of concern to the Jewish People, such as Project Renewal in the late 1970s and early 1980s; the Ne'eman Committee on Conversion in Israel; Israel's attempts to attract Jews who sought refuge in the US and other countries; and Israel's partnership in the Birthright program. Study methods included interviews with key public officials; examination of proceedings of the Knesset Committee on *Aliyah*, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs; and scanning of cabinet decision-making protocols from 1990 to 2004. In addition, the contributions made by numerous governmental bodies pertaining to the Jewish world were considered, including: the World Jewish Affairs Division in the Foreign Ministry; the Israel-Diaspora Education Relations unit in the Ministry of Education; Jewish People advisors in the Prime Minister's Office; the Minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs, and the National Security Council. Excluded are activities related to assuring physical security for Jews in the Diaspora, and Jewish People considerations in Supreme Court Decisions.

Our study distinguishes between general decision-making processes and decisions dealing with two specific issues: "Who is a Jew" and related matters of conversion and the status of the non-orthodox movements in Israel; and questions of Jewish continuity.

**Israel's choices must be guided by a concern for the well-being of Jews around the world**

## GENERAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Given the wealth of communication and dialogue between Jewish leaders and their Israeli counterparts, and the intense media coverage of Israel and Jewish events around the world, it would be advisable for Jewish People considerations to enter Israeli government decision-making processes. As such, in recent years there is growing awareness in government circles of Israel's relation to the Jewish People. Four notable developments are:

- The establishment in 1999 of the Office of the Minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs, whose formal task is to facilitate dialogue with Jews in the Diaspora, and to serve as a “government address” for the concerns of world Jewry. Admittedly, while this is not a full-fledged ministry, but more a bureau with a small budget, this Office has initiated and guided numerous joint missions and has introduced Jewish People considerations to cabinet deliberations. Among the Office's activities were organizing the Global Forum Against Antisemitism, and publishing a comprehensive study of reparations and restitution in 2005. However, in May 2005 Minister Natan Sharansky, who served as the first and as of yet only Minister for Diaspora affairs, resigned and it is not clear what the future holds for the Ministry.
- The addition of “Diaspora Affairs” to the responsibility of the Knesset Committee on *Aliyah* and Absorption. Although its dominant concern remains *aliyah* and *aliyah* absorption, this Committee has been devel-

oping into a forum for Jewish People issues of a wider scope.

- The keen interest in Jewish People questions by Israel's National Security Council. The overriding concern here is not the security of the State of Israel, but the strength of the Jewish People and the relationships between Israel and the Diaspora.
- The initiative of Israel's president Mr. Moshe Katzav to establish a “Second House” to remedy the decades long practice of “dealing with and making decisions that affect the life of the Jewish People without consulting the Jewish People.”

Despite these developments, there exists no formal mechanism in the Israeli government to systematically take into account considerations pertaining to the Jewish People. This is due partially to the prevailing decision-making culture in the Israeli government, with limited room for systematic staff work. But deeper causes are also at work, including the overall ideology concerning the relationship between Israel and the Jewish People, which regards *aliyah* as the main answer to the problems of the Jews in the Diaspora, and support for Israel as the essence of Israel-Diaspora relations. This ideology is changing and the meaning of “Israel as the State of the Jewish People” includes more elements of responsibility for the Jewish People as a whole. But translating these new perceptions into institutional processes is just beginning.

## WHO IS A JEW

Despite the absence of formalized practices for taking into account Jewish People considerations, and the existence of political barriers, the immense importance of this issue in the Jewish world has not been ignored. The motive behind the appointment of the Ne’eman Committee on Conversion in Israel in 1997 was “a difficult humanitarian problem” — the large number of people who immigrated to Israel pursuant to the Law of Return and have integrated into Israeli society, but are not considered Jews according to *Halacha* and are thus precluded from marrying Jews in Israel. Despite the “local” concern that triggered its establishment, the Committee was aware of the momentous ramifications that its recommendations would have on the Jewish world. Public officials frequently acknowledge that the “who is a Jew” question pertains to all Jews and therefore must not be dealt with as only an Israeli question.

## JEWISH CONTINUITY

Jewish continuity is one of the chief concerns that the Diaspora shares with the State of Israel, but the meaning of “Jewish continuity,” or of “meaningful Jewish continuity,” and what it might take to strengthen this trend, remains disputed. With few exceptions, governments of Israel have considered life in Israel, and consequently *aliyah*, as the main means for increasing the prospects of Jewish continuity.

Israeli governmental deliberations and actions can be mainly understood in light of the following set of premises:

- Israel’s security in the long run depends to a large extent on the size of its Jewish citizenry. The size factor is deemed crucial both externally (regarding Israel’s relations with its enemies), and internally (the threat of losing the Jewish majority inside Israel).
- The future of the Jewish world, i.e. the very likelihood of Jewish continuity, depends to a large extent on the existence of a strong and vital Jewish State of Israel.
- The State of Israel is best suited to enhance the prospects of Jewish continuity. According to this view, while Jewish life outside Israel is liable to wane and eventually vanish, Israel is the only place where Jewish continuity in the long run is secured. (However, there is growing recognition of the potential threat to physical security, should all Jews reside in one place.)

Based on these premises that dominate Israeli government thinking, it follows that those who wish to strengthen Jewish continuity should contribute to the existence of a strong and vital Israel. And the foremost, if not the only way to make this important contribution is to make *aliyah*.

The insistence on *aliyah* has manifested itself in numerous ways throughout the years:

- Whenever Jews around the world are in distress, be it due to economic crises or to acts of antisemitism, the invariable reaction of Israel’s authorities has been “*aliyah*” — “Come, it’s better here.”
- Alarming reports of increasing rates of out-marriage have met the same response.
- Often, when learning of Jews who wished to immigrate but their choice of destination

was not Israel, governments would intervene, even against the will of the immigrants and some of the organizations supporting them.

- The basic guidelines of the 30<sup>th</sup> Government of Israel (Sharon's Government) do not mention the Jewish world — except under the chapter on *aliyah* and absorption. In this, the present government follows the path of former governments.

Furthermore, one study showed that of the thousands of cabinet decisions made in the years 1990–2004, the key words that reflect concern with the well-being of the Jewish People (e.g. “Jews,” “Jewish People,” “Jewish World,” “Jewish Community,” “Diaspora”) are mentioned in the protocols of only one-hundred cases. Not surprisingly, the main theme in the great majority of these cases has been *aliyah*, and financial support for *aliyah* absorption.

A second significant theme in the government protocols is antisemitism. It should be noted that in all the meetings discussing antisemitism, *aliyah* is mentioned as the ultimate countermeasure.

The third central theme in the protocols has to do with Jewish education, primarily in relation to Israel's partnership in Birthright. Here, it seems that the motivation that has been guiding philanthropists and community leaders, namely to strengthen Jewish identity through exposure to Israel, has not been entirely determined by Israel because in Israel, Jewish identity is not the end, but rather the means of reinforcing the bond of Jews with Israel.

While the three premises mentioned above help to explain the overall neglect, or narrow view of Jewish People considerations in Israeli

governmental decision-making, there are important signs of change. These include:

- The definition of the tasks of the Minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs as “securing the existence and the future of the Jewish People *wherever they are*”;
- Israeli action to help assure physical security in the Diaspora and the long-established policy of “never again”;
- Israel's involvement and leadership in combating antisemitism (through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Global Forum Against Anti-Semitism);
- Israel's investment in Jewish education abroad and its advocacy of the strengthening of Jewish education and education about the Jewish People within Israel's education system;
- The institution of a Ministerial Committee on Restitution of Rights and Jewish Property and the official publication of the First Global Report on Restitution of Jewish Property 1952–2004.

Such measures demonstrate an emerging new, albeit still weak, stream of ideas and concerns whereby Jewish People considerations have a place and weight in the agenda of the Government of Israel, in their own right, whether or not they are tied to the more dominant motivation of maintaining a reserve of potential *aliyah*. These changes may provide an opportunity to institutionalize systematic consideration of overall Jewish People concerns in Israeli governmental decision-making processes, as highlighted in the chapter of recommendations in this assessment.