

# The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute

## Annual Assessment

2007

### Societal Aspects

...The notion of the Jewish People comprised of Jewish communities around the world with a core state in Israel shows signs of weakening... Israel and the American Jewish community are challenged to develop a strong leadership, pro-active rather than defensive...



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# Jewish People Policy Planning Institute

## Annual Assessment

### 2007

EXECUTIVE REPORT No. 4

### *Societal Aspects*

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## Foreword

The flagship project of the JPPPI is its annual assessment on the state of the Jewish people. This year's assessment differs from its predecessors in several respects.

First, it focuses heavily on the effect of the war in Lebanon not only on Israel, but also on the largest Jewish community outside of Israel, the Jewish community in the United States. Second, rather than providing an overview of the changing status of different Jewish communities internationally, this year's assessment analyzes a number of societal aspects and developments in leading Diaspora communities and in Israel. And third, by outlining socio-economic, migration, family and religious patterns, it offers insight into cultural directions and trends among the Jewish people.

Not surprisingly, one sees a mixed picture of positive and negative developments in this year's assessment. On the positive side of the ledger, many of Israel's Sunni Arab neighbors share Israel's fears and threat perceptions of Iran. If nothing else, shared threat perceptions create the potential for common or at least parallel actions vis-à-vis Iran. Additionally, while the war with Hizbollah in Lebanon was dispiriting for Israelis, the Winograd commission's unvarnished critique of the government's performance has led to important lessons learned and the introduction of some structural changes in the government and military's decision-making process. Further, in the American Jewish community, the war in Lebanon demonstrated that the fissures — political and religious — tend to be submerged in response to outside threats to Israel. And, though there are many worrisome trends in Europe, there is also an encouraging development: there is a new found interest in all things Jewish — e.g., Jewish and Israeli literature tops best-seller lists and Jewish studies are becoming established in increasing numbers of European universities.

On the negative side of the ledger, antisemitism is worsening and Jewish communities are shrinking in Europe. In Israel, the social-economic gaps are widening domestically. Externally, Iran poses an ominous danger over time to Israel, and more immediately, Israel confronts far more acute threats from radical Islamists with Hizbollah increasingly potent in Lebanon and Hamas now having taken over control in Gaza.

In light of all this, the assessment offers its own agenda for urgent action by Jewish and Israeli leaders. Among other things, more effective strategies are needed to deal with the threats posed by the Iranian nuclear program and the radical Islamists. To ameliorate some of the social-

economic gaps in Israel, policies will be needed to upgrade education and meet the standards of most developed countries; policies will also be needed to facilitate study by Haredi women and men in programs designed to help yeshiva graduates enter the job market. Given shrinking Jewish populations in the Diaspora, the successful U.S. Birthright program should be introduced to Europe and ways must be found to reduce or subsidize the high costs of Jewish services and facilities so Jewish life can become more accessible to a wider public. And, despite all the sensitivities, new modalities of conversion that take account of traditional criteria are needed even while policies to integrate children of out-married couples into mainstream Jewish society are also developed.

The issue for Jewish and Israeli leaders is not just to be aware of the agenda for action but to develop the means to follow through on the priorities outlined in this year's assessment. Let's hope they do so.

**Ambassador Dennis Ross**

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



## Preface

This year's Annual Assessment Executive Summary is somewhat different from its predecessors, for a variety of reasons. Among them is a perception that the notion of the Jewish people comprised of Jewish communities around the world with a core state in Israel is one which shows signs of weakening and, perhaps therefore, is increasingly expressed by the more deeply affiliated members of organized Jewish communities as well as by some Israeli leaders.

Accordingly, this year's Annual Assessment takes the Jewish people as a reality and examines a number of its societal aspects. In lieu of an examination of the major events in Jewish communities on a country-by-country basis, this year's assessment looks at some societal aspects of the largest Diaspora Jewish community, with some attention also on other Diaspora communities. In the future, we hope to expand the scope and give much more attention to other Diaspora communities.

Part I begins a series of tentative suggestions, based on the information and analyses provided in the material that follows, for a strategic agenda and policy direction. In order to see the suggestions in perspective, they are followed by an updated table indicating a number of major characteristics of the Jewish people. Some of the

salient features indicated in the table are then discussed in some detail.

There follows, in Part II, three major essays which assess, among others, the reactions to and impact of *the* major event of this past year, the Second War in Lebanon. The first examines the reactions of American Jewry to the war; the second examines the impact of the war and its aftermath on Israeli society; and the third surveys antisemitism in central Europe from 2000 until the present.

The first two essays explicitly, and the third implicitly, conclude with a focus on the challenge of leadership. Perhaps more clearly than ever before, the American Jewish community seeks leadership, and what is needed is a leadership which will have the foresight to lead proactively, rather than continuing to act defensively. Israel, too, is challenged to face its weaknesses and failures and to muster its resources both domestically and in the Diaspora to develop strong Jewish leadership. That is the overriding policy recommendation of this assessment, and it is the one with which the final essay concludes, namely, the urgent need to focus on the crafting of policies for the fostering of Jewish People leadership.

Part III consists of a series of essays which

examine Jewish socio-economic patterns; migration patterns; family patterns; religious patterns; and one aspect of Jewish culture, namely, cinema. It is JPPPI's goal to provide a comprehensive examination of Jewish cultural patterns. That is, however, extremely difficult and complex, especially because of the paucity of theories and data on the subject. We begin this year's analysis with the very revealing subject of Jewish cinema.

No analysis of the societal aspects of the Jewish people is complete without an examination of the changing roles of Jewish women within the Jewish community, and it was expected that this section would begin with a major essay on the subject. However, when the multidimensionality and other complexities of the subject became apparent, rendering a significant analysis unfeasible to complete for

this year's Executive Report, it was decided to hold that analysis, which is in progress, for next year's Annual Assessment. That will permit the complete attention the subject warrants.

There are, for sure, other societal aspects which warrant examination but for which there is a dearth of data or other reliable information. The fact is that there we know much too little and, if we are to plan effectively, we need much more empirically-grounded information. To further this, JPPPI hopes to prepare a detailed research agenda on important but neglected aspects of the Jewish people which will hopefully be taken up by salient research bodies.

**Chaim I. Waxman**

Senior Fellow

Jewish People Policy Planning Institute

# **Part I**

# **Policy Directions for World Jewry Today**



## Strategic Agenda and Policy Directions

The material presented in this Annual Assessment leads to ten strategic agenda domains with policy directions that require urgent consideration by Jewish organizations and leaders. They do not replace the strategic agenda and recommendations presented in earlier Annual Assessments and other JPPPI documents, but are added to them. These include:

### 1. ISRAEL

- A. Clearly, security issues of Israel emerge as the most important challenge aggravated in 2007. Therefore, policies are urgently needed to help Israel with crafting its political-security grand-strategies, help it mobilize critically needed resources, confront the dangers of global radical Islamic terrorism and prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear capacities.
- B. Unequal distribution of wealth has become more acute and pockets of poverty have emerged. Development of effective redistribution mechanisms is needed, together with more strenuous efforts to increase participation in the labor market.
- C. Policies directed at upgrading education so

as to reach the standards of the most developed countries need development.

- D. Policies are needed to encourage and facilitate study by Haredi women and men, including comprehensive professional programs designed to help yeshiva graduates aspiring to enter the job market, particularly IT fields.

### 2. SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES

- A. While education is widespread among Jews, the quality of education constitutes a growing concern. Innovative policies to restructure Jewish education, making it more attractive and easily available, are needed. These policies should aim for a quantum jump in utilizing the potentials of IT.
- B. Following the consequences of globalization, many Jews have been able to thrive but many others have suffered significantly negative consequences. In most western countries, relative to high income employees, the gap between Jews and non-Jews is narrowing. Jewish communities need new policies to cope with this trend.
- C. A particular population segment which appears to be poverty stricken comprises

a significant part of Shoah survivors. This situation should urgently be examined and rectified.

- D. A relationship is emerging between higher socioeconomic status and greater access to Jewish services and facilities — hence to Jewish identification. This calls for enhanced attention to the costs of Jewish life and the urgent need to make it more accessible to a wider public.

### 3. EUROPE

The overall Jewish population numbers in Europe are at a historic low. Due to emigration, assimilation and an ageing population, many communities are set to shrink further or to vanish altogether. Nevertheless, while it seems hard to reverse this trend it might be possible to slow it considerably. To achieve this, the following issues require innovative policies:

#### A. Communities:

- 1) Identification of viable communities and concentration of efforts on them with the help of “infrastructure” plans.
- 2) Search for new sources of funds.
- 3) Jewish formal education must expand. Evidence from all over the world shows that children attending Jewish day schools are more likely to develop a Jewish identity. European Jewish schools are usually privately run, consequently they are expensive and many cannot afford them. Therefore, a significant share of the funds mentioned above should be used to make Jewish education available to all Jewish children.

- 4) Informal Jewish education needs to be strengthened. There is an acute shortage of teachers and educators in many European countries. Emissaries and envoys from Israel and the U.S. already work in the FSU and Germany. They should also be sent to the rest of Europe. In order to strengthen Jewish identity, the successful U.S. Birthright program should be introduced in Europe as well.

#### B. Leadership:

- 1) Policies are needed which facilitate coordination of the diverse Jewish leadership both within national Jewish communities and in Europe as a whole. The ideological, political and religious struggles of the past are a luxury European Jewry can no longer afford.
- 2) Shrinking numbers mean declining political influence and electoral power. In countries like Britain and France, the Jewish community's influence will be surpassed by Islamic immigrant communities within the next few years. Nevertheless, despite rising antisemitism there is also a widespread interest in Judaism. The growing clash with militant Islam leads many Europeans to look for Europe's Christian roots, which in the spirit of Jewish-Christian reconciliation since the “Second Vatican” are commonly defined now as “Judeo-Christian”. This new development creates the need for novel policies. It might well mean that Europe actually looks for a Jewish moral voice in the challenges ahead. It would be wise to provide such a voice by establishing a unified Jewish

presence at the European institutions in Strasbourg and Brussels, so that the Jewish People are heard. This of course would also serve to help combat antisemitism and counter security threats.

#### 4. AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY AND THE SECOND LEBANON WAR

- A. Policies should be prepared, providing Jewish community leaders, intellectuals and opinion leaders with opportunities to deepen their understanding of Israeli security issues.
- B. Prepare long-term plans to strengthen Jewish influence, taking into account expected political, demographic and cultural changes.

#### 5. MIGRATION

Consider ways to involve mobile Jews in community activities and to adjust community belonging as a whole to increasing geographic mobility.

#### 6. JEWISH CULTURE

Policies to facilitate and intensify Jewish cultural creativity should be crafted. Ideas to be considered include, for instance:

- a. Studying Jewish creativity and its drivers.
- b. Building up gravity centers of Jewish cultural creative activities, so as to achieve a critical mass of mutually supporting facilities, creative persons, festivals and so on.
- c. Building up Jerusalem as the Civilizational Capital of the Jewish People, with special

emphasis on cultural creativity (as detailed in a separate JPPPI strategy paper).

- d. Encouraging highly gifted youngsters to prepare themselves for cultural creation.
- e. Developing specific plans for various types of cultural creativity, such as film making.

#### 7. JEWISH FAMILY PATTERNS

- A. Despite all sensitivities, new modalities of conversion making it easier while meeting traditional criteria should be developed.
- B. Focused policies, based on an understanding of the complexities involved, are needed to enable children of out-married couples to gain acceptance into the mainstream of Jewish society.
- C. Available research findings on the potential of the provision of social services and financial and value-oriented incentives to lead middle class families to have a 3<sup>rd</sup> or a 4<sup>th</sup> child should be translated into operational policies.

#### 8. STRATEGIC THINKING

Findings on the Second Lebanon War clearly exposed weaknesses in strategic thinking. However, this is the case in respect of many domains critical for the future of the Jewish People. Upgrading Jewish People strategic thinking is therefore a must.

## 9. DEEPER STUDY OF SOCIETAL DIMENSIONS AND PROBLEMS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Preparation of the Annual Assessment ran into serious problems due to the lack of adequate data on critical societal dimensions, without which policy needs cannot be fully mapped and adequate policies cannot be developed. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop a research agenda and implement it.

## 10. JEWISH PEOPLE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The subject of Jewish People leadership is not directly studied in the Annual Assessment, in part because of the objective difficulties involved in “studying” it. Still, there can be no dispute about the urgent need to upgrade the overall quality of Jewish People leadership, in Israel and the Diaspora, to assure the qualities needed for coping with the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Policies to develop Jewish People leadership should therefore be crafted.



## Selected Indicators on World Jewry – 2007

Country	Jewish Population (Core Definition)			Index of Human Development		GDP per capita (Purchase Parity US \$)	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>	2007 <sup>b</sup>	Projected 2020 <sup>c</sup>	2004 <sup>d</sup>	2004 <sup>d</sup>	2006	Most recent <sup>a</sup>	Most recent <sup>a</sup>	Most recent <sup>a</sup>	2006 <sup>e</sup>	2006 <sup>e</sup>
World	12,633,000	13,155,000	13,558,000	.965–.331	1–177	38,454–779				19,264 <sup>f</sup>	1,822,257 <sup>f</sup>
Israel	2,582,000	5,393,000	6,228,000	.927	23	24,382	97	5	–	–	–
North America	5,686,000	5,649,000	5,581,000	.960–.948	6–8	39,676–31,263				2,385	545,018
United States	5,400,000	5,275,000	5,200,000 <sup>g</sup>	.948	8	39,676	25 <sup>h</sup>	54	35	2,157	493,653
Canada	286,000	374,000	381,000	.960	6	31,263	55	35	66	228	51,365
Latin America	514,000	393,000	364,000	.879–.482	31–154	15,720–1,892				1,355	69,243
Argentina	282,000	184,000	162,000 <sup>i</sup>	.863	34	13,298	50–55	45	>50	293	11,803
Brazil	90,000	96,000	90,000 <sup>i</sup>	.792	63	8,195	71	45	>50	232	15,476
Mexico	35,000	40,000	42,000	.821	53	9,803	85	10	>70	72	13,311
Other countries	107,000	73,000	70,000 <sup>i</sup>	.879–.482	31–154	15,720–1,892	75	15–95	>50	758	28,653
Europe non-FSU	1,331,000	1,155,000	1,030,000	.966–.757	4–92	38,827–7,753				3,686	874,907
France	530,000	490,000	482,000	.942	16	29,300	40	40–45	>70	2,408	251,166
United Kingdom	390,000	295,000	238,000	.940	18	30,821	60	40–45	78	594	161,048
Germany	30,000	120,000	108,000	.932	21	28,303	<20	>60	>50	110	89,536
Hungary	70,000	49,000	34,000	.869	35	16,814	<15	60	..	63	7,588
Other EU <sup>j</sup>	171,000	149,000	134,000	.956–.856	4–42	3,827–14,623	10–25	33–75	>50	326	293,609
Other non-EU <sup>k</sup>	140,000	52,000	34,000	.965–.757	1–92	38,454–7,753	5–20	50–80	..	185	71,960
FSU <sup>l</sup>	2,151,000	357,000	173,000	.858–.652	40–122	14,565–1,202				7,469	131,343
Russia	808,000	225,000	130,000 <sup>i</sup>	.797	65	9,902	<15	80	..	3,593	73,416
Ukraine	777,000	77,000	25,000 <sup>i</sup>	.774	77	6,394	<15	80	..	1,777	30,574
Rest FSU Europe <sup>l</sup>	312,000	37,000	15,000 <sup>i</sup>	.858–.694	40–114	14,565–1,729	<15	65–75	..	813	16,876
FSU Asia	254,000	18,000	3,000	.774–.652	79–122	7,440–1,202	<15	50–75	..	1,286	10,477
Asia (rest) <sup>m</sup>	104,000	20,000	21,000	.949–.492	7–150	29,251–679				490	115,435
Africa	195,000	77,000	60,000	.842–.331	47–177	11,652–779				3,801	60,543
South Africa	118,000	72,000	57,000	.663	121	11,192	85	20	79	114	16,589
Oceania	70,000	111,000	101,000	.957–.523	3–139	30,331–2,543				72	20,887
Australia	65,000	104,000	95,000	.957	3	30,331	65	22	70	66	18,165

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.

## GLOBAL PATTERNS

At the beginning of 2007 the world Jewish population reached 13,155,000 — an estimated 60,000 more than the previous year — reflecting growth of 80,000 in Israel and decline of 20,000 elsewhere. The overall growth rate of 0.5% resulted from a 1.5% increase in Israel and a -0.2% decrease in the Diaspora. These trends continued the well established patterns of past years. Minor population increases in Canada and Australia were compensated by more significant losses in Eastern Europe, Western Europe as a whole, Latin America, and Africa. In Western Europe, Germany continued to increase, but France and the United Kingdom declined. The estimates reported here refer to the concept of *core* Jewish population, mostly inclusive of self-reported Jews who do not hold another monotheistic religion, and people without religion with Jewish parents. In some countries such as the FSU, Jewish population estimates reflect declared ethnic affiliations.

These population changes primarily reflect the different internal demographic balances of Jewish communities in different countries, but also the exposure of individual Jews to the political and socioeconomic constraints and opportunities within national societies and in the framework of an open global system. Levels and changes in the Index of Human Development (HDI) provide an apt background to these demographic trends. Based on the latest available data (2004) Israel kept its 23<sup>rd</sup> place out of 177 in the global ranking of countries by HDI, but it recorded the fastest improvement versus each of the countries with major Jewish populations. Israel was 9<sup>th</sup> best in terms of health, 23<sup>rd</sup>

in income per capita measured by real purchase power (but only 62<sup>nd</sup> in income distribution equality), 29<sup>th</sup> in educational enrollment, and 34<sup>th</sup> in public corruption (a worsening of 6 places versus the previous ranking). This does not take into account events and trends in 2006.

In Israel a comparatively young age composition and a persisting preference for nuclear families with children stand behind an annual natural population increase of about 70,000. The highest number of Jewish births ever recorded in the country (104,000 in 2006) strengthened the claim that Israel has become the largest Jewish community worldwide with 5,393,000 Jews plus another 308,000 non-Jewish members of Jewish households.

In the United States a high profile debate on the size of the Jewish community benefited from some new sources of data but mostly from the secondary analysis of older ones. Our estimate of 5,275,000 represents the middle range between two large national surveys conducted in 2001. The National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) and the American Jewish Identity Survey (AJIS) provided national estimates of 5,200,000 and 5,350,000 Jews, respectively. These figures point to effective Jewish population reduction versus the early 1990s and are highly coherent with available indicators of late marriage, low fertility, frequent intermarriage, ageing, and the weakening of international migration. The role of changing Jewish identification is of course very important in determining population estimates. In the U.S., a weakening in ethnic and community oriented expressions of Jewish identification can be noted along with resilience of religious oriented components of Jewish identification. A transition in perceptions of Judaism,

from one's own religion, to secular, cultural, or undetermined modes of identification growingly emerges among people aged in their 20s to 50s. On the other hand, the younger Jewish population segment includes a rapidly growing share of Orthodox and Jewishly educated children.

Rather than tackling these substantive realities in the perspective of the last decades, the discussion on different U.S. Jewish population estimates has focused on the quality of sources of data, none of which can be conclusively rated better than others. Large national surveys with relatively low response rates are pitted against compilations of disparate surveys — local or national — with better response rates but spread over many years, collected with different and not always random methods by different investigators, based on different definitions of who is a Jew, not comparable in their topical contents, and each inadequate to portray the whole of American Jewry in isolation from other cognate sources. The Jewish population estimates, higher by one or even two millions suggested by some investigators, mostly reflect a broader definition than the *core* Jewish population used in our estimates.

International migration between Israel and the rest of world Jewry played a minor role in global Jewish population redistribution. A total of 19,000 new immigrants went to Israel — a decrease of 9% versus 2005. Of these, over 7,000 arrived from the FSU (-20%), over 4,000 from Africa and Asia (+6%), 1,400 from Latin

America (-15%), 2,400 from North America (+4%), and 3,700 from Europe (+1%). Among the latter countries, an increase of over 50% (to about 600) occurred in immigration from the United Kingdom — the country where the highest increase in antisemitic incidents was recorded. As against this, aliyah from France diminished by 5%. Migration to Israel includes a growing share of non-Jews. Immigration is significantly off-set by out-migration, leading to an international migration balance close to zero.

Tourism to Israel, 1,822,000 in 2006, diminished too by 4%. Increases from North America (+7%), from the FSU (+12%), and from Africa (+32%), were off-set by decreases from Latin America (-27%) and Europe (-9%), incorporating a diminution of 19% from France and an increase of 3% from the UK. These variations, too, provide indirect hints at the contextual pressures felt by Jews in different countries, although they also tend to be sensitive to economic circumstances in the countries of origin and to the security situation in Israel.

The available estimates, although far from exhaustive, indicate clearly negative country correlations between the extent and reach of full-time Jewish education and the frequency of intermarriage.

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***In Western Europe, the Jewish population in Germany continued to grow, but declined in France and the UK.***

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## **Part II**

# **Significant Recent and Current Challenges**



## The American Jewish Community's Reaction to the 2006 Israel-Hizbollah War

The Israel-Hizbollah War in the summer of 2006 was as shocking to the American Jewish community as to everyone else with interest in the Middle East. The American Jewish community typically focuses on Israel during acute crises, and the summer crises vis-à-vis both Hamas and Hizbollah did not occur at a time of previous community concentration on Israel, an attention that had abated since the early period of the Second Intifada, the last time when Israelis were dying in large numbers.

Mid-2006 found American Jews adjusting to the loss of Ariel Sharon, the victory of Hamas, the emergence of Kadima, the new premiership of Ehud Olmert, and discussions of his so-called convergence plan based on unilateral withdrawals from most of the West Bank. After years of deep divisions in the community that during the 1980s and 1990s tended to mimic the Likud-Labor split in Israel, organized American Jewry was just recovering from the acrimony over Gaza disengagement. Most American Jews supported the Sharon government's actions, but the right — secular and religious, was still bitter over a withdrawal whose prospects had generated harsh debate and whose implementation continued to rankle, as right wing supporters of Israel believed disengagement had only aided

the Hamas electoral victory in January 2006. The right continued to warn of dire consequences.

Meanwhile, the centerpiece of their opposition to Israeli policy had moved to the convergence plan, but in the early weeks of the Olmert government there was insufficient activity to generate once again considerable debate. The center among American Jews, inclined in any case to support whatever Israeli government is in power, provided broad support for the plan without passion. Most of the left, though inclined to favor negotiations, was not prepared to oppose an Israeli government that wanted to reduce the occupation.

If there had been any issue that attracted broad attention and emotion in the American Jewish community before the war on a subject related to Israel, it was the publication by two leading political scientists, Stephen M. Walt and John Mearsheimer, of an attack on the "Israel Lobby." Beyond the disturbing subject itself, the community was focused almost unanimously on the vitriolic nature of their broadside, the frequent inaccuracies, the

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***The publication by two political scientists of an attack on the "Israel Lobby" attracted broad attention and emotion in the American Jewish community.***

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**Among the majority of American Jews, a strong consensus rapidly emerged in favor of Israel's actions in the Second Lebanon War.**

unclear definition of “the Lobby” — at least at first, and the media attention their initial article

attracted. Even those on the left who had had qualms about recent AIPAC actions, found it difficult to defend a paper (and the frequent articles and presentations that followed) so biased and lacking in objectivity.

Before hostilities began, there was disagreement concerning how strongly to support current Israeli policy, and over specifics, especially related to the Palestinians. Certainly, the ideological activists at either end of the political spectrum were deeply divided with each other. But the Walt-Mearsheimer contretemps had clearly demonstrated that the American Jewish community was

capable of acting in a concerted and unified manner when provoked.

In any case, beyond the unified attacks on Walt-Mearsheimer, a side activity for the official community and those most intensely engaged in matters Israel and the political arena, the war erupted at a quiet time in a context of basic support for the latest Israeli policies, and with a backdrop of some confusion as to the exact nature of those policies. This stability, even somnolence, was transformed almost instantly when the swift events that led to war suddenly erupted. As Israel began moving into the war, the American Jewish community began mobilizing the resources at its disposal. As the New York Times described it, “With Israel at war again, American Jewish groups immediately swung into action, sending lobbyists to Washington, solidarity delegations to Jerusalem and millions

of dollars for ambulances and trauma counseling, just as they always have.”

To the overwhelming majority of American Jews, Israel was once again in the headlines and in peril. Not surprisingly, a strong consensus then rapidly emerged in favor of Israel's actions in the war. American Jewish leaders not only sought to ensure that the United States would back Israel; they also wanted to demonstrate support for Israel at a moment of the country's isolation internationally and danger at home. It also helped that this conflict was perceived as a just war both among American Jews (and indeed most Americans) and in Israel, where such traditional famous critics of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians as Amos Oz, David Grossman and A.B. Yehoshua argued in its support. None of the moral ambiguity of the occupation of the Palestinians pertained in this conflict — at least before the controversy over the bombing of Lebanon emerged more clearly.

This profound concern for Israel can be traced not only to religious, ideological, and political connections; it also exists because of personal relations where Americans “are worried about friends and relatives under bombardment or driven from their homes.” American Jews, living away from the violence of the region, thus felt a sense of obligation to step in and do what they could in order to help Israelis when they most needed support. Crises are effective in rallying American Jews because, unlike the failures and successes of diplomacy that occur behind closed doors and over long periods of time, dramatic developments like katyusha rockets falling on northern Israel capture individuals' immediate attention. These kinds of problems and threats offer opportunity for the provision of goods,



services, and funds to help Israeli victims. And if that were not enough, media coverage constantly brought the war to America in a context in which many Jews believed that news coverage was overly sympathetic to Lebanese suffering, with insufficient attention to Israelis being killed from an area from which Israelis had voluntarily withdrawn in 2000.

The American Jewish community's intense support for Israel in this period can be seen in the funds that were raised following the initial eruption of violence. By mid-August, the American Jewish Committee had received more than \$1.5 million in donations and the American Friends of the Israel Defense Forces had collected more than \$4.5 million. The concerted effort of United Jewish Communities' Israel Emergency Campaign ultimately received \$310.8 million in donations. A similar push to support Israel was also seen following the start of the Second Intifada. For instance, United Jewish Communities received nearly \$360 million in donations to support Israel during this intifada, but over a longer period of time.

When Israel faces a crisis, the American Jewish community is prompted to act and contribute more funds to Israel. But most remarkable in this regard, the Israel Emergency Campaign of the United Jewish Communities was joined by all three of the major denominations: Reform, Conservative, and even more surprisingly given past patterns, Orthodox. In recent years, the community had not acted in unison on almost any issue, especially given the increasing divide between the denominations — particularly between the Orthodox on the one hand and Conservative and Reform on the other. They were even divided on Israel both in ideo-

logical terms (with the overwhelming majority of Orthodox leaning right, and most Reform — especially their leaders — leaning left). The differing official attitudes toward the respective movements in Israel added to the tension between the movements at home. In this case, however, all three movements decided to either endorse the effort or to actually fund-raise for it. As the UJC stated, "The federation system and the synagogue movements, together, represent the largest Jewish constituent framework on the continent. They are breaking new ground in their determination to broaden the overall base of support for Israel by creating a united front through the Israel Emergency Campaign." The Conservatives approached the UJC to work together; the Orthodox, after initial hesitation, accepted a joint campaign with UJC and like the Conservatives received support for their work in Israel; the reform, according to Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, enthusiastically endorsed the UJC campaign, but were not asked to fold their own campaign into the UJC's.

Not only were American Jews staging larger rallies in major American cities, communicating their support for Israel to Congress and the Bush administration, attending synagogues in larger numbers than usual (especially for the summer), and criticizing negative media, but they were also providing a united front and large donations as a further reminder of how important they believed Israeli

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security to be for them and for the United States. The commitment was so strong that when the usually sacrosanct AIPAC began a fund-raising campaign for its own organization during the war, even it came under criticism for asking for money for itself at a time when everyone else was seeking funds for rebuilding the psyche and physical structure of northern Israel.

Though some disagreements within the community could be seen later in the conflict, and certainly afterward, the 2006 Israel-Hizbollah War demonstrated how the pro-Israel left and

pro-Israel right were able to set aside differences in the interests of maximizing backing of Israel. This point was recognized by the Los Angeles Times when it stated that the recent crisis demonstrated “the broadest and most unified community support of Israel they’ve seen in years.” As John Fishel, president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, stated in July 2006, “Israel

is clearly under great duress, and its situation has mobilized support throughout the community across geographical and ideological lines.”

Thus, though traditionally advocating a negotiated and peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, groups representing opinions from the American Jewish left stood firmly behind Israel. As the prominent American Jewish commentator, James D. Besser, noted, “Many moderate doves believe the Israeli offensive, and especially the widespread attacks in Lebanon, are morally justified.” The solidarity within the Jewish community was perhaps exemplified when the head of the Union for Reform Judaism refused to endorse a student petition urging his orga-

nization to criticize Israel’s actions for harming Palestinian and Lebanese civilians.

Similarly, on the right, a strong “we told you so” attitude dominated, with a feeling that their opposition to the unilateral withdrawals from Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza in 2005 had been vindicated. Nevertheless, most right wing supporters of Israel quickly swung behind the country in its emerging predicament and participated in fund raising, public rallies, and efforts to persuade the Bush administration to continue to provide Israel strong support, and in particular the time to complete the job against Hizbollah.

As the war continued somewhat inconclusively, however, divisions between left and right re-emerged, though at first in a more muted form than before the war. Some on the right believed that Israel waited too long to initiate a ground war, and then did so too timidly. Prominent neo-conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer criticized Prime Minister Olmert’s “unsteady and uncertain leadership,” in an August 4 column. “Foolishly relying on air power alone, he denied his generals the ground offensive they wanted, only to reverse himself later.” Ariel Cohen of the Heritage Foundation, a well-known conservative think tank in Washington, complained “that the Olmert-Peretz-Halutz team is lacking a clear strategy and tactical plan on how to defeat Hizbollah.” Following a solidarity mission to Israel, leaders of the (Orthodox) Rabbinical Council of America pleaded with the Israeli military to review its policy of taking pains to spare the lives of innocent civilians in light of Hizbollah’s tactic of hiding its fighters and weaponry among Lebanese civilians. Some donors complained that the Israel Emergency Fund campaign of the UJC was aiding Israeli

**As the war continued inconclusively, divisions between right and left re-emerged.**

Arab victims of Hizbollah katyushas as well as Israeli Jews.

But naysayers soon developed on the left as well, encouraged particularly by the increased Lebanese casualties as the war dragged on much longer than originally anticipated and as Israel finally did initiate a ground war in southern Lebanon. Some on the left began to argue that the Israeli reaction was disproportionate to the initial kidnappings. Though they were in the minority, dissenting voices emerged. For example, the group Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace based in Chicago, moved in the later stages of the war from calling for active U.S. diplomacy to pressing for an immediate cease-fire, which differed at the time from both the American and Israeli government positions. Though they recognized that Israel was the victim in the current crisis, a representative from Americans for Peace Now also stated that “we have deep questions about the efficacy of what Israel is doing” for fear that its military thrusts might empower Hamas and Hizbollah.

The noted Jewish analyst, Leonard Fein, in a *Forward* article entitled “Was There Really No Other Way?” talked about his “queasiness” as he supported Israel. He worried about “too many ‘mistakes,’ too many dead children” in Lebanon, and a likely “callous indifference” in the selection of targets. “In the end, has Israel not through its own miscalculations committed the same dangerous error that the United States has committed, is committing, in Iraq — anticipating a quick victory and instead fracturing the myth of its invincibility?” Matthew Yglesias of the American Prospect, writing in the Chicago Sun Times, put it more bluntly. “Efforts to root

out Hizbollah rocketeers by force have made Israeli civilians much less safe.” He proceeded to argue that Israel miscalculated in its decision “to escalate” the conflict in the north, and that the way to prevent such attacks is to solve the Palestinian problem. “Were Israel’s conflict with the Palestinians resolved, other challenges like Hizbollah would melt away. The idea of firing rockets into Israeli towns would appear absurd.”

When money was being raised for Israel through United Jewish Communities, it was the exception to hear within the Jewish community calls to also raise funds for Lebanon. In the wake of the war, portions of the Jewish community, both on the left and the right, began to adjust to the new political environment. On the one hand, the left was confronted with the harsh reality that unilateral withdrawals and a more forthcoming position by the new Israeli government did not prevent war. But that did not address the problems they wanted to solve of pressing for diplomatic solutions short of the use of force, and the pro-Israel left found itself “scrambling for a new approach now that some of its key assumptions lie buried in the rubble of southern Lebanon and Gaza...” The answer became clearer after the war as groups and analysts on the left continued to maintain that Israel must continue to pursue peace with its neighbors and find ways to get out of the West Bank. In the months that followed, these groups saw their opportunity during the aftermath of the war, and especially with the publication of the Iraq Study Group Report led by former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton to endorse open channels of communication with Syria and Iran, and more intense

talks with Abu Mazen. A very few would add Hamas to this line-up.

As the left tried to encourage the United States to end the violence during the last days of the war, the pro-Israel right for its part pointed out that unilateral withdrawals from southern Lebanon in May 2000 and from Gaza in September 2005 meant that Israel had made major concessions without receiving any security guarantees or assurances in return, and had suffered accordingly. Such an argument was recognized by the executive director of the American Jewish Committee, David Harris, when he stated that “the idea you could leave these territories and be safe behind a security barrier” was no longer accepted. Describing the previous year’s efforts against disengagement by the Zionist Organization of America, an article in the Chicago Jewish Star reported, “Their warnings proved accurate, but their ‘I told you so’ crowing has been limited in the current crisis...” since their message seemed obvious and the immediate problem of assuring contin-

ued U.S. support loomed larger. The Zionist Organization of America initially planned after the war to take steps to discourage Israel from engaging Syria, because it realized that it was no longer necessary to oppose Prime Minister Olmert’s plan to withdraw from parts of the West Bank as support no longer existed for that initiative.

The problem that both the left and the right confronted after the war was that their positions had been directly challenged. The right

faced the problem that it was not offering

anything more than endless conflict, a solution not appealing to American Jews or Israelis. As James Besser noted, “the conflict revealed the soaring costs of war as Israel’s enemies become more sophisticated and better armed; it’s harder to be hawkish when the price is so high.” And one Jewish activist, disillusioned with his previous support for the peace process, nonetheless complained about the right: “they have nothing positive to offer. To most Jews here, their ideas just look like endless occupation, endless war.” At the same time, the left had to avoid appearing naïve and unrealistic in the recommendations for accelerating diplomacy that it increasingly promoted. That left the majority of the American Jewish community floating in the middle with little guidance and direction, because in recent years the center had to some extent followed either left or right or a combination, depending on events in the Middle East and the positions of the American and Israeli governments. Before we address the center’s role, the rift within the American Jewish community can also be verified in polling data.

In the 2006 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion, participants were asked, “Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Israeli government has handled the conflict between Israel and Hizbollah in Lebanon?” While 35% stated that they “Disapprove” of Israel’s actions, a majority of 55% stated that they did “Approve” of the steps that had been taken (10% stated that they were “Not Sure”). While this is certainly a high percentage of those who supported Israel’s actions, it does not reflect the overwhelming majority that most likely existed when the conflict first began. It also appears that the opinion of the American Jewish population

***“The conflict revealed the soaring costs of war as Israel’s enemies become more sophisticated and better armed”.***

was no different than the general population in the United States. A Gallup poll conducted between July 21–23, 2006 shows that 50% of Americans either stated that they “Approve strongly” or “Approve not strongly” of Israel’s actions, whereas 38% either stated that they “Disapprove strongly” or “Disapprove not strongly.” These numbers are very close to the 55% approval and 35% disapproval seen in the public opinion poll conducted on the American Jewish community.

Because the survey of American Jewish opinion was conducted between September 25 and October 16, one can assume that the “crisis mode” mentality that defined the American Jewish community when the soldiers were first kidnapped slowly faded, ultimately reverting back to the status quo divisions between the left and right that existed beforehand and that reflected the general American population’s opinion toward the conflict.

Nevertheless, the war did generate subtle changes in American Jewish thinking not reflected entirely in the polls. On the one hand, most American Jews gravitate to the center, a kind of silent majority following established organizations and looking for guidance. As Besser again describes, American Jews “support Israel and its right to defend itself, they distrust the Palestinian Authority, they recognize Hamas and Hizbollah as terrorist groups that are interested only in Israel’s destruction, but they also believe Israel must find a way to negotiate an end to the decades-old conflict with the Palestinians.” This widely accepted assessment leaves room for influence on the left and the right, and particular opportunities for centrist groups such as the Israel Policy Forum. It suggests, however,

that as we have seen both the left and the right emerged from the war weakened — neither the answer of endless confrontation or of negotiating with untrustworthy opponents seemed at the end of the war to offer much solace.

The result was a new subtle element in American Jewish thinking, an apocalyptic tone epitomized by a Boston woman who told the Boston Globe, “I’m sick about it, truthfully. They’re handling it the best they can. We have to come out victorious. If we don’t, that’s the end of Israel.” In the summer of 2006, American Jews felt compelled to mobilize because the war renewed an old fear that Israel’s very existence was in danger. Except for the opening hours of the Persian Gulf War when missiles reigned down on Israel, such panic had not been seen for more than thirty years since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. This concentrated trepidation was not shared by Israelis.

Referring to donations made by the American Jewish community, Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Simon Wiesenthal Center stated, “If they [Jews] begin to increase their gifts dramatically, it is often an indication that their concerns have greatly expanded.” With attacks occurring on two fronts, the American Jewish community conflated the issues of Gaza and Lebanon and identified a wider war against Israel, reinforcing the perception that Israel was under siege. Whereas perceived existential threats have historically emanated from Israel’s Arab neighbors, the danger that Israel now faced not only came from Hizbollah, but also emanated

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***In the summer of 2006, American Jews felt compelled to mobilize because the war renewed an old fear that Israel’s very existence was in danger.***

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from Iran, patron of both Hizbollah and Hamas, a country that is developing nuclear weapons, and whose president had shortly before the war threatened Israel with destruction and emerged as the world's most powerful Shoah denier.

**President  
Bush's  
support  
for Israel is  
questioned in  
many circles**

Despite the condemnations of Hizbollah by Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt, an "us versus them" mentality was still prevalent throughout the American Jewish community. With widespread international criticism of Israel and its military response, even from Human Rights Watch, the United States appeared to be the only ally on whom Israel could rely in what many American

Jews saw as an otherwise hostile and unsympathetic world. Indeed, in the AJC annual survey, 56% of American Jews responded that Israel and the Arabs would never be able to settle their differences and live in peace, while only 38% believed they would be able to do so. Given this worldview, it is not surprising that in the immediate aftermath of the war there was much talk in American Jewish circles about a second Shoah perpetrated by Iran with deep worries expressed about Israel's ability to survive in what seemed to be a deeply hostile and progressively extremist region.

However, the consequence of this new focus on the perils confronting Israel works in two ways. On the one hand, President Bush's strong support for Israel during the war meant renewed backing from strong advocates of Israel, especially on the right and among Republicans, as reflected in the warm welcome accorded to Bush administration representatives, especially Vice President Cheney, at the annual AIPAC

Policy Conference in March 2007. And in the aftermath of the war, the Jewish right remains newly focused on the danger of Iran, publicly advocating stronger sanctions and privately in some limited circles a consideration of the use of force under extreme circumstances.

On the other hand, polls repeatedly demonstrate that American Jews are strongly opposed to the war in Iraq and any use of force in Iran. Whether the problem is Iraq, Iran, Syria, or Palestine, American Jews by solid majorities are in favor of negotiation. Similar to the general rejection of his policies, the community does not support President Bush's Mideast policy, and they are far more sympathetic with the newly elected Democratic Congress. Even President Bush's support for Israel is questioned in many circles as rhetorically robust but practically inept and counter-productive.

In sum, these attitudes mean that the recent war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006 increased the concern and awareness American Jews felt about the dangers Israel faces while simultaneously intensifying skepticism about Israel's reliance on military force. Most American Jews are looking to the Israeli government to pursue viable policies they can support. They are at once more nervous about Israel's future and more enthusiastic about negotiations than most Israelis. These contradictory views mean that, like most of those involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, they are looking for viable, practical solutions to the seemingly intractable problems that resurfaced in the summer of 2006. The war reinforced the expectation that American Jews will staunchly back Israel in crisis, but it also revealed that, perhaps more than in earlier crises, they are desperately looking for a way

out of fear and hopelessness. Understanding future American Jewish attitudes should be seen in this light.

This conclusion means that the American Jewish community is staunch, perhaps stauncher than many analysts might have thought before the war, as reflected almost incidentally in the intense negative outcry that greeted former President Jimmy Carter's book published in November 2006, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. But it also means that most American Jews will follow an initiative pursued by either the American or the Israeli governments regarding the Palestinians, the Syrians, Lebanon, the Saudi Peace Plan, or even the Iranians — particularly if secret or public diplomacy precipitates an end to the pretensions of an Iranian nuclear force.

Yet, if either government took major initiatives such as talking to Hamas or the Syrians there would be concerted opposition on the right as has already been seen over the last decade and a half in American Jewish reaction to such disparate Israeli initiatives as Oslo and disengagement. Prime Ministers Rabin and Sharon were irritated that they had not received stronger support among American Jews, and they were correct in arguing that some areas of the establishment were muted in their backing of their positions. Clearly, the impact of the right was to create areas of tepid reaction in the community. However, in the end both initiatives were supported by the overwhelming majority of American Jews, and undoubtedly a future Israeli initiative would similarly be backed in analogous fashion — particularly in the likely event the U.S. government backed it as well.

In the wake of the war, it is clear that the

majority of American Jews are seeking answers: they will solidly back Israel in crisis, and any differences among disparate groups will be muted or even eliminated. But between crises they will pick and choose among perspectives. And, after the war, neither the left nor the right has been able to mount a concerted perspective with widespread support. As soon as there is an initiative from Israel or the United States, there will almost certainly be widespread support among American Jews whatever dissent may be raised, especially on the right. The majority of American Jews would prefer an initiative to stasis, but the apprehensions generated by the summer 2006 war also mean that there will not be any major calls for specific diplomatic movements from American Jews either. And the impact of the summer events mean that American Jews might be more likely to support a military action against terrorists or Syria or Iran by either the United States or Israel than would have been the case before the war, despite skepticism about their utility as reflected in opposition to the Iraq war.

In sum, the impact of the war on American Jews was contradictory. It generated increased fear and intensified trust in diplomacy, producing opportunities for leaders in Washington and Jerusalem, especially on the diplomatic front, that did not exist beforehand. But it also meant that American Jews wanted more, not less. Interestingly, when Secretary of State Rice began her intensified diplomatic campaign in

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***The American Jewish community is more effective in backing Israel in extreme crisis than it is in generating innovative ideas or in pressing for government action in the absence of crisis.***

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early 2006, she received more criticism in the community for not doing enough than for doing too much. The organized community was fundamentally supportive. That experience reflects more than any other where we are heading. Similarly, the organized community has supported sanctions on Iran strongly, but except on the far right and left it has been largely quiet on the use of military force or of direct negotiations. More than ever after 2006, the American Jewish community is looking for leadership to

complex problems, and that leadership when it comes is likely to emanate from outside rather than inside the community. That is the critical lesson of the Hizbollah war: even more than in previous times, the American Jewish community today is more effective in backing Israel in a moment of extreme crisis than it is in generating innovative ideas or in pressing for government action in the absence of a crisis. The community is in the end more reactive than pro-active, and should be understood in this vein.



# 5

## Israel – Developments in 2006-2007

### OVERVIEW

Developments in Israel during the assessed period have been dominated by relations with external actors and their domestic repercussions on one hand and social “normalcy” and economic thriving on the other. However, the most important feature was the high rate of change including reality-altering surprise developments — which put Israel to hard tests that continue with escalating vigor.

A time span of one year is too short to evaluate the events, some of which are quite dramatic. Therefore, this year’s Assessment highlights only some selected Israeli events and processes, whilst deeper analysis and evaluation will be undertaken in the 2008 Assessment.

### THE WAR IN LEBANON AND ITS AFTERMATH

The Second War in Lebanon and its still unraveling aftermath constitute the key developments in Israel in the past year. The war, which lasted 33 days, was one of Israel’s longest. Despite its low toll in human life compared to Israel’s other wars, it had deep impact on Israeli society, its perception of itself and its perception by others

— though it is an open question how deep and long-lasting these effects are in light of the rapidity of situation-changing developments.

Following the unprovoked kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by a violent Hizbollah incursion, Israel reacted with strong military action which developed into what was retroactively formally entitled the Second Lebanon War. During the first phases of the war, Israel and its leadership enjoyed substantial public and international support and leeway. However, as time passed, the perceived failure of the Israel Defense Forces to deliver an unequivocal and speedy victory on one hand, and continuous massive missile fire on Israel’s North on the other hand, led to erosion of support. The war ended with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which met main Israeli demands for the withdrawal of Hizbollah from the Northern border and the setting up of a multi-national force to reinforce the Lebanese Army which moved to the South, with provisions to prevent rearmament of Hizbollah. However, while parts of the resolution are being implemented, others, including very important ones such as disarmament of Hizbollah and preventing shipments of military equipment via Syria, are not. Concerning longer-term impacts of the War on Israeli deterrence,

future developments in Lebanon, the Palestinian issue and the geopolitics of the region as a whole, evaluations differ and impacts on the future are unclear.

**Asymmetric high-intensity wars cannot end in “victory” or “defeat” in the classical meanings of these terms.**

In Israel there is strong disagreement on the conduct of the war and its results. While nearly all agree that the war was not managed well, there is a division of opinions: some think that it should have been concluded earlier or perhaps not have been started; another view is that it should have been pursued much more intensely with large scale entry into Northern Lebanon of massive Israeli troop formations. There is also disagreement whether the results, including effects on deterrence, are more of a “victory” or of a “defeat.” However, in considering these opinions and the war as a whole, one should keep in mind that asymmetric high-intensity wars of this type are inherently hard to tackle and cannot end in “victory” or “defeat” in the classical meanings of these terms.

A strong protest movement against the way in which the war was managed resulted in the setting up of an official committee of inquiry by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense, approved by the Cabinet on 17 September 2006. The Winograd Committee, known by its chair, Elyahu Winograd, is composed of five members: the chair, who is a retired judge, two senior retired generals, and two senior professors and policy intellectuals.\* It has a very broad mandate

\* One of whom is the Founding President of JPPPI and the second of whom is a member of the Board of Directors of JPPPI.

to investigate the conduct of the war both on the political and the military echelons and to draw conclusions as it sees fit, on the basis of access to all relevant material and the right to question officials at its discretion.

The War in Lebanon was directed by a team of leaders of civilian background, Olmert as PM, Amir Peretz, the former head of the Labor Union, as Defense Minister. The background of the then Chief of Staff, Dan Halutz, consisted mainly of serving in the air force rather than in the ground forces. Parts of the public criticized them harshly, but most of the public awaited the report of the Committee of Inquiry. In April 2007 its eagerly awaited Interim Report was published, in both classified and public versions.

While the Commission was initially suspect for being nominated by the government which was to be investigated and lacking the status of a Judicial Commission of Inquiry of the past, the personal standing of its members, as well as its damning Interim Report established its credentials in the public, and quelled the popular protests. The Interim Report dealt in detail with the first constitutive days of the war. It chastised the leadership for faulty decision-making, pointing to “very serious failings in the decisions and the way they were made” and especially the lack of consideration of “the whole range of options” reflecting a “weakness in strategic thinking.” Contrary to expectations, the Commission wrote in unequivocal terms that “The primary responsibility for these serious failings rests with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense and the (outgoing) Chief of Staff.” However, while making a number of important recommendations for improving performance of the government and assuring

high-quality professional staff work on political-military issues, directed in part to redress over-influence of the military, it refrained from making any personal recommendations, reserving the right to do so in its final report.

The resignation of Dan Halutz, as well as Peretz' declaration that he would resign after the Labor Party primaries and his subsequent ousting from the Defense Ministry by new Labor Party Chairman Ehud Barak, are at least partly a result of the Winograd Committee's work and report. The future of the Prime Minister is widely regarded as depending on the Final Report of the Committee expected in the autumn of 2007.

One of the war's most problematic aspects which is widely accepted as a failure, also as a result of the State Comptroller's Report, was the handling of the home front. Not only were Israel's civilians in the North and Center-North shelled for 33 successive days, but also the handling of the shelled towns is widely seen as very inadequate. Images on TV of old and disabled people sitting in run-down shelters waiting for volunteers to bring them food were not uncommon. Some municipalities exhibited a complete breakdown of order with their personnel fleeing the towns, but others performed very well. Civic actors, such as volunteers, NGO's, Jewish organizations, wealthy individuals or corporations provided important services.

However, life for most Israelis continued as usual, though there was much identification with the North and many had relatives and friends from the North who came to live with them. There was a good deal of volunteering to help the North, but much of the "sweet life" of Tel Aviv continued as usual, at least on the surface. Opinions differ whether this is more

of a sign of robustness or of social weakness. Probably it is a mixture of both.

In some views, disappointment with Israeli performance during the war impairs its image in the USA as a strong partner and increases apprehensions among Jews about the security of Israel. However, such impacts must be seen within longer-term processes, such as the successful launching of an Israeli surveillance satellite. Still, clearly the Second Lebanon War makes it all the more necessary for future military actions to result in unambiguous Israeli achievements. At the same time, the war makes clear, as should have been known in advance, that in asymmetric conflicts, whether of low or high intensity, classical concepts of "victory" do not apply.

Following the end of the war, intense drawing of lessons in the IDF and the Winograd Interim Report, intense learning and improvement efforts, strongly supported by the Prime Minister, are under way. Much of the military is undergoing retraining, military stocks have been upgraded and all of Israel's defense doctrine is under revision (a process which started before the war in a task force headed by former Minister Dan Meridor). The defense budgeting process is also being revised, following recommendations of a committee headed by David Brodet, former director-general of the Treasury.

All in all, it is widely agreed that long-term results of the Second Lebanon War depend a lot on Israel's ability to learn from errors and that its strength as a democratic learning society openly investigating its

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**Long-term results of the Second Lebanon War depend a lot on Israel's ability to learn from errors.**

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failures augurs well for the future. However, the enemies of Israel are also learning and re-arming, including Hizbollah as arms flow from Syria and Iran has not been effectively stopped, despite UN Resolution 1701. All the more so, Israel is making a supreme effort to prepare for whatever may come.

## THE PALESTINIANS

One of the probable effects of the Israeli failure to stop missile attacks on its North during the Second Lebanon War, is a shift in activities by extremist Palestinian groups from suicide attacks in Israel to shooting of light missiles on the South of Israel and especially the town of Sderot, in part because of the electoral success of Hamas and their desire to concentrate on solidifying their power and in part thanks to the Security Fence. However, Israeli counter-measures including selective preventive action continued and the Israeli government continued to express its adherence to the Road Map. Then another quantum jump characterizing the Middle East and Israel's predicaments occurred, namely the brutal takeover of Gaza by Hamas as part of violent power struggles among the Palestinians.

It is too early to gauge the results of this development. In some respects it might provide a "partner" on the West Bank for agreements with Israel, but on the other it may develop into establishment of an Islamic fanatic quasi-state in Gaza which becomes an active base for anti-Israeli activities in cooperation with Iran and its allies. The second half of 2007 and 2008 may well be critical for the future of Israeli-Palestinian relations and indeed for the future of the Middle

East as a whole. Israel is aware of this situation and tries to prepare for it by both seeking agreement and gearing for conflict.

## SYRIA

Relations with Syria are also in part unstable. Syria re-supplied Hizbollah and strengthens its cooperation with Iran. At the same time, it expresses readiness and even willingness to negotiate with Israel "without prior conditions" on reaching a peace.

Intelligence assessments in Israel, as published in the mass media, differ in their opinions and recommendations, some supporting negotiations with Syria and others regarding the offers as a trap designed to improve the international standing of Syria without any real willingness to reach an accommodation with Israel.

This is a critical issue for Israeli statecraft which became acute during the period of this assessment, which is all the more complex because of the lack of USA support for Israeli negotiations with Syria.

## THE GEOPOLITICAL ENVIRONMENT AS A WHOLE

The Second Lebanon War, which after all was a very limited one, and developments with the Palestinians resonated with broader external geopolitical developments, most prominently the growing influence of Iran and radical Islam in the Middle East. The war with Hizbollah was viewed through this prism as a general rehearsal for a conflict with Iran. Hamas' takeover of Gaza was viewed in a similar vein. Iran's increasingly bellicose statements against Israel and its lead-

ership's Shoah denial, especially as a means to undermining what is viewed as one of Israel's most important claims to legitimacy, consolidated the growing sense among Israelis that Israel is being encircled on all sides by Iran and its local subsidiaries. This led to a questioning of whether the process of Arab acceptance of Israel's existence, which began in the early 1970s, was now jeopardized by the Hamas phenomenon and the strengthening of the Iran-Hizbollah-Hamas axis, which negates Israel's very existence.

The victory and military takeover of Gaza by Hamas also tended to confirm the view that the Palestinian side is divided and from Israel's point of view does not constitute a reliable party. Against Hamas, which is opposed to recognition of and peace with Israel, there is Fatah with its leader Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen), the elected Palestinian President, who recognizes Israel, is committed to the peace process and rejects the use of terrorism. But President Abbas is unable to control Hamas, and his own movement is weak and divided. However, concurrently with what seems like a significant step backwards by the Palestinians in the process aimed at achieving peace with Israel, certain other moves indicate that some of the prerequisites for a historical compromise are ripening and especially that the "three no's" of the Arab League in Khartoum (1967) — no peace, no recognition and no negotiation with Israel — have turned into "yes" in the Beirut (2002) and Riad (2007) resolutions. A normal peaceful relationship with Israel is now defined as a strategic goal by significant parts of the Arab world. The moderate Arab countries are disturbed and frightened by Iranian hegemonic regional ambitions and

nuclear activities, and the danger of Islamic extremists.

USA deeper entanglement in Iraq, together with changes in domestic U.S. politics, raise questions about future policies in the Middle East. Relations with the USA continue to be critical for the future of Israel. They continue to be very strong, but worries persist.

However, the most serious geostrategic issue facing Israel continues to be Iran and its persistent and apparently partly successful efforts to move towards a nuclear weapons capability, including delivery vehicles. This issue will most likely continue to dominate Israeli security issues because of the serious dangers it poses, which are viewed by many as existential.

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***The most serious geo-strategic issue facing Israel continues to be Iran's persistent efforts to move towards a nuclear weapons capability, including delivery vehicles.***

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## **ISRAELI MINORITIES**

Relationships between Israel's Jewish majority and its Arab Muslim minority exhibited a fork-like path with separatist and integrationist trends both becoming stronger. The publication of the Future Vision of the Arab Palestinians in Israel by the National Committee of the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities voiced clearly that the pre-requisite for integration and recognition depends on Israel's stripping itself of its Jewish identity. Whereas the document received some thoughtful responses by Jewish intellectuals in the press, on the whole it was perceived by the Israeli public as just another confirmation that Israel's Arab minority does not accept the basic

right of Israel to exist as the homeland of the Jewish people.

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***Olmert, Netanyahu and Barak are operating in an environment of low expectations, guarded perceptions and diminishing ideological fervor.***

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However, many Arab citizens repeatedly argued that the document represents extremist and minority views within their community and that the majority of Israel's Arab citizens are more interested in gaining greater access to employment opportunities and social services. These citizens were provided several positive gestures, when Raleb Majadla was nominated to become Israel's first ever Arab Minister, when the Labor Union launched a national strike on behalf of employees of municipalities — Arab in a major part — whose salaries were not paid for months, and when legal efforts to ensure their increased representation in

government civil service posts were conducted in earnest.

## **A GENERATIONAL SHIFT IN LEADERSHIP**

The past year marked also the final changing of the guard in Israel's top political leadership. After a "start" in the second half of the 1990's under Netanyahu and then briefly under Barak, the years 2000 — 2007 were marked by a return to the perceived comfort of old and trusted leaders, especially Ariel Sharon. Sharon's descent into coma in 2006 and Peres' move into the non-executive presidency left the next generation of leadership in power and opened the way for the re-emergence of Netanyahu and Barak as front-

runners against Olmert in the next elections. Olmert, Netanyahu, Barak and their generation of political leaders are operating in an environment of low expectations, guarded perceptions, diminishing ideological fervor and harsh and in part intractable external and security problems. Citizens seem to perceive the next generation of political leaders as less impressive, less visionary, more personally flawed, less committed, and more prone to pursuit of personal gain. A poll conducted for Ben-Gurion University in May 2007 showed that 82% of Israel's citizens do not think that any of Israel's leaders share David Ben-Gurion's qualities of leadership, vision, humility and integrity. David Grossman, the writer who has lost his son in the war, called the leadership "hollow" in his speech on Rabin's Memorial Day, a phrase widely picked up in the mass media and by the public.

Traditional divisions between left and right, between pro-peace and pro-Land of Israel are increasingly irrelevant with the broad majority of the Israeli public forming "a new middle" in which there is little ideological support for continued occupation, but also deep distrust of the Palestinians, and the wider Arab and Muslim world. Voters perceive the difference in views, as well as personalities, between the front-runners as minute. The confluence of the war's negative outcomes and later developments with the generational change in leadership may become a watershed in Israeli politics, hopefully bringing about a re-vitalization. There are indicators of movement in such a direction, but this may require time — while at the same time Israel faces critical choices.

## THE CHALLENGE OF CORRUPTION

The leadership crisis is magnified by the frequent surfacing of suspected and also proven cases of corruption, unethical behavior and even crimes among Israel's senior politicians. Israeli society demonstrated that it is willing — reluctantly — to tolerate some forms of corruption. However, the revelation of suspected instances of corruption committed by leaders lacking public credibility causes public hue and cry. The investigations of suspicions concerning a number of senior ministers and the President, together with the findings of the Zeiler committee's investigations into police behavior, generated a widespread sense of a dangerous wave of corruption, tied in with a broader context of "money and politics." Together with the perceived results of the Second Lebanon War and other developments, the pronounced result reflected in all opinion polls is decreasing trust in government. This is widespread also in other Western democracies, but more dangerous in Israel in view of its aspirations on one hand and existential problems on the other.

## GOVERNMENTAL STABILITY

Despite all these developments, Olmert's government has weathered all storms to the surprise of many. The paradox is that while Olmert's government has been exhibiting remarkable stability amid continuous challenges and very low approval ratings, the continuous expectation of its imminent collapse has created a sense of persistent government instability — which has proven false. One potential source of the government's ability to survive may rest with

Olmert's ability to put together a coalition of those who have much to lose by early elections, including some of the main parties and many of the present Knesset members.

## ISRAEL'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

As if separated from the region's geopolitics and the summer's war, Israel's economy continued to grow in a healthy pace. The war registered barely a blip on Israel's economic indicators, which investment bank analysts have termed nearly perfect. For the first time in its history, Israel's exports were higher than its imports, the stock market broke new records and more and more Israelis made a name for themselves as international investors. The sale of the Wertheimer's family's Iscar to Warren Buffet before the war and his subsequent visit to Israel after the war, where he expressed his admiration for Iscar's management and achievements and for the Israeli hi-tech and its knowledge-intense industry in general, seemed to take place in a world disconnected from the region's turmoil. This has led one of Israel's leading financial writers to write of "two Israels", in which a successful entrepreneurial private sector is functioning and thriving side by side with a political and public sector that is declining and even corrupt. The New York Times columnist Tom Friedman pointed to this phenomenon in his June 10<sup>th</sup> column "Israel Discovers Oil" saying that "if you want to know why Israel's stock market and car

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***Two Israels: a successful entrepreneurial private sector is thriving side by side with a declining and in parts apparently corrupt political and public sector***

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sales are at record highs — while Israel's government is paralyzed by scandals and war with Hamas and doesn't even have a finance minister — it's because of the ecosystem of young innovators and venture capitalists." Witnessing this dichotomy many commentators have wondered about its sustainability.

At the same time, significant parts of the population did not benefit from the economic prosperity, income disparities remain very pronounced and the number of poor remained high despite some improvement. Therefore, Israel continues to face major socio-economic problems.

## BETWEEN RISE AND DECLINE

The past year's developments sharpen questions on the trajectory of Israel into the future: what trends move more towards dangers and which ones provide more of opportunities? And, is Israel adequately equipped to contain the dangers and utilize the opportunities?

Although quite a few indicators may be read as pointing in a negative direction, our assessment is that the last year demonstrated both serious domains of weakness and significant domains of strength. There is ground for worry but also for hope — and most important of all for the future will be Israel's capacity to learn from failures and to rebuild its leadership, tasks with which the Jewish People can be of much help.



## The Jews of Europe 2000-2007

Europe today is in the midst of a period of transition. Old economic, political and social certainties and paradigms are changing or disintegrating and have not yet been replaced by new ones. The continent is changing rapidly and often beyond recognition. In this defining moment nobody can be sure where Europe is actually heading. Demographic decline, overburdened social welfare states, growing state sectors, economic stagnation, mass immigration from Muslim lands, secularization, a European integration which seems disoriented and paralyzed, weak defense and foreign policies and anti-Americanism are characterizing many parts of Europe and have led some to write off Europe altogether. However the dismissal of the old continent seems a bit premature considering that most economies are gaining steam again in 2006/07, with reform agendas under way or being discussed in Germany, France and Italy, and considering that a modified European integration is being pursued with new vigor. In the aftermath of the murder of Theo van Gogh in Holland, the London bombings and the controversy on the Mohamed-cartoons there are in most Western European countries intense debates raging on the compatibility of immigration and Western democratic values. A consensus

seems to be emerging whereby the model of a multicultural society is replaced by an immigration policy with strong demands on integration, language skills and the acceptance of Western values. And last but not least, the rise of evangelicalism and a Catholic church working for more or less opening for a "re-Christianization" of Europe exert more and more influence as can be seen in recent developments in Italy. The old and established European Jewish communities find themselves caught in these developments on a continent where not much is defined these days and a lot of things seem to be shifting and conflicting. This opens up new dilemmas and challenges. To give one example: Out of past experience and ideological conviction, European Jews tended until recently overwhelmingly to be politically liberal and to the left, advocating a multicultural society. Out of concern for their security and their long-term survival, which many see endangered by Muslim immigration and the so-called new antisemitism, many today support the right-wing, advocating strong immigration control combined with strong demands on integration and assimilation. While maybe diminishing an Islamist threat, these new integration policies with their centralizing nationalist overtones could well make it harder

to preserve Jewish identity as well. They could well prove problematic and counterproductive from a Jewish point of view. Jews are caught in a political dilemma.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE

The community being confronted by this is shrinking and therefore becoming weaker losing the limited political clout it had in the first place. In 2001 about 1.6 million Jews lived in Europe. Numbers have been steadily declining for decades due to low birth rates, assimilation and intermarriage and to emigration. In the countries of the Former Soviet Union numbers have gone down dramatically since 1990 with only some 413,000 Jews still living there. In most European Jewish communities the balance of death and birth is negative. However communities are shrinking at different speeds. In many countries smaller communities are vanishing and Jews are concentrating in larger communities, so the big cites might still see growing communities. In 2001 the European Union (EU) still had an estimated combined Jewish population of some 1 million with France being the biggest community and Paris being the largest Jewish city outside of America or Israel. Britain's Jewish population has been dropping steadily since the 1970s and was estimated at 275,000 in 2001.

## THE GERMAN EXCEPTION – A RENAISSANCE UNDER WAY?

Germany was the only country whose Jewish community experienced massive growth during the 1990s due to large scale immigration from the former Soviet Union. This immigration took

on a special meaning in the public Jewish discourse of the 1990s largely due to the symbolic significance Germany still holds in the collective Jewish memory as being both the country where Jewish modernity largely originated and centered and where the destruction of European Jewry was conceived and executed. Great hopes of a German-Jewish renaissance were put into the revival which immigration was seen to bring to the Jewish communities in Germany, and which was supposed to be at the very center of a general European-Jewish revival. Because of this, many Jewish organizations rushed to Germany establishing a symbolic or even real presence, opening offices in Frankfurt and Berlin or building institutions such as rabbinical seminaries.

With the number of community members rising from 26,000 in 1989 to 102,472 in 2003, the situation indeed seemed dynamic. Jews seemed to be thriving in Germany. That in 2000 there were 87 official congregations with dozens of synagogues and community centers built, with Germany becoming the worldwide focus of Jewish architecture, seemed to prove that there was indeed a Jewish renaissance under way. Jewish officials and intellectuals started to speak of a community which had passed the provisional state of always "sitting on packed suitcases" but finally was here to stay as an integral part of Germany. All this seemed to coincide with a renewed interest by the general public in anything Jewish and in a renewed preoccupation with the country's Nazi past. Museums and memorials were constructed, the most famous of which are the Holocaust memorial and the Berlin Jewish museum, which together with the partly recon-

structed synagogue at Oranienburgerstrasse have become Berlin landmarks. Jewish study centers were established and expanded at many universities. For the first time Jewish history was taught and studied as part of the general Jewish history.

Nevertheless what many missed to see was that the so-called revival under way was largely state-sponsored and artificial. It was to serve appearances more than substance. Jewish immigration bolstering Jewish demographics had come about as a result of political decision-making which sought to reassure the West in the aftermath of reunification of the good intentions of the new Germany with its newfound full sovereignty and its massive economic and political clout in Europe. That is one of the main reasons why the newly unified German Federal Republic continued after 1990 the policy of the newly defunct Eastern German GDR which in its last days had opened its borders to allegedly persecuted Jews from the former Soviet Union. Whereas the reason East Germany had opened its gates seems to have been a late try at "Wiedergutmachung," the newly unified Germany by furthering Jewish immigration would demonstrate to a rather suspicious world that it had definitely changed since 1945. By recreating a large Jewish presence in the country Germany would show that it had definitely come to terms with its past and arrived in the democratic West for good. If the Jews "returned" and trusted the emerging new Germany, then it could be trusted by Europeans, Americans and the rest of the world as well. Restoration of Jewish life therefore clearly served a foreign policy purpose. To create something resembling pre-1933 "normalcy" was the aim and it was

therefore decided not to settle immigrants in existing communities but to spread them across the whole country, bringing them "back" to towns and even villages where Jewish life had been absent since 1938.

The existing Jewish community on the other hand saw the influx of immigrants as the sole chance to strengthen itself and secure its demographic survival. As refugees under the "Quota Refugee Law," the "Kontingentflüchtlingsgesetz" Jews were to enjoy free entrance and residency. All persons from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) whose nationality there had been registered as "Jewish" or who 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. Since Jewish immigrants were to be recognized as refugees under the "Geneva Refugee Convention" of 1954 they had access to state-sponsored benefits such as free lodging, language-courses and welfare. There was to be no limit as to the extent of Jewish immigration into Germany except for the absorption capacity of the German "Länder." Compared to other refugees, they were better treated, with the notable exception of ethnic Germans who at the time arrived from the FSU and Romania by the hundreds of thousands. Until the end of 2004, some 190,000 people from the Former Soviet Union reached Germany as Jewish "Kontingentflüchtlinge."

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***Jewish immigrants to Germany, having been recognized as refugees, had access to state-sponsored benefits including free lodging, language courses and welfare.***

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## NO RENAISSANCE

This at first seemed to revive the Jewish community in Germany which turned into the fastest-growing Jewish community of the world besides Israel. Nevertheless it soon became clear that integrating the newcomers proved to be a challenge well beyond the human and financial resources of many communities. By 2006 many communities were on the verge of splitting along the lines of “newcomers” and “oldtimers.” The Jewish credentials and the Jewish interest of many newcomers also remained doubtful. Only less than 80,000 of the 190,000 who had come became members of organized Jewish communities. The policy of distributing immigrants across the whole country instead of integrating them into existing communities also proved to be problematic. People were sent to places with no Jewish infrastructure. There was a shortage of Rabbis, teachers and communal workers despite the activities of Habad-Lubavitch and the Lauder foundation establishing schools, seminaries, a Yeshiva and providing basic religious services. Often after an initial period of belonging to community and receiving funds people just seemed to vanish in a void. Add to that, that in early 2005 according to a German ministry of interior estimate, between 60 to 85 percent of Jewish immigrants were still dependent on welfare. Most FSU-immigrants were not integrated into the economy, despite their generally high academic qualifications. The ministry thought this to be due to the lack of knowledge of the German language and the advanced age of many Jewish immigrants. For German officials — not needing Jewish immigration anymore to make reunification go down well in the rest of the

world — an immigration which went straight away into welfare was hard to justify at a time when Germany faced high unemployment and the social welfare system was strained. Pressure by the Israeli government was an additional factor in taking the decision to limit Jewish immigration in 2005. From then on Jews like every body else fell under a new “Zuwanderungsgesetz” or “Immigration Law.” This law was to regulate and to limit all migration into Germany. The new law puts the immigrants’ integration and their economic prospects well before any other consideration. It now required that Jews with the intent to immigrate to Germany first had to prove that an existing community would accept them as members. This meant that Halachic criteria were introduced into the legal process, since most of the communities organized in the “Zentralrat” are Orthodox-affiliated. Prior knowledge of the German language was also required. Potential Jewish immigrants now had to prove that they would not be dependent on welfare and that they were willing to enter the German labor market. Already in the course of 2005 immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union dropped dramatically. It has dropped ever since. The period of rapid expansion of the Jewish community in Germany was over. The communities affiliated with the “Zentralrat” now count 105,000 members. Since this is still a Jewish community where a large part of the members live on welfare, where religious and non-religious Jewish institutions are struggling and where the young only make for a small percentage, a renaissance does not seem under way.

## SOCIAL STATUS

The German example shows the importance of socio-economic data in judging the future of a community. With the notable exception of Germany recent data concerning the socio-economic status of Jews is hard to come by. It is still generally assumed that European Jewry is largely middle class or upper middle class. The case of the German Jewish community proves this assumption wrong. Not much is known in this respect about other Jewish communities in Europe. However it is probably safe to say that Jews are as hit by the effects of high unemployment and economic decline during recent years as everyone else. Even in Switzerland with its 3 percent unemployment rate and high per capita income is still one of the most affluent countries on the continent, more and more Jews have been forced to turn to the social welfare offices of Jewish communities. In France quite a great number of Jews actually live in the lower middle class suburbs — the Banlieue — which are most hit by the economic and social crisis France experienced in the last decade. Often Jews live there next to immigrants from the Maghreb. Since these suburbs are also hotbeds of violent protest and Islamist agitation, Jews often find themselves exposed to violence there. In England high real estate prices are changing the face of the London community. There as almost everywhere else the high cost of housing and of Jewish education seem to put great strain on Jewish household budgets and thus on Jewish continuity. However since studies on poverty, social status and social mobility are virtually non-existent this cannot be proven in quantitative terms.

## NEW ANTISEMITISM

There are however plenty of studies on anti-semitism in most major European countries. The reason is of course the emergence of the so-called new antisemitism since 2000, which is a general European phenomenon. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) — a European Community body — has commissioned several reports on the issue of antisemitism in Western Europe since 2002. It specifically deals with the diminishing line between antisemitism and excessive criticism of Israel leading to a discourse of delegitimization of both Israel and the Jewish people. In its working definition of antisemitism the EUMC comes to the conclusion that denying the Jewish people the right to self determination, applying double standards when it comes to Israel and the Jews and holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel are all displays of antisemitism. The combination of classic forms of antisemitism with anti-Israelism of the left and the prejudice coming from the background of largely Muslim immigrant communities make up the fabric of the new antisemitism. The so-called new antisemitism is especially striking in France. As the French researcher Jean-Yves Camus writes, since the beginning of the Second Intifada the increase in antisemitic activity is an everyday reality in France, as shown by both the statistics of the Ministries of the Interior and Justice and those of the representative body of the Jewish Community, CRIF (Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France). The number of violent antisemitic acts grew dramatically between 2002 and 2004. However, since then — mainly due to increased police

work and a strong law and order policy by then minister of interior and present president Nicolas Sarkozy — incidents have diminished somewhat. Nevertheless there seems to be a feeling of uneasiness amongst French Jews. According to Camus it derives from the fact, that for the first time since 1945, while the threat

**While Jews are still prominent in the political and intellectual life of France, as result of the demographic change they will lose influence.**

of the extreme right remains a new form of antisemitism has emerged, which comes from a radicalized segment of the Muslim population. This segment of the population is on the rise. While the Jewish community now stands at about 575,000 out of a total population of 58,520 million, the number of Muslims is estimated at somewhere between 3.7 and 6 million. While Jews are still quite prominent in the political and intellectual life of the Republic, as result of the demographic change they will lose influence. The result of all of this is that aliyah from France

is on the rise as is emigration to Canada, though most French Jews stay put. The more affluent buy apartments in Israel. Antisemitism is also on the rise in Britain. Already in 2003 there were 375 antisemitic incidents recorded, representing a 7 percent increase from 2002. Incidents have risen ever since. In 2006 a 20-year record was reached with 60 percent more reported incidents than in 1986. Of those incidents, 37 percent were considered violent. These have included cases of physical harassment, desecration of synagogues and cemeteries, threats and propaganda. A disproportionate amount of manifestations of antisemitism in Britain originate from Islamist sources.

In Germany antisemitism is also on the rise despite the enormous effort invested in remembering the past or “Vergangenheitsbewältigung.” As in other countries open manifestations of antisemitism, anti-Americanism and anti-Israelism have become fashionable in all social circles. A recent empirical study commissioned by the social-democratic Friedrich-Ebert-Institute and presented in 2006 actually proves this point. Opinions of the extreme and neo-Nazi right are no longer to be found in fringe groups only but have arrived at the very center of society. All in all 26.7 percent of all Germans east and west agree to xenophobic statements, while 8.6 percent were shown to have a rigid extreme-right or neo-Nazi views. The number of openly antisemitic people was 20.1 percent much higher than in the “New Bundesländer” (the old communist GDR), where it stands at 9.2 percent only. Physical attacks are also on the rise in Germany.

In Switzerland a 1998 report by the Federal Commission against Racism demonstrated that antisemitism was on the advance. As elsewhere in Europe, the Swiss media’s presentation of Israel and the Middle East has been a major factor. A recent poll found that over 86 percent of Swiss Jews deplore media bias and distortions and think they have contributed to a major decrease in personal and communal security. Verbal and sometimes physical attacks have become common but still are rarely recorded or reported. Only recently has the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities set up an institution to collect data and provide reliable statistics, and its first report stated that antisemitic incidents are on the rise. Anti-Israelism is now common on all levels of Swiss society, and

so is antisemitism though it is expressed less openly. A March 2000 poll by the GFS-Research Institute in Berne found that 16 percent of the Swiss population harbored intense antisemitic feelings. Although this result was similar to the European average, it was double the percentage earlier polls had found. A 2006 study by the University of Geneva's Department of Sociology found that 20 percent of the Swiss are "affected by antisemitism." Since the methodology of the Geneva study has come under attack, the GFS Research Institute prepared a new study which was published in April 2007. According to this study only 10 percent of the Swiss population hold systematic antisemitic views. This would be the lowest percentage in Europe. The study is however using a classic definition of antisemitism excluding excessive criticism of Israel as defined by the EUMC. On closer inspection it also turns out that an additional 28 percent are said to be holding "selective anti-Jewish views." That the picture may be even bleaker is suggested by the latest GFS study, which finds 50 percent of the Swiss agreeing to the statement that Israel is conducting a war of extermination against the Palestinians. Be that as it may, the synagogue fires of Lugano in 2005 and Geneva in 2007 seem to show that there indeed is a problem with antisemitism in Switzerland and perhaps with its public handling as well. In Lugano, arson was established as the reason of the fire which caused heavy damage. The perpetrator was then found and arrested and brought to trial. Despite a rather long history of antisemitic utterances and deeds on his part the court established that the arsonist was mentally ill and therefore his reason for burning the synagogue

was his sickness and not his antisemitism. He received a light sentence. Immediately after the synagogue fire in Geneva which destroyed part of the building on the second day of Shavuoth 2007 the Geneva police suspected arson. Only a few hours after having issued a statement to the press, Geneva officials retracted and spoke about an electrical shortcut as the most likely cause of the fire. The investigation was still under way by the end of May 2007.

## POSITIVE TRENDS

While Jewish communities experience demographic decline and exposure to rising antisemitism there is at the same time a rising interest in everything Jewish on the continent. Klezmer music is en vogue for more than a decade now. Jewish and Israeli literature leads bestseller lists. Jewish topics fill the pages of nearly every European periodical. Jewish Studies have become an established discipline in more and more universities. Institutes and Jewish Museums are opened everywhere. Germany can again serve as an example. In Munich, on November 9, 2006, the 68<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "Kristallnacht," a new synagogue, soon to be completed with a new community center and a Jewish museum, was dedicated in the very heart of the city center. With its height of 20 meters, it constitutes a landmark which will be an integral part of the Munich skyline and cannot be missed. However, whether a largely cultural and historic interest by the Europeans is enough to enhance Jewish security and to guarantee Europe's remaining Jews a long-term future remains to be seen.





## **Part III**

# **Societal Aspects of the Jewish People**



## Jewish Religious Patterns

The marked decline in overt Jewish interreligious tension in recent years is viewed by many as a very positive development in American Judaism. It is held to bespeak a new era of tolerance and even pluralism, which are viewed as signs of communal health. Some, however, such as Jack Wertheimer, provost of the Jewish Theological Seminary, are not so sanguine. Wertheimer correctly avers that beneath all of the manifest cooperation, there are very basic divisions between the leaders of the different religious movements and they speak very different languages which have very different meanings even when employing the same term.

It remains to be determined whether a community requires that everyone agree or even employ the same categories of religious discourse, or instead, that despite their differences they feel a sense of kinship and at least behave civilly toward each other. Perhaps what is important is that the various factions view themselves as a common community despite their ideological differences, and that they cooperate civilly with each other to a maximum feasible. The cooperation of the various streams of American Judaism during the efforts to help Israel when it was attacked by Hizbollah rockets during the

Second Lebanon War suggests that a real rapprochement may be in the making.

In Israel, however, the situation is more complex. On one level, there are signs of more “civil” meetings between Orthodox and Reform factions. On the most official levels, however, the conflict between the Orthodox establishment and the non-Orthodox, especially Reform, has intensified. For example, on Yom Hashoah (Shoah Memorial Day), former Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu opined that the Shoah was punishment for the sins of Reform Judaism. Just one week later, the invitation to the father of an Israeli soldier killed in the line of duty to participate in the official Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day) prayer service was retracted because he was a Reform rabbi and refused to accede to a request to be called upon without his title.

All indications are that the official rabbinate is intensifying its stringencies in the most crucial areas, especially marriage, divorce, and conversion. There is a small number of more civil-minded, nationalist rabbis who are challenging the rabbinate’s monopoly, but they are a very small minority. Even among the more progressive rabbis of Religious Zionist background there is hesitancy to openly challenge the rabbinate. In no small measure, the rab-

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**The opposition of the Religious Zionist community to the disengagement has not yet led to a corresponding disengagement from secular Zionism and the State of Israel.**

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binate's increasing stringency is related to the significant growth in the political power of the Haredim, especially the Shas party, as evidenced by the slate of recent Haredi appointees to the rabbinic courts. Those appointments generated harsh criticism within the Religious Zionist movement, both within Israel and in the Diaspora.

The growing strength of the Haredim, especially Shas, was also largely responsible for the recent passage of the Nahari Law, according to which recognized but unofficial educational institutions, such as those of Haredim and the Arab population, will receive financial underwriting along with state schools. The law passed overwhelmingly, even though it will clearly undermine the national education system.

The steady rise and institutionalization over the last almost twenty-five years of the Shas party continues to reshape Israel's religious landscape in interesting ways.

Shas' undertaking upon itself the maintenance of a large social welfare apparatus not limited (as is its Ashkenazi Haredi counterpart) to those in the ambit of *yeshivot* gives it a broader traction in Israeli society at large. Indeed, Shas argues, contrary to both Religious Zionism and Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodoxy, that it can participate in Israeli society as an explicitly religious, indeed Haredi, party that nonetheless rejects many of Zionism's fundamental premises. Shas is by no means the exclusive vehicle of Sephardi religious identity, but it is that identity's most

visible and powerful political articulation. Within the Sephardi community one can discern several trends signaling a pulling away from Shas, in varying directions, such as the call by Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, former Sephardic Chief Rabbi, arguing for the perpetuation of the range of Sephardi halakhic traditions, contra Rabbi Ovadia Yosef's long-held stance in favor of a unitary halakha for Sephardim and Ashkenazim alike; at the same time, Sephardi religious intellectuals are increasingly articulating a moderate and socially active Jewish identity from within Sephardi traditions.

Within the Religious Zionist community, the Gaza disengagement of 2005 continues to leave its marks. The nearly unanimous opposition of the Religious Zionist community to the disengagement has not led, as many feared it would, to a corresponding and thoroughgoing disengagement from secular Zionism and the State of Israel. Indeed, the disproportionate number of religious military casualties during the 2006 Lebanon War offered a sad but powerful reminder of the continued commitment to the State and the Zionist project by the majority of Religious Zionists. (Interestingly, a similarly disproportionate number of casualties came from the Kibbutz movement, which, despite its strong political disagreements with the Religious Zionist camp, still shares with the latter an ideologically-grounded commitment to Zionism.)

A recent development which may have great significance for religious-secular relations is the proposal by a member of the National Religious Party, Zevulun Orlev, suggested several years ago by the Covenant of Prof. Ruth Gavizon and Rabbi Yaacov Meidan, of two laws, one which

establishes Sunday as an additional day of rest, in place of Friday, and a second which formally enacts the Sabbath as the official Israeli day of rest on which all industry and commerce, as well as government institutions, will be prohibited from functioning, but which does not explicitly prohibit cultural events from taking place on the Sabbath. Public transportation, other than to cultural events and leisure, will also be prohibited. This law is a compromise but one which, on the one hand, establishes the sanctity of the Sabbath but, on the other, recognizes the needs and desires of many non-observant Jews. The laws have received the endorsement of a number of highly regarded rabbinical figures, but it remains to be seen if they can survive the attacks from the ardent among both the religious and secular populations.

On the other hand, within Religious Zionism one sees the further consolidation and growing educational influence of the “Emuni” (“faithful”) or “Hardal” trend (“Hardal” is the acronym for “Haredi-Dati-Leumi” or “Ultra-Orthodox Nationalist”). This grouping combines a powerful ideological commitment to settling the Land of Israel with Ultra-Orthodoxy’s rejection of secular culture and of feminism, and its reliance on *Da’at Torah* (i.e. Rabbinic ideological rulings not necessarily grounded in halakhic analysis) as the basis for political decision-making. While historically Zionism saw settlement as serving the long-range goals of the State, for many of the Hardalim, the State is merely a vehicle for the long-range goals of settlement, which in turn is a religious duty with Messianic implications. While the Lebanon War has tabled issues of territorial compromise for now, any renewed diplomatic process will bring these tensions

within Religious Zionism powerfully to the surface and perhaps to the breaking point. Even so, on Independence Day 2007 the Religious Zionist community as a whole held the prayer services and celebrations that it always had, indicating an enduring fundamental commitment to the state and its institutions. It is, nevertheless, of concern that increasing numbers of intellectuals are no longer comfortable identifying as Religious Nationalists.

Alongside this political ferment, the Religious Zionist community, left, right and center, continues to exhibit mounting cultural creativity in the realms of film, drama, plastic arts and literature and this effervescence adds its own distinctive presence to Israeli cultural life.

The last fifteen years or so have seen the steady growth of a cluster of phenomena well-characterized by leading journalist Yair Sheleg as “the fourth stream.” This includes avowedly secular *batei midrash*, prayer services and prayer communities and life-cycle events, the incorporation of Jewish texts and themes into the works of avowedly secular artists, writers and musicians, secular rabbis, and festivals of Jewish culture.

Central to this broad cultural project is Hebrew — both as linguistic medium as well as a vehicle of cultural identity that connects deeply with but does not necessarily identify with Judaism *qua* religion. In this respect the “fourth stream” draws on, and is perhaps a renaissance of, an earlier Zionist vision (and in particular that associated with the Second

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**For many of the “Hardalim,” the State is merely a vehicle for the long-range goals of settlement, which in turn is a religious duty with Messianic implications.**

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Aliyah of 1904–1914, whose best known and most representative member was David Ben-Gurion) which saw in the creation of a modern Hebrew culture an effort that was both revolutionary and an assertion of deep continuity with the totality of Jewish history and the classical sources.

While this phenomenon has points of contact with Israel's very strong New Age culture, it differs in its explicit drawing on Jewish texts, and its eschewal of the highly personal, some might say narcissistic, dimensions of New Age. At the same time, as Yair Sheleg crucially points out, this "fourth stream" has yet to give rise to a distinctive body of Jewish praxis, let alone a social and political program.

A number of groups, such as "MiMizrach Shemesh" and "Ma'aglei Tzedek" are staking out strong positions on social justice issues from an avowedly traditional Jewish perspective. Powerfully moving as these efforts are, they have yet to wrap their hands around the complexities of, let alone influence the workings of, elite power groups or formulate broader sustainable economic programs.

Turning to the U.S., in December 2006, the Committee on Law and Standards, which is the halakhic advisory council of the Rabbinical Assembly, Conservative Judaism's rabbinic organization, issued a range of opinions on the issue of homosexuality in the Jewish community. By the terms of the Committee's operations, a range of opinions on any one issue may be considered valid on that issue if it receives the support

of roughly one-quarter of the Committee's members. On this particular issue, three opinions were thereby endorsed as legitimate options within Conservatism: A reaffirmation of traditional prohibitions on homosexuality, accompanied by a concern for the welfare of gays and lesbians; a ruling that gay and lesbian Jews may be ordained as clergy and their committed relationships may be recognized, although not as sanctified marriage; and a ruling which, while upholding the traditional prohibitions, argued that homosexuality is not a unitary condition and urged the development of educational programs within the community to achieve understanding, compassion and dignity for gays and lesbians. There was also some support on the committee for a more comprehensive repeal of the prior ban against homosexual relationships.

Surveys taken soon after the decision indicated that much of the movement's laity was left uncertain as to the decision's operative meaning. Some of that uncertainty was dispelled in March 2007 when the Jewish Theological Seminary, the denomination's flagship institution, announced that henceforth it would be accepting openly gay students to its rabbinical and cantorial schools. In a statement accompanying the announcement, the Chancellor-elect, Professor Arnold Eisen (though himself not a rabbi, a distinguished scholar of modern Jewish thought and society) explained that the adoption of the two more liberalizing opinions "provided halakhic authorization of the move," that this decision was "in keeping with the long-standing commitment of the Jewish tradition to pluralism," and that "we respect those who disagree with us and understand that in the

**The issue of homosexuality may serve as a marker between the Conservative and the more avowedly liberal elements within Orthodoxy.**

context of all that unites us, diversity makes us stronger.”

The outcomes of this development for Conservative Judaism, on its own terms and its relationships to other denominations, Orthodoxy in particular, remain to be seen. It will likely facilitate greater cooperation between the movement’s mainstream institutions and those groups and institutions, such as the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, which have for some time been advocating this policy. At the same time, the resignation from the Committee by Rabbi Joel Roth, perhaps the movement’s leading halakhist and author of the most traditionalist ruling, perhaps indicates that the issue of homosexuality may in the coming years serve as a vivid marker between the Conservative movement and the more avowedly liberal elements within Orthodoxy. While it is too early to tell, the debate and discussion overall may well contribute to the Conservative movement’s clarifying its relationship to and understanding of halakhah on the whole.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE AMONG ISRAEL’S HAREDI POPULATION**

Israeli ultra-Orthodox, “Haredi,” Jewry has grown dramatically over the past 50 years. Precise figures on the number of Haredim are not available, in part because of varying definitions of who is a Haredi. Haredim now comprise 15 percent of Knesset members. The Haredi population of Israel is growing steadily, primarily as a result of high birth rate (4.7 compared to 2.7 for general Israeli Jewish population and 1.1 for Diaspora women). In 2007, one of every three

Jewish Israeli children registered in grade 1 is in one of the Haredi school systems.

There are some 50,000–100,000 Old Yishuv descendants and their fellows who do not vote or participate in Israeli socio-economic and political life. By contrast, the Sephardic Shas party is a member of the ruling political coalition and holds three ministry positions. The Ashkenazi Haredim still refuse official ministry positions but are able to lobby for the Haredi sector’s social and educational interests and get financial support without directly partaking in governmental decision making. This sector, composed of both Hassidic and Lithuanian components, which is increasingly involved in Israeli socio-economic life and is undergoing interesting change, is facing major challenges.

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***In 2007, one of every three Jewish Israeli children in grade 1 is in one of the Haredi school systems.***

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Their ideology was developed mainly by the charismatic Rabbi Abraham Karelitz (“Hazon Ish” — 1878–1953) and his correspondingly charismatic follower Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach (1898?–2001) during the 1950s and 1960s in order to face the new political situation of a Jewish minority “exiled” in a Jewish state. Karelitz proposed collaboration with the Zionist institutions to get financial funding and backing, in order to set up a cultural and social enclave. He persuaded David Ben Gurion to free Haredi youth studying in *yeshivot* from military service, and he developed a comprehensive school system, ranging from kindergarten to *kollel* (full time study institutions for married lifelong students), aimed at developing a Torah-only intellectual elite to replace the rabbinical elite exterminated in the Shoah. He also devel-

oped a comprehensive schooling system for girls that prepared them to be dedicated partners for their learning husbands, to give birth to as many children as possible and to carry much of the burden of educating them, and to be employed full time as teachers.

Today, however, there is a shortage of positions for female teachers in religious schools

and the religious market is saturated. Newly married Haredi women, therefore, are seeking employment outside the traditional areas. As funding from the parents' families, German war reparations, and welfare state stipends decrease steadily, young Haredim are becoming the poorest population in the Jewish world.

Much as their rabbis may wish that they remained socially and culturally isolated, they increasingly come into contact with the larger society and are influenced there from. A significant fringe population, often of Anglo-Saxon origin enjoys shopping in malls; ultra-Orthodox radio, which includes advertising and global news, is heard by many;

religious Hasidic music integrates pop and even reggae rhythms and styles; increasing numbers are attracted to fashionable clothing; Haredi internet forums get many visitors weekly — some market researchers claim that one of every three Haredi households is discreetly connected to the internet.

Also, in order to prepare females to face their double dedication, they have received an eclectic education that includes advanced skills in arith-

metic, language, history, psychology, foreign language (English) and other professional skills that are foreign in Talmud-only oriented education of males. Recent years have witnessed a growing number of women leaving the limited Haredi job market and obtaining high salary positions in the wider society. One result is a cultural gap between spouses which challenges the prevalent family balance of power, leading to an increase in divorces among newly-married Haredim. In addition, increasing numbers of Haredi women are pressuring for academic degrees and professional skills appropriate to work in the consulting, high tech, public relations, marketing and management positions.

Some Lithuanian and Hasidic Haredi rabbinic leaders who perceive the dangers to the system if this trend grows, have banned professional and academic programs in the *Haredi Beit Yaakov* women's high schools. Religious Zionist and Sephardi Haredi programs, however, continue to offer diverse professional trainings for women.

Breaking barriers previously imposed on the provision of higher education to religious women, Machon Lustig in Ramat Gan is one of the newly established colleges that embarked on a novel program: to introduce them to work in high-tech fields. It offers bachelor's degrees in managerial accounting and computer science to women who have studied in the Beit Yaakov school system. The college opened its doors in 1999 with nearly 30 young women and today enrolls 450, the vast majority of whom are married to men who study in *kollels*. The institute consults with Rabbi Aharon Leib Steinmann, a well-known Haredi leader in Bnei Brak, who supports its work. "Whoever graduates with us, earns three times more than a teacher; at least

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**Increasing numbers of Haredi women are pressuring for academic degrees and professional skills appropriate to work in marketing and management positions.**

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three times," claims one of the rabbis who heads the college.

Another institute, the Haredi College of Jerusalem, allows ultra-Orthodox women to earn academic degrees in fields such as social work, speech therapy and medical laboratory science through arrangements with Israeli universities and colleges. The college opened in 2001 with 23 women. Today it has 453 women and 80 men. The men and women enter the building from separate entrances and study on different floors to prevent interaction. Adina Bar Shalom, the eldest child of the Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, co-founded the institute after consulting with her father and receiving his approval. Both colleges are described as environments in which Haredi women can feel comfortable. There are also teachers and rabbis available for students to talk to about resolving any issues that may arise between their studies and their ideology.

One of the successful initiatives supported by the Haredi rabbinical leadership is the single-sex computer hardware and software companies, located in Haredi neighborhoods, that allow mothers to earn better salaries, provide flexible working hours and promote the development professional careers without threatening the existing societal family system.

The major stimulus for the development of the burgeoning Haredi labor market has been welfare cuts, implemented during the administration of Binyamin Netanyahu, which forced most non-wealthy, full-time students to find part-time

jobs in order to survive. Today, some 80 percent of Hassidic and most Sephardic Haredi men work. Most of those not working are followers of the Lithuanian leaders that are fully dedicated to Torah study. Out of the entire Haredi population, about 40,000 *yeshiva* students are officially registered as solely studying and many of them work part time in illegal, low-paid jobs. Despite their efforts, they do not succeed in getting a decent wage for their large families. The critical problem, therefore, is not their refusal to work but their lack of professional training which leads them to low-level and unskilled jobs. The challenge is to develop training programs and appropriate part-time or full-time job opportunities for those who have intellectual abilities but no professional skills. Some private and public initiatives have been undertaken and are beginning to show successes, especially in the high-tech and finance sectors.

Three main interconnected challenges to the Israeli Haredi enclave's traditional strategy can therefore be distinguished: (1) unemployment, poverty, and uncontrolled demographical multiplication; (2) the cultural opening to the larger Israeli society; (3) the political involvement of Haredi leaders may lead to collective responsibility. Which path will predominate remains to be seen. At the present, it appears that patterns among Israel's Haredim may increasingly resemble those of Haredim elsewhere, and this may have an important impact on religious-secular as well as Israel-Diaspora relations.



## Jewish Family Patterns

There are in Jewish tradition two institutions which are referred to as *mikdash me'at*, a sanctuary in miniature. One, in the public sphere, is the synagogue; the other, in the private sphere, is the family. Both of these institutions are presented as basic agents of Jewish socialization and as central in consolidating the collective, the Jewish people. In examining the Jewish family within the context of societal aspects of the Jewish people, the focus is not on the well-being of individuals as individuals but, rather, as part of the Jewish people. The focus is also not on the well-being of the family per se. Indeed, there are today many debates over the definition of the family. The focus here is on its role as an agent of Jewish socialization which fosters Jewish identity and identification. This is, therefore, a definite functionalist perspective of the family. Of course, there are other perspectives, such as the conflict perspective, which do not accept the very basic assumption concerning the centrality of the family in Jewish socialization, but that need not be of concern as the entire premise of the Annual Assessment is that there is a Jewish collectivity and its well-being depends on the well-being of its constituent parts. Indeed, the entire notion of policy planning for a Jewish

people entity rests on a functionalist perspective.

There is not one single model of the Jewish family. Jews are indeed “a nation spread out and separated among the nations,” and in each society that they dwell, they acculturate to one degree or another and internalize cultural patterns from the larger society. That is a major source of the differences in customs between Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Mizrahim, etc., and between the various groups among all these. In terms of the subject at hand, the Polish Jewish family was different from the German Jewish family, the German was different from the Turkish, the Turkish from the Moroccan, etc.

Especially when dealing with the subject of the Jewish family, there is a tendency toward nostalgia, to romanticize “good old days” that, in many ways, were actually not so good at all, or did not exist at all. For example, under circumstances of high infant and child mortality, relatively few families could simultaneously raise many children, in spite of a high birth rate. It is, therefore, even more important to be empirically-based in discussions of this central institution.

In addition, in much of the analyses and discussion which follows, Jews in each country

are treated as a single unit and are typically compared to non-Jews in that country. It must, however, be emphasized that there is significant variation among Jews themselves along traditionalist-modernist lines, just as there is such variation among non-Jews. What is being portrayed here are the overall group patterns, and with respect to one variable, explicit reference will be made to the internal variation because of its potential significance for future developments.

Jewish men and women in the U.S. marry somewhat later than non-Jews. However, this does not reflect a declining significance of marriage and family for Jews; they also are more likely than non-Jews to eventually marry and less likely to divorce and remain divorced. In fact, at almost every age, a lower percentage of Jews are either previously married or widowed than non-Jews. They are also much more likely than non-Jews to be living with family rather than alone or with non-family members, and much less likely than non-Jews to cohabit without marriage after their first marriage.

In France, the second largest Diaspora community, the major characteristics of Jewish marriage are similar to those of the U.S. In Israel, by contrast, there has long been a tendency to marry at a younger age, apparently stemming from Israel's greater traditionalism which both encourages earlier marriage and proscribes living together without marriage. The age of first marriage in Israel has risen somewhat in recent years, as have the percentages of single men and women in the 20–29 age group. However, among those ages 40–44, approximately 95 percent have been married at least once.

It is not unreasonable to assume that, just as

they marry later, Jews also begin having children later and, indeed, the U.S. data bear this out. Thus, among married women ages 46–55, 40 percent of the Jews are married and living with their children, as compared to only 18 percent of the non-Jews.

In part, as a consequence of marrying and having children later, Jews also have fewer children than non-Jews, a point to which we return later.

At most ages, greater percentages of Jewish than non-Jewish males are living in family households. At younger ages — from about 18 to 35 — a little over half of Jewish men are living in families. At all older ages, about three-quarters are. The mature middle years 36–55 are more family-centered for Jewish women, and the oldest age groups are less so. Nearly 80% of Jewish men ages 65 and older are living in families, predominantly with their wives, compared to about 66% of non-Jewish males and less than 50% of Jewish women of these ages. As a whole, Jewish men and women are a little more likely to live in families at most ages than non-Jews.

Demographers estimate that more than half of marriages in the U.S. will end in divorce. The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) asked respondents who were not married to their first spouse how that marriage ended. The data show that about the same proportion of Jewish and non-Jewish men report that they are now divorced or that an earlier marriage ended in divorce. However, more Jewish than non-

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***The tendency in Israel to marry at a relatively younger age apparently stems from traditionalism which both encourages earlier marriage and proscribes living together without marriage.***

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Jewish women report a divorce at some time in their lives. Given the frequency of divorce, its implications for families, and the higher rate of intermarriage in second and later marriages,

these are patterns that should be of concern and carefully watched.

**Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Europe as well in the U.S., Jewish families have been smaller and Jews have had lower birth rates than non-Jews.**

In Israel, follow-up of Jewish marriage cohorts indicates a divorce rate of about 10 percent after 6 years of marriage, 15 percent after 10 years, and 20 percent after 25 years. These divorce rates are quite conservative in international perspective, but the trend has been rapidly increasing since the 1990s. The frequently quoted method of dividing the number of divorces by the number of marriages performed in the same year provides much higher divorce figures but it is

patently wrong.

At least since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Europe as well as in the United States, Jewish families have been smaller and Jews have had a lower birth rate than non-Jews. As was indicated, Jews on the whole marry later than do non-Jews; they also want and expect fewer children, have the most favorable attitudes toward contraception, and are its best practitioners. Coupled with their expertise in birth control, Jews have high educational and occupational aspirations and status, both of which contribute to desires for fewer children. The educational costs for children include not only the actual financial outlays for their schooling which, alone, are very high; a major part of the larger cost may also include the cost of one of the parents, invariably the mother, taking an occupational leave while the children

are very young, which means not only lower family income but also loss of occupational activity which can have lifelong consequences on both income and advancement opportunities. The result is Jewish families with fewer children than the minimum necessary to maintain group size, i.e. zero population growth. Viewed societally, Jews in the United States, Canada, much of Europe and much of the West are becoming a smaller percentage of the overall populations in the countries in which they live, as well as declining numerically. This is especially the case where there are high intermarriage rates, in which cases couples have even fewer children and most of the children of such unions do not identify as Jewish.

Jews in Israel, by contrast, have relatively high and steady birth rates. The Total Fertility Rate — a measure of current trends inclusive of all women married or not — varied around 2.6 children during the 1990s and was 2.7 in 2005.

Recent surveys in Israel point to a unique persistence of relatively high norms about desired and ideal family size among married Jewish adults. In 1988 Israeli married women indicated an ideal family size of 3.4 children for a family of the same socioeconomic status as their own. In 2005 the same ideal had increased to 4.0. If the more religious groups are put aside, the average remained 3.8, and it still was around 3 children among the most secular sections of the Jewish population. Over time, diffuse and stable gaps can be observed between ideal family size perceptions (3–4 children) and actual implementation (2–3 children).

Among Jewish communities out of Israel, fertility has been comparatively low since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century — often sig-

nificantly lower than among the respective surrounding populations since the end of World War II. Given the current lowering of fertility in most developed countries, low Jewish fertility is now less distinctive than it was. Around 2000, Jewish women in their 30s in the U.S. had about 1.2 children, their peers in France had 1.6–1.7, versus 2.4 in Israel. Jewish women in their 40s toward the end of reproduction had on the average 1.9 children in the U.S., 2.2 in France and 3.4 in Israel.

The Jewish public in Israel widely prefers policy interventions supportive of larger families. This goes hand in hand with a high share of households who declare they might consider having another child if the appropriate socioeconomic and infrastructure opportunities were in place. These findings cannot be explained by differences in the socioeconomic and educational composition of Jewish populations but rather reflect a different approach to the role of the nuclear family and reproduction in Israel versus the western world. An obvious consequence is a much faster Jewish population growth in Israel than in other communities. Likewise, the fact that the birth rate among France's Jews is higher than that of Jews in the U.S. may also reflect the more pro-active family policies in France, although pro-natal policies do not always result in higher birth rates. For example, after WW II, a number of European countries introduced pro-natalist social policies with the explicit aim of increasing the population but which did not have that effect. It appears that those policies may be effective only when the social values support having larger families. Among America's Jews, such are clearly not the values. Although they have positive attitudes toward marriage,

America's Jews are less likely than those of any other American religious group to say that children are central in one's life. They are also much less likely to believe that childless people are missing out on life. This contrasts starkly with Israel, in which Jews are much more child-oriented.

Western Jews, on average, hold quite liberal attitudes toward divorce. In the U.S. and much of the West, they are more likely than any other group, including those with no religion, to approve of divorce for unhappily married parents of preschool children and more likely to disagree that marriage is for a lifetime. But, while they are accepting of divorce in theory both for themselves and for others, they are no more likely than average to have ever divorced.

Moreover, religious commonality is highly correlated with marital stability. Thus, in the U.S., couples in which both are Jewish are about as likely to divorce as couples in which both are mainline Protestant, both fundamentalist Protestant, both Catholic, or both some other religion, and less likely to divorce than those in which both have no religion or those in religiously-mixed marriages

Jews in the U.S. have generally been opinion leaders on many social issues. They believe more strongly in equality between the sexes than any other religious group; they hold more liberal political and social opinions than any other group except those who say they have no religion; and, historically, they have held more socially

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***A high share of households in Israel declare they might consider having another child if the appropriate socioeconomic and infrastructure opportunities were in place.***

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progressive — or at least liberal — views on the family than other Americans. Thus, they are more likely than non-Jews to approve of a couple living together whether or not they plan to marry. And yet, Jews also have quite positive attitudes toward marriage, with high percentages stating that, over one's lifetime, it is better to be married than to be single.

According to the comparisons provided by the International Social Survey Programme, Israel pertains to a group of more traditional societies regarding attitudes to family norms such as: "Married people are usually happier than unmarried people"; "Better a bad marriage than not to marry"; "People who wish to have children should marry." Indeed, births out of marriage are quite infrequent in the Jewish milieu. In Israel, in 2004, they accounted for 3.3 percent out of the total birth rate (but 8.6 percent among women above age 40), as against over 30 percent among the total population in France and about 50 percent in Scandinavian countries.

The issue of intermarriage, its causes and consequences, is one of the most complex with respect to the area of the family. Until the end of the 1960s, intermarriage in the West was largely viewed as a deviant case, the exception, and rare. Although unknown at the time, we now know that intermarriage was much more prevalent behind "the Iron Curtain," in the USSR. The first systematic, national survey of Jews in the U.S., the 1970–71 National Jewish Population Study (NJPS), included a broad range of demographic

questions, including the religion of spouses prior to their marriage. It was found that approximately 7 percent of the Jews who were married at the time had non-Jewish spouses. Much more surprising was the rapid rise in the rate of intermarriage, from about 2 percent among those who were married during the first quarter of the century, to about 5 percent between 1930–1950, to 10 percent during the first half of the 1960s, and to more than 20 percent among those married during the second half of the 1960s. The 1990 NJPS indicated a continuation in the rising intermarriage rate, to the point of its becoming the majority. The survey found that 51 percent of Jews who married between 1975–1984, and close to 57 percent among those married between 1985–1990, were married to non-Jews. These percentages reflect the religious affiliation at birth and are not discounted for conversion to Judaism. Further moderate increases in intermarriage in the U.S. occurred during the 1990s, according to the NJPS.

In addition to the rapidly rising rate of intermarriage, important changes also took place with respect to its character and, some argue, its meaning and consequences. One major change is gender patterns. Until recently, intermarriage was much more common among Jewish males than females. During the decade of the 1960s, for example, nearly 25% of the spouses of married Jewish men were not Jewish, as compared to 17 percent of the spouses of married Jewish women. However, the gender gap has essentially narrowed and, indeed, by 1990, was even slightly higher among Jewish women than men. Much of this gender equality reflects broader patterns of decreasing educational, occupational and economic gender gaps among American Jews. As

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**Until recently, intermarriage was much more common among American Jewish males than females, but the gender gap has essentially narrowed.**

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a result, women, as much as men, increasingly interact with non-Jews in increasing numbers of social spheres, which presents increasing opportunities for close, even intimate, relationships. In the more recent marriages recorded in the 2001 NJPS, however, more Jewish men than women had non-Jewish spouses.

Until recently, it was accepted as axiomatic that Jews who intermarried rejected the Jewish community and their intermarriage was their final step in leaving that community. Today, conditions have changed and many of those who intermarry do so for reasons unrelated, at least consciously, to their feelings about being Jewish or the Jewish community. They marry for love or other reasons and, at the time of their marriage, they do not consider their Jewishness to be an issue. Indeed, they may even have very strong and positive feelings about their Jewishness.

As intermarriage became more common, attitudes toward it have correspondingly changed, from parental opposition, to grudging acceptance, to indifference. Today, it seems unbelievable that, as recently as a century ago, the traditional Jewish rites of mourning were often practiced by the families of those who intermarried. Recent studies indicate that the majority of American Jewish parents feel that the happiness of their children is more important than whether or not their children's spouse is Jewish.

Collectively, as well, there is almost no communal policy which even suggests a preference for endogamy, i.e. Jews marrying Jews. Indeed, in parts of the American Jewish community, calls for policy affirming the inherent value of Jews marrying Jews have been labeled racism. The Orthodox are more explicit in their opposi-

tion to intermarriage, but they have no uniform policy. One strong communal stance is that of the relatively small and highly insular Syrian Jewish communities in the U.S. and in Mexico, which refuse to accept intermarriage and have a firm policy prohibiting any conversion, no matter how sincere the particular individual involved might be, so that no member of that community even think that his or her intermarriage might ever be accepted. Aside from these rare exceptions, the only organized communal action that exists is among the growing number of groups on the liberal and Reform side that advocate complete communal acceptance of intermarriage.

Leaving aside its meaning for those directly involved in intermarriage, the spouses themselves, it is an issue for the larger community because of its implications for the children of such marriages. Most data indicate that the majority of children of intermarriages are not raised as Jewish. For example, the 1990 NJPS data indicated that only 25 percent were. The 2001 NJPS indicated a 33 percent rate of unambiguous affiliation to Judaism among the children of intermarriages. Moreover, even for many that were being raised as Jews, there existed a pattern of pluralism in rituals which scholars viewed as affecting the Jewish socialization of children and was a barrier to a clear and unambiguous sense of Jewish identity.

During 2006, a study of children of intermarriages in Boston indicated that the majority are being raised as Jews. This is a unique case and

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***The majority of American Jewish parents feel that the happiness of their children is more important than whether or not their children's spouse is Jewish.***

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is apparently the result of massive communal efforts promoting raising of such children as Jews. Encouraging as these findings are, it is still much too early to know precisely what is meant when parents say they are raising their children as Jews. Moreover, we do not yet know how the children themselves will choose to identify. The findings from Boston do indicate the importance of serious communal efforts and may provide an example of action that might be extended to other Jewish communities.

Be that as it may, there is an abundance of evidence which demonstrates the positive correlation between endogamy, marriage within the group, and every empirically analyzed pattern of Jewish identification. Endogamously married Jews are much more likely to identify with the community, to affiliate with one of the traditional religious streams, to frequent a synagogue, to contribute to Jewish charities and philanthropies, to live in Jewish neighborhoods, to have Jewish friends, to be connected with informal Jewish associations, and to have visited Israel

In the countries that are now the FSU, intermarriage and its meaning is even more complex. In many of those countries, Jewish identity and identification were largely devoid of reli-

gious meaning and were entirely national. For many Jews who married non-Jews, there was often no question of their retaining their Jewish identity and identification; it was inscribed in their identity card. In some cases, intermarriage was what saved Jewish communities during the Shoah. Many of those married to non-Jews suffered greatly because of their Jewishness which they refused to foreswear, and their situation is in no way comparable to that of the Jew in the West who intermarries.

Among the close to a million *olim* from the FSU who arrived in Israel during the 1990s, there is a significant percentage who are married to non-Jews. Their children are facing a unique situation in that they are being socialized in a society and culture which is overwhelmingly Jewish and they will, invariably, one way or another, assimilate into Jewish society. Perhaps ironically, it is the very ease with which they can assimilate into the broader Israeli society and culture that presents the greatest challenge to those who insist that Jewish status be religiously based. The nearly 310,000 Jewish connected non-Jewish immigrants — mostly from the FSU — raise a primary policy concern on the way to full integration within Israeli society.





## Socioeconomic Characteristics and Mobility

The major socioeconomic characteristics among world Jewry reflect more general trends in human capital and labor force structure and mobility in modern developed societies but also substantial Jewish distinctiveness. When reviewing some of the major ongoing socioeconomic processes, the minority-majority antithesis is a powerful explanatory factor of the different options available to Jews, hence of significant Diaspora-Israel differentials.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Well rooted in the traditional emphasis of Jewish society on learning, and also reflecting higher than average socioeconomic status already attained by a significant share of the Jewish population, primary and secondary school attendance can be considered a universally attained goal. Drop-outs at the high-school level call for constant vigilance and enhanced investment as they constitute a safe predictor of various forms of social deviance.

Rates of higher education among Jews are uniquely high. The proportions of both Jewish males and females holding college degrees remain far above the average of the total population in the most advanced countries. The

emerging educational profile can be described as nearly universal academization of the younger adult generation in the Diaspora, and in-depth professional training to the level of Masters and Ph.D. for quite a substantial minority. Around 1990, above 70% of Jewish adults in the U.S. had some post-secondary education, and over 50% held university degrees, against 38% and 20%, respectively among the total white population. Similar data applied to Jews in the Russian Republic — a singular similarity given the huge differences in economic structure and organization between the two societies. In Mexico in 1991, over two thirds of the adult Jewish population had attained college or had higher degrees. Percentages in other more developed countries were similar or only slightly lower.

In 2001 in the U.S., the share of adult Jews with post-secondary education had grown to almost 90%, and those holding a college degree were around 67%, about half of which had completed graduate studies. In the U.K. in 2001, over 50% of Jews aged 25–34, versus 21% at age 65–74, had completed a university degree. More problematic is the fact that Jews in U.S. universities tend to become less attracted by science and technology, and to become a smaller percent-

age of outstanding students. The latter is in part explained by the fast rise of Asian students.

In Israel, too, access to post-secondary and academic education is rapidly expanding, with about 65% of the younger adult generation of Jews aged 25–34 having followed post-secondary studies, and 34% holding a college or university degree. In terms of the overall exposure to higher education, Israel's Jews favorably compare with education attained among the total population in many Western European societies. The percentage of the Israeli-born of European-American origin who are university/college

educated is significantly higher than that of the foreign born. However, there still exist visible gaps among the Israeli-born of Asian-African origin vis-à-vis the former group in terms of the total number of years of school attended, of the percentage of high school who attain matriculation — the pre-requisite to be admitted at universities — and of the actual enrollment in higher education. These gaps have greatly diminished over the last several decades but they have not disappeared completely.

A much less promising picture emerges once the cognitive achievements of Israeli school pupils are compared with those observed in other countries. OECD and other studies indicate that in terms of school science and mathematics achievements Israel is compara-

tively very weak. Yet, Israel continues to be a very strong producer of Ph.D. graduates, in inter-

national perspective and relative to its adult population size, and the emphasis among these on science and technology is still high in comparison with other developed countries.

## EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, patterns of social and occupational mobility among Jews have been truly extraordinary. If we compare the starting points in the places where most Jews resided then, in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and the profiles attained in the countries where Jews have settled after a massive process of planetary redistribution, the extent and speed of change are probably unique in international perspective. The most striking example concerns the U.S., where mass immigration brought a Jewish population largely from Eastern European countries, that was the product of a clear downwardly self-selection process vis-à-vis the characteristics of the whole existing pool of Eastern European Jews. The overwhelming majority of immigrants were indeed able to indicate an occupation abroad — unlike large numbers of non-Jewish immigrants to the new continent — but most of them belonged to the lower social strata relying on manual and related work. Within a span of three generations, the overwhelming concentration of Jews in the U.S. gradually moved from manufacturing production to trade and sales, then to management, and finally to the liberal and academic professions. The socioeconomic profile of the Jewish population tended to converge toward the higher rungs of the national occupational ladder, and in fact became disproportionately represented in those more prestigious and better earning social

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***In terms of school science and mathematics achievements Israel is comparatively very weak, yet Israel continues to be a very strong producer of Ph.D. graduates relative to its population size.***

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strata. Similar trends appeared among Jews in other developed countries, though the more rapid evolution of the North American economy made that case more striking.

In the U.S. around 1990, 56% of employed Jewish men and 49% of Jewish women belonged to the upper occupational brow, inclusive of professionals and managers. Of these, 39% of men and 36% of women were in the academic, technical and liberal professions, more than twice the proportion among total whites, and 17% and 13%, respectively, were in managerial positions. In 2001, the share in the upper occupational strata had further increased to 65% of men and 63% of women, of which 53% of men and 51% of woman in the professions, and 12% of each gender in managerial posts. This points to a narrowing or even disappearance of the gender gaps that had prevailed in the past.

In other Western countries, trends were similar. In England and Wales in 2001, 42% of employed Jews had professional, associate professional and technical occupations, and 25% were managers and senior officials. In France in 2002, Jewish occupational distributions were quite different reflecting a higher concentration in lower management and clerical jobs. Only about 13–14% of Jewish men and women were in the liberal professions, versus 40% of men and 22% of women in managerial positions ranking from top to middle range. The proportion of Jews in clerical positions, including teachers, was 31% of men and 52% of women — far higher than in other Western countries. These data reflect a persistence of high percentages of Jews who are government employees, continuing a pattern that prevailed in the French

colonies and protectorates in North Africa and in metropolitan France during the early years of the post-colonial period.

In less developed economies, the massive turning of Jews toward the academic and liberal professions has been significant but slower. An interesting example of a country where until the recent past the concentration of Jews in trade and industry has remained significant is Turkey. In 1988, 61% of heads of households in Istanbul were in trade, versus 15% of managers and 11% of professionals; nor were there visible signs of mobility across the age spectrum. In Mexico City in 1991, 53% of the economically active Jewish population were managers and proprietors, versus 27% who were professionals. Looking at a division by economic branches, 35% were in industry and 29% in commerce. In Caracas, Venezuela, in 1998, 21% were in sales, versus 28% of managers and 17% of professionals.

In Mexico, the majority of the Jews belong to the upper and middle classes which constitute less than 10% of the general population. Only 5% of the Jews belong to the lower class, compared to 63% of the general population. But some attrition in Jewish economic status has emerged. While in 2000, 74% of the Jews belonged to the upper and upper middle class, in 2006 their number went down to 71%; the middle class went up from 14% to 15%; lower middle class went from 8% to 9% and the lower class from 4.9% to 5.1%.

In Israel, the all-inclusive character of the state's economy with a predominantly Jewish labor force allows — in fact demands — for employment of comparatively high proportions of Jews in agriculture, industry, and public services. Consequently a comparatively lower

**Among the Jewish labor force in most Diaspora communities, self-employment continues to be largely above the average of the total population.**

proportion of Jews in Israel are employed in professional and other technical activities requiring university training than may be the

case for occupationally selective Jewish minorities in the Diaspora. Nonetheless, the development of Jewish occupational stratification has been quick and highly significant. Among the employed Jewish population, the proportion of professionals passed from 10% in 1961 to 28% in 2005 among men and from 23% to 34% among women. This occurred while the share of women in the labor force dramatically increased. In 2005 the proportion in the labor force among Jewish women aged 15 and over was above 55%, versus slightly more than 60% among men. At

age 25–34, the proportion for both genders was above 80%, with a slight surplus among women. Jewish women participation on the labor force is quite high in international comparison, which cannot be said of the Jewish male labor force — due among other things to the relatively high percentage of males who pursue religious studies as their main activity throughout adulthood.

The share of Jews employed in Israel as managers is fairly low in international perspective, increasing from 7% in 1961 to 9% in 2005 for men, and from less than 2% to 3.5% for women over the same years. At the opposite end of the ladder, Israel has had significantly high shares of Jewish crafts, operatives, unskilled and agriculture workers — yet declining between 1961 and 2005 from 56% to 36%

for men, and from 24% to 11% for women. In spite of the striking structural differences in the occupations of Jews in the economy with Jewish majority or relatively small Jewish minorities, the main thrust of the observed trends is very similar. Increasing professionalization reflects the continuing expansion of higher education; manual labor is being substituted by a greater emphasis on services. It should be stressed that in both cases — Jews in Israel and Jews in the Diaspora — the diminishing impact of manual work reflects transformations in the economy, but also prominently a substitution by other population groups: in the world at large, by anyone — locals or foreigners — willing to take up those jobs; in Israel, by Palestinians and or by foreign workers.

A further important change, observed across the board of Diaspora Jewry, consists in the steady passage of Jews from self-employed to salaried positions. Among the Jewish labor force in most Diaspora communities, self-employment continues to be distinctive and largely above the average of the total population. Yet, allowing for the higher income levels of the Jewish labor force relative to the national average in the respective countries, a growing share of Jews now work as employees for large-scale national or multinational organizations. Their presence has also increased in the public sector where it was traditionally scant. In France, the share of Jews employed in sales diminished from 21% (including a minor share of artisans) in the 1970s to 9% in 2002. In the U.S. the aggregate of clerical and sales positions passed from 24% in 1990 to 23% in 2001 among men, and from 41% to 28% among women.

Self employment has long been one charac-

teristic trait of the Jewish labor force. In Mexico in 1991, as many as 63% were self-employed, including owners and workers on their own.

The Jewish labor force in Israel has followed a different course. Whereas the initial backbone of the economy heavily relied on investment and ownership by the state or by public bodies such as the Histadrut (incorporating the Trade Unions), the ongoing process of privatization is accompanied by a growing impact of free initiatives. Yet the proportion of self-employed in Israel — estimated at less than 15% — is significantly lower than in most large Jewish communities worldwide. The proportion of those employed in wholesale, retail trade and repairs, in business activities, and in health, welfare and social work services, including the liberal professions, has increased in Israel, while it has diminished in manufacturing, construction, and agriculture. As a consequence of these various processes, over the last decades differences in occupational distribution of Jews in Israel and in the main Diaspora communities have significantly diminished. Jews in Israel stand occupationally where Jews in the larger communities in the Diaspora stood one or two generations earlier.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY AND METROPOLITANIZATION**

One significant outcome of these patterns of social mobility is a very high amount of geographical mobility within and between urban areas. Availability of career opportunities is the main determinant of such mobility, which in turn reflects general trends of national and regional development in each country. This con-

trasts with the past, when Jewish geography was largely determined by historical patterns of settlement eminently tied to the political-economic constraints of the pre-emancipation period. Often, though not always, migration may be associated with a movement of Jews from locales with a stronger Jewish infrastructure, to places with a weaker one. This may significantly dilute individual expressions of Jewish identification and weaken affiliation with Jewish organizations.

An emblematic indicator of the sensitivity of Jewish population distribution to general market forces is the overwhelming concentration in major urban areas resulting from intensive international and internal migrations. The extraordinary urbanization of the Jews is indicated by the fact that in 2006 eighteen metropolitan areas worldwide had an estimated population of 100,000 Jews or more and altogether comprised about 75% of the total world Jewish population. Over one half of world Jewry (6,798,000, or 52%) lived in only five large metropolitan areas: Tel Aviv, New York, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and Haifa. The second tier comprising about 25% of world Jewry included, in that order, Southeast Florida, Be'er Sheva, Philadelphia, Paris, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, London, Toronto, Washington DC, Buenos Aires, Baltimore, and Detroit. Moscow, Montreal, Cleveland and Atlanta, each with less than 100,000 Jews each, were the following largest Jewish urban concentrations.

Most of these places are large, heteroge-

**52% of world Jewry live in only five large metropolitan areas: Tel Aviv, New York, Jerusalem, Los Angeles and Haifa.**

neous, well connected internationally and of world economic and cultural significance. In these places, large numbers of Jews enjoy very favorable and perhaps unprecedented standards of living and can bring to fruition high levels of education and professional specialization. But — leaving aside the Israeli locations where the situation is different — these are also the places where Jews often face the challenge of more intensive competition with, and easy access to alternative, non-Jewish cultures and social networks.

In spite of these processes, Jewish population distribution within major urban areas continues to be highly distinctive. Residential distributions significantly reflect socioeconomic stratification. As noted, Jewish occupational mobility has resulted in a massive redistribution throughout occupational groups, social classes, and income strata. Jewish residential mobility, consequently, has been characterized by massive relocation throughout the appropriate sections of the urban fabric. In most large urban areas out of Israel, a very substantial minority, and sometimes the majority of the whole Jewish population can be found on a small minority of a city's

territory. At the same time, in most large conurbations a trend prevails of growing territorial diffusion and population dispersion. Jews sometimes anticipated and sometimes followed these general patterns, thus periodically becoming less or more concentrated with respect to the total urban population. Overall, Jewish territorial

density still constitutes one of the salient bases for frequent personal interaction and community organization.

## JEWIS IN THE GLOBAL SYSTEM

To further understand the logic of current changes in socioeconomic stratification in the light of changes intervening over the last generation in the context of past large-scale migration, the Jewish presence — expressed in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the total population — can be related to major social and economic indicators of the respective places of residence. Do Jews simply move and redistribute at random, or do their mobility patterns reflect the inherent attraction or repulsion of the main socioeconomic and other market forces that operate in society at large?

Answers about the underlying logics of the Jewish presence are provided by studies of the geographical distribution of Jews examined at the level of detail, respectively, of 160 countries globally, of about 70 different economic regions within the European Union, of the 50 federal states in the United States, and of the main oblasts, or provinces, in the Federal Republic of Russia. In each instance, the geographical units were first sorted by level of economic development, and then sub-divided into five groups, each with the same number of geographical units. Around 2000, about 89% of the Jews globally lived in the highest ranked fifth of countries including most western nations and the state of Israel, whereas less than 1% lived in the bottom fifth of countries; over 59% of Jews in the European Union lived in the top fifth of economic regions, against 1% in the bottom

**Around 2000, about 89% of the Jews globally lived in the highest ranked fifth of countries, whereas less than 1% lived at the bottom fifth of countries.**

fifth; and 68% of Jews in the United States lived in the top fifth of states, against 1% in the bottom fifth. Similar correlations emerged in the Russian Republic.

Clearly, over time, the more economically and culturally attractive locales, at the country, regional, and provincial level, were able to hold their Jewish population or to draw Jews from weaker locales through international or internal migration. The inherent logic which connects the presence of Jews with the existence of certain basic socioeconomic and cultural conditions locally clearly indicates a response to changing opportunities on the part of a Jewish population generally highly educated, and quite specialized in its professional activities. But the data can also be interpreted as an indicator of material and functional dependency of the Jewish presence on the general situation of society at large, whose major changes generally are far beyond the control of the Jewish community.

The present situation is radically different from the one that prevailed during most of Jewish history. In the past the Jews were tolerated or discriminated against, and often held in their agenda a hope for changes in society that would benefit their political and social status. Under the more stable and attractive present conditions Jewish interests increasingly coincide with those of the prevailing societal order. Hence, at the end of a long transformation which allowed for political emancipation and economic achievement, the Jews find themselves in a more conservative state of mind in their relation towards society at large.

## SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Four socioeconomic issues seem to be of special interest for the socioeconomic study of Jews in recent years, and its policy implications.

The first concerns the possible effects of economic globalization and of the periodical waves in national economies on the standard of living of Jewish communities. Especially affected have been many medium and small Jewish entrepreneurs who did well in the past but whose bases of economic activity are now powerfully challenged by competition from the emerging economies in less developed countries. To the extent that imports substitute for local production, the latter has to find more sophisticated products and outlets, or to reconvert to other types of activity. The Jewish economy was affected in vehemently negative modes in those countries which passed from a regime of substantial autarchy to nearly unlimited openness to the global market. Examples can be provided especially in Latin America, but also in other areas.

The consequent turning of many Jews to tertiary activities probably has had mixed effects on their income distribution. On the one hand, average incomes for highly educated professionals tend to be far better than those of other employees. On the other hand, the big fortunes that could be accumulated through

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***Average incomes attained by Jews are quite universally higher than the averages in the respective non-Jewish populations, but in most western countries the income gap is narrowing.***

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***Israel's policy to continue the Falashmora immigration from Ethiopia may have rescued thousands from harshness and duress, but has brought into Israel a growing group prone to be poverty stricken.***

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manufacturing or other types of heavier capital investment are probably less frequently found today than was the case in the past. In relative terms, average incomes attained by Jews are quite universally higher than the averages in the respective non-Jewish populations. However,

there is evidence that — once one focuses only on those permanently and gainfully employed — in most Western countries the income gap between Jews and non-Jews is narrowing.

A second issue relates to the late and possibly terminal stages of upward social mobility. In the past, Jewish earners were often immigrants with a background of poverty, striving to find their way in a tight market in which, remarkably, many of the competitors were other Jews. It now seems obvious that having already reached the top, for many Jewish households the main objective is no longer to improve their social status but rather to maintain the reasonably comfortable standards already achieved. This requires strategies for the Jewish community facing society quite different from those needed in the past, when the

Jew often was a persecuted underdog. Nor is the outcome obvious considering that upward social mobility also exists among other minorities and overall among the non-Jewish majority.

The outcome indicates a certain degree of economic uncertainty for an otherwise mostly middle-class and fairly comfortable Jewish population. What remains a well established fact

both in the recent past and for the foreseeable future is the far greater degree of socio-economic homogeneity among Diaspora Jews than among the general population of the respective countries, or even among Jews in Israel. This implies that socio-demographic changes tend to be more synchronic and massive among the Jewish Diaspora than among other social groups whenever relevant political, economic, and cultural changes — if not upheavals — occur.

A third issue concerns the unequal distribution of resources across the Jewish population. Emerging poverty has come to the forefront of community care in many of the more developed countries and in Israel. One rather diffused problem is the emergence of widening social gaps connected with the general improvement of standards of living in the context of increasingly unregulated global markets. The speed and amount of increase at the upper income level has been greater by far than at lower levels. Consequently the distance between the richest and the poorest has increased, as documented by rising values of the Gini Index of income distribution. Since in many countries poverty is being measured in relative terms as a given percentage of average or median national income, often rapidly rising standards of living are accompanied by rising percentages of households below the poverty line. This is a technical issue which obfuscates the debate on poverty and significantly detracts from the need to understand and tackle the poverty conditions that actually exist. While the actual living conditions of the lower income deciles are today better than in the past, the subjective feeling of deprivation facing the increasing distance from households comprised



in the higher income deciles acts as a powerful factor in the whole assessment of one's own socioeconomic situation.

While relative poverty is usually at center stage in social welfare policy planning, the emergence of absolute poverty should not be neglected. This is particularly acute in the context of intensive international migration — in particular from the Former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. Israeli policies to continue the Falashmora immigration may have rescued thousands of individuals from harshness and duress, but has brought into Israel a growing group prone to be poverty stricken. Poverty also tends to be concentrated among Haredim, and in Israel with Arab citizens, in connection with low labor force participation of males (among Arabs, of females) and large households. The latter tend to reflect social norms and ideals, such that poverty among certain sections of the public — namely the more religiously observant — can be termed a culturally determined choice. Poverty, calling for urgent Jewish community interventions, has also emerged during short periods of intensive economic crisis such as in Argentina in 2002. A further population segment which appears to be poverty stricken comprises a high share of the Shoah survivors. In the FSU over 120,000 people receive basic socioeconomic help through of the Joint-Hessed organization. In Israel the number of Shoah survivors who are poor or near poor and also have problems in physical or mental health and/or have housing problems has been estimated at over 124,000, including 57,000 immigrants from the FSU and 30,000 from Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries.

A fourth issue of interest concerns the rela-

tionship between Jewish identification and socioeconomic characteristics and change, about which very little research is available. In the past, upward social mobility and the consequent higher degree of integration within society at large tended to coincide with a weakening of interest in Jewish culture and the sense of Jewish communal belonging. The more recent research indicates a far more complex relationship between socioeconomic status and Jewishness. The fact that the costs of belonging to an organized Jewish community are quite high generates a direct relationship between available income and the ability to purchase Jewish community services — unless the latter are heavily subsidized by the Jewish community or from outside sources. A lower degree of Jewish connectedness has consequently shifted over time from being a prerogative of upper and elite strata, to characterizing the lower socioeconomic strata. Under these circumstances, Jewish participation, Jewish knowledge, Jewish connections, and the sense of identificational belonging tend to become a dependent variable of the more general socioeconomic profile within a Jewish population.

A study of the 2001 NJPS by Barry Chiswick and Jidong Huang (*The Earnings of American Jewish Men: Human Capital and Denomination*) furthermore shows that in the U.S. earnings respond positively to schooling, labor market experience, being married, being born in the country, and for the foreign born, seniority in the country. Labor market earnings appear to be associated with Jewish education, those having attended full time Jewish day school reporting significantly higher earnings. Those raised without religious involvement or who as adults are not religiously

involved have lower earnings. Beyond some point of religious practice, however, time and effort devoted to religious activities may have a negative effect on secular labor market earnings.

These innovative findings seem to corroborate the argument of an emerging circularity between socioeconomic opportunities and Jewish identification maintenance.

## Jewish Migration and the Challenge of Multi-locality

Migration is one of the phenomena which have most significantly influenced the Jewish people in the last century. Beyond influencing the geographical distribution of the Jews across the globe, migration has a considerable impact on Jewish culture as well as forms of identification and community participation.

Estimates of the intercontinental Jewish migrations between 1840–1914 indicate that about 2.75 million Jews migrated, mostly from Eastern Europe to the U.S. Between 1915–1948, about 1.6 million migrated, of which 650,000 to the U.S., 485,000 to Palestine, and 465,000 to other countries (mainly Argentina, Canada and other countries in Latin America). In contrast to the migration of other populations, which often were “circular” or “temporary,” Jewish migrations were typically permanent and the bridges with the places of origin were severed, in the sense that not only was there relatively little return migration, there was also no aspiration or even possibility to return. Since 1948, nearly five million Jews and members of their families migrated, about 60 percent of whom to Israel. The other main destination countries of Jewish migrations were the U.S., France, Canada, Australia and Germany, and Jewish immigration patterns have undergone substantial changes

from earlier patterns. Jewish communities that emigrated in their near entirety included those in North Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans, and Ethiopia. The absolute majority of pre-existing Jews left the FSU.

In more recent decades and especially since the 1990s, globalization processes, improvements in the means of transportation and communication and the dissemination of multicultural absorption policies by receiving countries have contributed to increasing numbers of migrants being multi-local, that is, living in or maintaining ongoing vibrant links with more than one country. Globalization has expanded the means through which migrants, especially but not exclusively Chinese, Indians and Latin Americans, remain economically, socially, culturally and politically involved with their sending countries. It has also resulted in the migration of highly skilled individuals characterized by hyper-mobility involving remigration and return.

Increasing numbers of Jews today either choose more than one place as their place of residence or commute between places (living and working in different places). This new trend appears to become more common in Israel and among the Jews from the Diaspora. There are

no specific data on the numbers of multi-local Jewish immigrants across national borders; there is also a high level of national commuting among Jewish communities within the U.S.

Today, rather than moving “from” a place “to” a place, migration is increasingly characterized by moves back and forth between places. Multi-local migration may be voluntary or coerced, as the result of lack of possibilities in the receiving country; constant danger of being deported (lack of legal status); high level of rejection by the receiving society, etc. For Jews, it has become overwhelmingly voluntary. Moreover, if in the past the Jews migrated in order “to be,” currently they increasingly move in order “to see.” In Israel, for example, larger proportions of the immigrants arriving in

Israel continue to maintain multi-local links with their countries and communities of origin. It has been estimated that at least 20 percent of the families of the North American and nearly half of French immigrants arriving in Israel during the past decade may be characterized as multi-local. More than 15 years ago, researchers already pointed to the phenomenon of multi-local Russian immigrants to Israel, Canada, the U.S., and Germany. There are numerous indicators that the number of Russian immigrants spending some time in Israel and in Russia is on the rise.

There are varying patterns of multi-localism among immigrants in Israel. Some travel on a weekly basis, working in their country of origin and returning for the

weekend to Israel. Others travel less frequently, spending only one week per month in their country of origin, while others completely refrain from traveling and manage entire multi-local enterprises at a distance. They are typically highly-skilled individuals in liberal professions, high-tech, academics, Jewish communal professionals, or retirees whose families reside in Israel. There is among the multi-local *olim*, as among Western *olim* in general, an overrepresentation of those who define themselves in religious terms as Orthodox — although they do not represent the majority of all migrants..

FSU immigrants in Germany have greatly altered the Jewish community there altogether. They maintain multi-local relations with their families both in their countries of origin as well as with those in Israel and other destinations. Many of them actually chose Germany over relocating in Israel or the U.S. due to its geographical proximity to their places of origin. They conduct their lives in the Russian language and there are many Russian influences on the daily life of the community. Most of them are elderly and in need of socioeconomic support. Contemporary multi-local migrations among Jews are also discernible from South Africa to Australia, Caracas to Miami, Mexico City to San Diego, and Argentina to Spain. The majority of international migrants appear to maintain several identities that link them simultaneously to more than one nation.

There has been a general decline in immigration to Israel since 2003, and the annual figures for 2004–2006 are the lowest since the 1980s. Israeli aliyah officials and policy makers do not yet seem to have grasped either the new migration patterns or the opportunities of multi-local

**20 percent of the families of North American and nearly half of French immigrants arriving in Israel during the past decade may be characterized as multi-local.**

aliyah, and they are doing almost nothing to encourage it. Rather, most aliyah-recruitment efforts in Israel are invested in marginal populations, such as the Bnei Menashe from India, the Bnei Avraham from Peru, the remaining Falashmora from Ethiopia, and other marginal groups such as Yemenite *hassidei Gur* in New York, whose numbers are relatively small compared to the core of potential *olim* in the Western Jewish communities, or even in the FSU.

Multi-local immigrants, who tend to be well-educated and highly skilled, are strongly influenced by Israel's policies regarding taxation and the portability of social benefits from home to host society. Since the economic reforms of 2002, earnings from work abroad are heavily taxed and therefore strongly dissuade and impede transfer of capital. Also, current Israeli taxation and portability rights policies do not encourage the mobility rights of multi-local immigrants and may dissuade others from engaging in this kind of movement.

Multi-local immigration influences, perhaps first and foremost, the immigrants' families. Not all family members experience multi-locality in the same way. Home and host countries may mean different things for them and their mobility paths, and each one of them might differ from the other

The ongoing traveling of family members

between home and host countries affects the normal performance of the family unit. Although communications technology facilitates the capabilities of the family to maintain continuous contact, normal tasks require innovative solutions. Researchers disagree about the effect of this type of migration on spouses and children, but most agree that it has some impact. Much more research and analysis of multi-locality at the family level is called for.

Multi-local immigration produces and encourages multi-local enterprises, which take the form of businesses caring for the transportability of capital (remittances and travel); industry caring for the consumption of home-made products (ethnic consumption); or the formation of businesses at the home country which implement the capital accumulated at the destination. These businesses develop wider and faster if the immigration is accompanied by spatial (geographical) concentration of immigrants.

Turning from transnational to intranational migration, American Jews are characterized by an increased dispersion throughout the U.S. and by high levels of mobility. These characteristics present new challenges to the national Jewish community. In the U.S., migration impacts on the migrants' degree of affiliation with and participation in the Jewish community. Evidence strongly indicates that, for a variety of reasons, levels of participation decline with migration.

# Jewish Cinema

## INTRODUCTION: DEFINING JEWISH CINEMA

Like the question of “Who is a Jew”, any discussion of Jewish cinema may lead to a dead end and join the rest of the largely futile discussions around questions such as what is Jewish art or Jewish music.

Is *Saving Private Ryan* a ‘Jewish film’, because Steven Spielberg is Jewish? What about *ET*, which may contain Jewish themes involving ET’s alienness? And are all of Woody Allen’s films ‘Jewish’, or only those which emphasize specifically Jewish issues, such as *Annie Hall* or *Crimes and Misdemeanors*?

The biggest flaw in such a definition, however, is that it excludes from the discussion many important films about Judaism and Jews made by non-Jews; for example, films about the Shoah, such as *Au Revoir les enfants* (by Louis Malle) or *La Vita e Bella/Life is Beautiful* by Roberto Benigni. And what about *Fanny and Alexander*, in which the Jews (Isaac and his son Ishmael) play a major role?

Conversely, one could opt for a definition based on the film’s content, regardless of its maker, as in the examples cited above, of films made by non-Jews. In this definition, the crite-

riion which makes a film ‘Jewish’ is the extent to which it addresses Jewish subject matter. For instance, is *Cabaret* a Jewish film, as it has a secondary Jewish character searching for his way, and is of course rooted in the context of Nazi ascendance to power?

Beyond that, there are more complex content-related questions: Is a Jewish film only one that addresses particular Jewish dilemmas, such as any film about antisemitism? (And in this context, is every Holocaust film actually ‘a Jewish film’?) What about films about assimilated Jews, such as *Annie Hall*?

One could also ask whether films dealing with basic moral dilemmas stemming from the Judeo-Christian culture are ‘Jewish films’, as in a large part of the work of Polish filmmaker Kieslowski — both his outstanding *Decalogue* TV series and some of the films derived from it, most prominently *Thou Shalt not Kill*. The same is true for major chunks of the works of filmmakers who have a deep Christian affinity, such as Ingmar Bergman and Martin Scorsese. And what about films directly inspired by the Bible, such as *East of Eden*, *Cinema Paradiso*, and the entire list of Cecil B. DeMille’s biblical films? And if so, what about *The Last Temptation of Christ*? And can the role of Jews in Mel Gibson’s *Apocalypto*

be ignored? (Indeed it would be bitterly ironic if we conclude that this movie may be categorized as a 'Jewish work'...).

And what about the 'pogrom' scenes perpetrated by Indians against the Whites in classic Westerns, which according to the film *Hollywoodism: Jews, Movies and the American Dream* (1998), got their inspiration directly from pogroms against Jews which many of Hollywood's founding fathers suffered in the Ukraine prairies?

'Jewish Cinema' seems to escape definition, just as Judaism itself escapes any attempt ever made in the history of Jewish thought to find a clear and universally accepted definition. Thus, for the purpose of this review, we propose a definition which presumes to create, not a critical category of 'Who's a Jew and who is not,' but an active social and cultural category: we review films which made waves and/or raised a debate around questions concerning various Jews, within and outside Jewish communities around the world. This definition is based on the essence of the art of cinema: it is there to stir spectators to deal with their life questions, and therefore seems to hold more potential for a meaningful elaboration of the 'Jewish film' question; the role it plays in the Jewish discourse of identity, which never ends.

## THE QUESTION OF JUDAISM IN ISRAELI CINEMA

Historians of Israeli cinema are in strong disagreement regarding the point of its beginning. We can safely say that until the 1960s, there may have been a few scattered films, but a local film industry, in the usual sense, did not exist.

Thus, even intriguing films made in the Jewish context, such as *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer*, are in fact a kind of pre-history, insufficient for signifying a comprehensive cultural meaning.

The question of Judaism in Israeli cinema goes hand in hand with the question of Judaism in the renascent Israeli-Zionist culture. It could certainly be argued that any film made by Jews in Israel is a 'Jewish film'. But beyond the maker's identity criterion, one should bear in mind that it was a distinctive Zionist claim that anything made by the Jewish People in their land is automatically part of a living, contemporary and relevant Jewish culture.

And indeed, in the early films, of which the most prominent is *They Were Ten* (1960), the cinematic hero represented the Zionist myth of the pioneer-farmer. The film expressed the longings for biblical existence and its derivative themes (drought, quarrels over water, sentiments of the 'desert generation' and other variations on biblical themes). In these films the diasporic origin and cultural background from which the protagonists came was erased (or, in film jargon, 'retouched'). Like Elik in the novel *The Elik Chronicles* by Moshe Shamir, the cinematic hero had also 'arrived from the sea' and dissociated himself from his diasporic past.

Peaking in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hebrew literature dramatically described the struggle against 'diasporic' Jewishness. In Israeli cinema, which developed over forty years later, that struggle was already decided. Zionism has won, Jewishness has gone underground, and is in fact absent from the screen.

Historically, the renewed Hebrew literature had a long-standing, rich and fascinating textual tradition. Therefore, even as Israeli writers

**The only Jewish heritage traceable in Israeli cinema is the popular tradition of “Yiddishspiel”.**

were struggling against it, they were forced to acknowledge its greatness, and it had always been their great literary nemesis. In contrast, Israeli cinema had no significant visual heritage on which Israeli filmmakers could build. It was therefore the European cinematic tradition, along with its Christian imagery, which provided the tools and visual language required for mystical and transcendental expression (as would happen more than two decades later, in Assi Dayan’s important film, *Life According to Agfa*).

The governmental and cultural establishment’s attitude to cinema in Israel has always been problematic. Among other things, this attitude stemmed from the Jewish belief that the transcendent is always to be found in the word and not the image (the ancient commandment “thou shalt not make unto thee any grave image or any likeness of anything” has not been reduced to the ritual sphere only). This resulted not only in governmental under-budgeting of the cinema industry, as compared to other cultural spheres (until today, theater budgets are several times larger), but also in a depreciatory societal attitude towards the medium of film as a whole, which was perceived as a vulgar and inferior form, and as such, not even expected to reflect fundamental questions of Jewish identity. This may be the reason why the only Jewish heritage traceable in Israeli cinema is the popular tradition of the ‘Yiddishspiel’, which indeed led to a successful series of films and even to one of the greatest cinematic hits of all times (in

the character of *Kuni Lemmel*, 1966). Here the secular Sabra and the Jew who ‘converted to Zionism’ could nostalgically connect with the classic Jewish world, mainly because it was perceived as unthreatening. As is well known, Kuni Lemmel is an amusing and even pleasant nincompoop, but he has no contemporary power or value.

In those years (late 1960s and the first half of the 1970s) the massive immigration from Islamic countries also received its repressed expression, through a whole new genre which emerged at that time — the ‘Burekas comedy’. Here too, the Jewish ‘bomb’ was defused through its folkloristic commercialization. It is important to emphasize that ‘Burekas’ films were not made by filmmakers who had experienced repression, but rather by old-time Ashkenazis, who seem to have used Yiddishspiel formulas to describe the popular world of Mizrahi immigration waves. It is interesting to note here that the only important film to deal with the question of the crisis in Jewish identity and the social alienation of that immigration (and which actually launched the ‘Burekas’ genre) — *Salah Shabbati* (1964) — was the work of Ephraim Kishon, himself a new immigrant from Hungary, whereas most filmmakers in that era came from the Ashkenazi cultural center. The only exceptions to this rule — and that is no coincidence — are Moshe Mizrahi and Nissim Dayan, whose Mizrahi roots have enabled them to maintain a dialog of a secret, albeit critical, love with Jewish tradition. A good example is Mizrahi’s treatment of levirate marriage in his *I Love You Rosa* (1972). Dayan’s prominent works in this respect include his monumental TV series *Michel Ezra Safra and*



*Sons* (1982), along with his important feature film, *Light out of Nowhere* (1972).

But this repressed 'Jewishness' finally broke through and began to fight back. The social form it took was the struggles between religious and secular Jews in Israel. In the sociological division of Israel, the Orthodox accepted the role of bearers and representatives of diasporic tradition and Judaism. When they attempted to repossess their position and status, a culture war broke out. Thus, films created in the 1990s, such as *The Appointed*, *Forbidden Love* and *Snow in August* reflected their secular makers' ambivalence towards their Jewish identity. On one hand, these films were fraught with violence (labeled as normative Haredi behavior) and alienation. On the other hand, along with the terror they reflect, there is also desperate love. In all of the films, the secular man (or woman, in *The Appointed*) is in unrequited love with a Haredi woman/man. It is always a hopeless love, because in these films it is not only the Haredi establishment which fights the secular suitor, but also the Haredi beloved who ultimately rejects them. Beyond the sexual fantasies of a secular man about the forbidden and covered Haredi woman, this is a heart-rending expression of the secular filmmaker's secret yearnings for the Jewish world that has been lost. In this context it is understandable why it is the Haredi Jew who is labeled as the inheritor of 'Jewishness' in secular cinema. In contrast, the religious-national or modern religious Jew, is totally absent from most of these films.

The scope of this paper is too narrow to discuss the place of the Shoah in Israeli cinema. Suffice it to say that the Shoah, which fuels the majority of Jewish films around the world,

occupied a relatively marginal place in early Israeli cinema (except in documentary films). Very belatedly, the Shoah now increasingly occupies a meaningful space in Israeli cinema, as part of a larger process taking place in Israeli society and culture. Orna Ben-Dor's films — the trailblazing 1988 documentary *Because of That War*, and *New Land*, the feature film which followed in 1995 — are a case in point.

The change for the positive, albeit gradual, in the way Israeli cinema coped with Jewish culture and identity, surprisingly began through television, with the establishment of Channel 2 in 1992. In general, the breakthrough of Israeli cinema in terms of quality stemmed from this supposedly more commercial medium. The commercial channel endorsed the production of *Bat Yam New York*, a TV series by Yossi Madmoni and David Ofek (and *The Barbeque People/Mangalists*, the feature film that followed), which exposed for the first time a rich Jewish world occupied by the majority of Israelis who are neither secular nor religious: the traditional Jews, who are, of course, also mostly Mizrahi. It was followed by other series, such as *Catching the Sky*, *Meorav Yerushalmi*, *Within a Touching Distance* and others, which for the first time portrayed a complex, non-stereotypical religious and traditional culture.

In full-length feature films the change is still slower, since it largely relies on the emergence of new filmmakers. But here too, Shemi Zarhin's *Leylasede*, Ori Inbar and Doron

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**The Shoah, which fuels the majority of Jewish films around the world, has occupied a relatively marginal place in early Israeli cinema.**

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Tsabari's *Driks' Brother* (written by ex-Orthodox Amnon Dankner), Nirit Yaron's divorce episode in *Tel-Aviv Stories* (1992), have all heralded the gradual resurgence of complex Jewish themes in Israeli cinema.

Eventually the circle of filmmakers has extended to include various cultural groups. Beyond the major breakthrough of Mizrahi writers (Buzaglo, Madmoni, Ofek, Tsabari, Ben Shitrit, Zarhin), and to a certain extent of former Soviet Union immigrants (Dover Kushashvili, Arik Kaplun and recently other young filmmakers), a surprising change has taken place in Orthodox society.

Up until recent years, religious society has treated cinema as a forbidden secular medium. Following the establishment of the Ma'ale Film School, religious filmmakers, and later even Haredi students, have begun to make films. Most prominent among these are Yossi Cedar with *The Arrangement/Time of Favor* and *Campfire* and Shuli Rand with *Ushpizin/Divine Guests*. Naturally, they directly address Jewish issues. Another new and equally fascinating phenomenon is the flourishing of a Haredi 'cinema' industry producing dozens of films annually, specially made for home viewing on DVD. Such films are used by Haredi society as a substitute for commercial television and most of them are still of very low-quality.

Despite all the positive developments described above, Israeli cinema is still waiting for non-Orthodox filmmakers to directly and boldly confront their own culture and past and lend them a new and refreshing cinematic interpretation.

## NORTH AMERICAN JEWRY

From its inception, there has always been a strong presence of Jewish producers, directors, scriptwriters and actors in the American film industry. In fact, Hollywood was established as a Jewish business and the Jews dominated it until the late 1940s. The fact that the cinema industry was still in its infancy during the years of the great Jewish immigration to the U.S. was of critical importance to Jews. While other occupations were practically closed to them, many Jewish immigrants recognized the commercial potential in movies and jumped on the emergent industry's wagon with much enthusiasm. Being themselves immigrants, Hollywood Jews have experienced the immigrant yearnings for low-cost artistic gratification and desire to escape from the bleak economic reality for two hours of fantastic cinematic fiction. The movies provided a refuge from the sufferings of the present, where an American society free of social conflict and safe from a pessimistic future was created at an affordable cost. Along with the economic profit, Hollywood Jews realized the prestige involved in artistic pursuit and the challenge of developing a new artistic language, and they took on that challenge with a passion.

Despite the Jewish identity of many Hollywood producers, writers, actors and directors in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, it is almost impossible to trace in American movies from those years any Jewish elements or themes which go beyond the stereotypical and superficial level. Jewish characters with accentuated and caricatured attributes made their occasional appearance in the movies, but the plots they

served never developed into a substantial Jewish theme.

Only since the 1960s on can one trace an increasing preoccupation by Jewish filmmakers with the examination of Jewish identity in general, and of Jewish American identity in particular. The works of filmmakers such as Sidney Lumet's *The Pawnbroker* (1964), *Bye Bye Braverman* (1968); Larry Peerce's *Goodbye, Columbus* (1969); Ernest Lehman's *Portnoy's Complaint* (1972); Mike Nichols' *Biloxi Blues* (1988) and *Angels in America* (2003); Paul Mazursky's *Next Stop, Greenwich Village* (1976); *Enemies: A Love Story* (1989); Mel Brooks' *The Producers* (1968); Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977), *Zelig* (1983); Jeremy Kagan's *The Chosen* (1981); Barbra Streisand's *Yentl* (1983); and Joan Micklin Silver's *Hester Street* (1975) and *Crossing Delancey* (1988) — have all portrayed distinctly Jewish protagonists and attempted to examine the weight and significance of the Jewish component in these characters' identity. In these films, for instance *Next Stop, Greenwich Village*, Jewish identity was largely presented as a burden. For Larry, the protagonist, Jewishness is mainly represented in the image of his parents' family in general, and that of his aggressive mother in particular. Exposed to the lively scene of bohemian New York, Larry's family seems to be nothing but a ball and chain. He must choose between life in the realms of the conservative family past (which could turn him into a pale shadow of masculinity, as it did to his father), or following his lost lover, an authentic representative of the Beat generation who inhabited Greenwich Village in the 1950s. It is not surprising that the protagonist chooses to leave his family behind and try to find his place in the cosmopolitan Village society of the future.

The next decade was to reveal the talent of directors who peaked in the 1980s, such as Steven Spielberg (*Schindler's List*, 1993) and Barry Levinson (*Avalon*, 1990). Characterizing this transitional generation is their tendency to first establish themselves as filmmakers, often renouncing their Jewish identity, and turning to address that identity once they have gained stability, and as part of the process of their maturation and establishment as accomplished filmmakers.

The increasing interest of Jewish-American filmmakers in their Jewish identity should be regarded as part of the social processes taking place in the U.S. and as a result of processes undergone by second and third generation Jewish-American immigrants. On the one hand, these are the years in which American identity became an issue for other U.S. minorities as well. On the other, these were also the years when many Jewish filmmakers felt that, unlike their parents, they were already exempt from proving their loyalty to the U.S., and thus able to confront and question the nature of their Jewish identity with more confidence and depth. The making of movies addressing Jewish subjects should be regarded as part of the general Jewish awakening, whose major manifestations are found in American literature, journalism and popular culture.

The 1990s and the 2000s mark the birth of a new generation of filmmakers, who have tackled their Jewish identity from their earliest films, and who move freely between various and varied cinematic genres, making way for Jewish characters, Jewish themes and conflicts derived from the duality of Jewish-American identity. The shadow of the catastrophe of European

Jewry is still present in the works of these directors, but it occupies a secondary place.

Among the most prominent of this generation are directors and writers such as Ethan and Joel Coen (*Miller's Crossing*, 1990; *The Big Lebowski*, 1998); David Mamet (*Homicide*, 1991; *State and Main*, 2000); Darren Aronofsky (*Pi*, 1998); Ben Younger (*Prime*, 2005); and Liev Schreiber (*Everything is Illuminated*, 2005); scriptwriters such as Stuart Blumberg (*Keeping the Faith*, 2000) and Mark Zakarin (*Keeping Up with the Steins*, 2006); documentarists Mark Jonathan Harris (*The Long Way Home*, 1996; *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*, 2000); Menachem Daum (*A Life Apart: Hasidism in America*, 1997; *Hiding and Seeking: Faith and Tolerance after the Holocaust*, 2004) and Sandi Simcha Dubowski (*Trembling Before G-D*, 2001).

These films deal with a variety of subjects: examining the connection between the Eastern European past and American identity (Schreiber),

Jewish mysticism (*Pi*) and exploring the meaning of religious rituals in contemporary Jewish American life (*Keeping up with the Steins*). They also contain various positions regarding the degree of commitment felt by these filmmakers towards their Jewish past. Some manifest a postmodernist position, which regards Jewishness as one existential option among many (*The Big Lebowski*, *Keeping the Faith*), others express explicit criticism of traditional Judaism's stances (*The Believer*), and still others joyfully

embrace this tradition with a smile (*The Hebrew Hammer*).

One would expect that in the third generation of Jewish immigration to the U.S., young filmmakers would no longer be preoccupied with the meaning of their American identity. However, an examination of some of the above-mentioned films inevitably leads to the opposite conclusion: many Jewish-American filmmakers still regard the Jewish component of their identity as crucial, whether they like it or not. Unlike the 1960s and 1970s films, Judaism in these newer films is presented in a completely different light. For Jake, the protagonist in *Keeping the Faith*, Judaism is anything but an archaic, obsolete cultural relic. Like Larry, the hero of *Next Stop, Greenwich Village*, he is in love with a young non-Jewish woman, but for him this is a difficult dilemma because he finds in Judaism a whole world of morality and discipline. His choice to serve as a rabbi attests to the relevance he finds in Judaism, and which he will not easily give up, despite the prized temptations of the non-Jewish world. Neither is the family unit in this film presented as a relic from the past. The manipulative and repulsive mother of *Next Stop, Greenwich Village* is replaced in *Keeping the Faith* with a loving and understanding mother, and the family unit is depicted as highly valuable and integral to the protagonist's identity.

Like other films of its generation, *Keeping the Faith* does not advocate a total return to the Jewish community nor a withdrawal from the non-Jewish world. Such films acknowledge the contribution and value of the Jewish world and they seek to find a place for it alongside the modern values which they have already affirmed. And yet, their Jewish identity is an

**The making of movies addressing Jewish subjects should be regarded as part of the general Jewish awakening, manifested in American literature, journalism and popular culture.**

element which gives Jewish filmmakers a sense of partial alienation and makes their complete integration in non-Jewish society a complex task. In many of these films the Jew remains a stranger, even if only partially so, to American cultural life; but contrary to the preceding generation, this one is resigned to this stranger-status and often embraces it, reconciled and content. Recognizing the importance of family and roots, these filmmakers wish to posit the family in the center of their world. For them it is not merely a relic from the past, but a component of the present, which secures their future survival. It seems that in the third generation, young filmmakers are trying to find out whence they came from, so that they know where they should go.

## JEWISH CINEMA OUTSIDE ISRAEL AND THE U.S.

Four fifths of world Jewry is concentrated in Israel and the U.S. But Jewish and non-Jewish filmmakers born in other Jewish centers often address the nature of contemporary Jewish identity. Unlike Israeli cinema and also Hollywood, which were owned by Jews from their inception, the global Jewish cinema attempts to express Jewish positions within cultural frameworks that are identified with the non-Jewish majority. Moreover, in many European countries the Jew as a character first appeared in the films of non-Jewish filmmakers. The view which identifies the Jews as the 'Other' of European society has thus preceded the attempts by Jewish filmmakers to furnish an independent self-definition of their identity, and contemporary Jewish cinema may be regarded as an attempt to establish an independent Jewish cinematic position, one

that is conscious of the non-Jewish majority and seeks to locate its own authentic voice in the contemporary cultural cacophony. A few Jewish films were made in Germany (*Zucker*, 2004, by Dani Levy) and in Spain (*Only Human*, 2004, by Dominic Harari and Teresa Pelegri). Other foci of filmmaking with a substantial Jewish element exist in three other countries — France, Britain and Argentina.

France: Jewish characters were present in films already in the 1920s and 1930s. Especially memorable is the character of Rosenthal, the Jewish prisoner of war in Jean Renoir's *La Grande Illusion* (1938). By the end of the Second World War Jewish characters appeared in French films dedicated to the horrors of the war, such as *Enclosure* (1961, Armand Gatti) and *The Old Man and the Child* (Claude Berri, 1967). During the 1980s non-Jewish directors continued to address the treatment of the Jews by the Vichy government (*Au Revoir, les enfants*, 1987, Louis Malle) and the French government's coping with the memory of the Shoah after the liberation (*Les Années sandwichs*, 1988, Pierre Boutron).

Among films produced in the 1960s, the comedy *Pas Question le Samedi* (Alex Joffé, 1965) is worth mentioning, for his centering on a comedic gallery of Jewish characters, of mostly Ashkenazi origin.

From the 1970s on, Jewish directors also began to dedicate whole films to the examination of the nature and position of Jewish identity in France. That is how the comedy *Les Aventures de Rabbi Jacob*, directed by Gérard Oury, became a resounding hit in 1973, to be followed by other comedies, such as *Levy et Goliath* (Oury, 1987), *La Vérité si je mens!* (Thomas Gilou, 1997; followed by a successful sequel in 2001); *XXL*

(Ariel Zeitoun, 1997) and *God is Great and I'm Not* (Pascal Bailly, 2001). In these films, Jewish characters are examined in the context of their interaction with their non-Jewish environment, with the didactic objective of pointing out their similarity, and the solidarity that should exist between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors. The exception is the two *Le Grand Pardon* films made by Alexandre Arcady in 1982 and 1992, which depict the life of a Jewish family of North-African origin whose members are France's leading crime organization. In this film (clearly influenced by Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather*), France is not portrayed as a welcoming melting-pot, but rather as a place which forces its inhabitants to identify with their ethnic origins and cultivate their tribal-Jewish links.

UK: Up to the 1990s, significant Jewish films are hard to find. Carol Reed's 1955 film, *A Kid for two Farthings*, is a rare example of a film from these years which dedicates a significant role to a Jewish character. But in recent years the United Kingdom is enjoying a wave of Jewish filmmaking, with emphasis on the experiences of Jewish youth. Some of the films are dedicated to memories and conflicts of ancient past *The Governess* (1998, directed by Sandra Goldbacher) and *Solomon and Gaenor* (1999, Paul Morrison) and recent past, such as *Esther Kahn* (2000, by Arnaud Desplechin) and *Sixty Six* (2006, Paul Weiland). But at the heart of this filmmaking wave is a deep contemplation of the present, as in *Suzie Gold* (2000, Ric Cantor); *Shem/Name* (2004, Caroline Roboh) and *Song of Songs* (2006, Josh Appignanesi).

Argentina: The recent thriving of Jewish-Argentinian film is mainly thanks to Daniel

Burman. His three successful films, *Esperando al mesías/Waiting for the Messiah* (2000), *El Abrazo Partido/Lost Embrace* (2004) and *Derecho de Familia/Family Law* (2006) all outline the autobiography of a Jewish young man who is deeply connected to his Jewishness and who constantly springs back and forth between the non-Jewish society of Buenos-Aires and Israeli urban society. *Valentín* (2002) by Alejandro Agresti is also concerned with similar identity qualms, depicted through the journey of a young boy's learning of his mother's Jewish identity.

The cinematic preoccupation with Jewish identity in France, Britain and Argentina suggests that the talk about the demise of Jewish culture in these countries was premature. There is a dynamic Jewish culture in these communities, and such films are evidence. There is, however, the question of the relationship between these films and the life of the Jewish communities in these countries. Filmmakers there are aware of the community's position as a minority, but that does not deter them; on the contrary, it stirs them to examine the contemporary meaning of this ethnic Jewish identity. The future of these initial trends is not clear, but at this time, Jewish filmmaking around the globe is still very much alive and kicking.

## THE PLACE OF JEWISH CINEMA IN CONTEMPORARY FILM CULTURE

In recent years Jewish cinema around the world is enjoying an unprecedented flourishing. Film festivals across the globe offer programs rich in Jewish cinematic content. Among these, the San Francisco Festival, founded by Debra Kaufman in 1980, is a major event. The festival attracts

over 30,000 visitors a week, and their screening guide is distributed in over 100,000 copies. Many major Jewish festivals are held annually in England, Germany, Austria, Sweden and Holland. In Israel a Jewish film Festival has been held annually in Hanukah for the last seven years, showing dozens of Jewish films from around the Jewish world. In New York, Los Angeles and Miami there is an annual Jewish Film Festival, founded twenty-five years ago by former Kaveret band member Meir Pfenigstein. Around the world, many Israeli Consulates hold special events where Israeli films are screened. This is unprecedented, and it seems that no other artistic medium enjoys such demand and interest as Jewish and Israeli film.

The great importance of the festivals, beyond the exposure they offer Jewish and Israeli films and in addition to the enhancement and elucidation of Jewish identity through the medium of film, lies in the encounter that is facilitated by these festivals, between Jewish works and Israeli audiences, and between Israeli works and Jewish audiences. Jewish identity and Israeli identity (which, as said, are not overlapping) both benefit from a productive meeting in these numerous film events. Fascinating dialog and a welcome diffusion are inevitably created between the various films, their makers and their audiences.

The current Jewish cinematic fermentation should be seen as stemming both from the discovery of Jewish identity as relevant to a new generation of young filmmakers, the discovery of the medium of film as a promising, effective and refined channel for Jewish creativity, and the desire of a growing Jewish audience to explore their roots and the face of contemporary Judaism, preferably in the movies.

In the major Jewish festivals, there is a clear trend of seeking new and controversial subject matter, rather than dealing with classic Jewish issues. In the last five years certain topics and films stood out in Jewish festivals:

Jewish homosexuality: The films *Trembling before G-D* by Sandi Simcha Dubowski, about Jewish homosexuals, and *Keep Not Silent* by Ilil Alexander, about religious lesbians, are the outstanding works in this vein. They starred not only in Jewish festivals but were also successful in the international film sphere, having been screened in cinemas around the world and winning numerous awards. *Trembling before G-D* was even purchased for screening by leading international networks such as ABC, Arte, Sundance Channel, DR TV, ABC Australia, HBO Latin America and others.

The link between the tough macho Israeli male and homosexuality was celebrated in two major hits in the Jewish world: *Walking on Water* and *Yossi and Jagger*, an award-winning and widely screened TV drama centering on a love story between an army officer and one of his soldiers.

Gender and Women Issues: These featured in the films *Tehora* and *Mekudeshet*, which gained wide recognition in Israel and abroad, and last year a film about a Jewish comedian addressing sex issues made the headlines. The interest in the more traditional peeping into the Haredi world was still evident in films such as *Bat Melech*, *Pru Urevu*, *Israel vehapashkevillim*, *Hared liserato* (about the films of Yehuda Groweis) and others.

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**The San Francisco Jewish Cinematic Festival, founded in 1980, is a major event, attracting over 30,000 visitors in a week.**

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One of the 'hottest' subjects raised in Jewish festivals is the Arab as the Israeli 'Other'.

**In the major Jewish film festivals, there is a clear trend of seeking new and controversial subject matter, rather than dealing with classic Jewish issues.**

This year the Manhattan JCC is planning a festival titled *The Voice of the Other*, dedicated to the Arab in film, especially documentary works, as replacing the religious, Haredi and other Jewish 'Others.' In this respect, the Jewish world is following a global trend of an international and political interest in films made by Arab filmmakers or featuring Palestinians. In the last Docaviv festival, the film *Three Times Divorced* by Ebtisam Mara'ana won the first prize. The films, *Bedel* and *Shadia* (featuring an Arab-Israeli female Karate artist) won awards in the prestigious IDFA 2005 festival.

'Security-oriented' films about political prisoners 'with blood on their hands' and *9-Stars Hotel*, about teen Palestinian laborers, starred in the major festivals this year, including the prestigious Sundance festival.

The Jewish San Francisco festival and a number of other Jewish festivals are dedicating space for films addressing these issues and regard them as an integral part of Jewish films arriving from Israel.

The Arab as the Other is gradually entering Israeli television as well, as in series such as *The Weekly Portion* (a female physician, a Jewish studies major) and others.

In the conference of Jewish festivals held in May 2006 in Toronto, the question was raised how to attract young unaffiliated audiences to Jewish festivals. There is no doubt that innovative and controversial issues, and trendy rather

than classic 'Jewish' issues, are important for retaining and attracting young crowds to fill cinema seats.

Most prominent in this respect are the film festivals of Boston, New York and San Francisco, which have a leftist leaning and naturally gravitate towards such subject matter, whereas the festivals of Southern California, New Jersey and smaller Canadian cities are seeking to present the more 'Yiddishkeit'-type, less controversial issues. In these smaller centers, audiences are coming mainly to enjoy themselves, so that organizers are less keen on offering the 'heavier' political issues, preferring light comedies and complaining about a shortage of new Israeli comedies.

## CONCLUSION

This summary aspires to outline two processes: (a) a significant change occurring in the last decade in the amount of films produced in the Jewish world. Instead of a handful of films depicting Jewish conflicts, stories and characters, from early 2004 on dozens of Jewish films were made, in Israel and all over the world, that deal with distinctly Jewish problems and topics. (b) The change is not only in the quantity of films made but also in their subject matter. The few Jewish films produced during the 1960s and 1970s had a distinct historical or nostalgic character. In Israel, the cinema of these years repressed its Jewish roots and later even launched a frontal and often violent attack against their representatives. In contrast, current Jewish cinema is vigorously addressing questions such as the place of religious ritual in the life of a modern Jew, the relationship between traditional reli-



gious and secular Jews, Jewish holidays as a cinematic space, the nature of the relationship which may exist between Jews and non-Jews, or the likelihood of survival of the Jewish ethnic minority within the non-Jewish majority. Such films reflect the emotional struggles of a new generation of artists who use film to explore the nature of their current identity. The variety of identities is increasingly diversified in all directions — from religious filmmakers in Israel to assimilated filmmakers in the Diaspora who are rediscovering their Jewish identity.

At the same time, such films contribute to the shaping of a future Jewish identity. New and larger audiences are coming to the cinema and

being exposed to private and universal Jewish dilemmas from around the world. Such exposure is inevitably followed by a self-exploration of identity by the spectators.

In the beginning of the third millennium, cinema is a cultural bridge linking filmmakers and their audiences, Judaism and Israeliness, spectators and their selves. Film enables contemporary Jews to walk a cinematic bridge and find a mirror for reflecting their own multiple identities. It is a readily available, accessible, complex and constantly changing bridge, which is not always very stable, but it does illuminate and expose the yearning Jewish soul — a bridge of light.

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### **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*

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- Developing Jewish People Leadership
- A Jewish People Strategy Towards Islam
- Global Jewish Identity and Identification
- Improving the Image of the Jewish People
- Geo-political Environment: Opportunities and Challenges

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.



**Isaac Herzog**  
*Minister of  
Social Affairs  
and Services and  
for Diaspora Affairs  
State of Israel*

The comprehensive Annual Report by the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute constitutes a platform for an extremely important debate on the issue of the state of the Jewish People all over the world, in view of the trends, ups and downs, processes and events that have left their mark over this past year both on the State of Israel and on world Jewry. I am confident that the recommendations and conclusions of this very thorough report will constitute key points in shaping a solution to the critical issues facing the Jewish People, as we may see in the Report.

**David Harris**  
*Executive Director,  
American Jewish  
Committee*

For those who want to learn more about the external and communal challenges facing the Jewish people, the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute's Annual Assessment 2007 ought to be required reading. Once again, JPPPI has produced a comprehensive and incisive study of the issues that most affect our worldwide community. This report reminds us that all Jews are responsible for one another. If we're going to live out that adage, as we should, taking JPPPI's analysis to heart is the right place to begin.

**Richard Prasquier**  
*Président du  
CRIF (Conseil  
Représentatif des  
Institutions Juives  
de France)*

The history of this century has validated that Jewish People indeed exists, whatever its location, either in Israel or in the Diaspora. Too many Jewish community leaders do not have the appropriate tools to confront the complex challenges it faces from both within and the outside. The JPPPI vigilantly and admirably accomplishes the vital task of providing those tools, and they are a matter of survival.

**Baroness Ruth Deech**  
*Member of the  
House of Lords, UK,  
and Independent  
Adjudicator for  
Higher Education*

The work of the JPPPI is unique in its insight and breadth. Its publications, as well as the Jerusalem conference of July 2007, provide readers and participants with the tools and support they need to face Jewish problems worldwide. With the resources of the JPPP I feel better equipped to handle issues of antisemitism and the European diaspora.



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