

# The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute

## Annual Assessment

**2006**

### Major Shifts – Threats and Opportunities

...Major shifts create both opportunities and threats, as illustrated by the radical shift in Israeli policies towards the territories ...in combination with the radicalization of Islamic actors...



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THE JEWISH PEOPLE POLICY PLANNING INSTITUTE  
(ESTABLISHED BY THE JEWISH AGENCY FOR ISRAEL LTD)

# Jewish People Policy Planning Institute

## Annual Assessment

# 2006

### EXECUTIVE REPORT No. 3

#### ***Major Shifts – Threats and Opportunities***

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Layout: Marzel A.S. — Jerusalem

Cover Design: Nitza Bruck, Jerusalem

Cover Production: S. Kim Glassman, Jerusalem

Printed in Israel by Gefen Publishing House LTD. Jerusalem

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## Foreword

The annual assessment is the flagship project of the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute. The initial assessment in 2004 was designed to be comprehensive and give a picture of the state of the Jewish people internationally. Last year's assessment was an update, and highlighted emerging issues and challenges as well as the status of particular communities in the Diaspora and whether they had the potential to thrive or were bound to decline. This, the third assessment uses the concept of a "delta" or changes in direction or innovations or developments that can profoundly affect the Jewish people in general or in particular communities. As such, it focuses on especially important developments from the last year, or from the last several years, that affect choices in Israel and for the Jewish people and that require serious responses.

While ten strategic developments are outlined in the assessment — and recommendations are offered on each — several warrant special attention. First, 2006 marked the passing of a historic milestone in the relationship of Israel to the Diaspora. Israel now is home to the largest Jewish community in the world and this trend will only be magnified with the passage of time. If nothing else, this means that the future of the Jewish people is more clearly linked to the fate of Israel, and Israel's character, values and security will matter even more to those who live in the Diaspora. Israel must not lose sight of its responsibility to the Diaspora and the affect of its behaviors on shrinking Jewish communities around the world. At the same time, who Israel is and what it does may also have even more of an affect on Jewish identity outside of Israel.

Second, preserving an unmistakable Jewish majority in Israel is bound to be even more crucial at a time when Israel has become home to the largest single Jewish community in the world. Israel as the national homeland for the Jewish people must retain its Jewish character. Preserving Jewish identity is not just an issue for the Diaspora; it is also an issue for Israel, and has implications for education and demographics in Israel — and the assessment offers recommendations on each.

Third, the decision of the government to withdraw from Gaza and now to contemplate a major evacuation from the West Bank under the rubric of "convergence" (*hitkansut*) represents a historic development. While responding to the demographic imperative to preserve an Israel that is both Jewish and democratic, it has the potential to create fissures or even ruptures in Israel. Much will depend on how it is done. Is it done in circumstances of relative calm? Is it done with some semblance of Palestinian cooperation and input or coordination? Is that even possible? Is it done with international approval and acceptance and how much will such recognition depend on Palestinian responses? Is it done with the acquiescence of a majority of settlers and what must be done practically and financially to produce such an outcome? Responding to these and other questions (and the issues they raise) will require great skill on the part of the Israeli government and its partners internationally, especially the United States.

Fourth, the rising tide of radical Islamists in the Middle East and internationally constitutes a profound new threat. It is manifested not only in the election of Hamas in the Palestinian Authority, which constitutes one set of immediate challenges. But it is also manifested in the growing confidence of a more populist Iranian government that is determined to develop a nuclear weapons capability and is trying to build its appeal in the region through a virulent anti-Israeli policy. Will the Hamas-Iranian-Hizbollah-Moslem Brothers mantra of rejecting Israel become part of a wider discourse in which many in the Middle East and even internationally get used to the idea that it is somehow acceptable to question Israel's existence? Such a concern should not be dismissed and needs to affect Israel's own public and diplomatic efforts. In this sense, the challenge of the Islamists is existential and requires a well developed strategy in response. Perhaps, one of the most important new contributions in this year's assessment is its discussion of the Islamist threat, including its European dimension, and the recommendations for starting a dialogue with moderate Moslems in Europe and elsewhere. Ultimately, it is moderate Moslems who will discredit radical Islamists and there must be an effort to reach out to them.

There are many other developments outlined in the 2006 assessment that can have a fundamental affect on the future of the Jewish people and the choices that need to be made to ensure their well being. The Jewish people have many assets including knowledge, organizations, economic resources and other attributes of soft power internationally and hard power concentrated in Israel. What is most important is to understand the developments, see the new tools for enhancing Jewish identity (like the use of cyberspace for building virtual communities and active networks), and marshal the assets to act on the assessment's many recommendations. While the emerging challenges may be great, the Jewish people have the means for dealing with them. In the end, the value of this assessment and its predecessors will be determined by the readiness of leaders in the Diaspora and in Israel not just to read the recommendations but to act on them.

**Ambassador Dennis Ross**

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



## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

### **What Makes This Year Different From All Other Years?**

The 2006 Annual Assessment takes a different form from the earlier ones. Instead of providing a systematic survey of events and processes in main Jewish communities around the world it focuses on major and in part radical shifts, what we call, adopting metaphorically a concept from differential calculus,<sup>1</sup> “deltas”. A good thought experiment clarifying this concept, without going into theories of historic processes, is to ask oneself if a given event or process is likely to be regarded by a historian in twenty to fifty years to have made a significant difference.

As a result of this structure, a number of important Jewish communities, such as in Australia, Canada and East Europe, are not covered in this year’s Assessment, because no significant delta occurred in them in the period under consideration. This will be redressed in next year’s Assessment.

The concept of delta as used here refers to innovative events and changes in directions which are likely to have significant impacts on the future of the Jewish People, either as a whole

or on main communities. The deltas discussed in this Assessment focus in part on events and processes concentrated around 2005–6 and in part on developments within the last five years or so but becoming pronounced in 2005–6. They can be external to the Jewish People or internal, deliberately taken or stemming from deep historic dynamics. But all deltas share two main features: they constitute a relatively sharp change in direction and are likely to have significant impacts on the future.

There are additional forms of delta, including “missed delta opportunities”, namely events and developments which open significant opportunities for action by the Jewish People but have not been responded to. External and “spontaneous” internal deltas often provide space for deliberately initiating action which can make a significant difference for the better, but this opportunity is in many cases not recognized and utilized. A case in point is cyberspace, with Jewish organizations lagging far behind in availing themselves of its very large potential.

Uninitiated deltas often require responses, which have to be innovative and thus constitute “deltas” on their own, up to “throwing surprises” on history, as done by Israel with its radically new policies in respect to settlements.

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1 For detailed discussion, including many concepts applicable to discussion of historic change processes and turning points, see David William Cohen, James M. Henle, *Calculus: The Language of Change* (Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett), 2004.

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**From 2006 onwards,  
Israel became  
the largest  
Jewish com-  
munity**

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2006 is distinguished by three major deltas which in part partake of the nature of “turning points”. The first one is a critical point on a curve which has emerged for quite a number of years, namely the growing percentage of the Jewish People living in Israel. From 2006 onward Israel Jewry appears to have become the largest Jewish community, surpassing the number of Jews living in the U.S. (not including non-Jewish members of Jewish households). Assuming continuation of current demographic trends, it is expected that by 2015 more than half of the total number of Jews will live in Israel.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of these changes in the structure of the Jewish People, with far reaching implications for the very nature of the Jewish People and Israel-Diaspora relations in generations to come.

To move from culmination of historic deltas to the most important current delta in 2006, it too took place in Israel with the radical shift in its policies towards the territories, settlements and the Palestinians. This delta is closely interconnected with the elections and changes of leadership in Israel and the establishment of a democratically elected Hamas government in the Palestinian Authority.

Another major delta is the combined effect of the advancement of Iranian nuclear programs together with the declarations of the President of Iran that “Israel should be wiped off the map”; the growing number of Moslems in Western countries; developments in Islamic aggressive fundamentalism; and the increasing nature of Islamic terrorist actors as self-organizing

networks. All these add up to a shift producing the most serious external challenge and danger confronting now and in the foreseeable future the Jewish People as a whole and Israel in particular.

At the same time, there is a delta of Israel moving towards a peak in science and technology, as illustrated by four Israeli Nobel Prize winners during the last three years and the high rating of Israel in *The Global Information Technology Report 2005–2006* prepared by INSEAD and the World Economic Forum. But basic weaknesses continue, including the relatively low number of Ph.D. holders and low rating of Israeli school achievements in sciences and mathematics.

Other significant deltas presented in this report can be summed up as follows:

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The international standing of Israel is improving as illustrated by the International Red Cross decision to add an emblem symbol enabling *Magen David Adom* to become a full member; as well as increasing recognition of the Shoah as a major crime against the Jewish People and a human catastrophe, both at the United Nations and in a number of countries.

The rapid development of China into a main global power, while being very dependent on Middle Eastern oil, together with similar trends in India, create a new external environment to which the Jewish People adjusts quite slowly.

Relations with Christian movements and organizations demonstrated important positive features, especially with Pope Benedict XVI continuing the policies of Pope John Paul II towards

Judaism and the Jewish People. But some negative deltas also occurred, such as anti-Israeli divestment (some threatened and some realized) and antagonistic declarations by some Christian and academic organizations.

## THE JEWISH PEOPLE GLOBALLY

The multiple uses of cyberspace are expanding rapidly. Cyberspace clearly has enormous potentials for the Jewish people, in terms of networking, socialization, family formation, image shaping and more. However, despite some beginnings, this as mentioned is a clear case of a missed delta opportunity with the actual utilization of cyberspace lagging far behind needs and potential.

## U.S.

The standing of the Jewish community in the United States faces some new challenges and opportunities posed by the demographic growth and higher activity level of Hispanics. Events and publications concerning AIPAC pose some dangers, while the growing influence of Jewish jurisprudence on American law is a prime illustration of Jewish contributions partaking of “*Tikkun Olam*” and of the increasing importance of Jewish civilization as one of the sources of American culture.

Significant, though as yet of limited scope, grass roots initiatives serve as indicators of things to come, raising major issues of restructuring communities and organizations to fit a new epoch.

## EUROPE AND FSU

The European Union is stagnating, with the rejection of the Constitution by a number of countries, sharp disagreements on economic policies and the lack of clear consensus on foreign and security policy. This may, paradoxically, create opportunities for strengthening relations between main Jewish organizations and European Union bodies, but there are no signs of this opportunity being utilized yet — this constituting a “missed delta opportunity”.

In FSU countries and especially in Russia there is an upsurge in antisemitism fed by grass roots activists and nationalistic parties, though the government is trying to stem these.

In France escalated Islamic antisemitism combined with increasing conflicts between Islamic communities and the French State cause the environment within which Jews are living to deteriorate. But more determined governmental action against antisemitism partly offsets these trends.

The Jewish community in Germany shows signs of transition from growth to stagnation, related in part to changes in immigration policies which have reduced the inflow of Jews from Eastern European and FSU countries.

In the United Kingdom some academic discourse accepts extreme anti-Israeli positions, in part associated with antisemitism, which is often accepted as “normal” in public discourse.

A “*missed delta opportunity*”: the relations with the European Union have not been strengthened

## THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Political changes in Latin America pose new challenges and opportunities to Jewish communities. In the midst of globalization, the region underwent a process of democratization that led to cultural, political and institutional pluralism, widening the presence and legitimacy of the Jewish communities in the public sphere.

While the interactions of Jewish communities with new social and political actors have grown, there is a lack of common Latin American Jewish bodies together with inadequate attention to Latin America by the Jewish People as a whole.

Earlier assessments of the South African Jewish community diagnosed it as in a state of decline. Here a turnaround is occurring, with a change of directions from decline to stability.

Major shifts create both opportunities and threats, as illustrated by the radical shift in Israeli policies towards the territories, settlements and Palestinians in combination with the radicalization of Islamic actors and the explicit threats to destroy Israel by the President of nuclear capacities developing Iran. All the more so, mapping and understanding of deltas is essential for thriving in a rapidly changing world. This is a demanding endeavor, as demonstrated by glaring failures of the intelligence communities of main powers in correctly reading what is happening before their eyes. This assessment tries to help Jewish decision makers in doing so and in developing appropriate innovative policies.

**Yehezkel Dror**

Founding President  
The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute

## Selected Indicators on World Jewry – 2006

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
				Value	World Rank					
	1970 <sup>a</sup>	2006 <sup>b</sup>	Projected 2020 <sup>c</sup>	2003 <sup>d</sup>	2003 <sup>d</sup>	Most recent <sup>a</sup>	Most recent <sup>a</sup>	Most recent <sup>a</sup>	2005 <sup>e</sup>	2005 <sup>e</sup>
World	12,633,000	13,085,000	13,558,000	.963-.281	1-177				21,126 <sup>f</sup>	1,902,788 <sup>f</sup>
Israel	2,582,000	5,309,000	6,228,000	.915	23	97	5	–	–	–
North America	5,686,000	5,648,000	5,581,000	.944-.949	5-10				2,296	508,304
United States	5,400,000	5,275,000	5,200,000 <sup>g</sup>	.944	10	29 <sup>h</sup>	54	35	2,045	457,520
Canada	286,000	373,000	381,000	.949	5	55	35	66	251	50,784
Latin America	514,000	394,000	364,000	.878-.475	30-153				1,592	94,255
Argentina	282,000	184,000	162,000 <sup>i</sup>	.863	34	50-55	45	>50	397	14,777
Brazil	90,000	96,000	90,000 <sup>i</sup>	.792	63	71	45	>50	286	19,764
Mexico	35,000	40,000	42,000	.814	53	85	10	>70	64	23,987
Other countries	107,000	74,000	70,000 <sup>i</sup>	.878-.475	29-153	75	15-95	>50	845	35,727
Europe non-FSU	1,331,000	1,160,000	1,030,000	.956-.734	4-88				3,642	964,387 <sup>g</sup>
France	530,000	492,000	482,000	.938	16	40	40-45	>70	2,545	311,438
United Kingdom	390,000	297,000	238,000	.939	15	60	40-45	78	383	156,749
Germany	30,000	118,000	108,000	.930	20	<20	>60	>50	96	105,224
Hungary	70,000	50,000	34,000	.862	35	<15	60	..	94	8,720
Other EU <sup>j</sup>	171,000	150,000	134,000	.949-.849	4-42	10-25	33-75	>50	326	327,140
Other non-EU <sup>k</sup>	140,000	53,000	34,000	.963-.750	1-94	5-20	50-80	..	259	70,815
FSU <sup>l</sup>	2,151,000	366,000	173,000	.853-.671	36-116				9,378	116,965
Russia	808,000	228,000	130,000 <sup>i</sup>	.795	62	<15	80	..	4,155	68,010
Ukraine	777,000	80,000	25,000 <sup>i</sup>	.766	78	<15	80	..	2,321	28,275
Rest FSU Europe <sup>l</sup>	312,000	38,000	15,000 <sup>i</sup>	.853-.671	38-115	<15	65-75	..	1,109	11,031
FSU Asia	254,000	20,000	3,000	.761-.652	80-122	<15	50-75	..	1,793	9,649
Asia (rest) <sup>m</sup>	104,000	20,000	21,000	.943-.489	11-151				209	121,373
Africa	195,000	78,000	60,000	.821-.281	51-177				3,766	45,800
South Africa	118,000	72,000	57,000	.658	120	85	20	79	102	16,457
Oceania	70,000	110,000	101,000	.946-.523	3-137				76	22,463
Australia	65,000	103,000	95,000	.955	3	65	22	70	71	19,710

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* (2006). Provisional data.

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

d A measure of a country's public health, educational attainment, and real income. Source: United Nations Development Programme (2005).

e Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2006).

f Including country not reported.

g After downward reduction following NJPS 2001.

h Based on partial response from NJPS 2001. A more

accurate estimate would probably be 25–26%.

i Revised population projections for 2020.

j Without Baltic states.

k Including Turkey.

l With Baltic states.

m Without Israel, FSU and Turkey.



## Strategic Agenda and Policy Directions

The deltas presented in this Annual Assessment lead to ten strategic agenda items with policy directions that require urgent consideration by Jewish organizations and leaders. They do not replace the strategic agenda and recommendations presented in the 2004 and 2005 Annual Assessments, but add to them. These include:

### 1. ISRAEL – DIASPORA RELATIONS

The increase in the percentage of the Jewish People living in Israel is growing slowly but constantly, with Israel becoming in 2006 the largest Jewish community. This mega-delta will produce significant long-term changes in Israel-Diaspora relations which not necessarily move on their own towards thriving of the Jewish People.

Therefore, innovative ways to upgrade integration between Israel and the Jewish People in the Diaspora so as to assure the unity of world Jewry in the long run are required.

The following policy directions are recommended, among other things, for urgent consideration and action.

A. Establishment of a Jewish People Leadership Academy, where major Jewish decision-makers and up-and-coming leaders from

Israel and the Diaspora will explore in-depth the critical issues of the Jewish People within long-term and holistic perspectives.

- B. Improvement in Israel of understanding of the Jewish People and of its main communities, with devotion of more time of the Knesset and the Cabinet to Jewish People issues, better mass media coverage and upgrading of relevant subjects in schools and universities.
- C. Care to be taken by Israel to avoid putting Jewish communities and leadership in the Diaspora in situations which may produce an image of “conflict of interest”.
- D. More programs to bring young persons to Israel for at least one year, e.g. through an expanded MASA. At the same time, programs should be initiated to bring select young Israelis to live and work for one year in Jewish communities abroad.
- E. Urgent development of new forms of “multi-local *aliyah*”, for those willing to have two or more residences, in Israel and elsewhere.
- F. Implementation of the JPPPI recommendation to assure taking into account the needs of the Jewish People as a whole and consulting its leaders in making of Israeli decisions of significant impact on the future of the Jewish People worldwide.

- G. Search for new shared projects and forums, e.g. the initiative of the President of Israel, Moshe Katsav on a “Jewish People Forum”, on the basis or real partnership.
- H. Establishment a core staff on the Prime Minister's office in charge of conducting a strategic dialogue with heads of major Jewish organizations.

## 2. DEMOGRAPHY

The ongoing and expected changes in demography, including the lack of any significant improving delta in demographic trends in the Diaspora, make it all the more necessary to develop a vigorous demographic policy (without intervening with family autonomy and within the norms of democracy.)

While there is a delta in terms of growing interest by top level decision makers in assuring a stable Jewish majority in Israel, adequate policies have not yet been adopted. Doing so is recommended, with special attention to enabling families who want to do so to have a third and fourth child.

In addition to quantitative aspects, qualitative dimensions should receive more attention, such as efforts to point the Jewish People, including Israel, in the direction of becoming more of a learning knowledge society, important in terms of both Jewish values and human capital. Special attention should be given to preserving the unique contributions of the Jewish People to peak human achievements.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As discussed in Charles Murray, *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950* (New York: Perennial, 2004).

## 3. ASSISTING ISRAEL IN TRANSFORMATIVE CHOICES

Israel engages in transformative choices associated with difficult dilemmas and the likelihood of serious traumas. These impose a heavy burden on the political system and on society as a whole. The choice to withdraw from the territories and to dismantle settlements undermines classical ideologies and may leave a vacuum in Zionist norms, resulting in the reduction of collective will and energy, unless new values fill their place. The mega-delta of a radical change in territorial policies and all that that entails is clearly transformative. Significant and in part radical further steps are likely to follow in the short as well as the long term. All the more so, Israel requires assistance in coping with its choices and their implications. Seeking ways to do so should be a top item on the strategic agenda of the Jewish People.

Relevant policy directions include:

- A. Once a democratic decision is taken by Israel; its choices should be supported by the vast majority of Jewish People organizations and leaders, whatever their views may have been before that decision.
- B. Shared thinking between Diaspora and Israeli intellectuals, leaders and opinion shapers should take place on redefining Zionist values and principles so as to adjust them to changing situations, while preserving the core essence.
- C. New Zionist projects taking the place of abandoned ones should be undertaken

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as Jewish People Projects in ways posing new challenges and re-energizing a revised version of Zionism. Development of the Negev and the Galilee and strengthening the status of Jerusalem as the Cultural Capital of the Jewish People illustrate possibilities.

#### **4. MAKING CYBERSPACE INTO A MAIN INSTRUMENT OF JEWISH PEOPLE COHESION AND THRIVING**

Cyberspace is changing interpersonal relations, communities, distance, learning and communication. It is especially potent in networking, enabling close links between persons and institutions dispersed geographically.

In all these respects, cyberspace has tremendous potentials for the Jewish People. Some of the possibilities are increasingly recognized. However, only a small part of the potential of cyberspace is being realized.

Therefore, Jewish organizations should invest more planning and resources into increasing utilization of cyberspace as a main instrument of Jewish People cohesion and thriving, including support for grass root initiators of such uses.

The following policy directions illustrate promising possibilities:

- A. Expansion of remote learning of Jewish studies on all levels and in a variety of languages, including degree programs.
- B. Development of interactive computer games on Jewish and Jewish People subjects.
- C. Establishment many more diverse intranet and internet interactive websites and portals.

- D. Establishment of dedicated websites directed at unaffiliated Jews and “Jews Within”, as well as to non-Jewish partners and children in out-marriages.
- E. Creation of intranets for Jewish People leaders and organizations, with various levels of access.
- F. Intensive monitoring of websites relevant to Jewish People concerns, such as hate and antisemitism websites, terror technology diffusion websites, etc.

#### **5. FACILITATION OF GRASS ROOTS INITIATIVES**

Experience and research alike show that adjustment to significant deltas depends a lot on grass root initiatives (together with organizational and leadership innovativeness, as discussed in #10, below).

Grass root initiatives are taking place in many Jewish communities, in part supported by main Jewish organizations and in part independent, but the scope and need for more is very large. Therefore, facilitation of a plurality of grass roots initiatives is a main recommended strategy

Specific suggested policy directions include:

- A. Give priority to initiatives of youth groups and provide them with financial and other support.
- B. Set up advisory agencies to provide counsel and support to incipient and developing grass roots initiatives and provide training to would-be initiators.
- C. In all facilitation, take care to respect and encourage the autonomy of grass roots activities.

## 6. REMEMBRANCE

Historic memory is a core component of Jewish individual and collective self-identity and its uniqueness. *Yizkor!* (Remember!) is a fundamental Jewish commandment and an important one in terms of historic continuity and shared sense of destiny. The Shoah is an important tragic addition to the people-making events remembering of which is imperative.

As described in one of the deltas, there is an upsurge in the construction of Shoah memorials in various forms, as well as in commemorative meetings. However, these should not blind us to the historic processes likely to erode the memory of the Shoah as a major constitutive event in the long-term memory of Jews and non-Jews alike. The main reasons for this propensity include memory-fatigue and psychological processes tending to repress remembrance of the “terrible”.

These processes are deepened by changes in generations from those for whom the Shoah (and other dramatic events, such as establishment of the State of Israel) were personal experiences or strong virtual experience mediated by parents and grandparents, to new generations by whom this history is “taken for granted”.

It is doubtful whether “more of the same” can stop such memory-changing and eroding processes. Indeed, the multiplicity of Shoah memorials similar one to another may make them more “mundane” and reduce their impact.

Therefore, it is recommended to seek novel forms of preserving and presenting the memory of the Shoah in ways appropriate to the mind sets and life worlds of generations who do not share the emotional experiences of “living” the

Shoah personally or through close family relations.

## 7. DEVELOPING “EXTERNAL RELATIONS” STRATEGIES

The Jewish People is different from a state or a combination of states. It does, however, have some characteristics of a polity. And, as a civilization and a people, it is a global actor. Furthermore, it has the potential to become an increasingly significant one in ways appropriate to globalization on one hand and the growing role of “civilizations” as active units on global and state levels on the other. Therefore, it is justified to think, plan and act in terms of “external relations” of the Jewish People.

Jewish People organizations are active in developing external relations, such as in confronting antisemitism, supporting Israel in the global arena, demanding reparations, dealing with migration, and providing some help after disasters. If related activities of Israel acting in part as the State of the Jewish People are added to the picture, there are many expressions of Jewish People external relations concerns and endeavor.

However, these activities do not adequately meet the challenges posed by geo-political deltas. Therefore, crafting of high-quality Jewish People external relations strategies should be a major agenda item, subject to the national interests of the states of which Jews are patriotic citizens.

In particular, the following are recommended:

**Novel forms  
are required  
for pre-  
serving the  
memory of  
the Shoah**

- A. Formation of a long-term strategy towards Islamic actors on four levels.
  - 1. Towards Islam as a global civilization, with major attention to non-fanatic streams, groups, leaders and states.
  - 2. Towards growing Islamic communities, such as in France.
  - 3. Towards Islamic extreme terror groups and networks.
  - 4. Towards particular actors and events, such as Iran and its nuclear policies and Hamas.
- B. Paying much more attention to emerging global powers, in particular China (as detailed in a JPPPI study) and India.
- C. Using the opportunities provided paradoxically by stagnation in the European Union to upgrade relations with its institutions.
- D. Making much more of an effort to strengthen the action capacities of Latin American communities.
- E. Building bridges to increasingly important ethnic groups, such as Hispanics in the U.S.
- F. Intensifying activities towards global organizations including United Nations bodies and international NGO's, where persistent efforts may provide positive results,

## 8. STRENGTHENING ACTION CAPACITIES

Policies require action capacities. The Jewish People has many action resources, such as knowledge, organizations, domestic influence in main powers, soft power, economic assets, and hard power concentrated in Israel. Still, upgrading action capacities is essential for imple-

menting improved and expanded inner-directed and outer-directed strategies.

Relevant policy principles include:

- A. Better exchange of experience, coordination and cooperation between Jewish organizations and decision-makers.
- B. Strengthening the influence of Jewish communities, such as developing cooperation between Jewish communities in European Union member states.
- C. More studies and evaluation of experiences with Jewish People policies, with conclusions drawn for the future.
- D. Strengthening development of Jewish People policy professionals.
- E. Seeking new financial resources for Jewish People activities, including options which in some communities were rejected in the past such as governmental financing of Jewish education.

## 9. RAPIDLY UPGRADING CAPACITIES TO COPE WITH CRISES

All available indicators lead to the conclusion that there is a significant probability of violent actions against Jewish targets around the world.

Therefore, a major recommendation — based on earlier JPPPI work being partially implemented — is to rapidly upgrade Jewish crisis-coping capacities, with Israeli contributions as may be required and appropriate. The need for upgrading applies to each local community, to groups of communities in the same country or block of countries, and to the global level of Jewish People action. This involves an

early warning system, preventive short- and long-term action, real-time decision making and recuperation, with emphasis to maintain and strengthen communal activities. All these can be much improved by advance preparation, in close cooperation with relevant public order and safety agencies in the various countries.

The crisis-coping capacities are also important in case of natural calamities and other crises, if governmental action is not fully adequate for meeting specific Jewish needs.

## 10. ACCELERATE INSTITUTIONAL AND LEADERSHIP INNOVATION

The deltas explored in this Annual Assessment add up to main challenges, many of which are new in main features. This makes accelerated institutional and leadership innovation all the more urgent.

Self-renewal, adoption of radically innovative policies, multiplication of new structures and adjustment of leadership features to changing situations are therefore a critical strategic agenda item.

Relevant policy directions include:

A. Periodic evaluation of results of main policies

by independent organizations specializing in such studies.

- B. Accelerated injection of “fresh thinking” into main decision making bodies, including implementation of Jewish People Policy Planning recommendation “35–35”, namely, that about 35% of the members of main decision-making bodies should be below the age of 35, and that the diversity of main decision-making bodies should be increased by including more women and persons from different social strata.
- C. Periodic leadership retreats of three to six days discussing in depth main strategic issues, on the basis of position papers surveying relevant experiences and posing new options. Iconoclastic persons and independent thinkers should participate in such retreats, with discussions being off the record.
- D. Organizational development in Jewish organizations should focus on encouraging creativity and innovation, such as by setting up “strategic” staff units protected from current pressures and bureaucratic politics, but fully conversant with organizational realities.

## Deltas 2005-2006

### The External Environment

#### 1. GEO-STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

##### Global Deltas

A number of global developments constituting important deltas for the Jewish People are presented in following chapters, including trends in the Islamic world. This chapter briefly considers five major global developments which are of growing significance for the Jewish but have not yet had major direct repercussions during 2005–2006.

##### U.S. and Iraq

The United States is deeply caught up in Iraq, making some progress but with no end in sight. While there were elections and a government is being set up, its stability is doubtful. In the United States, the situation in Iraq evokes growing critique that is likely to have implications for the future of U.S. policies, including in the Middle East. Iraq continues to be

highly unstable, with potentials for becoming a breeding ground for fanatic global terror groups. All in all, Iraq is becoming a test case of Western capacities and determination, with many implications for the future, including Israel and the Jewish People as a whole.

##### China

China continues to develop into a dominant regional and a main global power in terms of economy and military strength. It is increasing dependence on Middle Eastern oil and active in oil-rich Middle Eastern and African countries. As a global power and regional actor, future Chinese policies are of profound importance for Israel and the Jewish People.

##### The European Union

The European Union is in stagnation and in part in regression. The rejection of the Constitution is not only a serious blow, but a symptom of

growing lack of enthusiasm for the European Union in some member countries. Efforts to develop a shared foreign and defense policy are stymied, despite some progress with building up a rapid intervention force. While enlargement continues, the situation makes it very unlikely that Turkey will be accepted as a member in the foreseeable future, with possibly serious implications for the self-identity of Turkey between the West and Islam. In respect to the Middle East, the European Union's role is continuing but weakening, while it is in a dilemma what to do about Iranian nuclear policies.

Another development is increasing dependence on oil and gas from Russia together with tendencies by the latter to use these resources politically.

Growing numbers of Moslem immigrants and difficulties with their integration, together with their radicalization, pose a difficult problem with serious potentials for Jewish communities.

### Fundamentalist Islamic Terrorism

The main shifts in the last year have been manifest mostly through:

- (a) An increase in the quantity and gravity of terror attacks in Europe perpetrated by Moslem terrorists in Europe.
- (b) The shifts in the Palestinian Authority since the Hamas ascent to power and the activity of Islamic Jihad as another force in the struggle against Israel.
- (c) Extremist Islamic ideological developments and increased terror attacks and struggle by the Islamic Jihad against Arab countries which they consider "moderate".

- (d) According to some estimates, albeit uncorroborated, Iran's involvement in and support of radical Islamic terrorism in the world in general and in the Middle East in particular, concurrently with the process of enhancing its nuclear capability.

The central change in the characteristics of recent terror attacks in Britain, Spain and The Netherlands and in other places in Europe is the fact that they were perpetrated with assistance and planning by European Moslems, the children of second-generation immigrants who were born and raised in Europe.

In some views, there are terrorist groups which are considering focusing attacks on Jewish targets.

European countries that were subjected to terror attacks are revising policies, including strengthening border controls and changing laws so as to permit tougher action against suspects also at some costs of human rights values. There is increasing cooperation with Israel in security matters and more understanding of Israeli anti-terror policies.

In 2005 there was a trend of increased attacks by elements affiliated with extremist Islamic terrorism in Arab countries and other Moslem countries, but there are no signs that this is destabilizing their regimes.

**European countries increase cooperation with Israel on security matters**

### Natural Disasters

In recent times the world has witnessed a series of large-scale natural disasters. A growing number of scientists believe that with global

warming as a result of human activity, multiple natural disasters and other disastrous changes, such as rising sea levels, are to be expected.

Up to now, Jewish communities were not counted among the main victims of natural disasters, except for the evacuation of some 9,000 Jews out of New Orleans, but if the forecasts of an increase in the number and gravity of natural disasters materialize, Jewish communities might be hit on a scale that would require assistance beyond local capabilities. The Israeli government as well as many Jewish community organizations took part in short- and long-term rescue and rehabilitation operations. The aid effort, however, was relatively small-scale.

## 2. TRENDS IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

Perhaps the best way to begin this chapter is by discussing the affair over the caricatures of Muhammad, which exploded in Copenhagen in late 2005, then spread to the whole of Western Europe and to most of the Islamic world. It originated in the initiative of Danish imams (soliciting the backing of Egyptian religious authorities) who sought to use the publication of the caricatures to strengthen sectarian tendencies among Danish Moslems and to widen the chasm separating them from the indigenous, nominally Christian majority. Imams and radical Islamic militants in the rest of Europe soon joined the opportune use of similar tactics to achieve the same goal, harping on the “shameful” desecration of Islam by the dominant, allegedly tolerant culture that had proved itself once more disdainful of Islam and totally opposed to it. As the global media gave salience to this dramatic confrontation, Moslem radicals — and not nec-

essarily apostles of violence — from Indonesia to Morocco jumped at what was perceived as a golden opportunity to provide fresh grist for the mill in their ongoing propaganda effort to bolster the sense of “clash of civilizations” among the masses. By Easter 2006, the violence instigated by the caricatures found its first victims in anti-Coptic assaults in and near churches of Alexandria, Egypt.

This affair was part and parcel of the confrontation between radical Islamic movements — mostly of the Moslem Brotherhood orientation — and the West and its allies in Islamic lands, with apparently nothing to do with the Jews, and yet the Jewish angle does intrude from time to time. For example, when discussing the western argument in favor of freedom of expression, in which “nothing is sacred” and no one is immune to criticism and ridicule, Arab commentators accused the western media of hypocrisy: “Don’t you have a taboo called the Holocaust, protected by laws which severely punish deniers and revisionists of all sorts?” they ask. This is an argument found not only at the higher reaches of the debate. Young drifters, claiming allegiance to Radical Islam, who were caught in France desecrating a Shoah monument, claimed that their act was tantamount to “urinating on the *Arc de Triomphe*.”

This indicated that Jew-hatred, derived from the perception of the Jew as an ally and/or sponsor of western culture and polity, is an integral, though often secondary part, of the radical Islamic phenomenon, not only in the terrorist (al-Qaeda-like) variety of the phenomenon, but also in its sectarian, educational varieties.

The main contribution of Radical Islam in fostering antisemitism lies, however, in anti-

Jewish propaganda of an older sort: in the plethora of books, websites and sermons dedicated to the unhappy history of the Prophet's relationship with the Jews of Arabia, as depicted in the Koran and the *Hadith*, and the status of the Jew as a humble minority religion in the *Sharia's* (Moslem law.) These are materials readily available in the tradition which the movement seeks to resuscitate. There is no need to invent or import anything: audiotape cassettes, videos, and booklets on this topic are offered for sale in Moslem quarters in Europe, as well as in Arab lands. Many of these materials are not even blatantly radical, but come from more conservative and intellectual circles. An aura of respectability is thereby conferred upon the radical arguments that the Jew as an age-old enemy of the Faith: devious, unreliable, and bound to renege on his commitments.

This anti-Jewish campaign is in full swing. It includes *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which is re-published almost annually. Copies are openly displayed at shops in Moslem quarters in Europe, with explanations often appended that state how the "document" accounts for Jewish prominence in the media, business and culture in the West (see the chapter on "French Jewry under Pressure"), as well as Israel's success and the way it allegedly dominates the U.S. Quite recently, the *Protocols* have been cited in sermons and blogs as proof of the conspiracy theories declared by Iranian President Ahmadinajad, who gave his imprimatur to a second theme: denial of the Shoah. The fact that his declarations were not condemned by the international community (the UN Security Council in late October 2005 merely condemned his call for the annihilation of Israel and/or the repatriation of its inhabi-

nts to Europe) lent extra weight to his words, at least among immigrant communities in Europe.

The value of emotion-laden visual representations transmitted by TV appears very clearly in the study conducted by Danielle Joly and Ferhad Khosrohavar among Moslems held in prison in the UK and France (published in late 2005.) Prisoners who held radical views said that a formative moment occurred when they saw persecution of Moslems on television. Among older ones, it was pictures of Kosovo; among younger prisoners, it was the Second *Intifada*. The study indicates another finding: arranging the prisoners on a scale from extremist (al-Qaeda or Algerian GIA) to radical (in viewpoint, but not involved in subversive activity) to conservative (practicing more or less the major precepts of Islam) to indifferent/slack, all the extremists and most of the radicals are found to be obsessed with Jew-hatred.

The fact that al-Qaeda has been decapitated by the American invasion of Afghanistan makes the evolution and operation of these radical groups very difficult to detect, monitor and counter-act. The terrorist actors now consist largely of many overlapping and autonomous self-organizing networks which do not depend on guidance from above.

Against this background of Moslem communities immersed in anti-Jewish propaganda — as a secondary, yet integral part of daily life — it is to be expected that friction with Jews is going to persist, and possibly even rise (particularly in Europe, where social envy and deprivation play the role of accelerator.) These self-organized networks inspired by al-Qaeda are more likely

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**Most Moslem  
radicals hate  
Jews and  
Israel**

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than ever to pick Jewish institutions as “soft” targets, at a time where “hard” targets (e.g. embassies) are better protected. This is true not only in Europe, but also in North America and in South East Asia.

This relates mostly to Sunni Islam (al-Kaeda is Sunni, and to some extent anti-Shiite; while almost all Moslem immigrants in the west are Sunni, but the Shi'a does enter the fray, especially through Iran, where the regime is Shiite-fundamentalist.) Through the influence of Ahmadinejad, a populist (and popular) politician, Iran has in

recent months become a major source of antisemitic and Shoah-denial propaganda that extends beyond the Shiite world and has the added media value of a “respectable”, state-sponsored activity. That this is combined with a call for the elimination of Israel, together with the accession to power of Hamas, makes its effect even greater.

Iran's nuclear threat also looms heavily in the background. Ahmadinejad is neither the sole nor the most important decision-maker in nuclear matters, and Iran's immediate goal in creating a military nuclear capability is to achieve hegemony in the Gulf. Still, Ahmadinejad's rhetoric does tell us something about the spirit in ruling circles, perhaps with regard to what may be done after hegemony is secured, with objectives such as leading the whole Moslem world, with the fight against Israel as reason or pretext. All this bodes ill for the global scene, if and when Iran gets the bomb.

The specter of an antisemitic, Shoah denier and anti-Israel Iran in possession of the bomb is thus not a chimera; it is a disquieting threat,

### **Iran has become a center of anti-Israelism**

and not only to Israel, the largest Jewish community in the world. Iran considers the Jews as evil — an idea with strong roots in the Iranian Shi'a, which has always considered Jews as “impure” and which demonstrated its attitude in two bombings in Argentina that were meant to strike Jews in order to punish Israel. Future international actions against a recalcitrant Iran, even short of military operations, may result in Iran regarding Israel as the instigator behind the scene.

In South East Asia, the Islamist movement, centered around the Indonesian *Jama'a Islamiyya* (which perpetrated the Bali bombing), presents a different picture. Despite its links with al-Kaeda, the *Jama'a*, and its allies in Malaysia and Singapore, exude no anti-Jewish animus, and makes no reference to the Shoah. The fact that Jews share no history with Javans, Chinese and Malayans must have something to do with this. At the same time, the attitude towards Israel as a state is very hostile.

If the events of 2005–6 are seen in the broad context of the attitudes of main Islamic actors towards Jews and Israel, the inevitable conclusion is that relations with Islam are probably the gravest security issue facing the Jewish people, both in Israel and the Diaspora, with the roots of this problem deeper and more persistent than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### **3. REPOSITIONING OF JEWS IN WESTERN SOCIETIES**

The changing insights prevailing on Jews and Judaism in Western societies can be framed along three main dimensions of knowledge, belief, and power. In 2005–6, a significant range

of new attitudes and initiatives by cultural, religious, and political institutions in Western countries touched upon:

- Acknowledging the particular historical experience of the Jews during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and particularly during World War II;
- Confronting Judaism on theological ground, especially by various branches of Christianity;
- Coming to terms with the attainment by the Jewish people of political leverage on the international scene through independent statehood.

### Shoah Recognition and Symbols

The most striking recent change in the relation of Western societies to the Jews and Judaism is probably the eventual acknowledgement of the Shoah as a major event in European and world history and a fundamental aspect of the Jewish experience. As opposed to a previous attitude of generic condemnation of genocide, specific focus on Shoah remembrance and meaning has emerged in several ways:

- The decision by consensus in November 2005 by the Assembly of the United Nations to declare an International Day of Holocaust Remembrance;
- The establishment by most European countries of a European Day of Memory on January 27;
- The establishment of a European Day of Jewish Culture on the first Sunday of September;
- The performance of large-scale and high-

profile official ceremonies, such as the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz;

- The inauguration of highly visible Shoah Memorials, notably a large one in Berlin; the renewed Yad Vashem facility in Jerusalem; and a growing number of Shoah-centered Jewish museums in various European and American cities;
- The legal recognition of civil-economic rights of victims of anti-Jewish persecutions and discrimination, and the active legal pursuit of the matter by more European countries, including a late recognition of Jewish communities in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean among those eligible for indemnification;
- The returning of art looted by Nazis to its rightful owners — most notably the restitution of a major collection of Klimt paintings in Austria, and some Dutch museums giving up their old masters;
- The sentencing of Shoah denier David Irving in a Vienna court;
- The opening of German war archives, which will enable an in-depth examination of the mechanisms of responsibility and perpetration of the Shoah;
- The Catholic Church's document, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, of March 1996, in which the very use of the Hebrew term instead of the common (and semantically inappropriate) "Holocaust" seems to indicate authentic recognition for the victim's right to their own terms of reference;
- The continued objection of Jews to the Church's ongoing procedure to sanctify Pope Pius XII: A comment by Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Franciscan Custodian in the

Holy Land, who — referring, in his words, to existing papal documents or documents by European bishops — expressed criticism of the Church's highest leadership levels for not adopting a courageous stand in the evangelical spirit in the face of the Nazi regime.

The importance of these developments cannot be underestimated, although they are accompanied by problematic side effects. On the positive side, the recent moves represent unequivocal recognition of the uniqueness of Jewish historical experience and, by implication, of the right of Jews to their own definition of past and present identity. The explicit acceptance of responsibility on the part of Western society toward the Jews is a deserved act of equity, long ignored because of lack of consciousness or political calculation. As such, it is an important step in the self-assessment of Western civilization and coming to terms with its own past. Moreover, the acceptance of the Jewish past on Jewish terms of reference is an important step toward recognizing Jews as an integral and legitimate component of Western history and society.

The negative side of the new developments is the crystallization of Jewish history and acceptance through a narrow and specific prism — one that in substantive terms is related to tragedy, injustice, discrimination and inferiority. Jews are therefore accepted in the mainstream of Western civilization primarily in their unique role as victims. It should be stressed at the same time that on the Jewish side, too, the Shoah is demonstrably one of the main catalysts of present-day Jewish identity and one of the

few bridges above divisions that characterize ideological positions and self-perceptions within the Jewish camp itself.

In no way can the achievements of the past few years concerning the authorization of Jewish historical memory be minimized. What remains to be seen, however, is what relationship such acceptance bears to other dimensions of Jewish relevance in Western discourse. It should also be stressed that recent negative references to the Shoah by Islamic representatives have generated vehement critical reactions in Europe and America, thus confirming the incorporation of Jewish memory among the core values of the West, as opposed to rising Islamic fundamentalism.

### Christian Churches and the Jews

Since Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, the attitude of Christian Churches has increasingly turned from viewing the Jews as possible rivals or competitors to ideal partners or even necessary elements in the definition of their own Christian doctrine. Innovative steps in the encyclical included clearing the Jews from indiscriminate collective responsibility in Jesus' crucifixion, recognition of an unbroken covenant of God with the Jewish people, and the condemnation of antisemitism as a sin. After the great impulse given by Pope John Paul II to the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jews, the election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in 2005 and his first year as Pope Benedict XVI were watched with interest. It was not to be taken for granted that the conservative German theologian would continue on the same path as his predecessor.

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#### **The new Pope: a high priority to relation with Jews**

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During the first year of his pontificate, the new Pope — albeit with a style different from his predecessor — openly showed his intention to give high priority to relations with the Jews and Judaism through:

- Meeting the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations less than two months after his election;
- Visiting the Cologne synagogue during his first visit abroad (August 2005);
- Meeting Israel Chief Rabbis Yona Metzger and Shlomo Amar on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*;
- Meeting with Rome's Chief Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni, jointly denouncing antisemitism in January 2006, and promising to return to the synagogue originally visited by John Paul II;
- Reaffirming condemnation of the Shoah as an indelible shame of history;
- Meeting Israel's President Moshe Katsav and political leader Shimon Peres, jointly condemning terrorism, and positively responding to their invitations to visit Israel (which would have more ecclesial than political meaning);
- A high profile visit to Auschwitz in May 2006.

The Catholic Church thus seems to be maintaining its central role in the Christian world in paying attention to Jewish issues. Clearly, the dialogue with Jews did not (and hardly could) enter into issues of the nature of God and other principles of religious doctrine, but has rather taken three main directions:

- Recognizing the importance of the Shoah

and the State of Israel in the contemporary definition of Jewish identification;

- Confronting and sharing ideas on the common fight to maintain relevance in the face of widespread spiritual alienation and the quest for unconventional alternatives to organized religion;
- Providing ethical solutions to emerging new issues related to medical, genetic and technological development and the manipulation of life and death.

As opposed to the repeated professions of “favorite brotherhood” and, all in all, a leading role on the Catholic side, the relation of Protestant denominations to Jews and Judaism seems to lack a central direction and reflects each denomination’s different stances vis-à-vis current political issues.

On one hand, the Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, and Episcopalian churches declared their support of divestment and use of other economic pressures against Israel as a protest against occupation of Palestinian territory and, in particular, against construction of Israel’s security fence. For a short while, the Church of England followed — although against the view of the Archbishop of Canterbury — but eventually withdrew.

On the other hand, among the Evangelists and Baptist churches, especially in the U.S. Bible belt, elements of religious belief intervened in providing justification of Israeli political acts. According to this view, in a sort of kinship relation, the State of Israel and its occupation of the Holy Land is an essential agent to trigger the Second Coming of Jesus, the battle of Armageddon, and mass conversion.

These conflicting positions leave a vacuum in the definition and comparison of basic religious contents, namely a search for possible common ground between Jews and Judaism and the several Christian Evangelical streams.

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**Since 1967,  
Western  
left-wingers  
have been  
more critical  
of Israel than  
the right**

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One most intriguing event related to Christian-Jewish relations was the highly publicized divulgence in 2006 of the third century Gospel of Judah. According to this version, Judas did not have sell his mentor but — in accordance to the Gnostic belief — adhered to Jesus' request to help him liberate his spiritual inside of his external physical body. More than generate revision of ancient dogma, this document may challenge the conventional character of Judas as the quintessential traitor and call into question two thousand years of anti-Jewish stereotype.

### Attitudes towards the Jewish State

There is a third and more problematic dimension in the relationship between Western societies and the Jewish people, namely, the political side as manifested in attitudes towards the State of Israel. In public statements, Israel is usually clearly identified as the Jewish state, but there still lacks uniform acknowledgement that for the vast majority of world Jewry statehood has become one irrevocable and central component in the overall definition of Jewishness. Consequently, the debate about Israel's standing in regional and world politics and especially criticism of Israeli government policies — which should be perfectly legitimate in public discourse

— bear a complex relation to criticism of Jews and the Jewish people in general.

While Western public opinion holds different opinions about the Middle East conflict and Israel's role within it, over the four decades that have elapsed since the June 1967 war (with some important exceptions) it appears that political forces on the left of the spectrum have been more critical of Israel than those on the right. This trend is broadly supported in the most recent political shifts and government changes:

- Part of President's Bush generally supportive position can be related to his own religious persuasions;
- Labor Premier Tony Blair's pro-Israel stance and support of Bush's policies, despite the generally critical nature of the discourse in the UK;
- Christian Democrat Angela Merkel, with her narrow election as Chancellor, readily issued reassuring declarations concerning Germany's relations to the Jewish people and to Israel;
- Silvio Berlusconi, head of Italy's center-right government, went on record as perhaps the friendliest to Israel in Italian history, before narrowly losing elections to Romano Prodi's center-left coalition in April 2006. In his former position as European Union Chief Commissioner, Prodi was involved in some controversy regarding the delayed publication of a major report on the causes of antisemitism in Europe and the results of a Eurostat survey which indicated Israel, of all countries, as the most dangerous to world peace. Members of the new center-left coalition readily advocated a more "equitable"

- position for Italian policies toward Israel and the Palestinians;
- President Jacques Chirac of France, after years of a rather tense relationship with Israel, gave some signs of a wish to readdress his policies — perhaps as a result of the unusual violence led by Moslem residents in major French cities. Similar violence had already caused damage to the French Jewish community;
  - On the negative side, Britain's largest academic Union, the NATFHE, voted to boycott Israeli academics and institutions that do not publicly declare their opposition to Israel policy in the territories. The NAFTHE resolution was not expected to have real implications following its merger with AUT, another union of university faculty, which had previously voted opposition to unrestricted boycotts. This was followed by a vote of Ontario's largest union in Canada to join an international boycott against Israel.

Identification of local Jews with Israel — a frequent feature in Western countries — is obviously problematic. Israel is seen by many as being part and parcel of the American camp. At the same time, leaders in East Europe, but also in significant parts of Western Europe and other Western countries, perceive the Jews in general and American Jewry in particular as overtly influential, both politically and economically. Those who view this in a positive light (rather than linking it to classic antisemitic conspiracy theories) deem Israel and the Jews in general as a conduit to get close to the U.S. in order to promote their own interests. Shadows of philosemitism and antisemitism intermingle in such a cluster of esteem-fear.

## Conclusion

The apparently unrelated spheres of history, religion and politics are usually discussed separately, among other reasons because of an analytic tradition that views issues of religious import and issues related to civil society as conceptually distinct. On careful consideration, however, an integrated perspective may be necessary in order to discern major ongoing changes in Western societies and more visible innovations in the ways chosen to address, and indeed to reposition, the Jews in their midst.

Western societies face an uneasy task in their attempt to define themselves in the light of their own fundamental religious and civil tenets. Such self-definition is becoming increasingly urgent in view of economic and strategic integration on the global scene, mass immigration from external countries, and perceived threats coming from militant quarters, such as Islam. One case in point is the animated discussion around, and loose compromise reached about, Europe's authentic roots ("cultural, religious and humanistic") in the preamble of the proposed but not yet ratified European Union Constitution.

Among the multiple ways by which Western societies are coping with the Jews and the products of their civilization, historical appraisal seems to have reached a stage of mature recognition. Religious belief is not a matter for easy convergence — if at all — and its main influence appears in civil and political issues. The political dimension of Jewish existence remains the more problematic and the one more in demand for intellectual elaboration and practical solutions.

## 4. MAGEN DAVID ADOM AND THE NEW RED CROSS SYMBOL

On December 8, 2005, the signatories to the Geneva Convention ratified a decision to adopt the third protocol appended to the Geneva conventions. There was no consensus for the decision, and it was reached with a majority of 98 states in favor, 27 opposed and 10 abstained. As the protocol states:

“This protocol recognizes an additional distinctive emblem in addition to, and the same purpose as, the distinctive emblems of Geneva Conventions. The distinctive emblem shall enjoy equal status”.

(As this report went to press, the 190 member-states of the Red Cross were going to hold a final vote in a plenary session.)

The meaning of the decision is the approval of the “crystal” as an official emblem of the International Red Cross organization by the Geneva Commission, in addition to the Red Cross and the Red Crescent emblems, and the acceptance of the *Magen David Adom* (MDA) into the Red Cross and Red Crescent organization. MDA is not required to use the crystal in its domestic operations, but is entitled to represent itself abroad by this emblem, either adjacent to the red *Magen David* emblem or containing it.

MDA is Israel’s official emergency and rescue services organization, providing first-aid and casualty dispatch in cases of emergency. It is based on an international model of Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations. The red cross on a white background, representing medical teams in battlefields, was ratified at the 1864 Geneva Convention. From the inception of the first Jewish Rescue Societies in Palestine in

1930, the red *Magen David* emblem has been recognized as representing medical and first-aid services for the Jewish population in Palestine.

On August 12, 1949, Israel signed the Geneva Convention, and in the signing ceremony on December 8, 1949, it officially became a member of the Geneva Convention. Upon joining, the state of Israel applied to the Red Cross Commission for approval of the red *Magen David* as its emblem and was refused.

In 1950, the Knesset ratified the MDA law. According to the law, MDA operates in the capacity of a “national Red Cross society” for the state of Israel and is committed to the provisions of the Geneva Convention and to other international humanitarian treaties. The organization’s emblem, as specified by this law, is a red *Magen David* on a white background.

During the 1974 Geneva Convention, called to discuss international law, the Israeli delegation once again submitted a request to recognize the emblem, but following the Six Day and Yom Kippur wars, it was feared that a negative vote could jeopardize the *de facto* recognition enjoyed by the organization, so Israel withdrew its request without it being discussed. The subject was raised again by Israel with various Red Cross agencies in 1977, 1981, 1986, 1995, 1997 and 1999. In each case, the request was refused on the grounds that the Red Cross emblem stands for neutrality and is devoid of religious significance. The Commission argued that the proliferation of symbols detracts from the unifying value of the Red Cross and may cause confusion in the battlefield. This refusal persisted regardless of the recognition of two other distinctive emblems — the Red Crescent emblem and the Iranian red Lion and Sun emblem, which

was recognized by the International Red Cross organization in 1907 (and disused since 1980).

As mentioned, despite the official recognition of these two additional emblems, repeated attempts by Israel to revise the decision have failed, mainly due to the existence of a strong Arab opposition to the move.

The American Red Cross organization has brought up the issue on numerous occasions. In 1989, it recognized MDA as a “sister-organization” and urged its acceptance to the federation. In 1990, the American Red Cross adopted an action plan for the inclusion of MDA as a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

In January 1999, following a meeting of legal and diplomatic experts, it was unanimously agreed that “an extraordinary route” could be offered, but that such a move would require a political intervention process. The 27<sup>th</sup> Convention, which took place in Geneva in late October 1999, agreed to form a joint workgroup authorized to find a comprehensive solution which would be acceptable to all. With this statement, a new process began, which went back to the old approach, linking the specific problem of MDA to the movement’s wish for a single universal emblem.

In early 2005, following pressures from the American Red Cross and the Israeli government, Switzerland decided to revive the move to add an emblem. The official reason given noted the existence of “suitable political and diplomatic circumstances”—a terminology consistent with the disengagement process and decline in the intensity level of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Most of the opposition during the deliberations came from the OIC (Organization of Islamic

Countries), which represents 53 countries. The organization insisted that the issue of responsibility regarding “the occupied territories” must be resolved before the special Israeli emblem is granted recognition. At the end of several days of deliberations and Switzerland’s decision to forego consensus, the issue was finally resolved with the recognition of the new emblem and the decision to ratify the new protocol in June 2006.

The ratification of the new protocol in June 2006 and the recognition of the new emblem signify a change in the status of MDA, from an observer organization to a full member of the international federation of Red Cross organizations. This membership is represented by a new emblem, the red crystal, which represents countries whose emblems don’t conform to the organization’s existing emblems.

The practical implications of this move are an improved ability to develop initiatives in the international arena and open access to Red Cross budgets.

In addition to recognizing MDA, in the same month the UN recognized three Israeli associations: *Zaka*, *Shatil* and the Women’s Lobby. These associations are entitled to take part in UN deliberations, international conferences and conventions, and maintain contacts with similar organizations worldwide. Another Israeli organization which had been accepted to the UN is *Yad Sarah*, admitted in 2003.

This recent development reflects the strengthening of Israel’s international standing and its acceptance as a legitimate actor in the arena of international organizations in the last couple of years, especially following the disengagement in the summer of 2005.

## The Jewish People Globally

### 5. ISRAEL BECOMES THE LARGEST JEWISH COMMUNITY

#### Selected Indicators of World Jewry

World Jewry was estimated at 13,085,000 at the beginning of 2006, an overall increase of 0.4% over 2005. Israel's Jewish population grew by 1.4%, while the rest of world Jewry diminished on aggregate by -0.3%.

Israel's Jewish population (not including more than 300,000 non-Jewish immigrants in the Law of Return framework) surpassed 5.3 million in 2006, or 40.6 percent of world Jewry. This represented not only a population increase of more than 70,000 over 2005, but also a landmark watershed in Jewish population history. Indeed, after critically reviewing all available evidence on Jewish demographic trends, it is now plausible to claim that Israel has overtaken the United States in hosting the largest Jewish community worldwide. At least, concerning the *core* Jewish population not inclusive of non-Jewish members of Jewish households and other non-Jews of Jewish ancestry, demography — through its multiple, imperceptibly slow and unnoticed daily action — has produced a transition of singular symbolic relevance for Jewish history and destiny. For the first time since the first century C.E., a plurality of world Jewry resides in the historical homeland.

Israel's Jewish population growth — even if slower than during the 1990's — reflects the continuing substantial natural increase produced

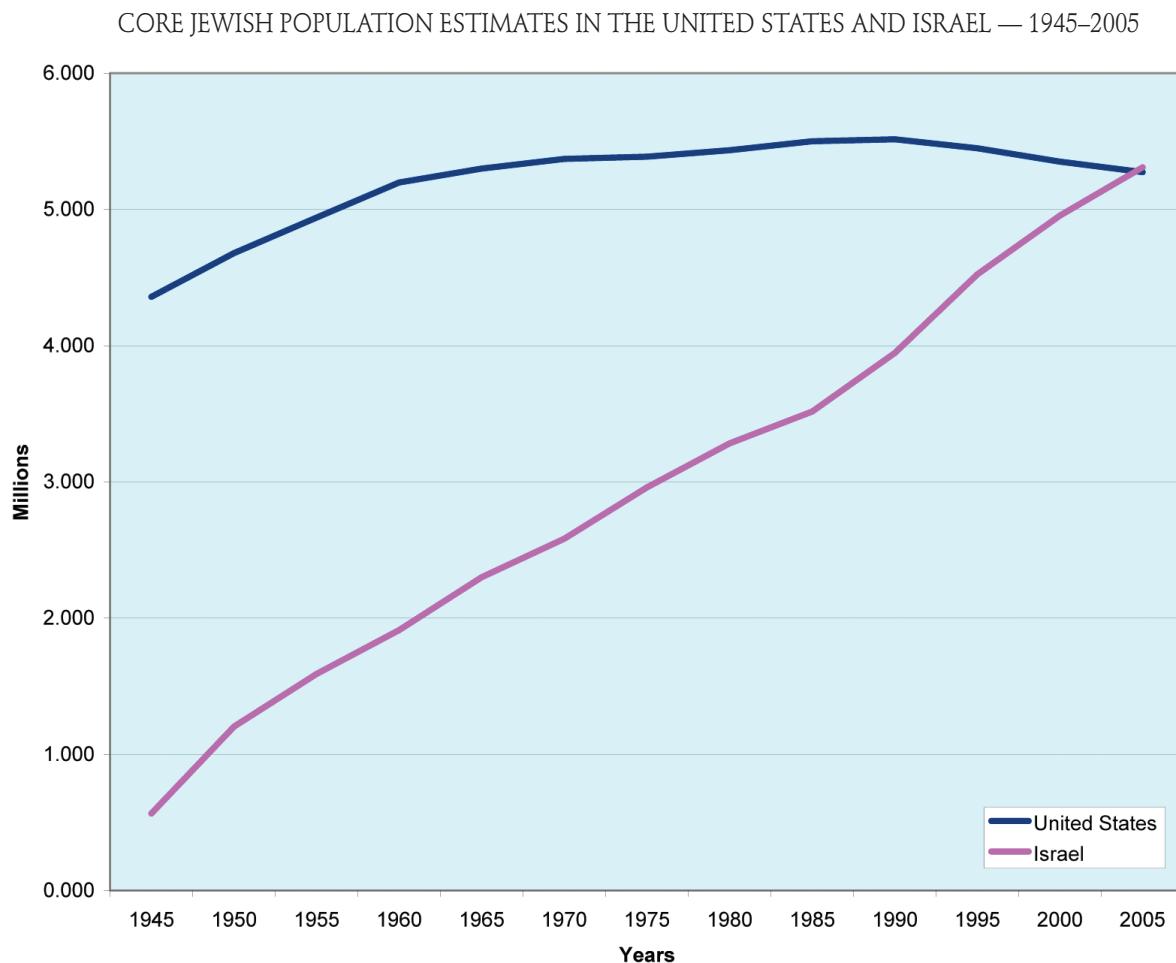
by a combination of relatively high fertility (2.7 children on the average in 2004) and young age composition (over 25% below 15). Neither of these two factors prevails in any other Jewish community worldwide where, besides the possible impact of international migration, Jewish population tends to decrease at variable paces.

This is also true in the United States, where two competing major surveys independently conducted in 2001 — the NJPS and AJIS — indicated a *core* Jewish population decline from 5,515,000 in 1990 to 5,200,000 and 5,340,000, respectively. Population projections had long predicted an eventual decrease in the *core* Jewish population in the U.S., reflecting a slowing down of international immigration, postponed and fewer Jewish marriages, growing frequency of out-marriage (over 50% of Jews currently marrying), low Jewish fertility (well below 2 children per female), only partial attribution to the Jewish side of the children of intermarriages, and marked aging (nearly 20% of the Jewish population is above the age of 65). Admittedly, the accuracy of U.S. Jewish population estimates cannot be compared with the more rigorous Israeli sources. Our estimate of 5,275,000 core Jews in the U.S., compared to 5,309,000 in Israel at the beginning of 2006, is a cautious compromise between the two major 2001 sources, accounting also for the findings of many other available American social surveys, as well as population extrapolations produced under different assumptions.

The graph illustrates the very different course of Jewish population change in Israel and in the U.S. between 1945 and 2005. After World War II, Israel (then the British Mandate of Palestine) had a Jewish population of over half-a-million, which grew by nearly 10 times over the subsequent 60 years, thanks to mass immigration and fairly high and stable reproduction patterns. In the U.S., the initial Jewish population of about 4.5 million in 1945 grew by about one million until around 1990, but later developments point to a moderate downturn. One important *caveat* is that according to the expanded concept of the

Law of Return, which grants Israeli citizenship to Jews, along with their non-Jewish children, grandchildren and respective spouses, the U.S. holds an aggregate of over 10 million individuals, compared to 5.6 million in Israel.

Beyond definitions and data accuracy, it is important to recognize that in no way can the momentum of Jewish population change in the U.S. (at best tending to zero population growth) be compared with that of Israel. This makes the apparent emergence of Israel as the largest Jewish community in the world increasingly grounded on empirical foundations. Projecting



the ongoing demographic trends and assuming continuity in the major factors of Jewish population change — admittedly a heavy assumption, the further scenario of an absolute majority of world Jewry living in the State of Israel gains plausibility and might materialize around or just after 2030. Of course, whether components of population change will remain stable or modify their course is a fundamental subject for policy planning and interventions in Israel and throughout the global Jewish community.

In recent years, immigration played a decreasing role in Israeli population size. In 2005, 21,126 new immigrants arrived in Israel — an increase of 1% over 2004. Slightly less than half of these came from the former Soviet Union (FSU), including a large contingent of non-Jews. Another fifth of the new immigrants came from countries such as Ethiopia and Peru, where conversion to Judaism

is an integral component of the migration process. Immigration increased by 27% from France, by 8% from the U.S., and by 4% from the Russian Republic. These changes do not alter the fact that Jewish migration to Israel only produces a modest surplus of a few thousand over the number of Israeli emigrants to other countries.

Jewish population distribution continued to be remarkably consistent with the rank attained by countries regarding the United Nations' Index of Human Development (HDI) — a composite of social indicators on a country's levels of health, education and real income. Higher levels of human development in a society tend to create conditions more favorable to a larger Jewish presence. Hungary, the main

Latin American countries, France, the UK and Germany, followed by Israel, experienced more significant improvements in HDI values in the last year on record (2003) versus the previous year. Israel, however, dropped one place in the overall ranking, from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 177 countries. In most republics of the FSU, the HDI continued to deteriorate.

Other significant indicators of Jewish communal development concern the reach of Jewish education among school-age population and the incidence of out-marriage among all new Jewish marriages. The data available for various countries indicate a reverse correlation between these two capital features. The more socially self-contained communities possess better-developed Jewish institutional systems and social networks which clearly determine the life course from early childhood through adulthood and significantly affect the chances for generational continuity.

The overall number of violent antisemitic incidents reported globally diminished in 2005 versus 2004: 501 and 406, respectively. Nonetheless, the 2005 figure was the second highest on record since 1989 and reflected a combination of social frustration, anti-Jewish prejudice and extreme anti-Israeli attitudes. Of particular concern is rising antisemitism in the FSU countries. As against this, efforts were deployed by Jewish regional and international organizations to develop counteracting educational and political efforts. Possibly beneficial were also the activities of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance — ECRI, the European Union Monitoring Center against Racism and Xenophobia — EUMC, the United Nations, as well as political and religious

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### Rising anti-Semitism in the FSU countries

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leaders. The relative diminution in antisemitic assaults worldwide possibly also reflected the somewhat diminished intensity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 2005.

## 6. CYBERSPACE AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

### Introduction

The widespread adoption of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in the closing decades of the 20th century constituted a critical global delta, fuelling important social, cultural, and economic benefits for those able to capitalize upon the opportunities it presented. It altered the primary means by which information was sought for billions, and made more information available to more people than ever before in human history. It facilitated new forms of commerce, entertainment, and even socialization. The novel public arena it introduced spawned new forms of deviance as well. Information crime, identity theft, spam and viruses became common terms and shared concerns for people the world over.

This article aspires to describe and examine the significance of computer-mediated communication for the Jewish people worldwide.

### Theoretical Understandings

Four primary types of electronic gatherings are established and sustained by electronic networks: discussion groups, fantasy worlds, virtual markets, and civic networks. They also house a massive digital archive, a treasure trove of resources more vast than any ever amassed in human history. The term “computer-mediated

communication” (CMC) offers a useful means to speak about these disparate phenomena in total.

Theorists disagree over the range of changes most likely to occur and the significance of those changes for particular population groups, but an emergent, wide-ranging consensus exists that through the reconstellation of major and minor patterns of modern social interaction, computer-mediated communication is altering the foundations of everyday life.

Globalization as an emergent, unified economic system relies upon the instant, worldwide communication that CMC provides. Thus, CMC confirms and supports the trend toward an inter-linked, world system of economic activity. Globalization as the cultural experience of having a global world view filtered through a local context view also has been exacerbated and extended by CMC.

Yet all life, like all politics, is local. Hence, *glocalization*, life acted out against a global horizon, best describes how Jewish communities from the U.S. to Argentina have encountered and responded to the rapid spread of computer communications. Individual needs and interests, the requirements of particular organizations, and the traditions and abilities of local communities have been decisive in how the Jewish People has responded to an information-driven world.

**The Jewish people are on the “have” side of the digital divide**

### The Jewish People and the Digital Divide

The first major public concern about CMC arose over inequities in access to this new public arena. The imbalance, referred to as “the digital

divide”, was huge. Almost 90% of the people online resided in post-industrial societies (Norris 2001, 45), although this is changing.

The effect of this disproportionate distribution upon the Jewish People is a decisive one. Over 80% of the Jewish People reside in cities located in relatively affluent, post-industrial or industrial societies, where Internet accessibility is greatest. Consequently, the Jewish People as a people are on the “have” side of the digital divide.

It is also important to note that the digital divide fuels the income gap among peoples within nations as well as between them. As nations increasingly turn to electronic communication as a point of first contact for basic services, these disparities have the potential to exacerbate the social stratification among citizens within a nation, potentially fuelling social unrest.

As a minority people in every nation of the world except one, such waves of social unrest could detrimentally affect the Jewish People. Within Jewish communities, those with a higher economic status will see their social capital enhanced by CMC, while those with a lower economic status will, by comparison, be left further and further behind.

While a significant majority resides on the “have” side of the digital divide, the Jewish People as a whole have had an uneven role in the development of computer mediated communications. Still, Jewish innovators have made some notable contributions to the development of computer hardware and software.

### Online Presence of the Jewish People

A search for “Judaism” on Google in December,

2005 delivered 16,800,000 “hits”. A sizable number, it is far exceeded by the “hits” during the same period on Google for “Christianity” (38,600,000) or “Islam” (50,600,000). Though supported by fewer web sites than either Christians or Moslems, the online presence of the Jewish People is highly varied and eclectic. It includes social service organizations, federations, congregations, textual archives, dating services and more. No single Jewish portal predominates online; instead, a huge variety of portals exist, including major ones such as Shamash (<http://www.shamash.org>), Maven(<http://www.maven.co.il>), Virtual Jerusalem (<http://www.virtualjerusalem.com>), Jewish Net (<http://www.jewishnet.net>), and Jewrope (<http://www.jewrope.com>). Among these, Shamash has the highest traffic rating and represents the earliest attempt to provide an overt Jewish portal on the Internet. The most popular Hebrew language site is the all-purpose Walla (<http://www.walla.co.il>) that supports e-mail accounts, and provides a wide variety of information on Israeli life. While these and other Jewish portals have attracted a coterie of followers, none has achieved prominence as “the” site for Jewish Internet searching. Instead, individual Jewish organizations from federations to agencies provide a plethora of portals to their disparate versions of Jewish cyberspace for any who visit.

### Internet Uses by Jewish Organizations

Today, every major Jewish organization maintains some form of online presence, as well as most medium-sized and even small organizations. Many sites offer “breaking news” as a prominent feature, detailing recent events in

Israel and Jewish culture. Religious organizations use web sites for outreach, providing information on programs. Some use web sites as a vehicle for donations. Most organizations using sites to solicit funds offer multiple donation possibilities, allowing people to target the funds they give to particular causes or programs.

In sum, the virtual artifacts that constitute the Jewish presence online is variegated, complex, and at times contradictory — rather like the Jewish People itself

## The Jewish People Online

No global study of when, how, and why the Jewish People go online has yet been done. The best data set on the Jewish People online addresses was generated by the National Jewish Population Survey. According to their findings, 39% of American Jews use the Internet for Jewish purposes. For those between the ages of 55 and 64, Internet use was 32%, while roughly half of the 35–44 year olds claimed that they used the Internet for Jewish purposes.

Studies disclose four pervasive trends in online use:

- *Increasing access.* In the U.S., the number of people online went from 8% in 1995 to 68.7% in 2005. In the UK, the number of users went from 40% to 65% between 2000 and 2005. Over half the population of 30 countries now uses CMC, including Australia (68.2%), and Canada (68.3%). Israel, at 45%, is significantly ahead of every other country in the Middle East.
- *Increasing commitment.* People are spending more time online and doing more things. By

2001, Americans were online over nine hours per week (UCLA Center for Communication Policy). The top five most popular uses were: web-surfing (81.7%), e-mail (81.6%), finding hobby information (57.2%), reading news (56.6%) and finding entertainment information (54.3%).

- *Domestication.* In the first years, most CMC activity occurred in the workplace, but, over the past decade, an increasing level of CMC activity has taken place in the home.
- *Longer work hours.* Growing numbers are increasing their work hours by using CMC to work nights and weekends (Wellman, Caythornthwaite 2002, 9.)

As the Jewish People overwhelmingly reside in advanced societies where these trends are at their strongest, they are in all likelihood participants in each of these trends, i.e. increasingly online, online for longer hours, online in their homes as well as at the workplace, and working longer hours via CMC; however, further research would be necessary to confirm this.

Certain trends in online use by the Jewish People have received considerable media attention. J-date and other web sites that offer themselves as a virtual meeting place for Jewish singles to meet online before any face-to-face encounter have been enormously popular. Orthodox Jews have become involved with the online dating trend as well, by developing and running specialized Orthodox dating sites. Congregational sites are growing in number and increasingly designed to satisfy the needs of local congregants.

One of the strengths of CMC lies in its ability to establish and maintain social networks

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**Antisemitic sites remain high on the list of results generated by a Google search for "Jew"**

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at low cost. This is a particular advantage for smaller, dispersed groups, with few resources at their disposal. For the Jewish people, CMC offers smaller Diaspora communities a viable means to strengthen their Jewish identity and broaden their social connections via CMC. In Scotland, where Jews are few in number and widely dispersed, the advent of a Scottish Jewish web site and individual community email lists contributed to the rejuvenation of the small Jewish community of Aberdeen.

### Digital Information and the Jewish People

Information is a cardinal resource of modern democratic societies. Because of its easy access and global availability, CMC has rapidly become the paramount information resource, and search engines the means by which that information is located. For the past several years, Google has been the top ranked search engine in the world. Hence, Google is the place where the online presence of the Jewish people is first encountered by many.

A heated public debate about the means by which the Google search engine determined the order of sites displayed in response to a search query was sparked off when a search for "Jew" on Google returned as its first response the antisemitic site Jew Watch ([www.jewwatch.com](http://www.jewwatch.com)). Today, antisemitic sites remain high on the list of results generated by a Google search, although the search engine offers an "explanation" for the results via a link in which they claim that they

find them disturbing, but that they in no way reflect anything other than the computer algorithms integral to the search process.

Because the Internet offers a vast, seemingly endless supply of information, it can be taken as a wholly sufficient information resource, but much critical data remains offline, especially information regarding the Moslem world and sub-Saharan Africa. Rapidly growing areas of information occur in languages such as Chinese, not widely known to the Jewish People.

Since CMC has rapidly become the cardinal information resource of the modern world, it is important for the Jewish People to think strategically about how information on and for the Jewish People gets placed online. This should include but extend beyond the careful work to document and tackle online antisemitism. Research ascertaining what Diaspora Jews, youth, and the elderly may want or seek online to strengthen their Jewish identity should be done, as well as a coordinated assessment of the best ways to meet those needs. Clearly, global statistics show that the Jewish People are online. Whether they can locate Jewish content that meets their needs or stimulates their interest in Jewish identity and community remains to be seen.

### Jewish Traditions and the Digital World

From Friday night candle-lighting to gathering for Seder night, the traditions of the Jewish People constitute *ritualized* behavior, handed down from generation to generation through social interactions largely learned in the home. With CMC, a potential for change in how traditions are preserved and transmitted was intro-

duced. Religious organizations and leaders, religious schools, *yeshivot*-all rushed to make the texts and traditions that undergird Jewish traditions available online.

Yet modern societies rushing to deposit their traditional heritages online may be engaging in the *de-ritualization* of tradition, according to media theorist John Thompson. He argues that within the context of modern societies, establishing and maintaining traditions have become dependent upon “forms of interaction not face-to-face in character”.

Jewish religious and educational organizations have gone to enormous effort to place much Jewish heritage online. From textual libraries to Seder recipes, information on how and why to be Jewish is available online from a variety of religious and non-religious perspectives.

Yet detached from social settings, traditions need to be reintegrated in human communities to survive and thrive. Placing the Jewish heritage online does not guarantee its survival, and in fact introduces a new challenge to its preservation. The challenge for future generations will be how to re-embed mediated traditions into everyday life.

## **Virtual Civic Engagement and the Jewish People**

No clear consensus exists over the contribution of Internet use to civic engagement. Castells contends that the Internet reflects and contributes to the social fragmentation of the modern world. Because information online is organized in networks, it furthers the isolation of social groups from each other. Slevin disagrees, arguing that the very process of laying out one’s view-

point, arguments, and ideas for global dispersion via CMC makes it possible for those viewpoints to be reviewed, critically engaged, and challenged by others.

Research by Brasher on CMC use by religious organizations in Jerusalem provided support for Castells rather than Slevin. The online networks created by the links embedded in the web sites of Jewish religious organizations form a virtual Jewish world, an electronic network of the like-minded, rather than any serious engagement with the “other”.

In the academic literature, a scholarly consensus has developed that CMC facilitates minority peoples and single-issue groups more than mainstream viewpoints in that it offers a low cost means to augment their public voice. To the extent this is the case, it suggests that CMC can be of particular advantage to Diaspora Jews wishing to raise critical issues and concerns within their homeland context.

## **Digitalization and Jewish Heritage**

Europe has moved rapidly to define itself as an Information Society and, through the EU, has engaged in a number of coordinated programs to digitalize and preserve European heritage online. Through the participation of Israel in these programs, the narratives and heritages of European Jews are being included in the public European historical narratives.

## **Conclusion: Jewish Identity in the Digital World**

For the individuals who constitute the Jewish People, as well as for Jewish organizations and

the Jewish People as a whole, CMC poses a novel twist on a classic question of Jewish tradition: “Who is a (virtual) Jew?” Does the fluidity of identity that electronic networks encourage undermine the social solidarity necessary

for the Jewish People to survive and thrive in the modern world, or does its ability to cross the boundaries of nation-states with ease make Jewish solidarity more viable and thus make an important contribution to Jewish survival?

### 7. A GRAND-STRATEGIC SHIFT

A fundamental shift in Israel and its character as the core state of the Jewish People may result from events and developments in the Middle East that took place in 2005–2006. These developments reached their peak with the disengagement from Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria, changes in the political map in Israel, the nuclear capability of Iran, and the rise of Hamas. Significant changes in society, demography and geo-political environment may also derive from this shift, thereby impacting on Jewish-Israeli identity, connections with the Diaspora, the economy, and Israel's policy on the conflict with the Palestinians.

With the failure of the Oslo process to produce a peace agreement, escalation of Palestinian violence, and recognition of the demographic threat that endangers the Jewish character of Israel, a pragmatic approach has developed that calls for unilateral withdrawal in preparation for crystallization of permanent borders — especially in the absence of a viable partner to an agreement over division of the land.

The change in the Israeli perspective stems primarily from an acknowledgement of the fact that as the potential for immigration is nearing exhaustion, the continued Jewish presence in all the territories of Eretz Israel is not necessarily conducive to the overall Zionist endeavor. This perspective is also based on a world image that does not grant legitimacy to the occupation of another people and from which a new

political style, compatible with changes in both the internal and external arena, is derived. Such concepts have augmented Israel's political center, leaving messianic groups on both the right and the left of the political map with very marginal public support.

A statement purportedly attributed to Prime Minister Sharon claims that “things you see from here (i.e. from the Prime Minister's seat), you don't see from there”. This was offered as an explanation for the dramatic shift in Sharon's ideology, from supporting settlement in all the territories of Eretz Israel to dismantling settlements and evacuating settlers back into the Green Line. This ideological shift was based on the realization that Israel cannot go on occupying most of the territories and continue to ignore global opposition to the settlement project.

The fundamental changes in the Israeli perspective are thus grounded in the conclusion that the ability of Israel to cope with dynamic internal and external settings is limited; much depends on independent factors, such as the nuclear threat of Iran, the war in Iraq, and the Hamas victory in the Palestinian Authority. This realization is a test of Israeli leaders' capability to apply pro-active policies and set new challenges in order to reduce frustration among the Israeli public. It is also a test of coping with the trauma, shared by many people, that is associated with concession of parts of the land and what others perceive as a regression in the Zionist project that increases the threat to the state's existence.

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### **The logic behind the convergence plan derives from the demographic threat**

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Nevertheless, the answer to the question regarding the ability of the new government and Prime Minister to cope successfully with the challenges is complex and depends on a number of external and internal factors:

- (a) The regional and international environment evolving over the Iranian threat;
- (b) The Iraqi imbroglio and the weakening of President Bush;
- (c) A demonstration of national leadership by the new Prime Minister and the legitimization of his leadership among the Jewish People;
- (d) The internal political situation in Israel as time for critical decisions runs out.

## **The Disengagement from Gaza and Northern Samaria and the Declared Policy of Convergence**

The disengagement from the Gaza Strip constitutes a collective decision by which Israel has chosen a path that is not an Oslo-style, one-stroke peace agreement, but at the same time has ceded a major chunk of the settlements built by Israel since the 1970's. The occupied territories are no longer part of the State of Israel or a bargaining card towards a decision about the separation of the two peoples, in return for which Israel would gain recognition and peace. The disengagement move also reflects a growing pessimism in Israel regarding the ability of the national Palestinian movement to generate a process of nation-building and establish sovereignty, along with erosion of the willingness of Israeli society to endure terrorism.

For the majority who support it, the logic behind disengagement and the convergence plan derives from the demographic threat that challenges the Jewish character of the state together with the pressure of terrorism on the one hand, and recognition of the processes of globalization and view of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the broader context of the Middle East arena on the other. This new consensus has enabled the disengagement plan to take place with a high level of legitimacy.

Yet this does not foretell the long-term internal implications of the disengagement from large chunks of Judea and Samaria, the dismantling of settlements, and the convergence plan, which causes a significant proportion of the public, especially large parts of the religious Zionists and other activist movements, to feel defeated.

These segments, who had believed that they were the leading edge of the Zionist endeavor, experienced a trauma and feel “betrayed.”

Moreover, those who regard the retreat from parts of Eretz Israel as fundamentally wrong in both moral and security terms are deeply perplexed. The resistance to the evacuation and the call of certain leaders and settlement supporters to “disobey orders” have caused some soul-searching, as illustrated by the deliberations currently engaging elements in the religious Zionist sector as to whether the establishment of the State of Israel is indeed “the beginning of salvation (*geulah*)” as it was widely believed until recently, or at least the preamble to that beginning.

These negative developments were aggravate in light of what is seen by many of the involved as the government’s failure to cater adequately to the needs of the evacuees, who in part found themselves without resettlement or occupational alternatives and devoid of any new ideological challenge.

On the positive side are highly valuable achievements, including the demographic implications of the disengagement and convergence policy; increased coordination with the U.S., the economic implications and a rise in foreign investments, and the improved international position and image of Israel (after its government has proved by deeds its credibility and the sincerity of its intention to put an end to the occupation of the Palestinian people.)

Broadly speaking, this is a sharp turn in the fundamental concept of Zionism and the State of Israel — in which the settlement project was a national imperative in both moral and security

terms that was shared by the majority of the public and the political parties.

The shift to convergence and the pragmatic approach in part motivating it raise a number of crucial questions:

- (a) Are these processes evolving towards a “de-Zionization”, or a “re-Zionization”, with new values, goals and challenges — such as settling the Negev and the Galilee and strengthening Jerusalem as the spiritual capital of the Jewish People?)
- (b) In what way will the disengagement and convergence policy affect the Palestinian-Israel conflict and Israel’s relationship with the Arab countries?
- (c) How will the more “moral” but less “powerful and resolute” image of Israel affect its geo-political status in a world where fundamentalist Islam is expanding, increasing its military might, and acquiring non-conventional capability for mass destruction?
- (d) How does the Jewish People “converge” and adapt Jewish identity to the modern age in Israel and the Diaspora, while building a global pluralistic system of identification, internal sharing, and Tikkun Olam?

These are currently open questions, and there are no clear indications where reality is heading. Much depends on the actions of the Israeli government and Jewish People organizations in the next 5–15 years, during which a new Israeli and pan-Jewish reality may emerge.

## Economy and Society

Concurrent with the change of course and fundamental transformation of the policy of

settlement and occupation of Gaza, Judea and Samaria, the demand for Israel to confront basic issues relating to various aspects of “the good society” has intensified.

The year 5766 (2005–2006) has been marked by an impressive economic recovery and sustained growth, due to the previous government’s policy of accelerating the economy’s adjustment to globalization and global competition, albeit at a social cost. With a growth rate of 6.6% for the first quarter of 2006, Israel ranks at the top of the world’s economic growth. The mega-transaction in which the majority of “Iscar” shares owned by the Wertheimer family were sold to Berkshire Hathaway, headed by “investment guru” Warren Buffet, as well the surplus funds accumulated in the public treasury as a result of the economic policy have all increased international interest in and desire to invest in Israel, but they have also intensified demand for social reforms costing billions of shekels.

In light of the above, social policy is once again a central issue. It encompasses the ongoing deliberations regarding nation-building, the

status of Israeli Arab citizens, and the place of religion in public life. The new agenda, manifest in the process of consolidating the new government coalition, is partly related to the evolving nature of the Israeli welfare state. Two parallel processes that took place in the 1980’s have engendered major contradictions in Israel’s social policy. In 1982, the Income Support Benefit Act was ratified, supplementing the social security system for all citizens, while in 1985 the age of economic-structural reforms began.

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**A growth rate  
of 6.6% for  
the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter  
of 2006 puts  
Israel at the  
top of world’s  
economic  
growth**

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These two trends have generated the cross-development of an expanded service sector and a concurrent trend towards privatization. The wave of immigration and growth rates of the 1990’s have made Israel’s social policy increasingly extensive, fueled further by the rise of the third sector and particularist pressure groups. The economic crisis that followed the second *intifada* exposed this uncontrolled and slapdash expansion and triggered a severe backlash of in part rash cuts. Welfare state processes, which took two decades to evolve in Western countries, were decided in Israel rather rashly, though this was in part necessary, hurting disadvantaged social segments in the process.

The result of the social policy pendulum motion manifested itself in high poverty rates and a switch from a definition of relative poverty to notions of absolute poverty. The poverty rates before and after transfer payments indicate that 20% of Israeli families and 35% of the children are living below the poverty line — though there are some doubts on these figures.

*Between Blessings and Curses.* The new government must now consider demands costing billions of shekels in terms of the scope and effectiveness of the allocation. Israel may fall into the behavioral pattern of volatile welfare regimes, fluctuating between excessive curtailment and uncontrolled expansion, while allocations are the subject of tough coalition bargaining.

*The Arab Minority.* A population of more than a million Israeli Arab citizens is undergoing a process of political convergence, moving from discourse as to the nature of the state towards issues of equality in the distribution of services and resources, and relying on the civic orientation of the Supreme Court. Others are seeking

the resolution of Arab status in the democratic and Jewish state under the radical terms of the Islamic movement, or by raising the issue in Arab and international arenas.

*The Ultra-Orthodox.* The *haredi* society is in the midst of profound changes related to the gradual and difficult transition from a society of Holy Script learners to a regular bourgeois (*ba'alei batim*) society. This is a rather complex process in which the state can both alleviate and exacerbate conflicts. Education and the labor market are the arenas where the position of Orthodox Jews in Israeli society will be determined. Their integration process, attributable to economic pressures and market forces, is beginning quite late. The acquisition of skills necessary for ultra-Orthodox males' integration into the economic world may be a long process that could take a generation or more. *Haredi* demography, which is marked by a young society comprising some 650,000 people, is increasingly burdening the social and educational systems as a result of the status of the ultra-Orthodox as welfare recipients. To this the increasing education of women must be added, which is likely to have important long-term effects.

*Immigrants from the FSU.* In the 1990's, the immigrant population was perceived as about to be torn apart between their particularist identity and the need for integration. Forecasts of a "Russian ghetto" in sectoral form have been disproved, with a much more complex reality emerging instead. Forecasts about high conflict levels over lifestyle issues and competition in the labor market between almost a million *olim* and the veteran population have been largely disproved. The poverty of the most vulnerable *olim* groups — the elderly and single-parent

families — along with the emergence of an Israeli-Russian middle class, are shaping both the self-image and the collective image of the immigrants. As time passes and the immigrants come to share the collective experiences of all Israelis, the *oleh* category is gradually changing.

## Security

The year 5766 (2005–2006) has brought about three radical changes related to the security-strategic situation of Israel and the Jewish People, which are discussed elsewhere in this evaluation:

- (a) Hamas' victory in the elections to the Palestinian legislative council and the establishment of a Hamas-led government in the Palestinian Authority. This government, which replaced the hegemony of the PLO in leading the Palestinian people, bears consequences not only for Israel's security and foreign policy, but also for the attitudes of Israeli society regarding the chances of achieving a peace agreement in the foreseeable future. It intensifies the risk of terrorism and reduces the possibility of peace negotiations, due to the Hamas government's refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist. At the same time, it casts the Palestinians as the recalcitrant party in the international arena, enhancing the identification of world Jewry with the State of Israel.
- (b) The election of Muhammad Ahmadinajad as President of Iran sheds a different light on the race to procure weapons of mass destruction. The President's venomous rhetoric (which calls for the annihilation of

Israel), the ongoing development of nuclear capabilities, and the refusal to submit to international monitoring are all issues of deep concern. Iran's nuclear policy constitutes a fundamental escalation in the challenge to Israel's existence. However, the dangers for Europe and the U.S. mean that Israel is not alone in this confrontation..

- (c) These two developments have massive implications for Jewish communities around the world: they are increasingly exposed to the threat of terrorism and, even more so, the implications of the serious danger to Israel.

All of these together are challenging Israel's defense doctrine, which is currently being re-evaluated.

### A Political Big Bang or a Change in the Center of Gravity and Shifts in the Traditional Right Bloc?

It is quite doubtful whether the political "bang" anticipated by many political commentators in Israel has indeed taken place, or if there is a chance of it happening anytime soon.

What has been nicknamed as "the bang" by the Israeli media was supposed to signify a consolidation process of a new centrist political movement, which would consist of Israel's leading politicians, headed by Ariel Sharon (*Likud*), Shimon Peres (Labor) and Yosef Lapid (*Shinui*.) This triumvirate was expected to concentrate most of the political forces around them, rake in between 40 and 45 seats in the Knesset, and fragment all the other political parties, with the aim of promoting an action plan that would

lead to the delineation of Israel's permanent borders, at least *de facto*, in the absence of a Palestinian partner.

Sharon's unexpected illness and his replacement by Ehud Olmert altered the anticipated result in the recent elections, shrinking "the bang" into a shift of the "blocking bloc" from the right-center into the center-left of the political map. Many voters chose not to participate in the democratic process, reducing the turnout to 63.2%, the lowest rate in the history of the Israeli elections.

The fall of the *Likud* party from 38 seats in the 16<sup>th</sup> Knesset to a mere 12 seats in the 17<sup>th</sup> was a crushing blow for its leader, whose party suffered a great defeat, due not only to the establishment of *Kadima*, but also to the decision by many of the *Likud*'s traditional supporters to make it pay a political price for its stringent economic policy — a policy introduced to save the economy, but which was largely interpreted as heartless and lacking in compassion.

Despite the *Likud*'s defeat and with Peres joining *Kadima*'s ranks, a "bang" is indeed an inappropriate term. The combined votes for *Kadima*, Labor and *Meretz* indicate a total of 53 seats for the center-left bloc, which, combined with the 10 Arab seats (an increase of 2), have prevented the possibility of a right-wing government.

The real political test still awaits *Kadima* in the future. Only if the party manages to survive under Olmert's leadership and grows stronger in the next elections will it mean a real change in the political map. Yet such results depend, first and foremost, on the particular situation on the eve of the next elections, and that situation will be derived not only from the accomplish-

ments of the present government, but also from regional and global developments that are out of Israel's control.

## Conclusion: In Transition

The political system in Israel is in a state of transition into a new pragmatic kind of center. This center found adherence to the "entirety of the land", in the sense that evolved after the Six-Day War, as well as beyond the vision encapsulated in the Oslo accords. The new position favors disengagement from the Palestinians, not necessarily through permanent agreements, and allows some flexibility for managing the conflict without solving it, if need be. The new political mood is a leap over both the right and the left agenda of the 1990's, signaling the chance for a new consensus. This prospect should, however, be treated with caution, in light of past experience and rapid change in the political center of gravity brought about by the belligerent initiatives of hostile forces, both within Israel's territory and the neighboring countries, as well as internal Israeli processes.

One of the pivotal tests for the future of the Jewish People is the new government's attitude to Diaspora Jewry. Prime Minister Olmert declares that the convergence policy and the delineation of the state's permanent borders are primarily affected by the desire to secure Israel's Jewish and democratic character. The connection with the Jewish dispersion and securing Israel's position as the core state of the Jewish People should be considered as well.

The emerging picture is a variety of fundamental transformations that fuel one other. The most visible one, which constitutes a grand stra-

tegic shift, is a change of policy regarding the Palestinians and the territories. Socio-economic shifts are less visible. It is safe to assume that political and security developments are at the center of the shift and they will greatly affect all others, including the social aspects, inasmuch as the election results suggest that the public continues to put more emphasis on political issues than on social ones.

Within these clusters of transformation, the government has a paramount role to play in shaping the future. This raises the question of whether the performance of the parliamentary-cabinet regime prevailing in Israel, along with the dispersal of democratic power, the system of elections, the abundance of parties and the looseness of its coalitions, meets the needs. The turnover (and partially the lack of adequate turnover) of the political staff adds to concern about the quality of the political system and political elite, governmental instability, and obvious weaknesses of capacities to govern. Connections between capital and government circles are also causing some alarm.

The sense of governmental inadequacy has led to a number of initiatives for reform of the regime. These include the activities of the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee in its capacity as the committee for the preparation of a broad consensus constitution. The committee completed its work in 2006 with the submission of extensive papers representing a broad spectrum of alternative views and recommendations.

Another initiative that differs at least partially in its concerns and recommendations is the Institute for Democracy's proposal for a constitution. This was also completed in 2006.

President Moshe Katzav has appointed a public-professional committee to review the form of government, due to finish its work during 2006.

Despite all of the above and in light of the composition of the 17<sup>th</sup> Knesset and the government, it is doubtful whether the necessary political consensus needed for deep governmental reform can be mustered. Significant improvements in the government's functioning are possible, however, through expansion of staff work and introduction of new decision-making patterns.

## 8. THE HAMAS VICTORY IN THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY ELECTIONS

Hamas' victory in the recent elections to the legislative council of the Palestinian Authority, which came as a surprise to many, and the establishment of a Palestinian government, headed by an Islamic movement with a platform upholding the means of terrorism and committed to the annihilation of Israel constitutes a significant delta in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ongoing efforts to settle it. At this time it is difficult to determine the depth and scope of the impact of this development on the future of the entire region. It does, however, require that Israel, the U.S., the more moderate Palestinian elements, the Arab countries, Europe and other relevant actors in the international community engage in some serious introspection regarding their intelligence failure, and to update political strategy in light of the new reality.

**Hamas' victory – a surprise to many and a significant delta in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**

The victory of Hamas has turned the tables on those who have based their policy on the assumption that these elections would contribute to the rehabilitation of an accord-based reconciliation process between Israel and the Palestinians. In the U.S., Europe and the Fatah movement, it was assumed that Hamas was bound to lose the elections, but its very participation would lend legitimacy to the Fatah line: negotiations with Israel and seeking a permanent peace agreement based on the two-state solution. Washington even regarded the mere holding of elections as proof of the success of its Middle East democratization policy, ignoring demands and advice, some from Israel, that Hamas' participation in the elections should be conditioned (on its renunciation of terror and recognition of agreements signed with Israel, etc.)

Hamas, which objected to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, attacked the very existence of negotiations with Israel and did not recognize its results, has managed to gain control over government institutions that are the fruits of the very process it decried as an abomination.

Hamas' control of the Palestinian parliament and government creates an intra-Palestinian dualism: Hamas is confronted with the elected Palestinian president, the leader of the Fatah movement, who recognizes Israel, is committed to a peace process with Israel, and rejects terrorism. The president is also the head of the PLO, the organization that represents the Palestinian people as a whole and the co-signatory to the peace accords with Israel.

The absence of an accord-based process and ongoing coordination between the Palestinian

government and Israel, the inherent tension between various components of the Palestinian government, along with the restrictions imposed by the international community on providing economic assistance to a Hamas-led government, all combine to create the potential for instability and the danger of deterioration leading to extreme violence.

In contrast to what seems like a significant step backwards by the Palestinians in a process aimed at bringing peace with Israel, Israel itself seems to be increasingly ready for taking steps forward. The opponents of the Gaza disengagement plan, who in the recent elections wished to consolidate a majority against the implementation of a similar plan in Judea and Samaria, have failed. The split in the *Likud*, the emergence of *Kadima*, and the establishment of a joint government by *Kadima* and Labor mark the adaptation of the Israeli political-partisan map to the positions of the general public, a majority of which is in the opinion of a number of commentators ready to support a very generous territorial compromise in return for a reliable peace agreement.

The new situation requires Israel and the international community to deal immediately with some pressing issues:

- Formulation of aid arrangements to the Palestinian public through non-governmental bodies or agencies that are exclusively subordinated to President Abbas (Abu Mazen), in order to prevent a potential humanitarian catastrophe while avoiding any strengthening of Hamas government.
- Formulation of working procedures vis-à-vis the Palestinian side in matters whose nature

does not permit total disengagement (from power supply through border control passage operation to taking measures for curbing the spread of bird flu).

At this point there is international consensus that Hamas must renounce terrorism and recognize Israel and the agreements signed with it before it can be considered a legitimate partner. In the coming months, Israeli diplomacy is expected to devote considerable efforts to fortify the international alignment against the Hamas so that it does not erode.

The convergence (*hitkansut*) plan to which Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is committed defines the coming year as a crucible for the Palestinian side. According to declared intentions, if the Palestinian side proves itself a worthy partner for peace moves, then Israel will proceed according to the Road Map. If not, however, Israel will unilaterally evacuate thousands of settlers and “converge” behind the border, whose lines it will determine unilaterally.

In the coming year we will be able to better estimate whether the success of Hamas is a transient episode in the history of Palestinian society or an authentic expression of massive undercurrents attesting to Islamization and/or nationalistic escalation processes, which could grow even stronger. We will also find out whether an armed bi-partisan Palestine will deteriorate into a violent confrontation between Hamas and Fatah, or manage to create a *modus vivendi* which could contain the internal tension.

Ideological movements are not immune to change. The new reality is bound to put pressure on Hamas towards practical and functional changes. Relatively moderate expressions

are already discernible among various Hamas spokespersons. The ideological core is much more immune to changes, and when they do occur, the rate is relatively slow. Hamas being a movement with a religious ideology certainly hinders the possibility of any change in the movement's basic tenets. The head of Israeli Military intelligence services resolutely estimates that Hamas will not change. Some researchers disagree and do not exclude the possibility of gradual changes which would facilitate reaching stable and long-term arrangements with Hamas. The period ahead shall reveal whether, from the Israeli point of view, Hamas' victory means thwarting the chances of an accord-based peace process vis-à-vis the Palestinians, and, for as long as Hamas stays in power, leaving Israel with only the unilateral option; or is it possible to reach — directly or through a third party — interim arrangements with the Palestinian side, be they signed or agreed upon *de facto*.

Along with its negative implications regarding the Israeli-Palestinian context, Hamas' success raises the possibility of other dangerous scenarios:

- The escalation of similar processes in Arab countries throughout the region, followed by their destabilization, and the emergence of an axis comprising Iran-Syria-Hizballah-Hamas, seeking the annihilation of Israel.
- Under conditions of violent escalation, efforts by Hamas — either independently or in cooperation with other factors — to attack Jewish targets around the world. (According to Hamas teachings, Judaism is a bitter enemy which must be vanquished.)

The Hamas platform contains an explicit call for killing Jews.)

- The decrease in the U.S.'s commitment to a strategy that seeks democratization in the Middle East and the potential emergence of alternative strategies which could be less convenient for Israel.

The establishment of a Palestinian Hamas government creates threats but also opens opportunities: Israel is not the only actor concerned by the phenomenon. The neighboring Arab states fear detrimental consequences on their home turf; Europe is worried about the implications on the Moslem minorities residing in European countries; the U.S. and the "West" are afraid of the strengthening of radicalism and Islamic terrorism. Thus Israel and the Jewish people have ample opportunities for the creative formulation of geo-political cooperation efforts.

Attempts to initiate, guide and control processes that take place in other societies have already proven themselves potentially disastrous. However, measures taken by Israel and the international community may have an impact on the development of the Hamas phenomenon — which could determine whether this is a mere accidental exception or a watershed deeply affecting the region and beyond.

## 9. THE ISRAEL ECONOMY INTO GROWTH AND MORE STABILITY

The economy of Israel has undergone a remarkable recovery over the past three years, following a deep recession that began in 2002.

The sharp slowdown in global economic activity from mid-2000 significantly affected

Israel's high-tech sector, which posted a decline of 21% in exports during 2001–2. In addition, the collapse of the U.S. financial markets, especially the NASDAQ, further hurt Israel's technology sectors. The outbreak of violence in September 2000 and the 9/11/01 attacks in the U.S., led to a sharp decline in tourism, which has traditionally played an important role within the service sector.

The recession was one of the most severe in Israel's history, matched only by the long crisis of the early 1980's.

As Finance Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu faced the formidable task of dealing with the economic depression and, with the support of Prime Minister Sharon, instituted a series of severe measures to improve the economy, while still facing internal security problems and an external environment of little growth internationally. The recovery has been achieved by a series of successive and massive cuts in the government budget, reduced salaries in the public sector, reduction in taxes, tightened fiscal policies, and structural reforms to boost competition and efficiency in the markets. The effect of the recession, coupled with the tough measures, led initially to a severe rise in unemployment and a real fall in disposable income. The public found it difficult to live with both great security concerns and economic hardship.

However, the recovery plan, which was lauded by the IMF, the World Bank and the international economic community, was effective and brought the economy round, as the main economic indicators began to show real improvement from the end of 2004 onwards. Continual improvement has been sustained.

State Revenue increased by a real rate of 8%

in 2005 to NIS 162 billion. At the same time, taxes were reduced by a net overall of NIS 3.6 billion. Tax changes included a reduction of VAT (to 16.5% in 2005), vehicle taxation, personal income tax, corporate tax (to 34%), and cancellation of stamp duty for loans and rental contracts, while taxes on cigarettes and diesel fuel were increased. The current budget deficit has been decreased and stood at 1.94% of the GDP in 2005.

The government has also gone on a selling spree by disposing of many state-owned companies or government holdings, such as El Al, Bezek, Discount Bank, and more. Thus the public sector is gradually being reduced and allowing the business sector to expand and lead growth.

The labor market has improved considerably from the time that unemployment reached a record level of 10.9% in the last two quarters of 2003. It has since fallen to 8.8%, or 244,000 people, in the last quarter of 2005. The government implemented the Wisconsin Plan, designed to reduce unemployment benefits and speed up the transition of the unemployed back to the labor market. The implementation has been accompanied by criticism and questions as to its effectiveness, but the operators insist that the plan is a success.

Tourism has turned around as the security situation has increased. From a record high of 2.4 million visitors in 2000, tourism fell drastically to only 860,000 in 2002. It has since recovered and reached 1.9 million in 2005. Arrivals in the first few months of 2006 are 25% higher than in the previous year, and Ministry of Tourism officials are hoping that tourism will reach a new record of 3 million by the end of 2006. Nevertheless,

renewal of terrorist activity could well damage this positive pattern.

Progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the Bachar Committee to reduce banks' holdings in provident and mutual funds (aimed at increasing competition and reducing conflicts of interest), and the process of equating tax rates on income earned on securities in Israel and abroad was completed.

The Bank of Israel predicts a growth rate of 4.4% in 2006. This is one of the highest in the developed world — a little less than the spectacular growth of 5.2% in 2005 (led by the business sector, which grew at 6.6%) and compared with a slight fall of minus 0.7% in 2002.

The housing market has picked up and prices have risen. This is especially true of Jerusalem and to a lesser extent Tel Aviv and Netanya, where prices have been boosted by purchases from overseas buyers and foreign investment in real estate.

The integration of the Israel economy in the global economy continued in 2005. Imports currently constitute more than 40% of the GDP and exports more than 35%, Israel's investment abroad, direct and portfolio, reached \$10.1 billion. Non-residents' investments in Israel totaled \$10.8 billion. Overall foreign investment grew to \$9.7 billion at the end of 2005 — a rise of 67%.

Israel's continued economic improvement was achieved in 2005 under favorable conditions, such as continued growth worldwide, particularly in the high-tech industries, and the improved security situation. Part of the economic improvement can be credited to Israel's economic and political leadership.

Standard and Poor's affirmed its A-minus

rating for Israel in 2006. Moody's rated Israel A2 and forecast that prospects remained stable, despite political uncertainties. Similarly, the Morgan Stanley investment house released a glowing review of the Israel economy and entitled it "Israel: Almost Perfect".

But the economic recovery was achieved at a significant social cost. Severe cuts in welfare benefits and transfer payments and a reduction on state spending on education, health and social services all hurt the poorer sectors of the population. When the economy entered a deep depression and unemployment rose, disposable income of the lower deciles was most affected. Stringent economic measures led to considerable social and public protest and the well-publicized demonstrations by single mothers and the homeless.

According to the Bank of Israel, the incidence of poverty has increased, whether measured in relative terms or in terms of basic needs. The 2005 poverty report clearly indicated a trend of worsening poverty over the last ten years and an increase in the gap between rich and poor beyond levels in the West, but it should be noted that it was harshly criticized for allegedly faulty methodologies. In the long term, it was hoped that the reduction in welfare benefits would raise levels of participation in the labor market and reduce poverty.

The economy has withstood a number of significant political changes that, under different circumstances, would have seriously affected both the stock market and confidence in the economy. Sharon's stroke and disappearance from the political scene and the election of Hamas did cause a blip on the Israel stock exchange of around 4–6%, but only temporarily

so. On the whole, both overseas investors and banks and local investors have shown confidence in the transition leadership of Ehud Olmert and the appearance of the new *Kadima* party. This demonstrates a certain stability and maturity of the Israel economy.

The disengagement from Gaza and the security fence have contributed to Israel's economic recovery. By concentrating resources in a small geographical area, economies of scale were created and resources less extended. In effect, the process of economic disengagement began at least a decade ago, following the Oslo accords. Economic investments have been diverted from the territories to Israel proper and devoted to education, industrial and infrastructure development, with a higher multiplier effect. The military can use its human resources more effectively in a smaller land space and rely more on capital and technological means, thus reducing both regular army mobilization and reserve forces.

All in all, as economic growth continues to be led by the business sector and assuming that the government continues its market-based reforms, Israel's economy is expected to strengthen, mature and remain stable.

## 10. PEAKS AND WEAKNESSES IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Four Israeli scientists (including one who lives abroad) won three Nobel Prizes in chemistry and economics between the years 2002–2005. This quadruple recognition by the Prize Committee of Israel's scientific achievements augments the universal respect Israel enjoys in the fields of science, technology and economics. This rec-

ognition is shared by organizations such as the UN, in their *2001 Human Development Report*, which rated Israel as one of the 18 world leaders in technological achievements, with a score of 15 out of 16 possible points in terms of the level of technological innovation, number 22 in investment in technological creativity, and ninth in the world in venture capital investments.

During the 1990's, the average annual growth rate of knowledge industries in Israel was 16%. The Israeli knowledge industry has increased its share in GDP from 5% in the early 1990's to 14%, and by 2005 advanced technology industries employed 11% of the total workforce, providing 14.5% of Israel's national product and accounting for 40% of its exports.

These indicators and other signs herald progress towards scientific and technological achievements in Israel, and exist regardless of doubts deriving from the flow of human and financial resources to pressing security issues. The significance of this delta, therefore, lies in its signaling Israel's achievements in science and technology, based on a robust infrastructure.

The main contributing factors to this trend are past and present governments' R&D policy, the immigration to Israel of highly qualified human capital, the development of defense R&D, industrial production and training, investments by the business sector, and the high quality of university research and teaching.

Israel's scientific and technological success should be regarded in light of the peak achievements of Jews in these (and other) areas ever since the scientific world opened for them following the Enlightenment. During the pioneering *yishuv* era, the importance of science and technology, particularly in agriculture, was

highly emphasized. The immigration to Israel of a well-trained and educated labor force from the world's prominent knowledge centers has been a cornerstone of the Zionist project.

The import of human capital has greatly contributed to the establishment of the knowledge infrastructure necessary for the development of high education and an economy based on knowledge industries. The waves of immigration from the West, in particular the influx from Central Europe following the Nazi ascent to power and in recent decades from the former Soviet Union — during which over 100,000 academics made *aliyah* — have placed Israel as the world leader in terms of the ratio of engineers in the total population: some 140 per 10,000 employees according to the Global Information Technology Report of 2005–2006.

The defense industries, established mainly in order to decrease Israel's dependence on imported arms, along with their large-scale R&D budgets (more than 100 billion shekels over the last twenty years, according to a conservative estimate) and the IDF's software and communication engineering training programs have also made a major contribution, both in terms of training skilled professionals who are integrated in the civilian market upon their discharge from military service and through external influences on the general market.

Four of Israel's academic institutions are included in the list of the world's 200 leading institutions of higher learning: the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Technion, Weizmann Institute and Tel-Aviv University. In *The Times'* Higher Education Ranking of 2006, the Hebrew University is rated as number 77 in the world. This is also manifested in the quantity

of scientific publications, where Israel is rated third in the world with 1,549 publications per capita (annual average), in comparison with the U.S. (900) and the European Union (729) in the years 1999–2003.

In the field of applied science, a WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) survey conducted in 2003 in order to determine which universities registered the largest number of international patents, the Hebrew University and the Weizmann Institute were included in the top ten, alongside institutions such as Caltech, M.I.T and Stanford University.

The proportion of persons with higher education in the general population in Israel is the second highest in the world. The potential high return of scientific education in the business market and other factors have led in recent years to a consistent increase in the number of university graduates in the disciplines of mathematics, computer sciences and biological sciences.

Government investment policy in R&D budgets has always played a key role in Israel's growth. It was designed to overcome the initial market failure of knowledge-based projects due to the heavy burden of investment, with the government assuming the role of investor during these initial and critical phases. Israeli government investment in R&D in relation to the GNP is higher than the U.S. and European Union average. The business sector in Israel enjoys a government investment share that is proportionally similar to that of the U.S. government. The lion's share of this investment (85.6% in 2003) is allocated to business R&D (40%) and university research (45.6%). During 2004–2005, Israel's R&D budget averaged 4.7% of the GDP, the largest of all OECD countries. Such policies,

together with the Law to Encourage Capital Investments and the Law to Encourage Research and Development in Industry, have led to the main strength of the Israeli knowledge industry being in the R&D stage.

The business sector in Israel has been quick to capitalize on the available human capital and the government's favorable policy. Israel boasts the highest ratio in the world of research jobs in the business sector and the overall percentage of employees (12% in 2001.)

Israel is a world leader in start-up initiatives, and is second only to the California Silicone Valley in terms of concentration of high-tech companies. Over 40 multi-national high-tech and information industry leaders have set up R&D centers in Israel, and the relative number of computer profession employees is among the world's highest.

This reputation has been of service to the Israeli business sector in foreign capital raising initiatives, which in 2001 have placed Israel at number nine in the world. As a result, IT industries are responsible for 14% of the GDP and constitute the main engine of current and most probably future Israeli economic growth.

Nevertheless, numerous weaknesses, some of them serious, continue and even increase. The current achievements are mainly the fruit of seeds planted over two decades ago, but studies suggest that the population of senior scientists in Israel is relatively old: 74% of physicists are over the age of 51. Moreover, while the number of Master's degree holders is constantly on the rise, the number of PhD students in Israel is significantly lower than that of Western countries and countries with similar characteristics (in terms of

R&D investment.) Less than 1% of the population holds a PhD degree, compared to countries such as Sweden, where the percentage of PhD holders is 2.7%, or Switzerland with 2.5%, or the U.S. with 2.4%.

R&D budgets earmarked by the universities have been greatly eroded and are unable to keep with the pace of growth in the R&D activities and budgets of the business sector. Despite their impressive growth, such budgets are by no means a substitute for university investment, being by nature focused on industrial rather than academic R&D. As a matter of fact, though in relative terms Israel spends more on R&D than any other country, the national expense on academic R&D is the lowest of all OECD countries.

A grave problem is the partial failure to absorb promising scientists and consequently their emigration (although efforts are under way to curb this trend.) Serious weaknesses in the education system continue to impact science and technology teaching. International tests designed to evaluate scholarly achievements in science studies indicate that Israeli pupils are in the dismal place of 27 out of 28 OECD countries — well below the world average (*The Times*, 1999).

At this point it is impossible to predict to what extent Israel's circumstances will influence the rate of its peak achievements in science and technology (along with other areas), in which the Jewish People in the Diaspora have excelled ever since the Enlightenment. Currently, trends are mixed, but the delta has the potential to signify greater chances for increasing peak achievements

## The United States

### 11. THE INFLUENCE OF JEWISH LAW ON THE U.S. LEGAL SYSTEM

In recent years, American Jewish scholars in a variety of fields of Jewish study have been engaged in the process of retrieving the Jewish tradition and making it relevant for a wider, secular and even non-Jewish audience. The Hebrew Bible has been resuscitated as an intellectual resource for political theorists, and *Midrash*, the distinctive rabbinic exegesis of scripture, has been re-introduced as an intellectual resource for literary theorists. This phenomenon is worthy of comment, for it indicates a shift in the relationship between American Jewish intellectuals and Jewish culture — a shift that is a part of the larger anti-assimilationist trend in American academia. By far the most interesting development in the recent turn to Jewish sources by American scholars is the emergence of Jewish law (*halacha*) in American legal culture.

Over the past three decades, Jewish law has become a familiar subject in American legal discourse. Citations of Jewish legal sources are commonplace in American judicial opinions, including those authored by the most prestigious sector of the judiciary, the federal appellate court. American law reviews routinely publish articles on Jewish law. Special legislation in various states has been enacted to deal with the dilemma of Jewish women seeking a Jewish divorce, and cases on the subject appear in nearly every treatise and casebook on family law. The most significant development, however, is the

appearance of a small but significant body of scholarship that draws on the history, philosophy, or interpretive techniques of Jewish law to advance American legal theory itself. This overview analyzes this shift in attitude toward Jewish legal sources in the American legal environment.

Sporadic presentations of the major principles of Jewish law have appeared in American legal periodicals since the inception of the genre. In the classical era of liberal legal scholarship, from the late 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, these presentations either looked for the Jewish roots of American law or presented Jewish law as an exemplar of then-prevailing Western liberal legal ideas. As the American sociologist Gerald Auerbach has argued, from the 1880's through the 1960's, American Jewish acculturation largely involved the transfer of allegiance from a sacred to a secular legal system, from the Torah to the Constitution. According to Auerbach, this assimilative process was aided by the creative discovery of a unitary "Judeo-American" legal tradition. As Jewish lawyers asserted that the American legal system was the finest flowering of the Jewish legal tradition, Jewish legal scholars also discovered that the "twentieth century ideals of America had been the age-old ideals of the Jews". In short, Jewish law was stripped of its distinctiveness and was viewed as merely an historical precursor of American law.

During this period, the judicial branch of the American legal system on occasion also

paid lip service to Jewish law. Indeed, citations from the Bible and Jewish law in judicial opinions of this period have a distinctly assimilative quality. Jewish law was cited primarily as part of the process of assimilating a new group into America. As the nation progressed from an Anglo-American country to a Christian country to a Judeo-Christian country with the influx of new immigrant groups, American jurists embarked on the invention of a unitary “Judeo-Christian” ethical tradition. In line with the then-prevailing view in America of Judaism as merely a private religion, Jewish legal sources were treated primarily as reflections of moral, ethical, and religious values, rather than as legal norms.

However, anyone who has glanced through recent judicial opinions or through the law journals of the past two-and-a-half decades cannot fail to notice the startling increase of citations of Jewish sources in public American legal discourse. The canon of Jewish legal sources cited in American judicial opinions has grown to encompass not only the Bible and the Talmud, but also the *Mishna*, Maimonides’ *Mishne Torah*, Yosef Karo’s *Shulchan Aruch*, and even Menachem Elon’s magisterial *Principles of Jewish Law*. These citations no longer appear solely in state court opinions or decisions authored by Jewish judges; they appear in the heart of federal appellate opinions authored by non-Jewish judges, such as Judge Michael McConnell, a recent candidate for the United States Supreme Court. Moreover, these Jewish sources have been divorced from Christian religious values. They are no longer cited as evidence of a unitary Judeo-Christian ethic, but as distinctly legal sources in their own right.

This change in the pattern of citation of Jewish law in American judicial opinions can be attributed to several factors. First, the Jewish composition of the American legal profession has altered. Jews, who are well-versed in the Jewish legal tradition, including Jews from the most Orthodox denominations, have entered the legal profession in increasing numbers. In addition, these new members of the legal profession have joined together to create advocacy organizations for the Jewish community. As part of their mandate, these organizations submit *amicus* briefs to the courts, in particular to the United States Supreme Court, in which the Jewish legal position on a question before the court is presented.

Second, under the aegis of multiculturalism, America has become increasingly receptive to the citation of particularist sources in public discourse. With the emergence of multiculturalism, Judaism is no longer viewed solely as a private religion or as an adjunct to Christianity, and *halachic* sources are no longer viewed as part of a unitary Judeo-Christian ethic. Rather, these sources are seen as the distinctive legal sources of a national or cultural group.

Third, globalization has produced intensified argument about the receptivity of American legal culture to foreign sources of law. The United States Supreme Court recently divided, in the case of *Roper*, over the question whether, consistent with the Constitution, the death penalty could be applied to juveniles. A significant aspect of the controversy was the majority opinion’s citation to practice in enlightened European countries. In his dissenting opinion, Justice Scalia chastised the majority for diluting the distinctiveness of American legal and especially

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constitutional culture. The majority opinion, however, asserts that the court should look for enlightenment from any source. In this context, Jewish law, which has been stripped of its former characterization as merely private religion, takes its place as a civilizational legal system, alongside other legal systems that may offer enlightenment about the proper legal norm.

Finally, Jewish law has made its way into the mainstream of American judicial opinions and American legal consciousness because more and more members of American society lead lives in which Jewish law and American law intersect. The chief example is Jewish women who seek divorce both under American and Jewish law. The figure of the *agunah* (the Jewish woman who is chained to a dead marriage because her husband refuses to provide a *get* or Jewish divorce) is a familiar one in American law. Increasing exercise of power by Jewish-American interest groups has led to the adoption of numerous ameliorative laws and judicial doctrines designed to redress the situation. New York has passed two special statutes to deal with the problem, one requiring anyone petitioning for a divorce to attest that he or she has removed all barriers to the remarriage of his or her spouse, and the other essentially allowing the judge to impose financial penalties for failure to furnish a *get*. In addition, various judicial doctrines allow the judge to rescind separation agreements in which financial consideration is given in order to obtain the *get*, permit tort actions for intentional infliction of emotional distress based on withholding a *get*, and

read into the *ketubbah* an implicit provision to submit to rabbinical arbitration. These ameliorative laws are designed to align Jewish women with all citizens of the state, who divorce under conditions of equality. As such, they constitute an alternative vehicle for reform of Jewish law. While the *agunah* is perhaps the most vivid example of the necessary interpenetration of Jewish and American law, others also abound.

Developments within the American legal academy are even more far-reaching. A new genre of Jewish-American legal scholarship has appeared. If the attraction of Jewish law once lay in its perceived similarity to the American liberal legal model, it now lies in its perceived difference from that model. Jewish law is invoked as a “contrast case”. It is described explicitly or implicitly in this new literature as anti-hierarchical, egalitarian and communitarian; as jurisprudence written in a feminist voice (though not by females), based on reciprocal obligations rather than rights, and a case study of the redemptive possibilities of legal interpretation. In short, the Jewish legal tradition has come to represent precisely the model of law that many contemporary American theorists propose for American society. Thus, American legal theorists are interested in understanding rabbinic texts as law specifically in order to develop and articulate an expanded vision of “what is law”.

A variety of institutional factors have conjoined in the last two decades to foster this transformation. First, the environment of the American legal academy itself has undergone a remarkable change over the past several decades, paralleling its leap from a primarily professional training ground to a full-fledged academic insti-

tution. Law professors now routinely come to the legal academy after completing doctorates in various fields of the humanities, notably literature, philosophy and religion. With the rise of this new identity, the legal academy has expanded its repertoire to include not only matters of practice, policy and doctrinal analysis, but also the theory of law itself.

Second, this new consciousness coincides with the legal academy's loss of confidence both in the moral and intellectual basis of authoritative and supposedly neutral legal interpretation and in liberal political theory generally, with its attendant alienation of the individual from communitarian forms of social life. These concerns, which reflect larger trends in philosophy and literary theory, have led to a search for alternative models to liberal legal theory. The turn to the Jewish legal model is also a somewhat belated response to the call in the 1970's for a reconstruction of legal theory grounded specifically in law and religion, a reconstruction that acknowledges the transformative power of law to enrich human existence and the role of religion in shaping the social reality upon which legal theory is based.

It is within this triply charged institutional setting of theoretical preoccupation, Constitution worship, and search for alternative models that religion in general and Jewish law in particular have emerged as subjects of general intellectual inquiry. Thus, within the American legal academy, interest in Jewish law stems from the ways in which it is perceived to be different from and a challenge to Western liberal legal models and to classical accounts of law. The *halacha* has become another tool to use in the theoretical criticism of law and its appeal lies precisely in

its characterization as an alternative religious legal model. In contrast to the approach of both the traditionalist and that of contemporary academic students of rabbinic texts, this turn to the Jewish legal model assumes that one can ask jurisprudential questions about the *halacha* that are asked about other functional legal systems. Is the *halacha* a system of social order, as is classical liberalism, or is it aspirational? How is a legal system organized around duties different from one organized around rights? Can a legal system operate in a decentralized fashion, without order imposed from above by a Supreme Court? What alternative political system does the *halacha* envision? How does the *halacha*, which has developed within the overarching institutional structure of other legal systems, interact with these other legal systems? And, in contrast to the approach of the Israeli school of *Mishpat Ivri* (Hebrew Law), this turn to the *halachic* model does not seek to efface the religious element of Jewish law. Rather, legal theorists are interested in understanding whether the religious element of Jewish law affects its operation or partially accounts for its particular approach to judicial discretion, the concept of objectivity in law, social order, or the autonomy of law.

Finally, in the past two decades, two important American legal theorists have produced work that has had an unprecedented effect on the study of Jewish law in the American legal academy, one directly and the other indirectly. In 1983, Robert Cover, a prominent constitutional theorist at Yale Law School, published a lengthy essay in the Harvard Law Review entitled "Nomos and Narrative". The

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essay juxtaposed two views of law: one as a system of social order and the other as a system of meaning. In describing the latter, Cover cited a host of biblical sources, although he did not discuss rabbinic sources or allude to Jewish law at great length. Cover's overall purpose in writing this essay was not to advance the field of Jewish law, but rather to give a new account of "what is law". The essay quickly entered the mainstream of legal thought, influencing the work of numerous constitutional theorists who were largely unaware of the connection between Cover's work and Jewish law. For those who became aware of its underpinnings, however, the essay essentially served to legitimize the field of Jewish law as an intellectual resource in the study of American law.

Indeed, many of Cover's arguments could have been developed without resort to Jewish law, but it was precisely the relationship between the theoretical issue Cover was addressing and central features of the Jewish legal system that stimulated it. Cover wished to address an inner American constitutional debate over the connection between constitutional interpretation and constitutional authority. A central part of his argument was that law cannot be defined solely in terms of official state organs. For him, the *halacha* provides a transparent example of how law can exist apart from a state or a Supreme Court. Second, the status of dissenting or rejected opinions within Jewish law provided an important illustration of Cover's insistence that "law" is not synonymous with an authoritative interpretation. In short, Cover's essay rested on precisely the opposite viewpoint: that the rabbinic endeavor must be understood as law and that its vision of law should be incorporated

into American constitutional theory. His work dramatized the relevance and utility of Jewish law for generating new ideas in American legal theory and constitutional law and it gave specialists in Jewish law an expanded vision of the larger theoretical issues at stake in analyzing *halacha*.

Ideas also flow in the opposite direction, however. Just as Jewish law expands and transforms constitutional theory; new theoretical models emerging from the American legal academy have begun to enrich the description of Jewish law. One of the potentially richest theoretical models of law in analyzing *halacha* is that offered by Ronald Dworkin, the pre-eminent Anglo-American legal philosopher of the twentieth century. Dworkin is not himself familiar with Jewish law, although he recently gave a public lecture on the topic, an event that further served to legitimize the field of Jewish law as an important subject of American public intellectual inquiry.

Dworkin has developed what has come to be known as the third theory of law, bridging the classical two theories of positivism and naturalism. His is the first interpretive, as opposed to analytic, account of law and, as such, particularly suitable for adaptation to the Jewish legal model. Dworkin claims that American law does not consist solely of rules; it also consists of more open-ended principles, specifically, moral and political principles imbedded in the Constitution at its inception. Professor Dworkin's explication of the role of principles in law provides scholars with a vocabulary to investigate the legal role of scriptural ideals such as man's creation in the image of God and rabbinic statements about the purpose of the law (such as pursuing paths of

peace, the dignity owed all humans, or sanctifying the name of God) and even of the *aggadah* in judicial interpretation. Essentially, Dworkin has offered scholars of Jewish law a way to go beyond a positivist or source-based description in which Jewish law is simply the application of a set of known divine norms to new situations, while at the same time not relying on traditional natural law theories, which have never been of much use to describe a system that posits revelation as the basic source of law. It offers a way to describe how the answer to a legal question is re-discovered even in a revealed legal system through the creative interpretive process.

The affinity between Dworkin's theory and Jewish law raises an interesting question: Why does the theory of someone who has devoted his life work to a description of Anglo-American law so resonate with scholars investigating the Jewish legal system, separated as they are in time and space and influence (the one secular and the other divine)? One answer to this question reverts to the relationship of the Torah to the Constitution. Are the two startlingly similar projects, as an earlier generation of Jewish lawyers insisted? In contrast to civil law systems, in which law is primarily the product of statutory enactments, both the American and Jewish legal systems are structured around a single, central, authoritative text with an ongoing history of interpretation that has inspired great allegiance over time. Moreover, American constitutionalism is set within a common law system and common law jurisprudence, which emphasizes casuistic development and the pivotal role of the judge, it tends to produce jurisprudential theories as or even more suitable for comparison with or adaptation to Jewish law than those provided by

civil law systems — the systems which provided the jurisprudential frameworks that shaped the early generation of great Jewish law scholars.

The affinity between the two systems, however, is more than structural; it is also historical. There are peculiar resonances between *halacha* and American constitutionalism that can be traced to the deep religious roots of the American experience. These roots originate with the Puritans' conscious effort to model American legal culture around the Hebrew Bible and with the central idea of a covenantal society. That effort has engendered a feeling deeply held among many that a moral vision must underlie American law, just as it underlies Jewish law.

## 12. GROWING HISPANIC STANDING AND THE POLITICAL AREA IN THE U.S.

The growth of the Hispanic population is changing the face of the United States and stands at the center of animated political debate in both houses of the U.S. Congress over immigration rules. The impact of the demographic change and questions of domestic identity and international relations that accompany it present a challenge for the Jewish community to seize the potential opportunity via policy and strategy. The Hispanic community in the U.S. is approaching a critical mass likely to be of key importance to the Jewish community in regard to its relationship with the changing face of broader U.S. society, as well as how this new face of America relates to Jews, the Jewish community, and Israel. The medium-to-long range impact may include U.S. public opinion and acceptance of Jews and the political influ-

ence/effectiveness of the Jewish community in absolute terms, in light of Jewish demographic decreases and the growth of the Moslem community in key electoral states. The U.S. Jewish community is aware of this delta and is trying to relate to it. The community, however, remains ill-prepared, due to a lack of common ground and inadequate financial and qualified human resources in dealing with outreach to the Hispanic community. Jewish leaders, organizations and activists should create a strategic policy for the medium-to-long range in relating to the Hispanic community that includes interplay between the community and national levels and places it as a top agenda issue.

### **Demographic Overview of Hispanics in the U.S.: Absolute and Relative to the Jewish Reality**

There were 40.4 million Hispanics in the U.S. in 2004, accounting for 14% of the total population. Hispanics are now the largest minority group in the U.S., outnumbering black Americans (12% of the U.S. population in 2004). It is estimated that Hispanics, who have increased 61% since 1990, will comprise 25% of the U.S. population by the year 2020. The community is noted by a youth bulge, and absolute growth of the community is even more striking when compared with the growth of the total U.S. population and the shrinking of the U.S. Jewish population — both of whom are aging; the total Jewish population decreased 0.3 million between 1990 and 2000.

Hispanics are geographically concentrated, with approximately 80% living in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Arizona, New

Jersey, New Mexico or Colorado. The growth of the Hispanic community in these states has been rapid and significant. Between 1980 and 2000, the Hispanic population in Florida increased by 212%, in California by 141%; in New Jersey by 127%, in Texas by 123%; and in New York by 73%. This is in comparison to the Jewish migration trend away from the Northeast, with the Jewish population declining there from 3.3 million in 1970 to 2.2 million in 2000. The Jewish population is moving towards the South and West, including Florida, Arizona, and California. The Jewish population in Florida is particularly elderly, compared with the young Hispanic population.

As the Hispanic population increased between 1980 and 2000, so, too, did its dispersal, with populations increasing over 200% and by over 200,000 people in the Southeast (North Carolina and Virginia, in addition to Florida) and the Northwest (Oregon and Washington). Moreover, there are states with newly emerging Hispanic populations that rose over 200%, but without large critical mass increases in absolute numbers. These states are largely in the Midwest, including Nebraska and Kansas. Interestingly, the majority of Hispanics live in neighborhoods where they are the minority — a trend that strengthened between 1990 and 2000. This may be reflective of a growing sense of comfort with or maturation of the Hispanic community, which has increasingly moved outside specifically Hispanic hubs or immigration center-points. The community is slightly less concentrated than the U.S. black population: 57% of Hispanics live in communities where they are the majority, compared to 52% of the

black population who live in majority black communities.

The Hispanic community is growing due to immigration, both legal and illegal, as well as a high birth rate. It is diverse in background, cultural and political outlook. In 2000, two-thirds of Hispanics were of Mexican origin, with the rest Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans, Dominicans and Spaniards. As noted, there is a pronounced youth bulge within the Hispanic population, exceeding the corresponding population (for both males and females) in the total population for every five-year age group under 35, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. In 2000, the median age for Hispanics in the U.S. was 26.0, compared to the median age of U.S. Jews, which was 42, and the median age for the total U.S. population was 35.4. Moreover, over one-third of the Hispanic population was younger than 18, compared to 23% of U.S. Jews and 25% of the total U.S. population. Among the older segments of the population, 4.8% of the Hispanic population was 65 and older in 2000, compared to 23% of the Jewish population, which was over 60 years of age.

In socio-economic variables, Hispanics tend to have a low education level. In 2000, 52% of Hispanics aged 25 and over had at least a high school diploma and 10% held a bachelor's degree or higher. This may be compared to high education achievements in the Jewish community, where 55% have earned a bachelor's degree and 25% a graduate degree, and to the U.S. total population, where 29% have earned a bachelor's degree and 6% a graduate degree, according to NJPS. Only 15% of Hispanic men and 23% of Hispanic women were in manage-

ment and professional occupations (the two job categories of highest status). This compares with 54% of total U.S. Jews and 32% of the total workforce. The economic disparity is reflected in median income, which in 1999 was \$34,400 for Hispanic families, compared to \$54,000 for Jewish families in 2001. Median income for the total U.S. population in 1999 was \$50,000. This indicates a large socio-economic gap between the U.S. Hispanic and Jewish communities.

The political impact of the Hispanic community is weak; relative to its numbers, due to low voting registration (partly because of the large percentage of illegal immigrants as well as youth, currently below the voting age, that comprise the Hispanic community), low voting turn-out, and a diffused political organization. Low political engagement is relative to the broader U.S. and magnified even further when compared with the Jewish community. While between 2000 and 2004, Hispanics accounted for half of the population growth in the U.S., they constituted only one-tenth of the increase in total votes cast. 47% of all eligible Hispanics voted in the 2004 presidential election (18% of the total Hispanic population), compared with 64% of eligible voters in the general U.S. population and 87% of all eligible Jewish voters. Nevertheless, the Hispanic community is increasingly recognizing and advancing its potential influence, both in terms of Hispanic-Americans and as illegal immigrants. Recent protests in April 2006 over legislation that would build a 700-mile security fence on the U.S.-Mexican border and make illegal immigration and assisting illegal immigrants a federal crime brought 1 million illegal immigrants and their supporters to the streets. The massive grassroots protests, assisted by and

illustrating the power of the Spanish media and technology among the young Hispanic population, are being noted as a potential turning point in Hispanic organization and influence.

The number of Hispanics voting will likely grow over time as the children of illegal immigrants born on U.S. soil are given the right to vote and the youth bulge comes of age. This is particularly important due to the Hispanic concentration in main electoral states: 50% of the U.S. Hispanic population lives in either California or Texas, the top two electoral states in the U.S. Hispanic and Jewish communities overlap with the Jewish community in high electoral states is in California, Florida, New York and New Jersey — 4 of the top 10 most important electoral states in the U.S. All of these states also contain growing Moslem populations that may pose a potential threat to the Jewish community and its interests, raising the potential need and/or opportunity to form a coalition with the Hispanic community.

The Hispanic and Jewish communities have both been impacted by redistricting following the 2000 census, which in certain regions, such as California, brought the Hispanic and Jewish communities to a head regarding the increase in Hispanic numbers in the Democratic districts. This threatens the replacement of Jewish with Hispanic leadership in those areas.

Stronger Hispanic political organization is already developing, both in the Capital and in lobbying bodies. Similar voting patterns between Jews and Hispanics on domestic issues make for strong potential coalition partners as part of

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### ***The growing importance of Hispanics offers significant opportunities***

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the liberal voting block, but more conservative on issues where the black population endorses strongly liberal positions, such as the economy and crime. However, this is a bond that has yet to develop. Although effort is underway, many point to the large socio-economic gap between the groups as hindering the evolution of such a coalition.

### **Internal Hispanic Distinctions and their Impact on Jewish Community**

40% of Hispanics in the U.S. in 2000 were foreign born. 70% of Hispanics are Roman Catholic. These factors may have great influence on Hispanics' relationship to Jews. For example, according to an ADL survey, Hispanic immigrants have a higher rate of antisemitism than those born in the U.S. (35% to 19% respectively are found to be antisemitic.). The difference is largely identified as the impact of U.S.-based education, which is credited for teaching U.S. values that reduce antisemitic sentiment. If accurate, the lower rate of non-immigrant Hispanics (especially when compared to U.S. blacks, 35% of whom hold antisemitic sentiments) presents U.S. Jewry with an opportunity as the shift from primary minority in the U.S. goes from the blacks to the Hispanics. In regard to Israel, 40% of the total Hispanic population sympathizes more with Israel, while 13% sympathize more with the Palestinians. This level of sympathy is similar to the white population (40% and 12%, respectively). According to a Pew survey, the Hispanic population is more sympathetic to Israel than the black population, 40% of who sympathize more with Israel, while 17% sympathize more with the Palestinians.

## Jewish Community Strategy and Tactics

Jewish communities and organizations in the U.S. are aware of the rapid growth of the Hispanic community and the strategic need to outreach/build relationships with them. The Jewish community has been developing relationships with Hispanics on a regional basis for many years. However, only recently has the Jewish community started recognizing a need to coordinate and develop policies on the national level with regard to the Hispanic community. The American Jewish Committee seems to be the foremost actor in the field of Hispanic-Jewish relations, dealing with it nationally for the longest period of time; in many cases, it is the sole actor with regard to Hispanic-Jewish activities and policy development. AJC's two staffers are themselves Spanish-speaking Jews from countries in Latin America. AIPAC and the ADL have both expanded to include a division and a subdivision respectively to work with the Hispanic community.

On a community level, there is a lack of coherent agenda and policy, with regard to the Hispanic community within several Federations. This includes Federations with some of the largest Hispanic populations in their areas, such as Los Angeles, and may be true for the Jewish community overall. The Hispanic community in the U.S. is also extremely diverse, with composition differing by region. This makes the issues and agenda for the Jewish communities throughout the U.S. vary when addressing the local Hispanic community.

Some Jewish Community Relations Centers (JCRC's) make strategic decisions to include outreach to Hispanics within the framework of

all-inclusive ethnic outreach. Reasons for an all-ethnic, rather than Hispanic-directed, approach of JCRC's include:

1. A scarcity of resources.
2. Personnel incapable/unqualified to strike up relations with ethnic leaders (emphasizing the need to train professionals for this type of outreach activity).
3. The large number of ethnic groups in major cities with which JCRC's are required to engage.
4. Overwhelming agendas of JCRC's, including responsibility towards social services in some areas

The Israeli government has also established liaisons in their consulates in major U.S. cities to advance outreach to the Hispanic community. Jewish communal professionals think that these liaisons could serve a goal, but question the ability of Israelis who are on site for only two years to build lasting relationships.

## Building a Relationship

There is a sense of lack of common ground in the Jewish community and a search to find a common agenda with which to start building relations with the Hispanic community, without it being patronizing or one-sided. While the Hispanic community has noted its internal need to build political and economic infrastructure (although already a huge consumer base) the Jewish community seeks pure numbers and wants to transform this delta from a potential into a seized (rather than missed) opportunity, or even a developing threat.

The debate in the U.S. Jewish community

is whether coalitions should be based on social issues important today to the Hispanic community and which share traditional U.S. Jewish liberal values, but not necessarily attend to Jewish needs directly today.

Social welfare (health care, education) and immigration issues are high on the agenda of the Hispanic community. This includes the better-

ing of public schools, a goal adopted in the liberal tradition of the U.S. Jewish community. Yet public schools are declining in importance relative to Jewish day schools, in terms of both attendance and community backing and in light of the threat facing Jewish identity. Jewish community leaders question the advantage in placing resources in public schools while needing to build up their own community ones.

The international sphere and the Latin America-Israel-U.S. national and population dynamics may replace the domestic sphere as a possible coalition basis. Issues such as foreign policy regarding Latin America and Israel and Jews in Latin America may play a critical role in developing a long-sought basis for discussion between the Jewish and Hispanic communities. Moreover, the Hispanic and Jewish communities share a Diaspora-Homeland model which may be a basis for coalition development and mutual understanding. The Hispanic community in general maintains very strong connections with their various countries of origin, including billions of dollars in remittances (monies back to their home countries) often outstripping foreign investment.

Trips to Israel have been found to be an

excellent way to build understanding on Israel issues. Among other things, the Israel model is being presented to the Hispanic community as a way for absorbing new immigrants from Latin America in the U.S.

## Identity Maintenance

Both the Hispanic and Jewish communities struggle against assimilation, but the Hispanic community is apparently able to maintain its distinctiveness for third and fourth generations with such force that it reverses assimilation. This is particularly evident where intermarriage is involved.

The centrality of Spanish and maintaining the Spanish language in the Diaspora are of central importance in the Hispanic community and identified as a key contributor to maintaining identity and a sense of commonality amongst Hispanics. 74% of all Hispanics speak and understand Spanish "very well" and another 12% "pretty well". The pride and degree of commitment in maintaining Spanish in second and third generations is also high as well with parents and grandparents born in the U.S. Overall, the acquisition of English is found to play a central role in assimilation, and language has been found to contribute substantially to differences in attitudes. Seen in this context, Hebrew may be an under-utilized tool in helping maintain Jewish identity in the U.S.

The close proximity of Hispanics' country of origin and land borders allow for a continuous back and forth travel to their countries of origin. This also serves as a reinforcement of identity.

Due to the fact that language is such a critical element of Hispanic identity, Spanish speaking

Jews play a key role in building relations. There is a lack of Spanish-proficient professionals in the U.S. Jewish world.

### The Broader Context

The United States is in the midst of demographic transition and, as a result, identity introspection. It parallels mega-trends of identity searching globally. Several potential scenarios are possible, including bifurcation and multiculturalism.

One potential scenario, deemed highly probable from historical patterns of once dominant racial-ethnic group threatened by another in the rise, is native white backlash and the renewal of suspicions of dual loyalty. Moreover, theories regarding the U.S. in decline can aggravate this potential native white backlash, particularly if economic indicators decline as well. This could have a negative impact on U.S. Jews, the Jewish community and the U.S. relationship with Israel.

### 13. THE AIPAC EPISODE AS A WARNING SIGN

Regardless of the outcome of the proceedings against former senior AIPAC officials Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, the affair may leave scars on the nature of operation of Jewish organizations, engaged in enhancing the relationship between the U.S. and Israel.

This would not necessarily be the result of actual pressure exerted by the Administration, Congress or American media attacking the connections between the American Jewish community and Israel. It may reflect primarily substantial decrease in the access of Jewish

organization staffers and Israeli diplomats to administration officials. And secondly; a self-imposed restraint as a result of caution, expressing concerns reflected by the Jewish leadership that an ‘overly pro-Israeli’ American policy may be perceived as inconsistent with American interests as reflected by some commentators, who tend to accuse the Jewish community of enjoying excessive influence. Certain sectors in the Jewish leadership are of the opinion that in the future this could result in a backlash against American Jews, reviving and augmenting accusations by antisemitic and/or anti-Israeli circles about the excessive power of the Jewish lobby, and insinuations of “dual loyalty” in its attitude to the Jewish state.

These fears may well have led to the dismissal of Rosen and Weissman and the omission of singing Israel’s national anthem at some U.S.-Israeli gatherings following the news of the investigation. The issue has already been raised in internal discussions of Jewish forums, as indicated by the caution taken in contacts with Israeli security figures, even though these contacts are mostly limited to information and briefing purposes.

This trend, which may cause a decrease in Jewish influence in the U.S., could grow substantially, in view of three main developments:

- (a) A series of pointed attacks against Jews occupying senior positions in the Administration, who have allegedly led a hard line policy against Iraq, Iran, al-Qaeda and other fundamentalist Islamic bodies;
- (b) Biased critical articles against Jewish lobbying in America, such as the attack on “the Israel Lobby” by John Mearsheimer

- (Chicago University) and Stephen Walt (Harvard University);
- (c) Intra-community processes of increasing assimilation, erosion in Jewish identity and as a result, less support for Israel.

### Covert Investigation

The “AIPAC Case” refers to the charges filed against the AIPAC foreign policy research director Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, head of AIPAC’s Iran desk, for the unauthorized receiving and passing of classified information pertaining to U.S. security. The two were asked to resign their positions in an attempt by AIPAC’s board to distance itself from the affair and minimize damages.

The charges against Rosen and Weissman are the fruit of a long-term covert investigation conducted by the FBI, in which suspicions emerged

that the two conspired to gather classified national defense information on U.S. policy towards Iran, terrorism in Central Asia, al-Qaeda and the terror attack on the Khobar residential towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, where 23 Americans lost their lives. According to the prosecution, the two AIPAC senior staffers obtained the highly confidential information from Administration officials, among others, with the intention of handing it over to other parties not entitled to receive it, members of the media and representatives of a foreign power (unofficially leaked to be Israel).

In January 2006, Lawrence (Larry) Franklin, a Pentagon analyst and Iran expert, pleaded guilty

and was indicted in a plea bargain for mishandling classified information and passing it on to unauthorized people. Franklin has met frequently with the AIPAC officials and with the head of the political department at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, Naor Gilon. Franklin was sentenced to 12 years in prison, having incriminated the two AIPAC officials. He is to begin his term in prison only after testifying in their trial. The prosecution has promised to consider appealing for a mitigated sentence once his testimony is given.

A few points are important to be mentioned:  
(a) The prosecution based its charges on the Espionage Act of 1917, which has never been put to use before, despite the fact that none of the three has been charged with espionage; (b) The gravity of Franklin’s sentence is unprecedented, although during the trial the judge stressed that he did believe Franklin meant to act in the interests of the U.S.; (c) The three’s conduct had been in line with the rules of the game prevalent in Washington, where ongoing contacts and passing of information between Administration officials, lobbyists, journalists and diplomats are common practice.

In view of these issues, the defense in Rosen’s and Weissman’s trial requested that the charges be dropped, claiming that they contradicted to the American Constitution. The defense stressed the potential damage to the First Amendment, which secures freedom of expression.

### Routine Practice, Clampdown on ‘Leakage’, or Budding Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Sentiments?

The Jewish community in the U.S. first reacted

in shock, then concern, and later, when it was clear that the affair would not die down, took steps of self-restraint. But the Jewish community is not alone in its assessment that the prosecution in this case has broken the rules, and that the federal investigators are playing a dangerous game which could backfire, not only against freedom of expression, but against freedom of association and the routine operation of legitimate lobby groups in the political culture prevalent in America.

Steve Rosen is a well-known figure in Washington. Over many years, he has befriended and built close working relationships with senior government officials and members of Congress. His loyalty to the U.S. has never been questioned and he had never been perceived as operating out of line in terms of the common norms of conduct in Washington.

These facts have led to serious questions and various interpretations regarding the affair:

- A. **A bona fide investigation:** According to this interpretation, a defense or investigative agency official identified two of the protagonists as they were engaged in a conversation about sensitive matters at one of Washington's common meeting places, and reported it to their supervisors. This incident has led to the decision to run a covert follow-up, which evolved into a *bona fide* routine investigation, leading to the charges against the parties involved, with the intention of not only punishing those concerned, but deterring others.
- B. **Clampdown on chronic leakage:** C.I.A senior officials have decided to launch an effort to curb leaks by defense establishment

officials. This assessment is based, among other things, on the criminal investigation conducted to reveal the source who leaked that Valerie Plame was a senior C.I.A agent. In this view, Larry Franklin fell victim to this directive against leakage, with the added benefit of catching two other 'birds' — the AIPAC staffers.

- C. **Curbing the operations of political lobbies:** In this view, the American Administration is fed up with the expanding operations of lobbies on Capitol Hill and the White House, designed to influence the shaping of American foreign policy, and has decided to teach them all a lesson, once and for all. AIPAC was perceived as an appropriate target for the struggle to change the rules of the Washington game, representing one of the capital's most influential lobbying strongholds.
- D. **Antisemitism and/or anti-Israel sentiments:** In certain Administration corridors, and mainly among security agencies, there are elements suspected of being antisemitic, or — in the mitigated version — elements who are motivated by American national interests, who have been trying for years to curb what they regard as the excessive influence of the Jewish establishment that is sympathetic to Israel and motivated by sentiments of dual loyalty.

These claims are supported by some opinion papers written by professional Pentagon and State Department officials, who maintain that the long-term interests of the U.S. in the Middle East for a strategic partnership with the Arab

states outweigh the interests of cultivating the special relationship with Israel.

Any of these interpretations and any combination of them could be a valid explanation of the AIPAC affair. But even if the legal proceedings amount to nothing, and even if it eventually turns out that the affair was born out of a *bona fide* routine operation by American law enforcement agencies, it could still be a milestone and a warning sign regarding the vulnerability and sensitivity that characterize Jewish influence in the Diaspora.

The Jewish community in North America is the leading edge of the Jewish people's soft and political power. It has established its position and influence following the trauma experienced by American Jews during the Second World War, when they were powerless to do anything against the annihilation of the Jews of Europe. In building their power they have relied primarily on the common values shared by the West and drawing on the roots of the Judeo-Christian culture upon which the American culture has been founded.

The Jewish organizations realized that in order to help the State of Israel they must work towards the intensification of common interests between the two countries, avoid any situation of conflict and opposing interests.

The State of Israel must, however, realize that while U.S. Jewry is indeed a strategic asset, this relationship is not totally immune, and that like Diaspora Jewry in general, American Jews naturally feel that for as long as they choose to live in the Diaspora, their first loyalty is to the state of which they are citizens, and that loyalty to the Jewish People only comes second. In the U.S. this sense of loyalty to America is

even stronger, due to the pride they take in belonging to the world's strongest superpower and a thriving, free society of which they are an integral part.

## 14. NEW GRASS ROOTS INITIATIVES

Ever since the 1960s, the U.S. has been undergoing a process of massive social and cultural change. In the last half century, social values have changed considerably, especially among the "baby boom" generation born after the Second World War, who have moved towards a more individualistic and cosmopolitan orientation. The social change is expressed by many by diminished respect for authority, an emphasis on individual quality of life, increased importance of interest in work, greater sexual freedom, the decline of religious institutions and attendance, and deeper focus on reflective issues such as the meaning and purpose of life.

Within this long-term process there is currently a generational shift, where a new generation is beginning to mature and reach a stage where its members are able to assume responsibility and act in society.

The members of this new generation grew up in an environment that is both morally and technologically different from their parents'. They grew up in a time of changes in the individual's attitude to one's self and the surrounding environment, where self-realization is a superior value to the collective values so central to their forefathers. Conversely, this generation is much more tolerant of the others' origins and religious affiliations. Globalization too has contributed to a greater familiarity with different cultures and the adoption of a postmodernist view of them.

Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* has warned that as a result of the current changes, such as shifts in the family structure, work structure, technology, etc., American society as a whole has regressed from its previous social and familial values, and that civil society, based on institutions and organizations, is being transformed. The change is indeed evident especially when compared to the situation a few decades ago — during the heyday of the big social movements. In the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the percentage of Americans who were members of social organizations fell by 10–20%. The number of individuals actively involved in such organizations' activities fell even more: the number of Americans who dedicate their time to participation in public assemblies relating to the local council or the school, or are members of a committee in a local organization or club, has decreased by 30%. This could imply a negative change, but it could also indicate that social networks have shifted and are now manifest in other fields such as cyberspace.

As a result of the changes in the social alignment, it seems that the process of identity formation which was based mostly upon the need for identification with a certain social group is diminishing while the possibility for self-determination and self-identity which is not bound to situational and socio-economical factors grows stronger. The vast territory of the U.S. provides ample space for the development of many diverse possibilities for shaping and defining one's identity. This also offers U.S. Jews many choices in their decision to affiliate themselves with various possible communities.

In an attempt to understand the attachment of American Jews and the way in which they

express their Jewishness within this vast array of possibilities, researchers Cohen and Eisen surveyed in the year 2000 some 1,000 American Jews, focusing on those who define themselves as "moderately affiliated". These were Baby Boomers affiliated with local synagogues and Jewish organizations although not particularly religious. They are usually married to a Jewish spouse and have children. The religious sentiments describing their faith are largely personal. There is a belief in God but it does not necessarily manifest itself in the synagogue. They feel less committed to communal manifestations of Jewishness or of the Jewish people; and while they still feel a special connection to other Jews, the line separating them from non-Jews is thinner than before. In this context, their attitude to Israel is also changing and is increasingly dualistic; an attachment combined with criticism. Organizations perceived as associated with Israel and the Jews, such as the Federations, are thus perceived as unappealing and alienating. There is a strong wish to pass on the sense of affiliation to their children, but they are not interested in dictating to their children a prescribed choice for their self-expression of Jewishness.

Both Baby Boomers and their parents' generations may be described as "pick and choose Jews" — Jews who are faced with multiple choices regarding their identity. The inter-generational difference is that Baby Boomers are less concerned with the communal continuity than their parents were. The desire of this generation to find a personal meaning for the expression of Jewishness is bigger than its commitment to building a community and a collective obligation towards it.

Furthermore, amongst the younger generation, the number of Jews who choose to not remain affiliated with any denomination is on the increase. In a study based on a 2000–2001 survey by Jonathon Ament of the UJC, the number of those defining themselves as “just Jewish” (i.e. not affiliated with any of the distinct religious denominations) amounted to some 1,559,000 people. Among this segment, 27% were young people, in the 18–34 age group, compared with 15% in that age group in the previous decade. Thus, young people identify less with the Jewish people and Jewishness than the older generation does.

For the younger generation, expressing identity is mostly becoming less institutionalized: members of the current generation are less likely to go to service at synagogues. They express their Jewishness, both ethnic and reli-

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**For the younger generation, expressing identity is becoming less institutionalized**

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gious, within their homes, among family and less in the community. When in need of communal institutions, they mostly choose synagogues and schools that are defined as non-denominational or post-denominational.

This year, the Reboot organization published a study on current Jewish identity in the U.S., entitled *Grande Soy Vanilla Latte with Cinnamon, no Foam: Jewish Identity and Community in a Time of Unlimited Choice*.

The study describes how young Jewish people feel a part of a global Jewish community, and are less affiliated to the Federation or the communal synagogue attended by their parents and grandparents. Only about 30% of them consider participation in communal prayer a central part

of their Jewishness, although some claim that when they start a family they would like to join some kind of synagogue.

Members of this generation mostly marry later and their partners are not always Jewish. Young Jews are less attached to Israel, more attuned to American culture and feeling comfortable in it. Judaism is perceived by this generation as an affiliation with an exclusive club uniting young people from all over the world around the shared experience of Jewish education, but Judaism is not necessarily the most important thing.

According to Prof. Jonathan Sarna, there is a discernible shift in the focus of questions that concern this generation: in the past, the issues of identification with the struggle against antisemitism and the survival of the state of Israel have strongly concerned the older generations; nowadays other questions are being asked by a generation that no longer feels threatened by antisemitism and is not interested in Jewish life.

The young generation expresses dissatisfaction with the performance of many established organizations and sees them as irrelevant. Others maintain that a change in the organizational map is needed, as well as a grand strategy for the future of the Jewish community.

Another segment of the current Jewish generation is not even complaining about older Jewish organizations; they simply do not know about them. As far as these young people are concerned, the long-standing Jewish organizations are totally irrelevant.

Preliminary results from a study conducted by Ari Kelman in collaboration with Prof. Steven Cohen to examine the activity of young Jews in

their 20s and 30s participating in Jewish events in New York, suggests a number of prerequisite parameters for their success: youngsters want fun, they demand cultural and social activity but it cannot be religious or “too heavy”. The lack of involvement of the younger generation in older organizations in the U.S. has brought about a proliferation of literary salons for Jewish topics, dance parties, clubs, Internet blogs, alternative periodicals such as the Heeb magazine, Guilt and Pleasure, Zeek and others, and many marginal movements that range outside the ‘old’ establishment organizations that are backed by the large federations, synagogues and community centers.

Jewish identity is expressed in the form of cultural events that are not necessarily religious, as in the example of the Hassidic reggae performer Matisiyahu, who has burst into the world’s consciousness about a year ago and went on to sell over half a million copies of his albums. His popularity indicates that there is no social stigma attached to the self-expression of Jewishness, and that it is possible to comfortably express Jewish identity.

These social and cultural movements lead to the emergence of new grass root initiatives attempting to blaze a new trail and reflect the younger generation’s wish to create a community of their own, based on finding a new meaning for the surfacing new Jewish culture.

Examples of socio-cultural initiatives that are shaping current Jewish culture abound, and they include the film “Trembling Before G-D” which depicts the struggle of religious homosexuals, the jewlicious.com blog which is at the center of Jewish social activity, *Storahtelling* — an organization engaged in the dramatization

of the Weekly Portion texts instead of reading them at the synagogue, *Ayecha* — Jews of Color — involved with Jews of various ethnic backgrounds, and a plethora of other bodies. The new initiatives reflect the desire of many young people to find meaning in Jewish culture and use it as a basis for building a community and a social network.

Similarly, in response to the regression of spiritual expression into the privacy of the home, there are organizations such as Synagogue 2000, seeking to revive the synagogue as a spiritual and social center.

Some established organizations and foundations are also attentive to these grass root initiatives and support them. Backing is provided through the establishment of ‘incubators’, such as the Bikkurim organization engaged in encouraging new creativity and allocating grants for new innovative projects. Slingshot 50 is a list of fifty prominent grass root initiatives put together in order to help young people wishing to donate funds to see the organizational map better and to direct them into aiding the organizations most compatible with their own value system.

Most of these initiatives are short-lived but their success has led to the involvement of the Jewish establishment. An example of this is the *Havura* movement, which endeavors to create an independent communal framework for the egalitarian study of Judaism in various communities. Established about thirty years ago, this initiative originally emerged as an opposition to the organized and established Jewish communal structure, but as it gradually established itself,

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**Seeking to  
revive the  
synagogue  
as a spiritual  
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the movement was fostered by the existing organizations and today many of the *Havura* groups are in operation in synagogues.

Another movement which has eventually rooted itself in the establishment since its inception in 1976 is CAJE — Coalition for Advancement in Jewish Education, which is home to Jewish educators from various learning institutions, and targets its activity at all Jews regardless of their religious denomination.

The very use of the term “young people”, which is repeatedly brought up in discussion concerning the continuity of the Jewish people, is indicative of the generational gap. “The young people” are characterized by the older society as a distinct, often misunderstood group, with new and unfamiliar values and behavior patterns that are often puzzling to their parent’s generation. The multiplicity and diversity of grass root initiatives reflects this generational gap. Yet the meaning of this gap is not necessarily the destruction of all previous systems, as some in the Jewish American public maintain. Potentially it could mean that existing systems should change and adapt themselves to the new generation.

From a historical point of view, the significance of creating a peer group community, especially in times of socio-cultural crises, lies in its ability to provide support and encouragement to its members. Besides, from a psychological point of view it is possible that the change required to break away from old values inherited from the older generation is enhanced through identification with the group and the movement, especially among the younger age groups, in response to the loss of familial support and encouragement. In the current individualistic and constantly changing society, choosing and affiliating with a social group serves young people’s need for identification beyond that of their families.

Establishing the new community and forging the accompanying identification system are the new challenges facing the young generation as it departs from the previous system. The desire on the part of the younger generation to express their Jewishness is implied by the hundreds of smaller associations and thousands of independent blogs dealing with Jewish identity. The culture itself facilitates the free expression of this desire.

### 15. TRENDS IN RUSSIAN ANTISEMITISM

According to various estimates, between 60 and 63 percent of Jews of the former Soviet Union (235,000) reside in Russia, making it Europe's third largest Jewish community. In recent years, antisemitism in Russia has been a part of the nation's general xenophobia, although it also has certain distinctive features.

Acts of violence against peoples of the Caucasus region — blacks, Chinese and others — have recently been intensifying, to the extent that several Russian papers have defined the phenomenon as a "racial war waged in the streets of major cities", and many Russians have expressed the fear that within a few years Moscow, the symbol of historical Russia, could become a non-Russian city. Anti-Jewish expressions should be considered in this light.

Beatings of Jews in certain cities (e.g. Moscow, Orenburg, Kostruma and Omsk), damage to synagogues (in Moscow, Ryazan and Samara), desecration of Jewish cemeteries, swastika graffiti, antisemitic slogans, etc. have become common and growing phenomena. In this respect, Communist, Fascist and neo-Nazi groups share a common language in the name of Russian "patriotism". These groups enjoy certain sympathy in various establishment circles, such as the military, security services, bureaucracy and parts of the judiciary system. The central government regards these forces as both a major mainstay of a viable centralist regime in Russia on the one hand, and as a means for preserving

its position as one of the central actors in the international arena on the other.

The violent groups are not very large, estimated at only several tens of thousands of people throughout the country. These are mostly young people, consumed with hatred for anything that is not authentically Russian by their standards. Despite the gaping contrasts between the worldviews of the different groups — from radical Bolsheviks to neo-Nazis — they are united in their hostility towards foreigners in general and towards the Jews, who are well integrated into the Russian *intelligentsia* and business sector, in particular.

Over the last three years (2002–2005), the activity of these groups has broadened in a host of Russian towns (e.g. Perm, Kaliningrad). At demonstrations they attack not only foreigners, but also the central government, including President Putin himself. In some demonstrations they called Putin's regime *Zhidokratia* ("government of Jews"). The situation escalated to the point that in April 2002 the authorities were forced to deploy ten thousand security agents in the streets of Moscow in order to prevent pogroms against Central Asians, blacks and Jews. Under the circumstances, the *Duma* (parliament, which *de facto* is totally controlled by the president) ratified a bill against extremist groups (added to existing legislature against ethnic and racist incitement), but the bill did not significantly change the situation; considerable segments of the bureaucracy, especially in the

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periphery, sympathize at least partially with many of these groups' slogans.

One of the features uniting all these groups is their hostility towards the West, and especially the United States, with the Jews perceived as a fifth column. Spearheading the fight against Westernization of Russians is the Russian Pravoslavic Church, as declared by Patriarch Alexei the Second, who in December 2000 said that "the West is waging a bloodless but carefully planned war against our nation with the aim of annihilating it". These groups allude to

Jewish capitalists ("Oligarchs") who are "looting" Russia's wealth and transferring its capital to the West.

The central government's campaign against the Jewish oligarchs improved the President's rating in Russian public opinion, even though this persecution stemmed not from ethnic hostility, but from the wish to break the power of capitalists who criticize or oppose the President's policies. Vladimir Putin is not an antisemite, and he makes an effort to demonstrate this in visits to synagogues and his tolerance towards capitalists, including certain Jews who keep out of general politics and refrain from criticizing the government, but among certain strata of the Russian people, the echo of the fight against Jewish oligarchs enhances the stereotype of the capitalist Jew, a subversive and destructive element.

In a demonstration held in Moscow in September 2002, bringing together radical Communists and neo-Nazis, slogans such as "Liquidate the *Zhids'* Mafia", "Jews Out" and

"Chechnyans to Auschwitz" were heard, and tens of thousands of fake 10 ruble notes inscribed with "Jew-free Russia" were circulated throughout the city. The slogan "Jews to Israel" is often heard — echoing the familiar slogan "Jews to Palestine", used by antisemitic movements in Poland on the eve of World War II.

Unlike the hostility towards the peoples of central Asia, national groups often raise charges against the Jews, saying that the Bolsheviks' seizure of power was in fact a Mason-Jewish plot and that the Jews are responsible for the "genocide of the Russian people", killing millions of Russians during Soviet rule. In view of the demographic decline of the Russian people in recent years as a result of the decrease in life expectancy, low birth rate, alcoholism, AIDS and the collapse of the health care system, these groups have recently claimed that there is a Jewish-Western plot to continue "the genocide of the Russian people" by new ways and means.

These accusations by violent groups are also made by broad circles of the Russian Pravoslavic Church, lending them a religious dimension. An artistic film entitled *Ruskaia Golgofa* ("The Russian Golgotha") was recently released which emphasized that the murder of the last Czar had been a ritual killing performed by Jews and the Free Masons. Russia and the Russian people are conceived as a sort of Jesus whom the Jews keep abusing and crucifying. In this atmosphere, it is easy to understand how several parliament members applied to the Attorney General demanding a criminal investigation to be held against the publisher of the abridged *Shulhan Aruch* because it allegedly contains racial incitement, which is against the law. In early 2005, a petition signed by 500 "patriotically-oriented"

people associated with the Russian Pravoslavic Church demanded a ban on the activity of all Jewish organizations. Among the signatories were notables such as former chess champion Boris Spassky, writer Vasily Belov and mathematician Igor Shafarevich, a member of the Science Academy, who in his anti-Jewish book *Russophobia*, published in the 1980's, argued that Jews and democrats were destroying the socio-cultural fabric of Russia.

The extremist groups and their associated circles publish papers, leaflets and books which discuss, among other things, the universal Jewish conspiracy to enslave Russia. The Jews are portrayed in these publications as a people, whose ultimate value is money, being by nature business people, in direct contrast with the Russian people, who are characterized by generosity, hospitality and exalted moral qualities. This portrait of the Jews goes hand in hand with the hostility of broad strata of the Russian people towards the oligarchs, of which the Jews comprise a relatively large group. Religious publications of this type often stress that the Jews are the murderers of God. Most of these publications, which are printed in relatively small editions, are being sold publicly while the authorities refrain from acting resolutely to stop them, although there have been some sporadic cases where certain antisemitic publications were banned.

There is great ideological affinity between the nationalistic and violent groups and the "patriotic" political parties in terms of their attitude to Jews. Both regard the Jews as one of the forces sabotaging Russia's economical, cultural and spiritual underpinnings. The exploitation of the xenophobic current against foreigners in general

and Jews in particular increases in pre-election times, under the assumption that these slogans attract voters, even if this is not always reflected in the actual results.

Hostility towards Jews in the general population is on the increase, as several studies indicate. For example, in a poll conducted in 2002, between 15 and 18 percent of the respondents expressed negative attitudes towards Jews, and in 2005 the percentage rose to 25 (hostility to Moslems rose to 46 percent), and 42 percent of Russians argued that the influence of Jews in government bodies, politics, business and educational institutions should be curtailed.

The media regularly refers to the acts of violent groups as the actions of "skinheads", "hooligans", etc. in order to stress that these are extremist youth from the margins of society, almost totally ignoring the transformation taking place in wider strata of Russian society. The question is therefore raised whether these are tiny groups of lunatic youngsters and "mad" politicians who have no substantial support in the general public, or merely the tip of an extremist, violent iceberg of fundamental shifts in the consciousness and identity of the Russian people.

Prior to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the identity of the majority of Russians was based on three major tenets: a) A deep-rooted sense that the entire Soviet Union, regardless of its division into republics and the widespread propaganda about "the Soviet People" is, in fact, Russia. Indeed, Russians who settled in the Baltic States or Moslem territories of the Soviet Union have felt quite at home there. b) The dominant language in these regions, especially among the administrative circles and parts of the local intel-

*ligentsia*, was Russian, and c) the Russian culture was perceived as superior to all others.

This identity, which some call “imperial”, practically collapsed with the downfall of the Soviet Union. The rapid and largely chaotic changes in the economic, governmental and social arena during the first decade after the USSR’s downfall were not conducive to consolidating a new identity for the Russian people. However, early manifestations of the debate over the new Russian identity were already evident by the mid 90s. Some publications stressed the distinctive character of the Russian state, which should not copy the forms of government of Western liberal democracy, but instead should follow its own unique path, while others of the *intelligentsia*, including many Jews, called for “Europization”. Five years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was difficult for large segments of the population to come to terms psychologically and mentally with the fact that Russia had ceased to be a superpower. While certain intellectuals felt that Russia was no longer

a superpower in political and economic terms, they insisted that it was still a cultural and spiritual superpower, and that extending Western influence into these areas was nothing short of surrender and enslavement to the West.

The tendency towards the consolidation of a new Russian identity gained momentum with the election to the presidency of Vladimir Putin, whose inauguration ceremony in May 2000 bore certain elements of a coronation in the Russian tradition. Indeed, in an international scientific conference held in Moscow in

January 2001, a researcher from the Institute of Philosophy at the Science Academy lectured on the transformative processes taking place in the consciousness and self-identity of the Russian people. The speaker emphasized that 80 percent of the country’s population were Russian, part of the Eastern European civilization of a distinctly Pravoslavic-Byzantine character. He attempted to characterize the main features of the new Russian identity and social groupings of its members: part of the Russian people, especially the “new paupers”, “construct their [spiritual] values and world view primarily around the distinctiveness of the Pravoslav-Byzantine character”. Those who uphold this identity, said the lecturer, were previously called Slavophiles, and now they are labeled nationalist or nationalistic. Like modern-day nationalists, the Slavophiles of the past regarded the Jews as a foreign body, and some of them even regarded them as a cancerous tumor in Russia’s body.

At the other extreme are those with a Russian identity that is based on cultural-spiritual values that unite the Russians with pan-European culture. This thin stratum, the speaker contended, was comprised of media figures and business and government elites. As in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this segment is referred to as “Westerners” or “radical liberals”. Between these two poles is a third element, which tries to merge the distinct Russian identity of Pravoslav-Byzantine character with pan-European values. This group was labeled by the speaker as “traditional” or “Eastern European liberals”. Reservation or even hostility towards “Westerners” is shared by both the “nationalists” and the “traditionalists”.

If we accept this division in principle, then the centralistic regime and the Pravoslavic denomi-

nation are an essential component of the new self-identity of the first and third strata. Indeed, large-scale surveys indicate that most Russians define themselves as Pravoslav, although they do not go to church and have no connection whatsoever with religion. It can therefore be said that the term “Pravoslavic” has become a sort of synonym for “member of the Russian People”.

The Pravoslavic denomination is an increasingly dominant and essential component of the new Russian identity. It is manifested in the emphasis on religious ceremonies, icons and symbols in the framework of the state. President Putin demonstrates his Pravoslavic allegiance at every opportunity, whether as a result of his deeply rooted religious belief or for political ends and in response to public sentiments. The emphasis on religion is also expressed in practical measures such as the appointment of priests in army units and the introduction of Pravoslavic religious studies into the school curriculum. One can therefore safely conclude that in recent years there has been rapprochement between increasingly larger segments of the “traditional” population and the “nationalistic” elements. This is not to say, however, that the “traditionalists” endorse acts of violence by the extremist groups, nor does the central government. Still, this group serves to a large extent as public backing for at least some of the ideas upheld by the extremist groups.

The new Russian identity, as it is being consolidated in recent years, puts the Jews in Russia in a delicate and complicated situation. The number of people identifying themselves as Jews — primarily older people — is rapidly declining. The majority of the “Jewish” population is the product of mixed marriages, roughly

divided into three groups: (a.) people who define themselves as Russians but society regards as Jews; (b.) people who claim to have a double identity (i.e. Russian-Jewish; and (c.) people who claim to have a universal, pan-human identity, without any specific ethnic belonging. All three groups would have difficulties integrating into the new Russian identity and the surrounding society will go on regarding them as “the other”. Moreover, a significant number of Jews residing in the larger cities are part of the *intelligentsia*, upholding Western worldviews and shunning autocratic tendencies. As the pressure against such tendencies increases, the Jews will increasingly bear the brunt. Early signs of such distress are already apparent, but they are sure to intensify as the new identity of the Russians takes deeper roots.

In conclusion, it could be said that the roots of antisemitism in Russia are different from those in the majority of Western countries, where antisemitic expressions are linked with the growth of the Moslem population and directly and/or indirectly associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In Russia, however, hostility towards the Jews in Russia stems from different sources.

## 16. FRENCH JEWRY UNDER PRESSURE

The future course of French society and politics is of deep concern to French Jewry.

Faced with a high immigration rate and difficulties with integrating into the European Union (EU), France now finds itself at a crossroad of societal change, with implications for French Jewry. The social malaise specifically strong among frustrated unemployed young Moslems

led for the first time in France to a wave of riots in November 2005. In the poorer areas located in the suburbs of several major cities, young idle Moslems decided to express their feelings of exclusion, frustration and hate of the establishment by burning some 10,400 cars and tens of public buildings.

The rioters resent the French establishment in general, but they also feel a particular “social jealousy” against Jews. Their hostility evidenced a new emergence of violence and black antisemitism with the kidnapping and assassination of a young Jew, Ilan Halimi, in February 2006.

The reactions of the media and politicians aligned according to the traditional French polarity of left and right. Intellectuals on the left denied the ethnic-religious aspect of the problem, claiming that the problem is socio-economic, and demanded greater investment of resources in social projects. The radical left supported the ideal of a multicultural society that will give greater representation to Islam in France. The rightwing Minister of Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, called the rioters “scum” and refused to negotiate with them. Moreover, he expressed his opposition to all the so-called “social demands” and implemented a strategy of zero-tolerance. He closed off the zones of rebellion with a large police presence, arresting hundreds of violent youngsters and allowing local mayors to impose curfews. His determination was apparently effective and the riots stopped after three weeks.

Despite the apparent termination of the tension, after a determined effort orchestrated by the Sarkozy, who was the main target of the rioters and of the leftist media, there is a serious issue of social integration, together

with a dimension of ethno-religious identity, which remains unsolved. Three aspects of this problem can be identified: economic, cultural and political. Economically, the second and third generation descendants of foreign workers are unwilling to do the menial jobs their parents have been doing, with low salaries and adverse social conditions. Moreover, with the highly regulated job market, French employers tend not to hire potentially trouble-making segments. Black or Arab youngsters, even those who graduated from high schools or universities, are stigmatized as unreliable employees and consequently have difficulty finding employment in the corporate business world.

Culturally, Moslem citizens are very critical of French Republican values, which they perceive as hypocritical and manipulative. Misled by media stories of easily earned money on the one hand and disgruntled by the meager opportunities of social mobility on the other, they tend not to believe in higher education and hard work as the path to social integration. They are dissatisfied with the Western value system that does not offer practical solutions for them, but having integrated consumerism and individualistic values, they experience an identity crisis and are looking for an alternative model of values and meaning. Rejected by French society and accepted only as rap singers and soccer players, their claim to a religious/ethnic identity is one way to regain their lost dignity.

Politically, French Moslems account for more than 10% of the general population and are mostly poor and socially non-integrated, with no formal representation. None of the 570 members of the National Assembly are Moslem or African. The same lack of representation exists

at the local, regional and national levels. With the French leadership system being very conservative, the chances for a Frenchman of Moslem origin, even if highly educated, to progress in the government administration are very low. This bias in representation will probably be the first aspect of discrimination to be corrected, due to electoral considerations. In the forthcoming elections, many minority representatives of Arab origin are expected to be placed in significant positions by both rightwing and leftwing parties. The riots therefore resulted in acknowledgement by the political system of the political power of the Arab minority.

This change in the balance of power, that follows a continuing demographic trend, has strong relevance for the French Jewry. According to several studies, antisemitism and anti-Zionism serve to cement the common identity of the Moslem and African minorities. The Jews represent to them all that they are not: they have money, fancy cars, presence in the media and political representation. Israel plays a similar role in this view; its economic, military and technological success stand in contrast to the perceived powerlessness of the Arab and Islamic peoples.

Between these classic pro-Palestinian and religious claims, which are supported by the Arabs and their anti-globalization allies on the left and the no less classic “social jealousy” antisemitism nurtured by the extreme right, we can see a new phenomenon in France: the emergence of a black, mainly Moslem, discourse of hate. Their antisemitism is motivated by ethnic bias, rather than religion: sub-Saharan descents claim that Jewish wealth was built on the profits of trafficking in slavery and that the universally recognized tragedy of the Shoah overshadows

the suffering of the blacks. Living in the same neighborhoods, blacks and Moslems share the same bitter feelings.

During the recent riots, the Jewish community kept a low profile and refused to express any position. When interviewed by the media, its leaders claimed that the resentment of the second-generation immigrants had nothing to do with Jews. Indeed, foreign observers asked themselves why Jewish persons and institutions were untouched during these events. It seems that in the major identity clash in November 2005, the specific grievances against Jews were temporarily hidden by the existential fury against general French society.

The trend toward social disintegration may not be understood without taking into account the increasingly negative attitude toward Jews among several segments of the general French population. Although the concerted efforts of the police resulted in a decrease of 48% in the number of violent antisemitic acts and threats committed in 2005 to 504 (from 974 incidents reported in 2004), antisemitic sentiments gradually penetrate into public discourse, and, for the very first time since World War II, 33% of French citizens defined themselves as racists. This xenophobia, certainly aimed more at Arabs and blacks than at the more integrated Jews, reveals the erosion over the years of the core French identity and social cohesion. Each ethno-cultural sector of the French society tends to avoid meeting the other, and more committed Jews tend to concentrate together in a kind of voluntary social “ghettoization”.

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**Antisemitism  
serves to  
cement the  
common  
identity of  
parts of  
the Moslem  
and African  
minorities**

Two events have reinforced the diffused feelings of distrust, loneliness and exclusion of French Jews. The first is associated with the interview with Alain Finkielkraut, the prominent French Jewish philosopher, in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* on November 18. Finkielkraut, formerly considered to be one of the most eminent spokesmen of the French left, denounced the myths of the French left in the 70's, the antisemitic dimension of the leftist anti-Zionism in the 80's, and the hazardous effects of post-modernism and Shoah denial in the 90's. In 2005, he was the first French thinker who dared to express what was quite clear to spectators of TV news: the specific ethno-religious commonalities of the rioters. The controversy erupted when excerpts of the interview were translated into French and appeared in *Le Monde*. The truncated version of the interview caused an immediate sensation, and a lively debate took place in the French media. On November 24, the Movement against Racism filed charges of racism against Finkielkraut, who publicly apologized the next day, claiming that his comments had been taken out of context.

The second, tragic event is the murder of Ilan Halimi on February 13, 2006. A 23-year-old cell phone vendor, Halimi was lured into a trap by a young girl and held for three weeks by a gang of youths of mixed origin, led by a charismatic black immigrant. Halimi was beaten and burned with cigarettes and acid, then dumped, half-naked, on railway tracks near Paris. He died on his way to hospital.

The case received extensive attention in the French media and among the French public. Six French associations called for a mass demonstration against racism and antisemitism. Tens of

thousands of people showed up for the demonstration on Paris and other cities around the country on Sunday, February 26. However, in contrast to mass demonstrations in the 80's and 90's that followed a terror attack on the Copernic synagogue and desecration of the Carpentras Jewish cemetery, when hundreds of thousands of French people participated, this time the Jews found themselves almost alone.

Many Jews are concerned about the chance for thriving of the Jewish community in the homeland of human rights. Some of them hope Nicholas Sarkozy will be able to persuade French Moslems to accept the rules of democracy, stop the violence, end illegal immigration, and restore security and self-confidence to France. Likely to be a candidate for the presidency in 2007 and sensitive to the concerns of the minorities, Sarkozy supported Finkielkraut when under attack and visited the Halimi family, but also developed working relationships with Moslem representatives.

## 17. THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN THE UK

Since the outbreak of the second *intifada* in 2000, there has been a steady rise in antisemitic incidents in the UK. The Community Security Trust (CST) reported 455 incidents in 2005, 14% fewer than in 2004, but still the second highest annual total recorded. The Association of Chief Police Officers reported 390 incidents, with a small increase over 2004. Unlike France, where antisemitic incidents brought about strong government action, such activity in Britain still remains at a high level though less than that of France. In response to the rise in incidents, a parliamentary inquiry was set up to look into the

question of antisemitism in Britain. Especially worrying is the increase in the volume of anti-semitic, anti-Israeli and Shoah denial rhetoric in the public space.

The tradition of free speech has always been strong in the UK. Until recently, with the memory of World War II strong in people's minds, public antisemitism and Shoah denial were deemed unacceptable and there was a form of self-imposed censorship. Now, however, 60 years after the Shoah and with the generation of war veterans and Shoah victims dwindling, experts have suggested that public acceptance seems to have changed. Incidents indicating this change include Prince Harry dressing up in Nazi uniform, Mayor of London Ken Livingstone's frequent anti-Israeli barbs, and more virulent anti-Israeli articles in some of the media. The decision of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) to rescind its academic boycott of Israel is not guaranteed, and is due to be raised again this year. Meanwhile the other and larger academic union, NATFHE, passed a motion in May 2006 to boycott Israeli academics and institutions who do not publicly declare their opposition to Israel's policies in the territories. This decision became a simple recommendation after its merger with the AUT.

Shoah denier David Irving, based in Britain, has little audience in the UK, but he has had a free reign to speak out his hatred and lies. It was only in Austria, which, unlike the UK, has a Shoah denial law, that he was brought to trial and sentenced. In reaction, the British press severely condemned Irving as a racist and liar, but did not support incarcerating him.

Many organizations (and not only Jewish ones) complained to the Standards Board of

London's Mayor, Ken Livingstone's, behavior. Livingstone was asked to apologize for accusing a *Jewish Evening Standard* reporter of behaving like a Nazi guard, but no one asked for his suspension from office. Indeed, most of the press condemned his expressions and his suspension alike and argued that the ethic of free speech was paramount. Livingstone continues to embrace Sheikh Yusuf al Qaradawi, who publicly supports suicide bombings, and he has refused to express remorse.

It seems that rules of the game of public discourse in the UK have changed in recent years. Anti-Israel expressions are frequently followed by criticism, but few suggest that the public podium be denied or that such persons be removed from office. Similarly, Claire Short, former Secretary of State for International Development, suggested that Israel and its policies in the territories are one of the prime reasons for discord throughout the world.

The problem of such freedom of speech is that exaggerated criticism of Israel (as in a recent article by Chris McGreal in *The Guardian* comparing Israel policy to South African apartheid) raises the notion that if Israel behaves in such ways, then Israel does not have a right to exist, and the objectionable equation of Zionism equals racism. Such expressions are not only becoming more frequent, but are likely to become common parlance. Hate literature is also on the rise.

While in other countries anti-Israel rhetoric has declined since the battle of Jenin and implementation of Israel's disengagement plan, hyper-critical sentiments and public expressions in Britain continue unabated. According to experts, this implies that antisemitism has become more structural and less transient.

Some Jewish leaders have gone overboard in their reactions. The unfortunate comment of the Chief Rabbi, calling recent statements and incidents a “*tsunami*” of antisemitism created a backlash and called for an eventual apology.

Worrying, too, was the debate of the Anglican Church to divest in Israel. Although the plan was withdrawn in the end, the original decision to divest was heavily criticized both by the Chief Rabbi and the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey.

Abu Hamza, a leader of the Islamist organization Supporters of Shariah, who was found guilty of inciting to murder Jews, is just one of many Moslem religious leaders who enjoy freedom of speech in multicultural Britain and use both the mosques and communal orga-

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nizations to incite against Jews and Israel. A recent survey of Moslems in Britain showed that though a half (52%) of those surveyed say that Israel has a right to exist, 16% still believe that suicide bombings in Israel can sometimes be justified, and 7% say the same about suicide

bombings in Britain. Among 18–24 year olds, no less than 21% believe suicide bombings in Israel can sometimes be justified. A survey by *The Jewish Chronicle* reported that 15–20% of Britons could be defined as antisemitic; some 20% believe that the Shoah is “exaggerated”, and a similar number would not vote for a Jewish prime minister.

The situation in Britain stands in sharp contrast to what is going on in Europe. Britain has become a multicultural society that allows minority groups great freedom of action and expression and also supports them in the devel-

opment of faith-based institutions, such as schools. This is accompanied by strong protection of the right of free speech, even at the cost of racist incitement by ethnic and religious minorities. In many countries in Europe, separation of church and state has been accompanied by attempts to curb religious freedoms, such as the head scarf law in the public space in France. Similarly, countries such as Austria and Germany have laws that make Shoah denial a criminal offence. The UK has no specific Shoah denial law, but has successfully prosecuted four cases within the context of incitement. As the European Union grows stronger and European legislation becomes more common place, there will be greater pressure on all EU countries to standardize laws banning racist activities, such as Shoah denial and others. For the UK, this means a conflict between the principle of free speech and the desire to be integrated into Europe.

Following the recent act banning incitement to religious hatred, the British government has been aggressively pushing a new anti-terrorism act through parliament. The Jewish community is supportive of the legislation, but some believe that such legal curbs will only force antisemites and pro-terrorism activists underground and create greater resentment. They would argue that a more effective policy would be through traditional British ways of quiet advocacy and diplomacy, accompanied by more effective public relations. Such policies have paid off with regard to the BBC, which has toned down somewhat its pro-Palestinian tone to be more even-handed, improved its coverage of Israel, increased its Jewish interest programs, and quietly made some changes of staff.

The written media remain more or less

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### **The BBC has improved its coverage of Israel**

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divided across the traditional left-right dividing lines. *The Guardian* continues to be highly critical of Israel (although it provides good coverage of the Jewish world), *The Financial Times* and *The Independent* lag not far behind, while *The Times*, *Telegraph* and *Daily Express* are more favorable, yet critical. *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Express* are sympathetic to Israel's battle against terrorism.

While there are few serious threats to the continued life of the community and British Jews in general are economically well-off, well-educated and prominent, the nature of the public discourse may continue to be less positive for Jews and Israel. New legislation in line with the UN and EU may curb some more extreme expressions, but not change the fact that Jews are likely to be on the receiving end of public criticism and that condemnation of Israel and challenges to its right to exist will continue. As the Moslem minority grows numerically and gains political power and influence, the Jewish community will have to live within a new reality of less influence and prominence, and may feel just a little uncomfortable with a public discourse that is more critical and less sensitive to Jews and Israel.

## 18. CHANGES IN THE GERMAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish communities which formed in the Displaced Persons camps and in major German cities immediately after 1945 were considered to be only transitory in character. They were meant to serve as a gathering point, a temporary station to recover, from which one should move on. It seemed inconceivable to re-establish

a permanent Jewish presence in Germany. Indeed, between 1945 and 1952 alone, 220,000 Jewish DP's from Germany arrived in Israel. 52,000 had immigrated to the U.S. and Canada. Many thousands more had reached the UK and Australia. Only some 28,000 remained in Germany, organized in 50 communities. They considered themselves Jews in Germany, and not German Jews. Thus, when in 1950 the Jewish communities of Germany established a nationwide organization, it was called *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* (The Central Council of Jews in Germany)

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**"If Germany treated the Jews well, then it could be trusted again by the international community"**

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The provisional character showed in the very buildup of the new communities. Only a few new synagogues and community centers were built. Few rabbis and teachers were ready to come and serve in Germany. Nevertheless, it became clear during the 1950's and 1960's that a new Jewish community was there to stay.

Ever since the government of the first post-war chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, good relations with the Jews were to be a central feature of government policy. Thus, in 1952 the German Federal Republic, Israel and Jewish organizations concluded the treaty on compensation (*Wiedergutmachung*). Good relations with the Jews were not only a way for Germany to alleviate guilt, but also proof of Germany's *Westbindung*, its adherence to the values of the Atlantic democratic community. If Germany treated the Jews well, then it could be trusted again by the international community. Despite this, Jews felt that they were sitting on packed suitcases (*auf gepackten Koffern sitzen*). Their

children, born in Germany between 1945 and 1965, grew up with this feeling of alienation and “packed suitcases” Indeed, prior to 1989 and well into the 1990’s, many of the young people left. This pattern should have created a serious demographic problem for the Jewish community. At the end of the 1950’s, the number of Jews in Germany had decreased to 23,000. That it recovered to around 30,000 in the early 1980’s was due to subsequent waves of Jewish immigration to Germany from Poland, Hungary, Iran, the Soviet Union and Israel.

An increased occupation with Germany’s guilt and a growing interest in anything Jewish seemed to lead to a more open approach to the country’s Jewish community and to Jewish culture and history in general. For the first time after 1945, the Jewish community found itself close to the center of German society. It became increasingly self-assertive. Jewish officials, authors and journalists began to participate in national debates. A new self-consciousness and a sense of belonging developed, despite recurrent manifestations of antisemitism, xenophobia and the emergence of a new neo-Nazi right in the late 1980’s.

The overall long term demographic trend continued to be negative. In 1989, the number of Jews in Germany had again fallen to 26,000. It was predicted that Germany’s Jewish population would only number 12,653 souls by 2003. The real number turned to be approximately eight times higher: 102,472.

## 1990–2004: Organized Mass Migration

One of the last political actions of the reforming

German Democratic Republic (GDR) after the fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989 was to open its borders to Jews from the FSU. On July 11, 1990, the government of the GDR decided to grant entry and permanent residence to all Jews from the FSU. They were thought to be threatened by rising antisemitism.

When reunification of the two German states came in October of that year, the decision of July 11 was not included in the Treaty of German Reunification. Russian Jews — as all Jews from the FSU came to be called — nevertheless kept coming by the thousands. Ignaz Bubis, then head of the *Zentralrat*, appealed to the central government, which put the matter before the “Conference of the Interior Ministers of the States”. Bubis pushed for allowing Jewish immigration to Germany, arguing that it would help guarantee the survival of the shrinking Jewish community and demonstrate to the world that Germany was reconciled to a large Jewish presence. It would also show that Jews in return trusted the emerging new German power in Europe, thus reassuring Germany’s neighbors, who were rather uneasy about reunification. The restoration of Jewish life to something resembling the pre-1933 Jewish community therefore served a clear political purpose. Inasmuch as this *Normalität* (normalcy) between the Jewish and the German peoples was to be created artificially, it was decided not to settle immigrants in existing communities, but to spread them across the country. Jewish life was to return to places where it had not existed since 1938.

Probably the most fateful decision was taken on January 9, 1991 by the Interior Ministers of the German states. They agreed to place Jews

from the FSU under the *Kontingentflüchtlingsgesetz* (Quota Refugee Law), under which free entrance and residency were granted to the Jewish immigrants. According to the 1991 ruling, all persons from the FSU who had been registered there as Jewish or were descended from at least one Jewish parent were eligible for immigration. Non-Jewish spouses, children under 18 and unmarried adult children living in the same household were also included. Jewish immigrants were to be recognized as refugees under the Geneva Refugee Convention of 1954. This gave them the right to state-sponsored benefits such as free lodging, language courses, welfare, etc. There was to be no limit as to the extent and the duration of Jewish immigration into Germany, except for the absorption capacity of the *Länder* (states.) A complicated formula was developed in order to divide the financial burden between the Federal government in Bonn/Berlin and the *Länder*. Allocations were given proportionally to the size of the population of a certain state, which is another reason why the Russian-Jewish immigrants were spread over the whole territory of the unified German Republic. Jewish "quota refugees" were much better treated than any other group of refugees, asylum seekers or migrants, with the notable exception of ethnic Germans. While the average guest worker or immigrant had to wait 15 years before even trying to apply for citizenship, Jewish "quota refugees" could do so after 6–8 years. Jewish quota refugees received unlimited residence permits, permission to work, housing support, absorption assistance and language courses for six months.

## The fastest growing Jewish Community in the World

All in all, some 190,000 people from the FSU arrived in Germany as *Kontingentflüchtlinge* from 1989 to 2004. Between 1990 and 2002, the number of Jewish immigrants from the FSU increased annually from 4,000 to about 20,000 souls. By this time, Germany had become the main destination, surpassing Israel and the U.S. This changed the community beyond recognition: from a small shrinking community, it became in a very short time the fastest-growing Jewish community in the world.

Integrating the newcomers proved to be a great challenge. In many places they outnumbered the natives, which often led to tensions. In addition, the Jewish credentials of many immigrants remained doubtful. Only less than 80,000 of the 190,000 who had arrived as of 2004 became members of the Jewish communities. Some did not want to join; others were simply not accepted by the mostly Orthodox-affiliated German-Jewish communities because they were not Jews according to the *halachic* definition. Again and again there were reports that many non-Jews from the FSU had used a false Jewish identity in order to obtain legal entry into Germany. The policy of distributing immigrants across the whole country, instead of integrating them into existing communities, also proved to be problematic. People whose Jewish identity had deteriorated during 70 years of Communism were sent to places where Jewish life barely existed, if at all. They were on their own,

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Jewish  
"quota  
refugees"  
were granted  
privileged  
status

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since there was a shortage of rabbis, teachers and communal workers. Into this void stepped two players that have since become influential in German-Jewish life: Chabad-Lubavitch and the Lauder Foundation. The latter established and supported many schools. In Frankfurt, it founded a *yeshiva*. Chabad has emissaries active in virtually every German city, providing basic religious services.

### Between renaissance and welfare

Despite the many problems, the great influx of people revived the Jewish community. In the year 2000, there were 87 congregations that were part of the *Zentralrat*, comprising over

100,000 members. These communities all needed synagogues and community centers. Dozens were built, mostly paid for by the state. Germany thus became the world-wide focus of Jewish architecture in the 1990's. All this coincided with a renewed interest in anything Jewish and in a renewed preoccupation with the country's Nazi past, which only intensified as the years went by. Dozens of museums and memorials were constructed, the most famous of which are the Shoah Memorial and the Berlin Jewish Museum. It seemed only logical to speak of a Jewish Renaissance in the country which once had stood at the very origin of Jewish modernity.

However, there are shadows to this rosy picture. In January 2005, the German Ministry of Interior estimated that between 60 to 85% of Jewish immigrants were dependent on welfare. Despite their generally high academic qualifications, they were not integrated into the

### Shadows to a rosy picture

economy. The ministry attributed this to their lack of knowledge of the German language and the advanced age of many Jewish immigrants: over 40% were older than 50.

### 2005: Immigration is limited

Things had to change from the point of view of a bureaucracy which had to foot the bill and felt less and less inclined to do so, since Germany's guilt was fading into the past and the public discourse was increasingly preoccupied with the sufferings of the Germans during World War II, such as the Allied bombing of German cities. However, the main reason why the government wanted to limit Jewish immigration was economic: in 2004, of the 12,500 members of the Berlin Jewish community, 8,000 were from Eastern Europe, and most of them still lived on welfare. For the government, this was hard to digest at a time when Germany faced its highest unemployment since the Weimar Republic and when the social welfare system seemed to crumble. An immigration which immediately became dependent on welfare drained scarce resources. Pressure by the Israeli government, which resented the fact that in 2004, for the first time, more Russian Jews came to Germany than to Israel, was an additional factor in making a decision to limit immigration.

On January 1, 2005, the *Kontingentsflüchtlingsgesetz* was therefore replaced by the new *Zuwanderungsgesetz* (Immigration Law), intended to regulate and limit all migration into Germany. Jews were to be included in the law and lose their privileged status as *Kontingentflüchtlinge*. The new law put integration into German society and good economic prospects well before any other

consideration. It now required Jews hoping to immigrate to Germany to prove that a community would accept them as members. Prior knowledge of the German language was required. Potential Jewish immigrants now also had to prove that they would not be dependent on welfare and that they were willing to integrate into the German labor market.

The government decided on the new policy in outmost secrecy on July 9, 2004. The *Zentralrat*, which was only informed in December, reacted very strongly to the new bill, fearing that it would actually end Jewish immigration to Germany. Open conflict between the Jewish community and the government was avoided only by an agreement on June 24, 2005, a few days before the legislation went into effect. In the agreement, the *Zentralrat* basically accepted the main points of the new rules. Exceptions were agreed upon for victims of Nazi persecution and cases of family reunion, but in every case a prognosis as to the chances of a potential immigrant integrating into German society and economy was now required. This *Integrationsprognose* had to be positive.

In the course of 2005, immigration of Jews from the FSU dropped dramatically. The period of rapid expansion was over. Germany's Jews now had to concentrate on strengthening their communities and putting them on more solid foundations independently from the government, which still was funding them.

## What next?

Germany's is still a Jewish community with a large part of its members living on welfare. It is still dependent on state subsidies to survive.

This is one of the reasons why talk of renaissance has given way to more gloomy discourse. Contributing to a growing sense of gloom is, as elsewhere in Europe, the emergence of the so-called "new antisemitism." Since 2001, hostility has increased and more incidents have been recorded. Antisemitism, anti-Americanism and anti-Israelism have merged into an amalgam that has become fashionable among some opinion leaders. Paul Spiegel, current head of the *Zentralrat*, argues that whereas until recently people had avoided even being suspected of antisemitism, they now speak and act almost uninhibitedly. In addition, the recent gains of neo-Nazi parties in local and state elections are worrying to many. Basic to the sense of impending doom is the fact that many communities face financial disaster. Stephan Kramer, the Secretary-General of the *Zentralrat*, estimates that, without any newcomers to the workforce, in about 10 to 15 years only 40 of the 89 communities of the *Zentralrat* will remain. It may even be possible that only 10 to 15 communities will exist by then, he says.

## Conclusion

This prediction seems a bit exaggerated. True, Germany's Jewish community may decrease in the decades to come, but most likely it will stabilize at a level still significantly higher than that of pre-1989. However, Jews in Germany will long be dependent on rabbis, teachers, and community officials trained in the U.S. and Israel to strengthen and stabilize the German-Jewish community. It is doubtful

**Recent gains  
of Neo-Nazi  
parties are  
worrying to  
many**

that Germany will ever become a Jewish center of worldwide importance again; it is more likely that, on a more modest level, it will be an important European Jewish center. This is because Jewish communities all around Europe are shrinking and aging, whereas the German community, due to recent immigration, might

stabilize at a more positive demographic balance. The key to it all is strengthening Jewish identity among the younger generation of Russian-Jewish immigrants, while at the same time integrating them into the German workforce and German society. If this succeeds, a thriving community of modest size seems a realistic possibility.

## The Southern Hemisphere

### 19. CHALLENGES FACING LATIN AMERICAN JEWRY

#### Background

Latin American Jewish communities are characterized both by common elements and by diversity of experiences. The crystallization of a shared and distinctive Latin American culture and the patterns of collective identity-building have determined the shaping of social boundaries, the ongoing construction of national identity, and the dynamics of social integration of minorities. Jews never had to fight for emancipation on this continent; freedom and equality were granted, although national societies have had to deal with “otherness” as a legitimate component of their community.

In recent decades, Jews have witnessed profound changes in the way they are perceived and accepted in the national arena. Starting in the 1980's, the continent underwent a process of economic liberalization linked to democratization and exogenous ideological influences. The dynamics of globalization processes brought about an overall decline in the standard of living: low income, recession, unemployment, under-employment, and the growth of a “black”, unofficial, informal economy. Close to half the population of Latin America now lives below the poverty level. The top 5% of the population enjoy 25% of the total income, while the bottom 30% receive less than 8% of the income.

The Jewish communities of the continent

have especially felt the impact of this crisis, which varies in scope and intensity according to the size of the middle class, the place of the community in the social and national arenas, and the ability of groups and leaders, both national and communal, to operate in a particular country.

Paralleling the diversity of social settings, cultural milieus and political arrangements, the overall Jewish presence points to a variety of demographic trends, models and scope of organized communal life and identity processes. While on the one hand the Jewish presence on the national arena points to different ways and degrees of incorporation as individuals and a group, Jewish life reflects the dual dynamics of diminishing communities and signs of revitalization.

#### External challenges

##### **1. New governments — new challenges**

In the last few years, the governments of Latin American countries have shown a strong pattern of turning towards the left-center left. This started in Brazil and Venezuela and continued to spread to Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Bolivia. Analysts believe that this trend will continue in the coming elections in Mexico, Peru, Ecuador and Nicaragua.

This change should be understood as something more than a simple development of populist governments; it is the quest of the people in Latin America for a democracy of higher intensity.

People are asking to be more involved as participants, to equal access to health and education, more active public policies, more credibility, and social responsibility by private industry and the media. Moreover, the inability of citizens to use the power of the ballot box to promote democratic solutions for their most pressing needs may in itself constitute a threat to democracy.

On the regional level, there is a visible tension between the populist governments that seek to build new autonomous hegemonies and the more liberal regimes that have moved closer to the U.S. along the lines of Free Trade Agreements.

The Latin American continent has been experiencing a “paradoxical poverty”, i.e. although it is blessed with impressive natural resources, it is one of the most inequitable areas of the planet. The affluence in natural resources has

brought about the renewed interest of China, South Korea and the Arab world in developing new strategic alliances with the countries of Latin America.

Unfortunately, there is no similar attention to Latin America by the Jewish People, despite the fact that both the local and global political-economical situation influences Jewish communities in several ways. The Jewish community is now compelled to develop a new dialogue with parties that have not previously been seen as “natural” partners. Furthermore, American Jewish interest in the Hispanic population of the United States has grown and is likely to strengthen in the foreseeable future. All the Hispanic groups show

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#### No substantial level of anti-Semitism, but evidence of anti-Israel attitudes

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evidence of a transnational character, therefore the needs of the Hispanic U.S. population are affected by the developments occurring in Latin America.

### ***2. Changing dynamics of inclusion and exclusion***

Latin American Jews are experiencing the opportunities offered by democracy and pluralism, but they still live in the shadow of the traumatic events experienced by the Jewish community in Argentina. Since the year 2000, they have been the object of what both researchers and Jewish leaders have termed “the new antisemitism”, in which Jewish communities, individuals and Israel are perceived as a single, evil entity.

The connection between hostility toward Israel, antisemitism and anti-Americanism constitutes an important trend in Latin America. Although there is no substantial level of antisemitism, there is evidence of anti-Israel attitudes. In order to cope with these dilemmas, Israel should opt to export its unique experience in voluntarism and “social technologies” to Latin America.

At the same time, the demand for the right to be different and the legitimacy of the other has become the province of many Latin American Jewish intellectuals. Local Jewish literature is distinguished by a recurrent emphasis on the heterogeneity that paradoxically both differentiates and merges the national Latin American experience and the Jewish one. Thus, the critical conditions of many Latin American communities do not annul the cumulative value of cultural creativity and Jewish education.

Local Jewish communities have already joined the commitment to social causes, the

fight against poverty, the attention to educational needs, and the fight for human rights in society-at-large. Their interaction with non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and diverse sectors of society has defined a new agenda in which citizenship building and collective identity seek to converge.

### **3. Relations with Arab communities in the continent**

Although Latin America is predominantly Christian, the presence of Islam is growing. Nevertheless, the level of knowledge among Jews of their Moslem and Arab neighbors is rather meager.

One of the concerns of the Jewish community is the presence of terrorist organizations, such as Hamas or the Islamic Jihad, on Latin American soil. This presence is highly visible in the area known as the "Triple Border" between Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil, and on Margarita Island (Venezuela). The strengthening of relationships between Islamic radical groups and governments could become even more problematic for the Jews, as in the collaboration of Iran and Hamas with the government of Venezuela and the potential opening of *Al Jazeera* offices for the transmission of virulent programming via cable TV in Venezuela and Argentina.

### **4. The Jewish World**

The organized Jewish world is not fully acquainted with the inner diversity of Latin American Jewish communities and the nature and intensity of their lives; rather, it has extended its concern to the region mainly in times of crises. This concern has resulted in philanthropic assistance, but this type of relationship can lead to a sort of asymmetry and dependency that

weakens the local Jewish leadership by depriving them of the power of making decisions that affect their own lives. However, local representatives of the Jewish international organizations were able to devise methods and systems that regulate the allocation of financial support and social services. Although the number of Jews living under the poverty line in Argentina and needing assistance is still close to 25,000, the JDC decided to reduce its support by 20% per year over the next five years. This decision challenges the community and its leadership to develop new capabilities for finding resources and making the right decisions for their use.

Philanthropy alone, however, has not defined the relationship of Latin America Jews with world Jewry. On the political level, there has been a growing flux of interaction with North American Jewish organizations that aims to advance the interests of the communities. North American Jewry has become attractive not only as a source of support, but also as a model. This represents a change from the previous pattern of almost exclusive interaction with Israel and Zionist organizations, which have always played a central role in shaping Latin America Jewish life. While Israel's presence in the Jewish communities of the region continues to be high-profile, its attention to the relationship with the Latin America countries in general has decreased. Moreover, what might seem to be a lack of coordination of Jewish policy towards the region could, in fact, be a lack of policy altogether.

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**The Jewish community is concerned with the presence of Hamas and Islamic Jihad on Latin American soil**

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## **Internal Challenges**

### ***1. Migration***

Over the past few years, a new type of Jewish migration has developed in the region. There is no longer a one-way movement towards a definite destination, but rather constant commuting between the place of origin and a chosen new residence, preferably in the U.S. This type of movement is illustrated by the commuting taking place between Bogotá or Caracas and Miami, or between Mexico City and San Diego. Dealing with this migration requires finding new ways of communal membership, both to maintain the links between the Jewish commuters and their original communities and to allow them to build bonds within the new communities.

### ***2. Diversity of organized communal life***

Demographic changes represent new challenges for organized communal life. The trend of expanding the non-core Jewish population and the growth of non-affiliated individuals characterize important Jewish communities such as Argentina and Brazil. These varying degrees of the ethnic dimensions of Jewish life show diverse qualitative and quantitative realities. Out-marriage, non-affiliation and non-membership in organized institutions represent the loosening of collective ethnic bonds required to structure the more individual and subjective dimensions of Jewish identity today.

The weakening of organized communal ties in some settings and the growing of structural density in others point to different challenges, varying according to the milieu and size of the Jewish community. It calls for the exploration

of bonds between individuals and their societies, both in territorial and cultural dimensions and an examination of institutional patterns of Jewish commonality that respond to new individualized trends and to the quest for meaningful identities and sense of belonging.

While Brazil and Argentina represent models of centrifugal communities, Mexico represents a model of structural and institutional proliferation, with membership rates higher than 80%. The differentials in organizational and institutional order are highly reflected in education — a central realm of Latin America Jewry. Jewish education, mostly in day schools, is a core mark of Jewish life in the region. While in Mexico, 85% of children attend Jewish schools, the school system in Argentina and Brazil is weakening.

### ***3. Cultural and religious trends***

Religion shows a noteworthy strengthening among Jewish communities in Latin America, not only in the educational field, but also in the overall community life. The Conservative movement has continued to show a relevant presence in the region. Beginning in the 1960's, the Conservative movement spread to South America as the first model of a religious institution imported from the United States. As it adjusted to local conditions, the synagogue played a more prominent role.

In recent years, parallel to changing trends in world Jewish life, Orthodox groups have formed new religious congregations. Today, the spread of the Chabad movement and the establishment of Chabad centers in both large, well-established communities and smaller ones is striking. More

than 70 Chabad rabbis are currently working in close to 50 institutions.

While the extreme religious factions and the strategies of self-segregation are still marginal to the whole of Jewish life in the continent, their growing presence corresponds to developing processes and tendencies. Amid the global desecularization process marked by the return of religion into the public sphere, both organized Jewish life and Jewish identities face new challenges. There has been a re-definition of external identification components, such as place of origin and the dilution of ideologies, which were the source for hardcore values, and the emergence of calls for spirituality.

A challenge shared by all the communities is the question whether Judaism in the years ahead will be characterized by religious polarization or whether there will be a return to the mainstream of Jewish life.

#### ***4. Profiles of leadership***

While the tendency of communities to be exclusively governed by volunteer leaders has been slowly reversed and there has been a gradual incorporation of professionals, the rhythm of replacement of the traditional activist by younger cadres varies according to the community.

In Argentina, the presence of wealthy patrons as leaders of central institutions and the overlapping of personal and communal agendas signified the breakdown of institutional life and rejection of the leadership's moral authority. Efforts to renew the leadership have accomplished more substantial results in the field of professionals rather than in the field of lay leaders. In the vacuum created by the crisis in leadership, religious leaders have played an important role in

confidence-building and legitimization of institutions.

The incorporation of a new generation of activists with more pragmatic profiles and explicit commitment to efficiency may lead to awareness of the changes required for the re-organization of communities. Efforts are still required in order to create new paradigms through accountability that could articulate the whole spectrum of Jewish interests.

### **20. FROM DOWNTURN TO UPSWING IN SOUTH AFRICAN JEWRY**

Over the past two decades, the Jewish community of South Africa has gone through a period of rapid decline. Its numbers fell from a community high of 120,000 souls in 1981 to 73,000 in 2005. The main reasons for this dramatic loss (40%) were the deteriorating economic and physical climate. The end of apartheid brought with it an increase in criminal violence and problems of personal security, economic depression and a severe fall in the value of the rand, as well as political uncertainty. Affirmative employment policies also made it hard for young Jewish graduates to find jobs.

Jews were also especially concerned about possible antisemitic violence (which largely failed to materialize), especially in the Western Cape Province, where there is a significant Moslem presence, as well as a decline in prosperity. They looked at Zimbabwe with alarm, as the government there confiscated farms and property from the white minority, including Jews, and violence reached intolerable levels.

The reaction of the Jews was twofold: Many chose to leave and migrated, either to Australia

(their first choice) or to Israel, Canada, the U.S. and Britain. Despite the long Zionist tradition of South African Jewry, relatively few chose Israel, partially due to the onset of the second *intifada* in Israel, the fear of terrorist attacks, and economic depression there. Those who left were primarily young and well-to-do families, resulting not only in a quantitative depletion, but also a loss to the communities of young blood, new leadership and sources of badly needed funding. Those who remained were mostly older families and those who could not afford to leave. This led to a greater burden on the communal welfare system and a reduction in giving. The IUA-UCF, one of the main communal appeal organizations, reported that it was losing some 400 contributors a year.

The second reaction of the community was “to turn in on itself”, i.e. to settle largely in Jewish concentrations, especially in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and to intensify Jewish involvement. One expression of this was increased religiosity, and indeed the *baal teshuva* movement in South Africa is especially strong. Attendance in Jewish day schools and synagogues also increased and more sprouted catering for fewer attendees. This created a new problem of an over-extensive infrastructure of services and facilities that became inefficient as numbers of attendees dwindled.

However, in the last three to five years there has been a significant change in a number of spheres. South Africa has achieved political stability. After two decades of democracy and three general elections, South Africa has stable government, an independent and respected judiciary, and free media (often critical of the government). A recent study found that South

Africa is the sixth most patriotic country in the world, showing support for country and government and a positive atmosphere. Serious economic problems of disparity and unemployment remain, yet the creative course of the country is in the right direction, according to a recent survey in *The Economist*.

The economy continues to improve. The growth rate of the economy is high at 5% a year, the stock market has reached record levels, and foreign investment has returned. Jewish philanthropy has increased, according to the IUA-UCF, as young Jews attain wealth.

Jews continue to play a major role in the country. Tony Leon, the leader of the Opposition Democratic Alliance in parliament, is a Jew. Arthur Chaskalson, the retired Chief Justice, is Jewish, and a fifth of all the judges in Johannesburg are Jewish. Many young Jews have made fortunes in recent years.

Emigration has reduced to a trickle, from a high of 1,500 a year five years ago to a current level of only 300–400 annually, and indeed some young families have returned, mostly from the U.S. and the UK (but not from Australia). This is true not only of Jews, but of others as well. A sign of the times is the establishment of the privately funded organization called “Home Coming Revolution”, which encourages and supports re-immigration. The organization has had considerable success, with some 10% of all returnees being Jewish. Recent data from the South African Board of Jewish Education show that enrollment in pre-school education is increasing, a further indication that young families are staying.

The South African government has gone out of its way to make Jews feel at home. President

Mbeki attended the inauguration ceremony of new Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein. At all state functions, the Chief Rabbi is invited to make a prayer. Although the South African government has criticized Israel and supported the Palestinian cause, including extending an invitation to Hamas, it has also extended a hand to Israel. The visit in 2005 of Ehud Olmert, then Vice Premier and Minister of Industry and Trade, was well-publicized and served to improve relations. Since the disengagement from Gaza, the anti-Israel rhetoric has been toned down.

Jews are still able to feel comfortable in South Africa. Despite concerns, the number of antisemitic incidents in South Africa is among the lowest in the world.

One of the successful outcomes of the difficult period was the consolidation of the community. In Johannesburg, most of the social and welfare organizations were brought under the umbrella of the *Hevra Kadisha*, which became an effective and professional agency providing a wide variety of services to the community and is the largest welfare organization in all Africa. Similarly, most of the Jewish and Zionist organizations were brought into a common building called *Beyachad* in each major city. Thus the community has become leaner and more compact.

Another outcome of the last decade has been a lowering of the age of much of the communal leadership. The new Chief Rabbi is only 34 years old, the executive director of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues, the national vice president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and the heads of the Zionist Federation and the Board of Jewish Education are also all in their thirties.

Israel continues to be the major theme

uniting Jews, although perhaps not as much as in the past. *Aliyah* has fallen from 595 in 1994 to around a hundred a year, having been affected by both the *intifada* in Israel and the anti-Israel media in South Africa. However, there is still considerable interest in Israel, where 80% of all Jews have visited. Youth movements, which declined in many Diaspora Jewish communities, are gaining strength. The religious *Bnei Akiva* movement remains the largest of the youth movements, but *Habonim* has also shown significant growth in recent years. The motto of the community, according to the Chief Rabbi, has become “either go home (to Israel) or stay home (in South Africa)”, indicating the strong Zionist nature of the community, as well as its commitment to Jewishness.

As part of the process of being involved in the governmental regime, a large number of outreach programs have been initiated. One of the main initiators was the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, who was a co-founder of *Tikkun*. There are many such Jewish organizations that provide assistance to disadvantaged blacks, and most schools have outreach programs as well.

Political stability and improvement in the economic and security situation are the main explanations for the positive delta in the Jewish community of South Africa. With attendance at Jewish day schools of well over 80%, inter-marriage at a low level of 15% or less, and an improved economic and physical climate, there is cause for being optimistic about the future of the more compact Jewish community of South Africa.

**The South  
African gov-  
ernment  
makes great  
efforts to help  
Jews feel at  
home**

## **JPPPI Main Publications**

### **The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute - Annual Assessment 2004–2005 The Jewish People Between Thriving And Decline** *JPPPI Staff and contributors 2005*

To succeed, large resources, judicious coping with critical decisions and careful crafting of long-term grand-policies are needed. The full volume contains analyses of the major communities around the world and in-depth assessments of significant topics.

### **Between Thriving and Decline — The Jewish People 2004, Executive Report, Annual Assessment No.1** *JPPPI Staff and contributors 2004*

### **Facing a Rapidly Changing World — The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, Executive Report, Annual Assessment No.2 2005** *JPPPI Staff and contributors 2005*

### **Institut de Planification d'une Politique pour le Peuple Juif, Rapport Annuel du JPPPI 2005/2006, Le Peuple Juif en 2005/2006, Entre Renaissance et Déclin, Special edition in French,** *JPPPI Staff and contributors 2006*

### **China and the Jewish People: Old Civilizations in a New Era** *Dr. Shalom Salomon Wald 2004*

This is the first strategic document in the series of Improving the Standing of the Jewish People in Emerging Superpowers Without a Biblical Tradition.

### **Position Paper: Global Jewish People Forum** *JPPPI Staff 2005*

The position paper examines President Moshe Katsav's initiative to establish a "Second House" and makes a number of recommendations.

### **Soft Power — A National Asset** *Dr. Sharon Pardo 2005*

Today's global changes in the international arena require more consideration of soft assets possessed by the Jewish People. Prepared for the 2005 Herzliya Conference.

### **Strategic Paper: Confronting Antisemitism — A Strategic Perspective** *Prof. Yehezkel Dror 2004*

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### **Alert Paper No. 2: Jewish Demography — Facts, Outlook, Challenges** *Prof. Sergio DellaPergola 2003*

There may be fewer Jews in the world than commonly thought, and if the current demographic trends continue unchanged, there might be even fewer in the future.

### **Alert Paper No. 1: New Anti-Jewishness** *Prof. Irwin Cotler 2003*

The new anti-Jewishness consists of discrimination against, or denial of, the right of the Jewish people to live, as an equal member of the family of nations.

### **A Road Map for the Jewish People for 2025** *JPPPI Staff 2006*

Published in the context of the Alternative Futures for the Jewish People 2025 project. Prepared for the 2006 Herzliya Conference.

# **THE JEWISH PEOPLE POLICY PLANNING INSTITUTE**

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The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute was established in 2002, as an independent non-profit organization. The Institute examines the challenges, threats and opportunities facing the Jewish People, and engages in strategic policy planning to assure long-term thriving. Interface with actual policy making is enhanced by helping the major Jewish organizations and the government of Israel in agenda setting and presenting analyzed and innovative policy options.

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- Alternative Futures of the Jewish People 2025.
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- Jewish People Crisis Management
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The Institute promotes Jewish leadership policy discourse by publishing policy papers, preparing background material for decision-makers and holding workshops for decision-makers and policy professionals. In addition, the Institute provides advice and helps with staff development in an effort to help build-up strategic thinking and policy planning capacities of the Jewish People.



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**Amir Peretz**

*Deputy Prime  
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**For the third time consecutively, the JPPPI produced its annual assessment of the Jewish People. This year, the Assessment focuses on identifying deltas of change, which are bound to influence the future of the Jewish People and the State of Israel such as the nuclearization of Iran and the threats of terror, which put Israel, with an edge in sophisticated defense technologies, against unsophisticated and dangerous weapons of fundamentalist Islam including suicide bombers and "Kassam" rockets. The assessment presents a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and dangers of the new policies of Israel, and recommendations which should be seriously read and discussed by senior decision makers, both in Israel and the international Jewish leadership.**

**Abraham  
H. Foxman**

*National Director  
and Chairman of the  
Anti-Defamation  
League of  
B'nai B'rith*

**If strategic planning for the Jewish people is to succeed, it is critical to ask the right questions, identify the core issues, see not only the dangers but the opportunities, and determine the external and internal factors affecting the future of Israel and world Jewry. The 2006 JPPPI assessment admirably fulfills these vital needs and sets the stage for trend-line analysis from year to year.**

**Rabbi David  
Ellenson**

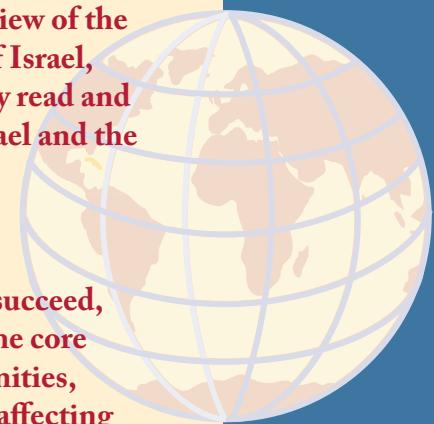
*President of the  
Hebrew Union  
College – Jewish  
Institute of Religion*

**The 2006 JPPPI Annual Assessment presents a broad overview of the state of the Jewish people worldwide, and an articulate and judicious summary of the challenges before Jewish policymakers as they confront future directions for their organizations and institutions. Anyone interested in Jewish life will be edified by this book, and it should be consulted by professionals and involved lay people alike. A fine work!**

**Tzipi Livni**

*Vice Prime Minister  
and Minister of  
Foreign Affairs  
of Israel*

**Upon the publication of the JPPPI's Annual Assessment, the Minister of Foreign Affairs emphasizes that the essence of the State of Israel, the purpose of its establishment and its right to exist are to be a national home for the Jewish People. In our decision-making process in the Government of Israel, we envision the whole of the Jewish People. May we have the wisdom to reach the right decisions and the power to implement them on behalf of the People of Israel wherever they are.**



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