



**המכון למדיניות העם היהודי (מיסודה של הסוכנות היהודית לא"י) בע"מ**  
**The Jewish People Policy Institute (Established by the Jewish Agency for Israel) Ltd.**

# **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT 2010**

## **Executive Report No. 7**

### **Special In-Depth Chapters:**

Systematic Indicators of Jewish People Trends

De-Legitimization and Jewish Youth in the Diaspora

The Impact of Political Shifts and Global Economic Developments  
on the Jewish People

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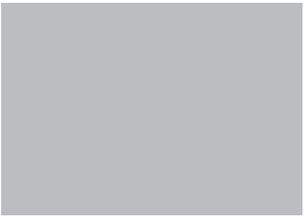
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# Annual Assessment 2010 - Table of Contents

<b>Foreword – Amb. Stuart Eizenstat</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Major Developments and Policy Directions</b>	<b>9</b>
Selected Indicators on World Jewry – 2010	17
<b>1. A System of Indicators for Measuring the Well-Being of the Jewish People</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2. Significant Global Developments &amp; Challenges 2009-2010: Possible Implications for the Jewish People</b>	
Developments in the Geopolitical Arena and their Possible Implications for Israel and the Jewish People	49
2010 – The Triangular Relationship between Washington, Jerusalem and the Jewish Communities	71
Global Economic Changes: Implications for Israel and the Jewish People	83
Asia’s Rise: Implications for Israel and the Jewish People	107
Latin American Jewry Today	123
<b>3. In Depth Chapter – De-legitimization of Israel and Israel Attachments Among Jewish Young Adults in North America and Europe</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>4. Developments to Watch 2010</b>	
Religious Issues and Israel-Diaspora Relations	193
The Jewish Free School Case in London and the Hebrew Charter Schools in the US	197
New Findings Concerning the Genome Structure of the Jewish People	201





# Foreword

The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI), whose board of directors I am privileged to chair, was created in 2002 with a unique mission, which no other organization in the world performs: to serve as a think tank for the Jewish people worldwide, looking at strategic challenges facing all major Diaspora Jewish communities and the State of Israel, and proposing recommendations to policy makers to meet those challenges.

JPPI performs this critical and unique task with a group of distinguished scholars and fellows in Jerusalem who bring world-class expertise to the examination of both internal challenges facing the Jewish people - like demographic trends, Jewish and Israeli cohesion, intermarriage, and the multiple facets of Diaspora-Israel relations, and external threats, from Iran's nuclear ambitions to the arms buildup by Hamas and Hezbollah, and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. JPPI produces papers, books, and notes on these and other topics, sponsors seminars and conferences, and brings together leaders of major Jewish organizations, and leading Jewish figures from the four corners of the world in an annual conference in Jerusalem.

In October 2010, JPPI's annual conference brought 120 Jewish leaders, thinkers, and decision makers, with a stronger representation than ever before from Latin America and Europe, as well as North America. We organized into several working groups, on crucial subjects like the effort to delegitimize Israel as a nation state for the Jewish people; the growing challenge of different standards for conversion to Judaism; Israel's security threats and the peace process; Diaspora-Israel relations; and the special challenges of European Jewry. The importance with which Israeli leaders hold our conference was demonstrated by the fact that some half dozen senior ministers of the government spent hours with us in these working groups. We were addressed in plenary sessions by the President, Prime Minister, Defense Minister, leader of the opposition; and the Chairman of the Jewish Agency.

With all of these activities, perhaps the single most important contribution JPPI provides to the Jewish world is our annual assessment. Like its predecessors, the 2010 JPPI Annual Assessment provides an invaluable snapshot of the major developments and policy directions in the Jewish world, along with

significant global developments and challenges in the broader world in the future. These include geopolitical developments; global economic changes and their implications for the Jewish people and the State of Israel; the importance of the rise of Asia; and the triangular relationship between Washington, Jerusalem, and the American Jewish community. The 2010 Assessment also presents a fascinating set of indicators that tell us who we are and where we are headed globally. These indicators also tell us about Jewish day school participation, per capita GDP, out-marriage rates, Aliyah, and numbers of Jews by country visiting Israel.

**I would like to highlight a few of the particularly interesting areas and policy recommendations covered by the 2010 JPPI Annual Assessment.**

- The upheaval in the Arab world is reviewed with a fresh and objective perspective on its impact on Israel.
- There is an important action-oriented recommendation to further strengthen Israel's relationship with the US, its most important ally, at a time of economic stress in America: a "Buy American" campaign in Israel to buy U.S. products, such as automobiles for Israeli government fleets, and other American products and services.
- The Assessment analyzes a series of troubling illiberal religious and political initiatives in Israel, including loyalty oaths for non-Jews, which could affect Israel's image in the world, and among Diaspora Jews.
- Israel's remarkable economic progress as a global leader in high tech and other start-up

companies was highlighted by Israel's admission in 2010 to the Paris-based Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the organization of leading industrial democracies. Yet, the Annual Assessment points to a troubling decline by Israeli students in international tests, at a time when educational attainment is the most important ingredient nations need to compete and succeed in the global marketplace.

- U.S. support for Israel has always been bipartisan. But the JPPI Annual Assessment warns that while there is continued support among American Republicans, enthusiasm by some Democrats is waning.
- JPPI in 2010 stresses the importance of Jewish organizations and supporters of Israel focusing on college campuses in the U.S. and Europe, in which Israel is increasingly cast in a negative light by its opponents. This is from where our leaders for the future will be coming, but they, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, are often not armed with facts to counter false attacks against Israel, part of the effort to de-legitimize Israel as a Jewish state.
- Looking forward, Steven Popper, one of JPPI's bevy of expert scholars, describes a novel and important project he has embarked upon, to provide a multi-year examination, of the health of the Jewish world from multiple perspectives: Its hard and soft power; the perpetuation of Jewish culture; the traditional Jewish concept of betterment of the world, Tikkun Olam; Jewish religion and practice; Israel as a Jewish nation

state; and strengthening Jewish communities around the globe. Professor Popper's project furthers JPPI's unique contribution to the Jewish people.

Everyone connected to the production of the 2010 JPPI Annual Assessment is to be congratulated for their contribution to this important volume. Special thanks go to Dr. Shlomo Fischer, the Project Director, for this Assessment, and to Avinoam Bar-Yosef, the president of JPPI, who injects a sense of purpose and direction to the Institute, and with whom I am proud to serve.

**Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat**

Chairman of the Board and Professional Council  
Jewish People Policy Institute





# Major Developments<sup>1</sup> and Policy Directions

In 2010 the Jewish people started to face challenges which seem to be qualitatively different than those with which it has been confronted hitherto. Among the developments which represent these challenges we find the following: the breakdown of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians and attempts to introduce a solution imposed from outside; a de-legitimization campaign directed against Israel which involves numerous geographical locations and arenas; popular uprisings involving government and regime change in the Middle East; a perception of the decline of American economic and political power and the economic and political rise of China, India and other emerging powers such as Brazil and Turkey; possible changes in the attachment to Israel among young Jews in the Diaspora.

The following section on Policy Directions and Strategic Agenda briefly describes these and other developments and where appropriate, suggests policy directions.

## A. The Geopolitical Plane

### 1. The Arab Israel Conflict

- a. Breakdown of direct talks between Israel and Palestinian Authority in September 2010.
- b. Palestinian appeal to the international community to recognize Palestinian state within borders of June 4, 1967. This course of action represents a Palestinian move away from bi-lateral negotiations conducted between Israel and the Palestinians in favor of a solution imposed from outside.

Publication by Al Jazeera of papers concerning the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations of 2006-2007 demonstrates the seriousness of negotiations during the Olmert administration. Publication was conceived as an attempt to damage, by the Palestinian opposition, Mahmud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority. The papers also show that despite the progress that was made in the negotiations, disparities still remained between the two sides.

## 2. The Campaign to de-legitimize Israel

The Gaza Flotilla incident along with the Goldstone Report gives new impetus to de-legitimization campaign against Israel. This campaign goes way beyond the immediate parameters of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. It involves numerous geographical locations and many arenas, including legal and economic attacks (Boycott, Disinvestment, Sanctions). Potentially, it could develop into a serious strategic threat for Israel.

### Policy Directions

The de-legitimization phenomenon, which aims to challenge/subvert the Jewish people's right to sovereignty in the Middle East, is damaging not only to Israel but also to Jewish identification, the support of friends of the Jewish people, and the Israel-Diaspora relationship. Israel and the Jewish people should develop a comprehensive strategy vis-à-vis this phenomenon, as well as establish networks and collaborations among the plethora of bodies involved in this area. The Israeli government should re-examine its policies in order to locate elements which facilitate the de-legitimization of Israel, and consider revising such elements.

Better use should be made of actively Israel-attached young adults (the "New Zionists") who have knowledge and experience in global civil society, in combating Israel's de-legitimization. Younger elements especially should be encouraged to take a larger role in combating de-legitimization because of their expertise in social media.

## 3. The Middle Eastern Regional Complex

- a. Popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. In Egypt the military takes over and confirms adherence to all international treaties and obligations, including Peace Agreement with Israel. Arab youth demonstrates commitment to democratic values and ability to utilize information technology and social media. These new developments challenge the stability of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Yemen and Syria, and perhaps encourage the opposition in Iran.
- b. These developments signify the potential for significant change in the region. "There [is] ... a pervasive sense that a shared system of poor governance by one party, one family or one clique of military officers backed by brutal secret police was collapsing."<sup>2</sup> Israel could benefit from the democratization of Arab countries in the long run; however, in the short term, the expression of popular sentiment could lead to the crystallization of negative policies towards Israel, especially if it leads to the adoption of an Islamist direction by Arab regimes.

### Policy Directions

**Following the civilian uprising in Egypt and the ongoing upheavals in other Arab countries. Israel and the Jewish people must prepare for a new Middle-Eastern reality, which embodies both threats and opportunities. The considerations made heretofore regarding various strategic issues must be re-examined and updated in light of the changing reality: the relationship with**

**Egypt, the connection with the US, the peace process, Hamas, Turkey, and more.**

- c. Iran continues to make progress towards acquiring nuclear weapons despite the stuxnet worm and attacks on major nuclear scientists. Planned US withdrawal in Iraq leaves Iran with enhanced power in the Persian Gulf while asserting its influence in Lebanon and other parts of the region.
- d. Turkey emerges as a regional influential power. It adopts a new Islamic and Middle Eastern orientation which entails increased coldness and even hostility toward Israel.

#### **4. The Global Arena**

- a. Continued perceived erosion of American power and international standing. The US emerges slowly from Great Recession but still with high unemployment and record budget deficit.
- b. Rise of China and new Chinese assertiveness in economic, foreign policy and military arenas. India also enjoys growing political and economic clout in the regional and international arenas. China and India have increased their presence and importance in the Middle East. Increased economic and political importance of other emerging market states – Brazil, Turkey, Indonesia etc.

#### **Policy Directions**

**Israel and the Jewish people should reach out to Asia, focusing on cultural policies and information exchanges, science and technology policies, Judaism and Israel studies**

**in Asia, Asian studies in Israel and more. Israel and world Jewry can and should find ways to help Asia's rising powers to address their most urgent challenges, including, in particular, energy security, fighting poverty and rural development.**

**Israel and the the Jewish people should monitor closely such countries as Brazil, Turkey and Indonesia which are gaining economic and political importance. The Jewish people (including the State of Israel) should devote resources to empowering the Jewish communities of these countries to become bridges to the surrounding societies and governments and centers of local influence.**

- c. Beginnings of cultural backlash against multiculturalism in Europe. Electoral success of right-wing parties in various European countries. Sovereign debt crisis in the Eurozone. Rise of economic nationalism alongside attempts to strengthen the Eurozone and its unity.

#### **5. Political Developments: Washington – Jerusalem – American Jewish Community Triangle**

Despite efforts by both Washington and Jerusalem to reach an understanding in light of the mid-term congressional elections and the problems of the coalition in Israel, the challenges facing the triangular relationship remain. The American response to the upheaval in Egypt, symbolized by the "cold shoulder" shown to Mubarak, has been a matter of concern to other allies in the Middle East. Yet the new situation may also empower new reformists

and progressive regimes and reinforce mutual interests between Israel and the United States which may draw them closer. As such, it is a primary interest of Israel and the Jewish people globally that the status of the US as the leading superpower doesn't erode.

Past experience shows that cultural values, democracy, and common interests of Israel and the United States eventually overcome controversies and even severe crises. The most recent events require intensifying efforts to achieve strategic cooperation and coordination between the United States, Israel, and the Jewish community.

### **Policy Directions**

- **The challenges facing Israel in light of regional changes require its leadership to make a decision as to its direction, to confront the challenge of preserving its Jewish character, take the initiative in areas that require urgent intervention, and be alert to other arenas in order to adapt policy accordingly.**
- **Every possible effort should be made to prevent the Middle East conflict from becoming a point of contention between the Republican and Democratic parties in the United States, and to remove Israel and the Jewish community from the American, internal political debate.**
- The concern of a possible erosion in US international status on one hand, and the general support that Israel and the Jewish people enjoy in North American public

opinion on the other hand, **require a continuous effort to reinforce the strength and economic power of the US. Israel and the North American Jewish community should make every effort to strengthen their ally.**

- **Israel should be conscious of American global interests without diminishing its own critical security requirements on one hand, and on the other, it should consider a "Buy American" campaign that encourages, for example, purchasing American cars by Israelis and for the fleets of the State of Israel and the IDF and promoting the import and use of US goods and services.**
- With former President Katsav's conviction, indictments of other leaders and measures taken against other senior figures, Israel may be parting ways with the attempt to grant legitimacy to the improper conduct of public figures. **This is the beginning of a welcome process that may eventually improve trust of the young Jewish generation globally and contribute to strengthening the ties between Israel and the Diaspora. This process should be encouraged.**
- The de-legitimization phenomenon aiming to subvert the right of the Jewish people to sovereignty in the Middle East harms not only Israel but also Jewish affiliation, support of friends of the Jewish people, and Israel-Diaspora relations. **This phenomenon requires a comprehensive evaluation and treatment in various arenas to minimize damage.**
- Despite the erosion of the standing of new Jewish organizations that attempted to establish

a lobby in opposition to the Jewish American establishment and Israel, there is a continuing trend among the young, American generation to organize independently to promote agendas, unrelated to the establishment or Israel. **Against this background, Jewish organizations must make a special effort to open their ranks to the young and encourage them to assume key roles in the community. Israel, for its part, must use its resources to increase its investment in the future of the young generation, in education and in expanding the frameworks shared by Israel and the Diaspora.**

## 6. New initiatives in Israel relating to religion and politics

- a.
  1. New conversion law sponsored by Yisrael Beiteinu threatened to place all conversion under the sole control of the Chief Rabbinate. The threat of severe opposition and alienation by American Jewry caused Prime Minister Netanyahu to shelve the law.
  2. Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef confirmed the validity of IDF conversions, then retreated somewhat in the face of severe Ashkenazic Haredi opposition. Yisrael Beiteinu sponsors law recognizing IDF conversions. Shas and Yahadut HaTorah oppose the law.
  3. M.K. Rabbi Chaim Amsalem split from the Shas party. Amsalem's move could represent the first step in the growth and consolidation of a [Sephardic] Haredi inclusive-pragmatic approach to Halacha and Jewish tradition.
4. The arrest of a leading member of Women of the Wall also caused severe criticism by many American Jews.
- b. Emergence of illiberal religious and political initiatives in Israel such as the proposal of parliamentary investigation of human rights groups; the initiative regarding loyalty oaths for non-Jews who apply for citizenship; rabbinic prohibition on renting apartments to Arabs and the expulsion of the children of foreign workers; immunity from prosecution according to the Law against Incitement to rabbis claiming to rely on the halacha. Some American Jewish liberals claim that these developments are making Israel into an anti-democratic obscurantist religious ethno-state which is harder to identify with or defend. Support for such initiatives seems to come, at least in part, from widespread insecurity regarding Israel's identity as a Jewish State due to de-legitimization and post-Zionism.
- c. The recent wave of corruption scandals damages Israel's image among non-Jews and Jews alike. At the same time, Israel's ability to deal with these scandals judicially and administratively potentially strengthens its image as a society which strongly adheres to the rule of law.

## Policy Directions

Israeli policy makers and legislators should take into consideration the effect of illiberal legislation, which casts Israel in undemocratic light, upon the image of Israel in the eyes of Diaspora Jews and Israel supporters abroad. They should also realize that such steps add fuel to the de-legitimatization campaign.

The Israeli government should consider canceling its decision to expel 400 children of foreign workers who were born and are educated in Israel.

Israel should strengthen internally its self-identity as both a Jewish and democratic state. In its expanded civics program for students it should stress that national identity and being a nation-state does not contradict democratic and liberal values but rather fulfills them.

## B. The Jewish People Plane

### 1. The Economic dimension of Jewish life: Diaspora Communities and Israel

- a. American and European economies still adversely affected by the financial crisis. Both in need of structural and regulatory reform; both experience a real decline in the value of their currency. As a result of these developments, America might be poorer vis-a-vis other countries.
- b. Israel emerged relatively unscathed with very high growth (7.8 % annual growth rate in the fourth quarter) and record low unemployment.

Substantial natural gas reserves discovered off the coast of Haifa, auguring important revenue stream with potential long-term energy, economic, financial, ecological and geopolitical Implications, though fully developing these reserves is several years off. Recognition of Israel's economic achievements by accession to the OECD.

- c. Despite these strengths, Israeli ability for effective collective government action is impaired as can be seen by poor educational performance by Israel students on international tests, prolonged strikes by public servants and the Carmel fire.
- d. American Jewish philanthropy still adversely affected by the financial crisis (and Madoff fraud repercussions). At the same time funding needs within the American Jewish community increased (especially for Jewish education). American Jewish support for Israeli non-profit ("third") sector drops off.

## Policy Directions

**Israel, both the Israeli government and private individuals, needs to contribute more financially, and in certain areas replace Diaspora funds, in regard to projects designed to enhance the well-being and strength of the Jewish people such as Birthright, and Jewish education.**

**Israel should consider which steps are necessary to restructure its institutions of governance to better strengthen the capacity to undertake effective collective**

**action, to translate national priorities into action and to undertake complex public sector challenges that cut across ministerial portfolios. It needs to establish a systematic strategic perspective to guide both short- and long-term domestic policy actions.**

### **Jewish Identity and Israel Attachment Among Younger Jews**

- a. For a significant segment of young Jews, Israel is not the single most important pillar of their Jewish lives. Fewer young Jews are willing to identify Israel as occupying the most central place in their Jewish landscape.
- b. For many younger American Jews the concept of ethnic peoplehood, the world divided into "us" and "them," is not salient. Younger Jewish leaders are interested in Judaism as a way of providing meaningfulness in life. They respond to Jewish culture and Jewish activities, but not to the idea that there are distinct differences between Jews and non-Jews. They are unresponsive to activities to "protect" Jews since they don't feel vulnerable, discriminated against or different.
- c. Criticism - even severe - of Israel is increasingly acceptable, and a mode of "critical attachment" to Israel has developed among young people. We also note a rise in the realm of discourse of Diasporism and post-Zionism. On the political plane new groups are challenging the general consensus. For limited segments of young Jews it may be increasingly acceptable to view

Israel and Zionism as an irrelevant or even negative factor in regard to what is important and valuable in Jewish life.

### **Policy Directions**

**Travel to Israel programs such as Masa and Birthright should be amplified for young Jews living in the diaspora. Travel to Israel programs should be organized around a variety of perspectives and orientations, and not reflect just one approach.**

**Israel travel programs ought to be extended to European Jewish youth. Programs deepening attachment to Israel should be set up for European Jewish youth and children visiting Israel with their parents.**

**Within the framework of Israel education for young Jews, one should amplify cultural and social factors including language, literature, food, film, friends, touring Israel and the like.**

**In contrast to this, educators should exercise caution in dealing with policy issues and when discussing Israel's vulnerability, topics which are controversial among young Jews.**

**Jewish mainstream spokespersons should avoid labeling Jewish critics of Israel as "self-hating Jews" in order not to alienate them from the larger Jewish community.**

***Hasbara* for young Jews in the Diaspora should be the same as that which is targeted to the general public. Israel and the Jewish leadership should not create special *hasbara***

programs for young Jews which are based upon the assumption that their Jewish identity makes them automatically pro-Israel. Wherever possible, in *hasbara* aimed at the general public, non-Jewish, pro-Israel groups should play a leading role, in *hasbara* aimed at the general public.

The Jewish organizations are committed to a special effort to open their ranks to young people and to encourage them to assume key roles in the life of the community. The state of Israel, on its part, must utilize its resources in order to enhance the investment in the future of the younger generations, in education and extending joint frameworks shared by Israel and the Diaspora.

It is crucial to listen and respond honestly to young people who ask critical questions about Israel's and its policies. Such questions should be answered with reliable information and balanced judgments.

Severely critical points of view should be allowed to be heard in Jewish frameworks such as Hillel chapters and other Jewish organizations, together with other opinions which are more positive to Israel and Israeli policies. Disenfranchising such severely critical voices will only increase their alienation.

At the same time, advocates of the destruction of Israel and those who wish to use BDS against the very existence of Israel as a Jewish state should be singled out.

## Endnotes

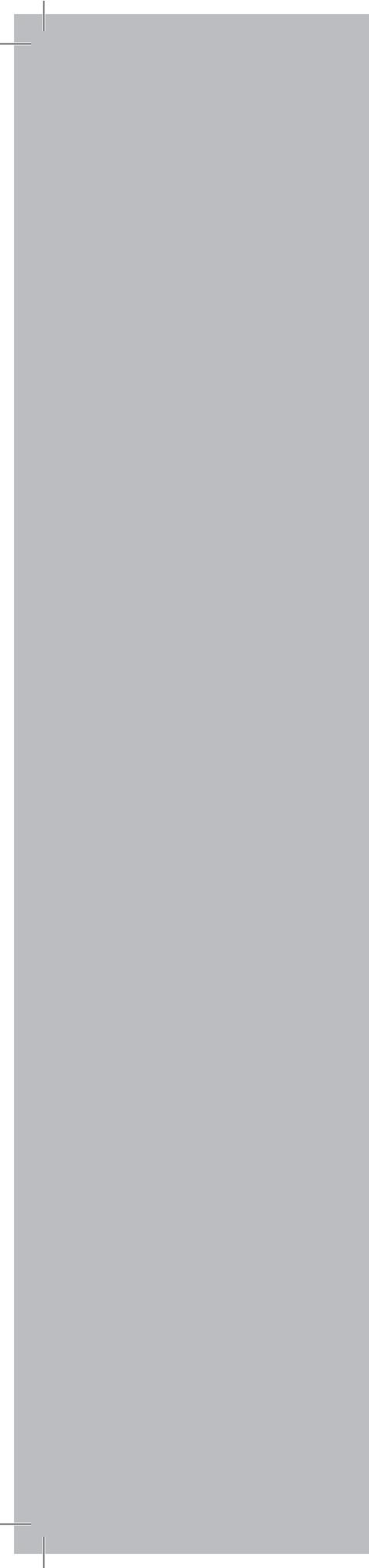
1. The geopolitical Plane section and the section on the economic dimension of Jewish life reflect developments over the past year. The section on Jewish identity and Israel attachment reflects trends over a longer period of a number of years. The developments in that section reflect the special chapter on de-legitimization and Israel attachment among younger Jews.
2. "Unrest Spreads Some Violently in Middle East", *New York Times*, Feb. 17, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/17/world/middleeast/17protest.html?pagewanted=1&r=1&hp>

# Selected Indicators on World Jewry – 2010

Country	Jewish Population, Core Definition <sup>o</sup>			GDP per Capita (PPP \$US)	HDI Rank	Jewish Day- school Attendance (%)	Out- marriage Rate (%)	Visited Israel, % of Jew. Pop.	Aliyah
	1970 <sup>a</sup>	2010 <sup>b</sup>	Projected 2020 <sup>c</sup>	2008 <sup>d</sup>	2009 <sup>*</sup>	Most recenta	Most recenta	Most recenta	2008 <sup>e</sup>
World	12,633,000	13,428,300	13,827,000 <sup>i</sup>	86,008-268					13,681 <sup>f</sup>
Israel	2,582,000	5,413,800	6,453,000 <sup>i</sup>	28,474 47,440 – 39,098	27	97	5	100	-
North America	5,686,000	5,652,300 <sup>n</sup>	5,581,000						2,281
United States	5,400,000	5,275,000	5,200,000 <sup>g</sup>	47,440	13	25 <sup>h</sup>	54	>35	2,019
Canada	286,000	375,000	381,000	39,098	4	55	35	>65	262
Latin America	514,000	387,300	364,000						955
Argentina	282,000	182,300	162,000 <sup>i</sup>	14,408	49	50-55	45	>50	188
Brazil	90,000	95,600	90,000 <sup>i</sup>	10,466	75	71	45	>50	208
Mexico	35,000	39,400	42,000	14,534	53	85	10	>70	83
Other	107,000	70,000	70,000 <sup>i</sup>	18,977-1,317		75	15-95	>50	476
Europe non-FSU	1,331,000	1,144,500	1,070,000	82,441-6,897					2,598
France	530,000	483,500	482,000	34,205	8	40	40-45	>70	1,562
United Kingdom	390,000	292,000	278,000 <sup>i</sup>	36,358	21	60	40-45	>75	505
Germany	30,000	119,000	108,000	35,539	22	<20	>60	>50	86
Hungary	70,000	48,600	34,000	19,533	43	<15	60	..	54
Other EU <sup>j</sup>	171,000	148,900	134,000	82,441-22,097		10-25	33-75	>50	262
Other non-EU <sup>k</sup>	140,000	52,500	34,000	53,738-6,897		5-20	50-80	..	227
FSU <sup>l</sup>	2,151,000	330,000	173,000	20,561-2,023					5,603
Russia	808,000	205,000	130,000 <sup>i</sup>	15,948	71	<15	80	..	2,600
Ukraine	777,000	71,500	25,000 <sup>i</sup>	7,342	85	<15	80	..	1,310
Rest FSU Europe <sup>l</sup>	312,000	34,900	15,000 <sup>i</sup>	20,561-2,984		<15	65-75	..	590
FSU Asia	254,000	18,600	3,000	11,434-2,984		<15	50-75	..	1,103
Asia (rest) <sup>m</sup>	104,000	19,200	21,000	34,116-930					134
Africa	195,000	76,200	60,000	20,829-268					1,892
South Africa	118,000	70,800	57,000	10,136	129	85	20	>75	257
Oceania	70,000	115,000	105,000 <sup>i</sup>	36,918-2,108					119
Australia	65,000	107,500	97,000 <sup>i</sup>	36,918	2	65	22	>65	109

\* UN HDI Report 2009 | a Source: Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, The Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. | b Source: S. DellaPergola, World Jewish Population, 2010. Berman Institute – North American Jewish Data Bank, 2010-Number 2. | c Source: adapted from DellaPergola, Rebhun, Tolts (2000), medium variant. | d Source: IMF 2008 data. | e Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2008). | f Including country not specified. | g After downward reduction following NJPS 2001. | h Based on adjusted response from NJPS 2001. | i Revised population projections for 2020. | j Without Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria. | k Including Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria. | l With Baltic states. | m Without Israel, FSU and Turkey. | n Includes Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands | o Includes all who, when asked, identify themselves as Jews or who are identified as Jews by a respondent in the same household, and do not have another monotheistic religion. Also includes persons of Jewish parentage who claim no current religious or ethnic identity.





## **PART 1**

# **A System of Indicators for Measuring the Well-Being of the Jewish People**



# 3

## A System of Indicators for Measuring the Well-Being of the Jewish People

### 1. Introduction

The first JPPI Annual Assessment was prepared in 2004. That first effort was a comprehensive, multi-faceted benchmark for the state of the Jewish people at the beginning of the 21st century. It also posed one over-riding question: Are the Jewish people as a whole, and in their various communities, thriving or in decline?

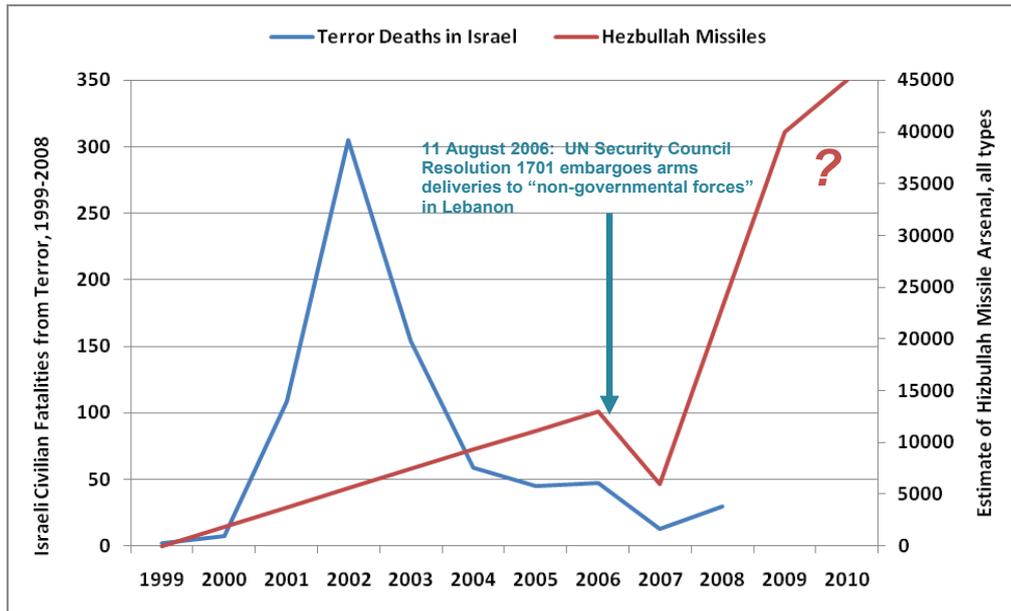
JPPI also took up as its main task the application of analysis to the critical future-shaping decisions the Jewish people face. The goal is to improve the means available to Jewish people institutions to make better decisions. Clearly, these two main thrusts are related. Without measurement and benchmarks how is it possible to be effective in assessing priorities and framing policies? Without a desire to affect both the state of the Jewish people

and the environment within which they exist, what is the purpose of measurement?

As we near the end of the decade in which JPPI was established, it seems appropriate to ask what has changed. What state do the Jewish people find themselves in today?

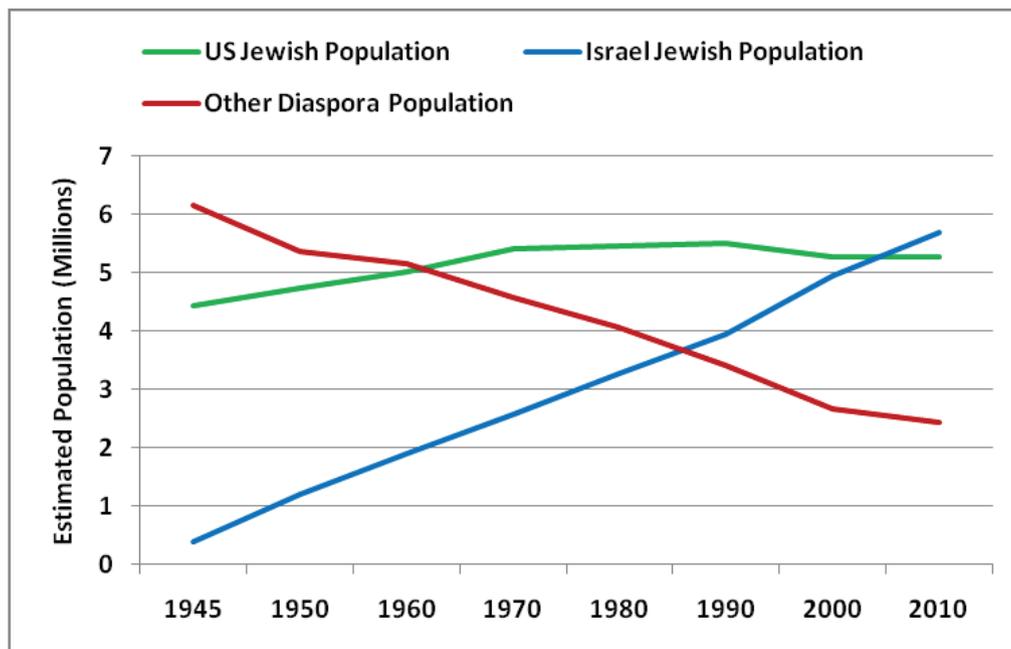
The following five graphs show trend lines for several different measures of interest for the Jewish people. In each case, at least two measures have been grouped into one graph. The time scales differ between the graphs because for slow-changing trends it is useful to see if the trends during that decade followed those of the prior periods. The discussion of the graphs will be found after their presentation.

**Figure 1.1. Balance of Security in Israel: Deaths from Terror and Numbers of Missiles Held by Hezbollah, 1999-2010**



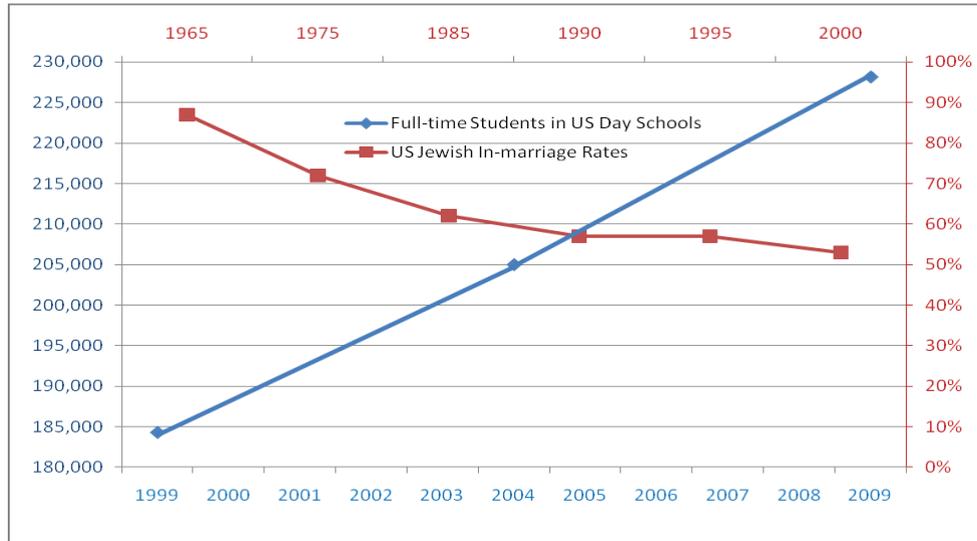
(Source: JPPI | Data: Global Terrorism Database; New York Times<sup>1</sup>)

**Figure 1.2. Size of Jewish Population in Israel, the US and the Rest of the Diaspora**



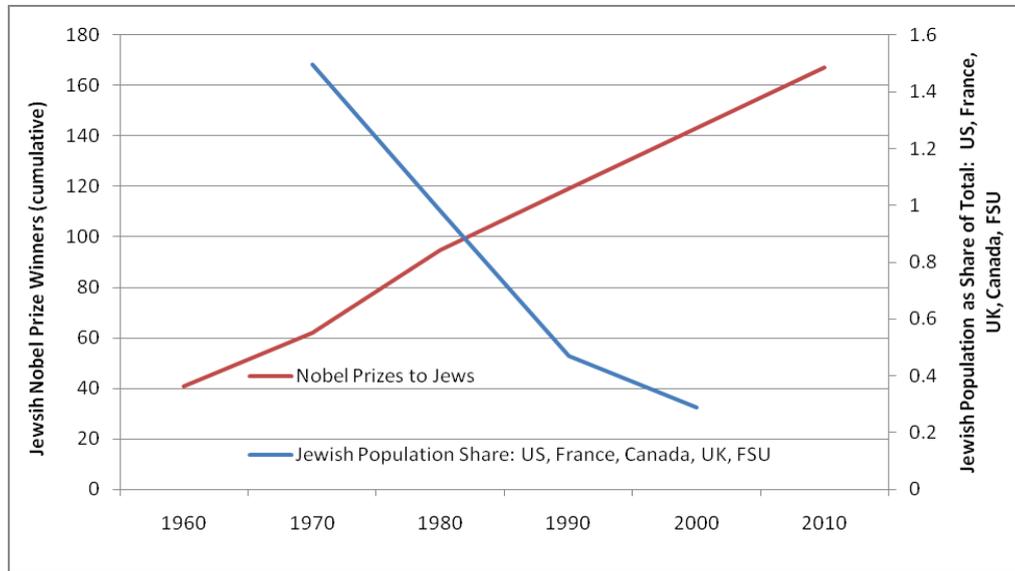
(Source: JPPI | Data: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics; DellaPergola, 2010<sup>2</sup>)

**Figure 1.3. Jewish Identity in the United States: Numbers of Full-Time Students in Jewish Day Schools and Rates of In-Marriage**



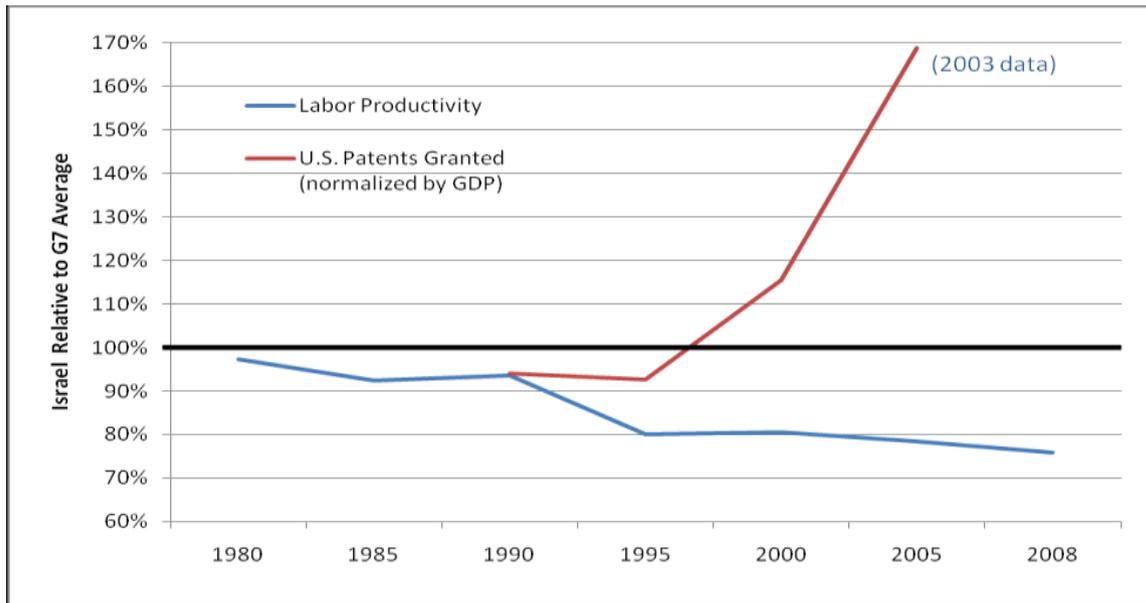
(Source: JPPI | Data: Schick, Marvin (2009). "A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States, 2008–2009". Avi Chai Foundation, October; "Kotler-Berkowitz, Laurence et al. (2003) National Jewish Population Survey, 2000-1".

**Figure 1.4: Sources of Soft Power: Cumulative Total of Jewish Nobel Prize Winners and the Jewish Population Share in the Total Population of the US, FSU, France, UK, and Canada.**



(Source: JPPI | Data: <http://www.science.co.il/nobel.asp>; DellaPergola, 2010; National Jewish Population Survey, US Census Bureau, CIA Factbook, *Narodnoye Khozaistvo SSSR* [various years])

**Figure 1.5 Israel's Economy: US Patents Granted to Israeli Principal Inventors and Israel's Labor Productivity Compared to OECD Average, by Year**



(Source: Jewish People Policy Planning Institute | Data: Ben-David, 2009<sup>3</sup>)

These data suggest there are multiple trends, not strictly comparable, that paint a mixed picture of Jewish people's progress. According to some measures, the trends appear to be moving in a positive direction. At the same time, different measures that also appear to have relevance show a trend of decline.

The data also exhibit an "apples and oranges" problem. The different measures shown in each interest area are of dissimilar types and have no easy common denominator. Yet, none can be dismissed as unimportant. Each has been looked to as a trend of significance or has been used as evidence supporting a rhetorical point concerning Jewish people interests. But are they all equally

relevant in providing indicators of Jewish people well-being?

Clearly, measuring the progress of the Jewish people in a meaningful way requires more than just casually collecting trend statistics. Measuring a trend that is moving in a presumably positive – or negative – direction may not be sufficient. To take a deliberately dramatic example, Israel's stunning victory in the 1967 Six Day War was momentous, but despite clearly relieving the quite real fear of Israel's imminent annihilation, it created a situation that has resisted a comprehensive peace. Meanwhile, the crisis of the 1973 war created the basis for the greatest measure of security Israel has ever known, the peace with Egypt and eventually Jordan.

Meaningful indicators for the Jewish people should be derived systematically. They must cover the wide swathes of geopolitics, economics, demography, culture, society, education, and religious life to name a few. Further, any system of indicators needs to address the bottom-line question of what goals should any Jewish people initiatives, plans, and actions seek to achieve. The answers are far from clear and could in themselves cause discord.

These issues are profound and the stakes could not be higher. For these reasons, JPPI's newest project is devoted solely to developing meaningful indicators for the well-being of the Jewish people. The following section will more fully introduce this project whose scope clearly takes it beyond the means of any single institution of the Jewish people to carry forward. JPPI must rely upon the research being done by others. Yet, the JPPI project will in turn provide leverage for those efforts by bringing their outputs together in one venue. The goal is to attain greater insight through their intelligent juxtaposition and produce a synthesis that will prove meaningful in helping understand and meet the challenges that face the Jewish people in the years to come.

### **Indicators of Jewish People Well-Being**

The JPPI indicators project seeks to enhance understanding of where, when, how, and to what effect policy may affect Jewish people concerns. Measurement of important indicators could:

- Provide more effective early warning on emerging issues. Even if apparent to some, issues could gain wider consideration and be evaluated more effectively within a larger framework.

- Make it easier to assess whether the Jewish people or individual communities are thriving or declining.
- Inform strategic decisions and the framing of Jewish people-oriented policies, and
- Allow us to measure the performance of initiatives and actions to understand what is working and when modification might be required.

The project is not a substitute for rigorous research; it is its complement. A “dashboard” of well-chosen indicators would provide lay and community leaders with gauges for assessing the state of being of the Jewish people in its various communities. The fruits of research would provide the inputs and the dashboard would add value by drawing the best insight we have into one place to be more easily accessed by a wider public. The full panel of dashboard gauges would provide more insight than any one indicator viewed in isolation. Juxtaposition can also point to what we do not yet know (or perhaps previously never asked) but whose importance may be made clearer.

No matter the vision, the challenges are great. This is true even in businesses whose bottom-line goals are few, whose interactions are governed by bodies of law, regulation, and practice, and whose organization is determined by long-shared experience, legal practice, and industry norms. To do so for the Jewish people with more than 3,000 years of history, experience, custom and practice – and who continue to interact with surrounding cultures - presents a daunting task indeed.

The next section discusses how JPPI intends to approach this task, and then is followed by an introduction to the types of data inputs that will be considered.

## 2. A Framework of Indicators for Jewish People Policy

A useful system of indicators would address issues of recurring importance to Jewish communities and also provide insight into events that occur during the year. There are technical concerns, but first come more general questions: How do we identify what

**Fundamental Jewish values are expressed as recurring activities or historical "projects"**

indicators would be truly useful? What does any individual indicator mean for the entire fabric of Jewish people concerns? Choosing solely based on data availability is expedient but might cause fundamental issues to be unintended.

Indicators should be selected systematically. The initial strategy for doing so is to apply a version of the Balanced Scorecard now used in many businesses.<sup>4</sup> This is designed to provide an integrated view across many aspects of a complex organization's interests and actions. It could be modified into a dashboard for the Jewish people as well. We will outline below the directions JPPI will explore.

### 2.1 What do Jews care about?

Strategy consists of choosing actions that will move us closer to achieving goals we consider desirable. If we are to measure and assess trends to aid Jewish people decision making, what purposes do we seek to advance?

Few human groups who consider themselves a unity match the Jewish people for diversity. The touchy issue of core Jewish values can spark more heat than light. One way to remove the need for codifying a core set of Jewish goals is to instead observe what it is that Jews, as individuals and communities, do. Fundamental Jewish values are expressed as recurring activities or historical "projects". Similar to the economic concept of revealed preference, Jews reveal through their allocation of effort what matters to them. Thinking in terms of the Jewish agenda places the focus on these projects rather than the values that may impel them.

All who identify themselves as part of the Jewish people are likely involved in at least one of these projects. The five major projects to be discussed below also have an integrated quality. Success in any one of these projects is at worst neutral with respect to progress in the others. Most Jews will, in fact, see a positive interaction: while as individuals they may not be equally attached to each project, they are glad that others are pushing them forward.

A Balanced Scorecard highlights more dimensions for assessment than the traditional bottom-line approach. It achieves coherence because the common denominator is the progress of a specific enterprise. So, too, the Jewish enterprise of 3,000 years consists of several projects. What would be the balanced scorecard equivalent for getting a sense of how the Jewish enterprise is faring?

The following areas of long-standing Jewish interest are the projects for this enterprise:

## Sustain and Develop Judaism

This project is based on the religious-value component of Jewish peoplehood. It is directed toward building and living within communities that are predicated upon interpretations of *Torah*—and actively exploring what it means to do so while also members of the surrounding mass society and in the face of external pressure for change.

## Israel as a Thriving Jewish Nation-State

The Jewish national project seeks a modern, democratic, Jewish nation-state in the historical land of Israel that is accepted by the community of nations and regarded by them as being equal in sovereignty, legitimacy and respect.

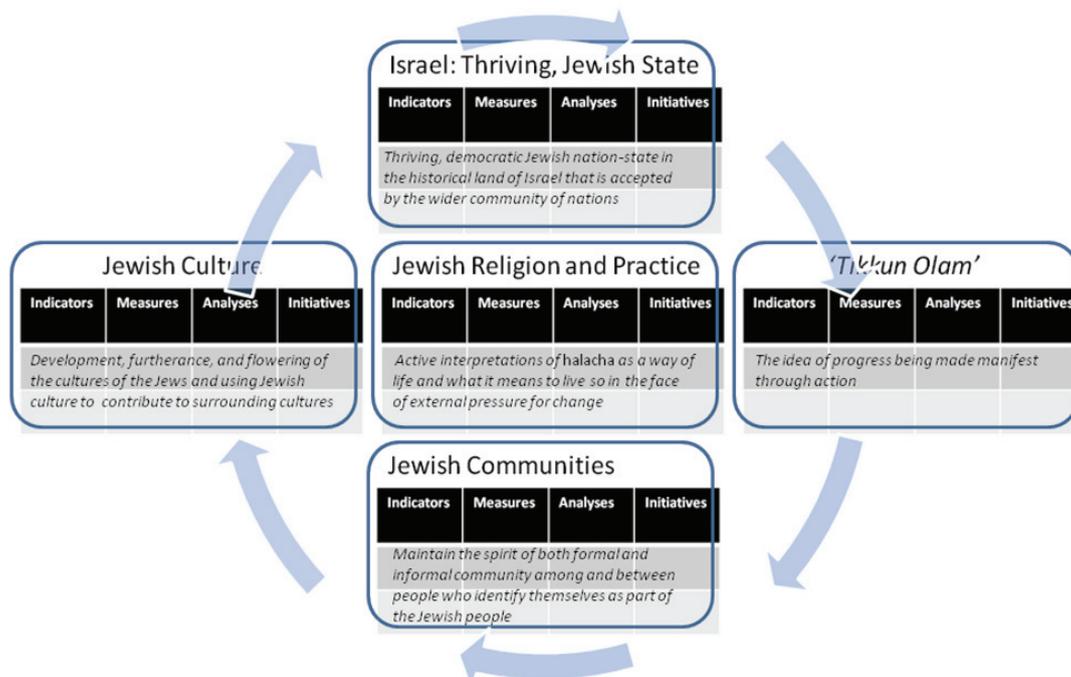
## Create Culture Emanating from Jewish Roots

This project seeks to perpetuate the cultures of the Jews and build upon their accomplishments in generating wisdom, aesthetics, and contributions to ethical progress.

## Bettering the World

Jewish thought has been instrumental in the idea of progress. The concept of *'tikkun olam'* repairing a wounded world to bring it closer to the ideal framed in Torah has been generalized in recent years and raised to a significance that troubles some.<sup>5</sup> We use it here, however, as a convenient theme: Discovering the foundations of human

**Figure 2.1. Balanced Scorecard of Major Jewish People Projects**



[Source: JPPI]

health and employing that knowledge to combat disease is, in this sense, a project emerging from Jewish roots.

### **Ensure Secure, Thriving, and Connected Communities**

This project involves security, socioeconomic conditions, collective action toward Jewish ends, and the thriving of identity. This project seeks to maintain the spirit of both formal and informal community among people who identify themselves as part of the Jewish people and encompasses the collective structures and actions of those communities.

Figure 2.1 places these five Jewish people projects in a Balanced Scorecard format. For each the key questions are what indicators are relevant, how can we measure them practically, what analyses will they support, and what initiatives would further them.

## **2.2 Main drivers of Jewish well-being**

An over-riding issue for devising indicators and measures is to determine what we truly need to measure. If we measure, analyze, and derive policy implications from individual dimensions such as demography, economics, culture and geopolitics, considering each in isolation, this will lead to biased inferences and possibly counter-productive policy recommendations. We need a framework providing an overarching structure to our inquiries.

A dashboard should arise from consideration of Jewish people goals (the projects above) and those

drivers that affect Jews and their interests. Two earlier JPPI projects identified several such key drivers.<sup>7</sup> From these and other works, we identified a list of drivers that would seem of greatest importance for their effect on Jewish people issues:

- The demography of Jewish communities and the Jewish people in the world;
- Formation and strengthening of individual Jewish identity;
- Relations between Israel and Diaspora communities;
- The economics of the Jewish people and Jewish communities;
- Jewish creativity and culture;
- Leadership in Jewish communities and their institutions;
- Geopolitics; and
- Sources and balances of hard and soft power

The indicators in the five graphs in the previous section each relate to at least one of these drivers. But it is also clear that while drivers they may be, they are also complex composites of forces, trends, outputs, outcomes, implications, and potential venues for action. Moving toward measurement and analysis means achieving clarity on the distinctions within these prismatic dimensions. "Increased Jewish identity" may not in itself be a clear goal or a good in itself – its value lies principally as a driver towards something else – e.g. increased Jewish engagement, or increased Torah study or enhanced Jewish family life.

**Table 1. Weighting of Importance of Matrix Nodes in Determining Jewish People Thriving or Decline**

	Internal Dimensions							External Dimension		
	Demo- graphy	Identity	Israel- Diaspora Relation	Economic	Creativity	Leader- ship	Geo- politics	Hard & Soft power	Globalization; Demography; Economics; Culture; Anti- Semitism; S&T; Energy; Environment; Health; Cyberspace...	various
Jewish People Projects										
“No-surprise” Interval of Change	7-10 year	5-7 year	1-5 year	1 year	1-5 year	5-7 year	1 year	1-5 year		
Sustain and develop Jewish religion and practice										
Israel as a thriving Jewish nation-state										
Culture emerging from Jewish roots										
Bettering the World										
Secure, thriving, connected communities										
Key: Core relationships										
Major relationships										

[Source: JPII]

## 2.3 Systematic Framework for Jewish People Indicators

We now place together the two principal elements we have discussed, goals and drivers. Table 1 is an initial design of the structure within which we will situate the indicators to be included in the dashboard. The columns correspond to the main drivers/dimensions that affect the fortunes of the Jewish people. The rows lay out the major projects of the Jewish people. Each cell of this matrix therefore allows us to determine what relationship between forces and outcomes may exist and what measures would serve as indicators to understand the nature and meaning of trends.

Clearly, any framework will be an oversimplification. The interconnections between the elements are many and profound. But we can begin with the intersections that would seem to matter most. Table 1 shows such a first cut, based on a review of previous literature. Color coding shows those relationships at the core of the Jewish enterprise and, in a lighter shade, those that while perhaps not core still have major influence over events and outcomes. We have also noted that for some dimensions it is meaningful to construct indicators of change on a yearly basis. For others, in the absence of major surprises, it is more appropriate to look across several years before observing detectable change.

The JPPI indicators project will develop measures as part of a dashboard that will illuminate the trends among the important drivers and the intersection of these trends with the specific projects of the Jewish people. We will root these

indicators in the issues of greatest interest to Jews in communities around the world. For example, Table 1 shows where core relationships exist between demography and three Jewish people projects. Each such intersection might yield one or more indicators for a dashboard of indicators constructed along Balance Scorecard principles. Table 2 shows some candidate indicators for inclusion into a Jewish people dashboard.

JPPI's indicator project will follow the program we have outlined in this article to engage in the construction of such a dashboard. As a first step, we present below some early explorations into available data and their types by examining several issues that most of the Jewish people would find important.

## 3. First Steps toward Measurement

This section illustrates the four different types of data that would be necessary to draw upon in constructing the indicators for a Jewish people dashboard. The first involves the direct use of quantitative data. The second explores the use of existing data series to construct *indirect* indicators that may provide a perspective on issues of interest. The third examines using survey data to understand attitudes toward Israel and Jewish identity in three diaspora Jewish communities. The last uses qualitative descriptors within a systematic framework to tally changes in the geopolitical environment. The examples illustrate the strengths and limitations of the various kinds of data.

**Table 2. Examples of Indicators Based on Demography for Potential Use in Jewish People Balanced Scorecard “Dashboard”**

PROJECT	ISSUE	INDICATOR
Judaism	What are the trends within JP faith groupings, including unaffiliated and secular?	Size and rates of growth of different Jewish people faith communities
Israel	How may demography affect the Jewish character of Israel?	Size and rates of growth of Jewish and non-Jewish communities within Israel
	How do issues related to daily life and security affect decisions on emigration from Israel?	Relative rates of Jewish immigration to and emigration from Israel
Jewish Community	How are specific Jewish communities thriving or declining?	Size and rates of growth of JP communities, including unaffiliated
	What are the trends in identity and affiliation among out-married couples and their children?	Percentage of children under 18 who are being raised by in- and out-married couples.
	How do JP communities change according to definitions of Who is a Jew?	Size and rates of growth of JP new entrants through conversion or choice

### 3.1 ‘Take You the Sum of All the Congregation of the Children of Israel’

Demographic and economic data appear the most definitive of all. Numbers of people or amounts of goods and services lend themselves to precise definition and measurement. Table 3 has appeared in previous Annual Assessments, updated by the most current data.

The project will draw upon such data but also seek to understand what lies behind them. For example, two additional recent studies of the size of U.S. Jewry find numbers of as much as 6.3 million for 2010 rather than 5,275,000 as in Table 3.<sup>8</sup> The difference between the two numbers lies largely in issues of methodology and data gathering. While these are to large extent technical, they also reflect upon the

Table 3. Selected Indicators on World Jewry – 2010

Country	Jewish Population, Core Definition <sup>o</sup>			GDP per Capita (PPP \$US)	HDI Rank	Jewish Day-school Attendance (%)	Out-marriage Rate (%)	Visited Israel, % of Jew. Pop.	Aliyah
	1970 <sup>a</sup>	2010 <sup>b</sup>	Projected 2020 <sup>c</sup>						
World	12,633,000	13,428,300	13,827,000 <sup>i</sup>	2008 <sup>d</sup> 86,008-268	2009* 27	Most recent <sup>a</sup> 97	Most recent <sup>a</sup> 5	Most recent <sup>a</sup> 100	2008 <sup>e</sup> 13,681 <sup>f</sup>
Israel	2,582,000	5,413,800	6,453,000 <sup>i</sup>	28,474	27	97	5	100	-
North America	5,686,000	5,652,300 <sup>n</sup>	5,581,000	47,440 – 39,098					2,281
United States	5,400,000	5,275,000	5,200,000 <sup>g</sup>	47,440	13	25 <sup>b</sup>	54	>35	2,019
Canada	286,000	375,000	381,000	39,098	4	55	35	>65	262
Latin America	514,000	387,300	364,000						955
Argentina	282,000	182,300	162,000 <sup>j</sup>	14,408	49	50-55	45	>50	188
Brazil	90,000	95,600	90,000 <sup>i</sup>	10,466	75	71	45	>50	208
Mexico	35,000	39,400	42,000	14,534	53	85	10	>70	83
Other	107,000	70,000	70,000 <sup>i</sup>	18,977-1,317		75	15-95	>50	476
Europe non-FSU	1,331,000	1,144,500	1,070,000	82,441-6,897					2,598

France	530,000	483,500	482,000	34,205	8	40	40-45	>70	1,562
United Kingdom	390,000	292,000	278,000 <sup>i</sup>	36,358	21	60	40-45	>75	505
Germany	30,000	119,000	108,000	35,539	22	<20	>60	>50	86
Hungary	70,000	48,600	34,000	19,533	43	<15	60	..	54
Other EU <sup>j</sup>	171,000	148,900	134,000	82,441- 22,097		10-25	33-75	>50	262
Other non-EU <sup>k</sup>	140,000	52,500	34,000	53,738- 6,897		5-20	50-80	..	227
FSUI	2,151,000	330,000	173,000	20,561- 2,023					5,603
Russia	808,000	205,000	130,000 <sup>i</sup>	15,948	71	<15	80	..	2,600
Ukraine	777,000	71,500	25,000 <sup>i</sup>	7,342	85	<15	80	..	1,310
Rest FSU Europe <sup>l</sup>	312,000	34,900	15,000 <sup>i</sup>	20,561- 2,984		<15	65-75	..	590
FSU Asia	254,000	18,600	3,000	11,434-2984		<15	50-75	..	1,103
Asia (rest) <sup>m</sup>	104,000	19,200	21,000	34,116-930					134
Africa	195,000	76,200	60,000	20,829-268					1,892
South Africa	118,000	70,800	57,000	10,136	129	85	20	>75	257
Oceania	70,000	115,000	105,000 <sup>i</sup>	36,918- 2,108					119
Australia	65,000	107,500	97,000 <sup>i</sup>	36,918	2	65	22	>65	109

\* UN HDI Report 2009 | a Source: Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, The Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.  
| b Source: S. DellaPergola, World Jewish Population, 2010. Berman Institute – North American Jewish Data Bank, 2010-Number 2. | c Source: adapted from DellaPergola, Rebhum, Tolts (2000), medium variant. | d Source: IMF 2008 data. | e Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2008). | f Including country not specified. | g After downward reduction following NJPS 2001. | h Based on adjusted response from NJPS 2001. | i Revised population projections for 2020. | j Without Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria. | k Including Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria. | l With Baltic states. | m Without Israel, FSU and Turkey. | n Includes Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands | o Includes all who, when asked, identify themselves as Jews or who are identified as Jews by a respondent in the same | household, and do not have another monotheistic religion. Also includes persons of Jewish parentage who claim no current religious | or ethnic identity.

socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the Jewish population. Both surveys point toward large

### **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada and the short-range missile attacks from Lebanon and Gaza changed perceptions about the vulnerability of Israel's population**

numbers of individuals who self-identify as Jews but are indifferent to Jewish culture (secular or religious) or issues of Jewish concern. If the larger number is accepted, it implies an increasing, rather than decreasing, population trend. But it also implicitly suggests a greater incidence of individuals indifferent to Jewishness and decreases the share of Jewish children

in Jewish educational frameworks.

Furthermore, both estimates refer to what demographers call the "core" Jewish population. There are other Jewish populations that might be counted. For the US there is an "enlarged" Jewish population of 6.7 million which:

Includes *core* Jewish population plus non-Jewish members of the respective households. A similar figure of 6.7 million obtains for total persons of Jewish parentage, regardless of current identification. Further adding all the respective non-Jewish household members generates an aggregate of about 8 million. By the criteria of [Israel's] Law of Return, the total number of eligible persons might approximate 10 to 12 million Americans.<sup>9</sup>

This reinforces the JPPI interest in indicators that are rooted in core concerns as in Table 2. Jewish

population, whether core, enlarged or Law of Return depends on the question being asked and also the purpose behind asking the question. The apparently simple issue of measurement is intimately bound to fundamental concepts and definitions which each, in turn, have implications for policies and Jewish people-based strategies.

### **3.2 'How Goodly Are Thy Tents, O Jacob': Residence Construction in Israel**

Existing data bases may be used to gain insight, albeit indirectly, into issues of Jewish policy interest. In the absence of surveys, it might be possible to detect changes based on how people act. This is not a substitute for formal scholarship. Rarely can individual effects be isolated as a controlled experiment. Rather, constructing such indirect indicators from existing data is potentially a cost-effective expedient for developing indicators, not evidence that would, in itself, be sufficient to prove a case.

The second Intifada and then short-range missile attacks from Lebanon, Gaza and Sinai changed perceptions about the vulnerability of Israel's population. The threat of a vastly more massive Hezbollah missile attack looms as does the possibility of similar assaults by Syria and, conceivably, Iran. Coupled with the Iranian nuclear threat, such capability by a state that misses no opportunity to display its enmity toward Israel would profoundly change the world. What effect has this had on individual Israeli families and the behavior of Jews outside Israel?

One potential gauge is the price and supply of housing in Israel. In Israel as elsewhere, housing usually

represents the largest single component of household budgets. Housing prices and supply are subject to many influences, especially in a nation of immigrants. But economic growth will also affect prices and construction. Moreover, a decision over how much housing a family can afford is based upon attitudes toward future individual and national prospects. In Israel there is the additional component of Jews from outside purchasing part-time housing, principally in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. This last component could be quite volatile. Tourism to Israeli was greatly affected by the outbreak of the second Intifada causing especially vulnerable sectors to suffer heavily.

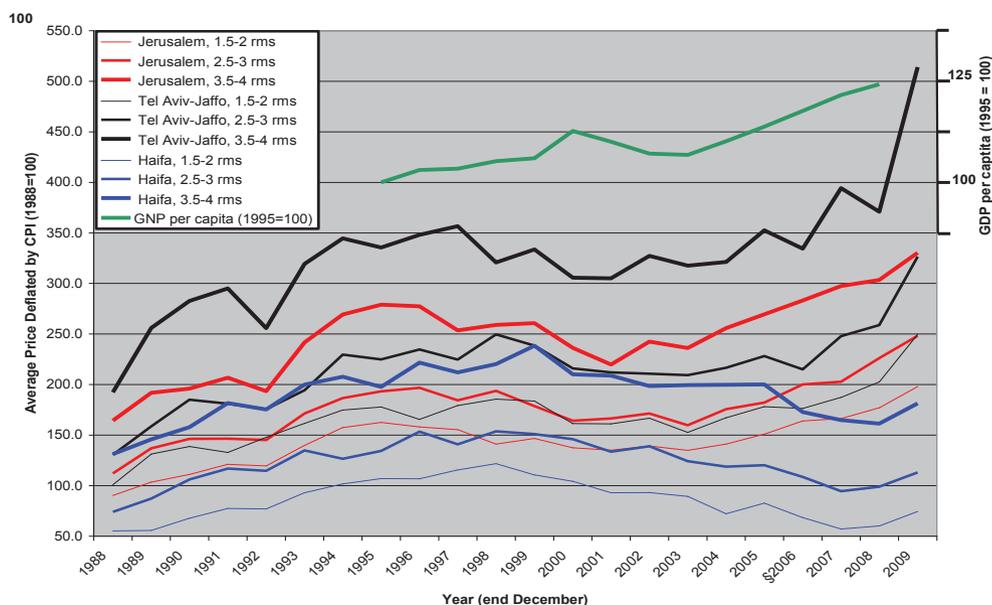
What do residential housing statistics tell us about how sensitive Israel is to changes in internal and external mood? Have Jews outside of Israel “voted with their feet” on Israel’s future prospects? Figure

3.1 shows average residential prices, by size class, in the major cities over twenty years.<sup>10</sup> The data do not otherwise characterize quality or neighborhood, both significant determinants of price. The figure also shows GDP per capita from 1995.

All categories show the same general trend through 2000. The two highest-priced categories peak in 1997-1998, then decline. The others peak a year or two later in 1998-1999.<sup>11</sup>

From 2001, the prices in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv track with the changes in economic growth. In fact, during the first years of this latter period, prices in most size categories appear to be mildly counter-cyclical. That is, they hold steady or even grow in the years GDP per capita declines. These years, 2001 and 2002, were also the height of the second Intifada terror campaign.

**Figure 3.1. Average Price in Constant NIS (1,000s) for Residences in the Major Cities of Israel, by Residence Size, 1988-2009; and Real GDP Growth per capita, 1995-2009**



[Sources: JPPI | Data: Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem no. 24, 2009/2010; Israel Central Bureau of Statistics]

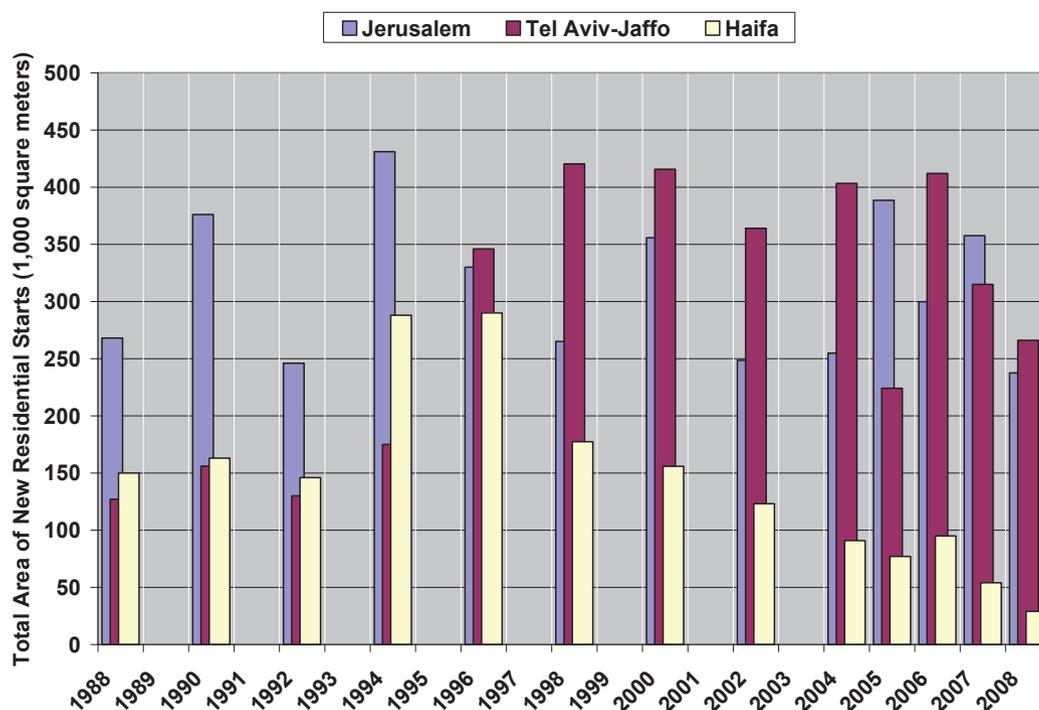
For Haifa, decline begins with the 1998-1999 general slump in prices – not explicable by war, terror, or national economic downturn – and continue with an uptick only in the last years. Nothing suggests that Haifa was not harder hit than other places by the terror assault of the early 2000's. The decline accelerates with the second Lebanon War in 2006. Since some of Haifa's housing supply was damaged during the war, this suggests that the price effect is explained by a reduction in demand.

One explanation for these trends is that Tel Aviv, as the cultural and business center of the country, and Jerusalem, as the spiritual home of the Jewish people,

are attractive to non-Israelis who wish either to live in Israel or to invest in a part-time home or a rental. Jerusalem is particularly interesting since it was the most consistent second Intifada terror target, but also a major focus for Jews outside Israel. If the data do not demonstrate that the latter was a greater attractive force than the former was a deterrent, neither do they sustain a hypothesis that disturbing political-military-security events concerning Israel affect the behavior of non-Israeli Jews – at least as measured in this one dimension.<sup>12</sup>

Other data provide a different indirect indicator of geopolitical and security effects on housing

**Figure 3.2. Total Annual New Residential Construction Starts, by City and Year, in Thousands of Square Meters, 1988-2008**



[Source: JPPI | Data: Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem no. 24, 2009/2010]

activity. Housing prices are “sticky” in the absence of large precipitating events. Once set, leases, rents, and mortgages change slowly except in unusual circumstances. Residential construction, however, is a more responsive barometer of current economics and individuals’ perceptions of the future. Construction starts reflect expectations about interest rates, demand, the economy, and future asset value. A project may be accelerated in expectation of increased demand or perhaps delayed (a costly decision) because of uncertainty.

Figure 3.2 displays annual data on residential construction starts. Here, the inference is more equivocal. The data reinforce the impression of a Haifa slowdown, but the trends for Jerusalem and Tel Aviv-Jaffa diverge. Both show a recent slowdown despite the economic upswing.<sup>13</sup> This may represent a return to normal levels of construction after an extraordinary spurt in the 1990s due to Russian immigration. But those immigrants – and their children – are now better off economically than as *olim* and so likely to demand bigger and higher quality housing.<sup>14</sup>

The change in dynamism between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv is striking. During the years before the Oslo process coinciding with the first Intifada, new housing starts in Jerusalem, the largest mixed population city in Israel and therefore site of considerable communitarian conflict, dwarfed those of Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Haifa. Indeed, Jerusalem’s “front-line” status may be a partial explanation. While almost all residential construction in Tel Aviv-Jaffa would be private, there were major government projects to create entirely new residential communities within Jerusalem’s boundaries.

Since 1998, Tel Aviv matched or dominated Jerusalem in new construction. The height of the second Intifada’s terror assault upon civilian targets in 2002 saw a downturn from 2000 levels for all cities. However, the levels for 2008, the start of the global recession were lower still. Although Israel weathered that storm, this was not clear until later and construction decisions are based on expectations. It is worth noting that construction in Jerusalem began once again to match Tel Aviv-Jaffa starting in 2005, seen even then as after the defeat of the second Intifada.

**Economic cycles affect individuals’ major economic decisions more than geopolitical events**

These data provide *prima facie* evidence that it is economic cycles more than geopolitical events that affect individuals’ major economic decisions. The year 2002, for example, marked not only the height of the second Intifada but also the stock market rout that began with the “dot.com” meltdown of 2000 and the first full year after the 9/11 economic shock. It becomes less clear how distinguishable are decisions made by Israelis from those of investors living abroad. This might be addressed by exploring indicators of this type focused not on entire cities but in selected areas known for high non-Israeli purchases and habitation. In any case, dispositive proof is not necessary for an indicator to be of value. JPPI will continue to explore data of this type to explore indirect indicators for the dashboard.

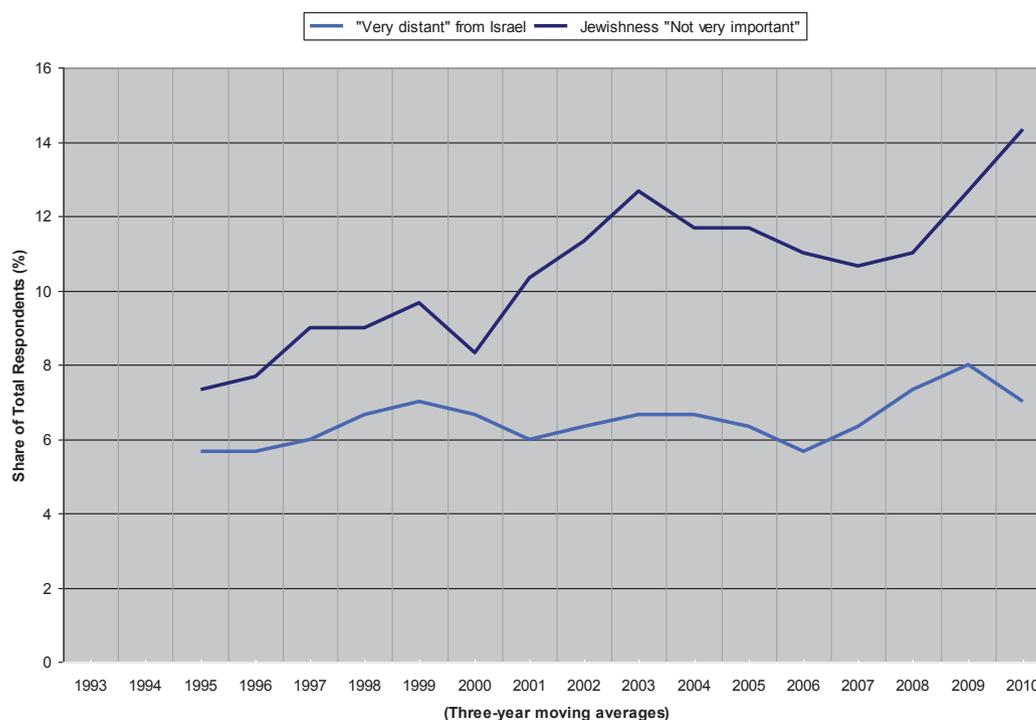
### 3.3 'If I Forget Thee, O Jerusalem': Attachment to Israel and Jewish identity.

A recent article by Peter Beinart brought the “distancing” hypothesis to the attention of the Jewish world.<sup>15</sup> This holds that in some diaspora communities the Jewish population, particularly among the young, has grown more distant from formerly strong identification with Israel. The Beinart article puts forth a political explanation: Israeli actions have come to be perceived as running counter to the liberal perspective in which many young Jews in the West were reared.

This is but one instance of the complex relationship between Jewish identity, diaspora communities, and Israel. To what extent does identification with Israel form a part of individual Jewish identity? What role should Israel play in modern Jewish consciousness? To what extent does attachment to Israel enhance Jewish identity or, on the contrary, to what extent could disaffection with Israel actually impair Jewish identification?

Data to illuminate these questions are most often gathered through surveys, an expensive process. Surveys of Jewish opinion are complicated because of the need to identify appropriate subjects within

**Figure 3.3. Shares of Those Who Feel "Very Distant" from Israel and Those Who Feel Jewish Identity is "Not Very Important" in Their Life (3-year moving averages)**



[Source: JPPI | Data: American Jewish Committee Survey of American Jewish Opinion, 1993-2010]

the general population. Survey results are sensitive to format, phrasing, and response choices. Therefore, surveys are both episodic and difficult to compare.

Jewish people indicators should have the attribute of consistency to be of most value. This makes survey data particularly problematic. However, among the US Jewish community there is one annual survey that maintains consistency in questions and responses.

Figure 3.3 shows part of the responses to two of the survey questions. It plots responses of those who feel very distant from Israel and those who say that being Jewish is not very important in their life. The data have been shown as three-year moving averages to smooth out year to year volatility and make it easier to detect trends.

These data do not appear to support a direct connection between declining affinity for Israel and the problems of Jewish identity in the US. There is little variation among those who feel very distant from Israel, especially given the expected

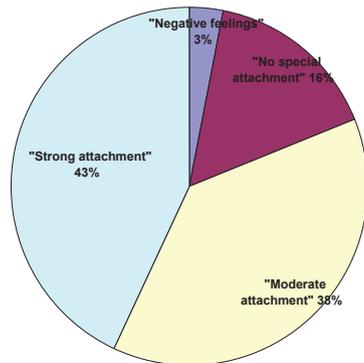
3-percent error rate of the poll. In other words, we could not state with certainty that this share has changed during the 1993-2010 period.

The data do suggest that the source of distancing from Jewish identity itself needs to be sought elsewhere. The share of those for whom Jewish identity is irrelevant appears to be on the rise. This rose from an average of less than 8 percent in 1993-1995 to more than 14 percent in 2008-2010. Even assuming a 3-percent error rate, the growing change from previous years appears to be real. This suggests that unlike disaffection from Israel that may be a life-cycle phenomenon (that is, the young may feel a less strong attachment that may grow with age,) distancing from Jewish identity itself may be age-cohort related: younger age groups are forming beliefs that carry forward into adulthood.

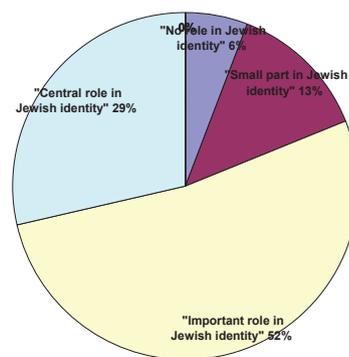
The answers to questions about the relationship between Jewish identity and affinity toward Israel can only come from rigorous research. But indicators can both help to frame research questions and illuminate

**Figure 3.4. Selected results from two polls of Jews in the United Kingdom, 1995 and 2010**

"Can you say whether you have any special feelings of attachment (or otherwise) towards Israel?" (1995)



"Which of the following BEST describes the role of Israel in terms of your Jewish identity?" (2010)



[Source: Jewish People Policy Planning Institute | Data: Kosmin, Lehrman, and Goldberg, 1997; Graham and Boyd, 2010.]

for others what areas are deserving of further Jewish people effort. For example, no other Jewish community yields similarly consistent survey data. Figure 3.4, based on two surveys of the United Kingdom's Jewish community, illustrates some of the difficulties.

Both surveys, in 1995 and 2010, were professionally conducted. The fact that they were not done annually is not in itself a problem; the results are as credible as those for the AJC annual surveys. However, the two surveys asked different questions and framed possible responses so that comparison between them difficult as well as comparisons to similar results elsewhere.

For the third-largest Jewish community, France, there are no similar surveys. Figure 3.5 shows one point estimate for the year 2002 that addresses Jewish identity directly but also indirectly allows

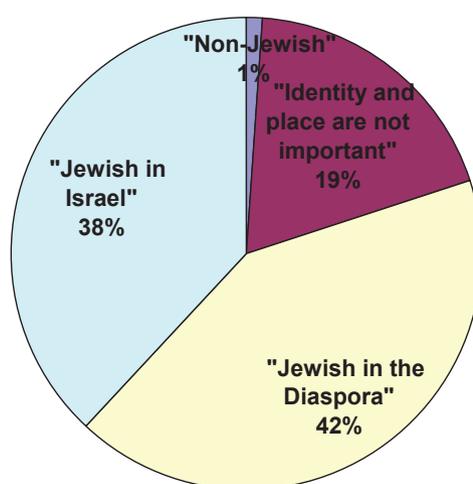
inference about individual attachment to Israel and issues of identity.

The UK and French polls are suggestive and provide as good a baseline as we are likely to find for those communities. But it is the direction of change that would be of greatest interest. These three examples from the leading diaspora communities illustrate how national organizations in the other major centers of world Jewish population could both extend and deepen our knowledge in the realm of individual identity formation and the effects on community health.

### 3.4 'Nation Shall Not Lift Up Sword Against Nation': Geopolitics

The realm of geopolitics holds considerable importance for Israel's security as well as for the health and well-being of all Jewish communities.

**Figure 3.5. Selected results from a poll of Jews in France, 2002**  
**"If you could be born again, how would you wish to be born?" [2002]**



[Source: JPPI | Data: Cohen, 2009]

It also presents a different set of challenges for measurement. While simple quantitative indicators might be desirable, few would capture the nuances of this realm. The most obvious quantitative indicators would be largely peripheral to the most significant developments.

Jewish people indicators need not be limited to numbers. Rather, the selection should be rooted in the importance – or perceived importance – of the phenomena involved. In the case of geopolitics, it may be sufficient to highlight what appear to be salient developments.

This calls for judgment and therefore raises the potential for bias. Of course, biases exist with quantitative indicators as well; in many ways they are even easier to mask. Bias may be reduced by applying a consistent framework when viewing the geopolitical landscape. Yet, even with an objective perspective there will almost certainly be a gap between what we may believe is significant and what actually become the main drivers of future events and circumstances.

By the nature of the subject, geopolitical indicators will focus a good deal on Israel. While today we witness the rise of non-state actors, historically and for the foreseeable future the principal geopolitical actors will be nation-states. Israel, as the only nation-state that has a specifically Jewish character, recognizes Jewish concerns as a matter of Israel's very *raison d'être*.

For these reasons, JPPI will explore means for drawing in the views of experts in geopolitical dynamics. We will employ collaborative analytical methods to develop indicators that may then be included in the larger “dashboard”. It may be possible to provide normative input by consulting panels of

experts on how to weigh the relative importance or influence of specific events. We caution, however, that perhaps the last thing we should desire when facing an uncertain and potentially highly varied future is too-early consensus. History has shown time and time again how important it is to have several guesses about the world to come.

In the balance of this section, we will illustrate the value – and hazards – of dealing with this type of data. We will take a retrospective look at salient geopolitical developments since the founding of JPPI in 2002 that have specific importance for Jews, Jewish communities, and Israel as the civilizational state of the Jewish people.

We first compiled events and trends under four main categories. First were location-specific occurrences in Europe, Asia, the FSU, North America, Latin America, the Greater Middle East, Iran, and Israel. Our second category included developments with a global character such as the new geography of cyberspace and media as well as international organizations and NGOs.<sup>16</sup> The third category was called “Game Changers” – events that incline us to view the before and after as two different eras. Finally, we included “Trends to Watch”: clear events or trends that may or may not have importance for Jewish people interests as well as trends that may not fully emerge but would clearly have importance if they did.

**Israel, as the only nation-state that has a specifically Jewish character, recognizes Jewish concerns as a matter of Israel's very *raison d'être***

We then selected the leading events or trends from these lists and placed each into one of the four categories presented in the geopolitics section of this Annual Assessment: Those directly affecting the security of Jewish people, affecting general Jewish people interests, bearing on the Arab-Israeli conflict, or influencing the “triangle”, the relationship between Washington, Jerusalem, and US Jews. Each was then assigned a current understanding of its character. – a continuation of past trends, an event breaking from past trends, or a new trend.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, each event or trend was color coded as being widely seen to benefit (green) or harm (red) Jewish people interests. The Table 4 entries left uncolored pull in different directions or exhibit less common agreement on net effect. The early 2011 turmoil in Egypt provides a case in point. While it may be argued that the apparent fall of the Mubarak regime in Egypt should be color-coded red because of seriousness of losing the prime guarantor of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, another argument could be raised that that very event illustrates the fragility of the basis upon which that peace was predicated. There at least exists a possibility that if the formality of peace between the two countries can be preserved, it may be done on a broader and possibly more secure footing than before. Time will tell.

This section and Table 4 only introduce the issue of geopolitical indicators. It is not surprising that most entries are in red followed by those of uncertain direction. While current discomfort becomes all too apparent, potential benefits are usually less easily perceived. It is worth noting, however, that while both the continuing and new trends would appear to be unfavorable on balance,

a large number of the major events are either ambiguous or favor Jewish people interests. This may suggest the presence of opportunities not yet seized or brought to fullest bearing on the trends that surround Jewish people geopolitical interests.

### 3. Moving Forward

How well are the Jewish people doing? A definitive answer will always be difficult to frame. The previous discussion will convince some that the search for appropriate indicators will itself confound this question even more. Others will be confirmed in their view that the task JPPI has taken on is impossible.

We remain agnostic on this latter point; we are determined to address the former. The discussion has laid out the course we will follow in realizing what JPPI has envisioned. This course is motivated by two sets of words, widely separated in place and time. The seventeenth century’s Francis Bacon, one of intellectual founders of our modern world, said:

If we begin with certainties, we shall end in doubts; but if we begin with doubts, and are patient in them, we shall end in certainties (*Novum Organum*, 1620).

We couple this with words arising from the core of Jewish tradition:

לא עליך כל המלאכה לגמור, ולא אתה בן חורין להיבטל.  
(*It is not incumbent upon you to finish the work. Yet, you are not free to desist from it.*) (R. Tarfon; *Pirkei Avot*, 2:21)

It is in this spirit that we approach the task.

**Table 4. Salient Geopolitical Events or Trends Affecting Jewish People Security, Interests, the Arab-Israeli Conflict, or the Triangle: Washington-Jerusalem-U.S. Jews, 2002-2010**

	Continuing Trends	Trend-Breaking Events	New Trends
Directly affecting Jewish people security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Growing visibility of Islamic communities in Western Europe</li> <li>- Growth of political, militant Islam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Defeat of Second Intifada</li> <li>- Complete separation of Israeli and Palestinian communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Post-Afghanistan al-Qaeda survives and "metastasizes"</li> </ul>
Affecting Jewish people interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BDS, de-legitimization, and 'anti-Zionist' forms of anti-Semitism</li> <li>- Widely-perceived Israeli economic strength, especially in high-tech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- US invasion and occupation of Iraq</li> <li>- "Great Recession" begins; greatest effect in U.S. and Europe</li> <li>- Madoff scandal emphasizes new 'normal' of lower Jewish giving with new local philanthropic needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rise of internet: individual identity affirmed; cognitive environment is personalized to taste</li> <li>- Decline of professional news reporting affects Jewish and Israeli "background" stories</li> </ul>
Arab-Israeli conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Iranian nuclearization: raises regional threat; fuels drive for either nuclearized or nuclear-free Middle East</li> <li>- Growth of offensive missile capacity, in Syria and by Hezbollah/Hezbollah</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Death of Yasser Arafat; rise of Palestine-focused (as opposed to Israel-focused) PA leadership</li> <li>- Arab League peace plan repudiates "Three 'No's of Khartoum"</li> <li>- Second Lebanon War; Operation Cast Lead</li> <li>- Overthrow of post-1952 order in Egypt<sup>17</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hezbollah/Hamas all-but-sovereign control of territories changes region's political calculations</li> <li>- Wave of popular Arab unrest undermines past bases for autocratic, secular rule<sup>17</sup></li> </ul>
Washington-Jerusalem-US Jews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- US popular support for Israel remains widespread</li> <li>- Continuing polarization of Israeli political parties along dimensions of peace, settlement, and religious life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- J Street manifests cracks in "AIPAC Consensus"</li> <li>- Formation of <i>Kadima</i> and <i>Atzmaut</i> parties</li> <li>- Barak Obama's election</li> <li>- Renewal of US engagement in Israel-Palestine negotiations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perceived decline in US political, moral, economic, and military influence</li> </ul>

(Source: JPP)

## Endnotes

1. The figures on rockets and missiles of all types in the hands of Hezbollah must necessarily be rough estimates when relying upon non-classified sources. The time series in the graph is largely based upon articles appearing in the *New York Times*: “U.S. Strains to Stop Arms Flow” (6 December 2010), “Stronger Hezbollah Emboldened for Fights Ahead” (6 October 2010), “Israel Says Syria Gave Missiles to Hezbollah” (14 April 2010), “A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel with Its Training, Tactics and Weapons” (7 August 2010), “Arming of Hezbollah Reveals U.S. and Israeli Blind Spots” (19 July 2006).
2. DellaPergola, Sergio (2010). “World Jewish Population, 2010”, Berman Institute – North American Jewish Data Bank, 2010-Number 2.
3. Ben-David, Dan (2009). “A Macro Perspective of Israel’s Society and Economy” in Ben-David, Dan (ed.) *State of the Nation Report: Economy, Society and Policy in Israel, 2009*. Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, September, pp. 17-48.
4. Kaplan, R. S. and D. P. Norton, “The balanced scorecard: measures that drive performance”, *Harvard Business Review*, Jan – Feb pp. 71-80, 1992.; Kaplan, R. S. and D. P. Norton, *Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action*, Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.
5. While a marginal concept in traditional Jewish thought, its growing usage may signal a desire among individuals to find a means to define their particularity as Jews while reconciling this with the universal ideal that has become more normative in Western societies.
6. The 2030 project led by Avi Gil and Einat Wilf identified several dimensions to describe alternative scenarios of the future thriving or decline of the Jewish people. These include internal dimensions described as constituents of the motive force providing for varying degrees of Jewish-people “momentum”. The macrohistory project of Shalom Wald, on the other hand, instead looked into the past to determine what have been the patterns of civilization-scale rise and fall and then extrapolating what appear to be the core lessons for understanding the thriving or decline of the civilization of the Jewish people.
7. See Tighe, Livert, Barnett & Saxe (2010). “Cross-survey analysis to estimate low-incidence religious groups.” *Sociological Methods & Research* 39 56-82; and Sheshkin, Ira and Arnold Dashefsky (2010). “Jewish Population in the United States, 2010”, Berman Institute – North American Jewish Data Bank, 2010-Number 1
8. DellaPergola, 2010; p. 62.
9. Data on prices derived from various time series shown in the 2009/2010 *Jerusalem Statistical Yearbook* (Choshen, 2010) and the CPI deflator was constructed from data obtained from the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. We have changed the original price (995.5) reported in the time series for the average price of 1.5-2

room dwellings in Haifa in 1990 to one of 95.5. All pricing data are averages from the October-December quarter of each reporting year. The figures are not disaggregated by actual dwelling living area (other than number of rooms), actual quality of the residence, or nature of the neighborhood. Thus, if there are significant differences in the ratios among different classes of dwellings in terms of these characteristics the comparison between cities would not be strictly comparable. This is, of course, over and above any distinguishing circumstances that may have occurred in one city and not the others in the comparison.

10. Prices are measured only in the last quarter of the year whereas the GDP per capita figures are annual. Thus in 2000, the GDP per capita series shows a local peak whereas housing prices in October-December of that year would reflect the influences of both the piercing of the “Dot Com” bubble (the rapid decline in the value of information and computer technology companies), and possibly a reaction to the outbreak of the second Intifada in Israel.
11. Another explanation could be that in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv local economies might be more resilient and better connected to general economic trends than was Haifa’s. Yet, while plausible for Tel Aviv the relative lack of industrial development in Jerusalem coupled with its large dependence on tourism makes this not at all certain.
12. The most recent construction data go through 2008 and so do not reflect the sharp upswing

in prices for all residences that began in 2009 and continued through 2010 as shown in the pricing data series which goes through 2009.

13. If we look at three-year moving averages to dampen some of the year-by-year volatility, the trends for Tel Aviv seem more responsive to the growth in the overall economy while those for Jerusalem decline.
14. Beinart, Peter (2010). “The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment”, *New York Review of Books*, 10 June.
15. While not geopolitical in the narrowest reading of the word, some of these trends have the potential for profoundly affecting the effective distance between individuals and groups, the pacing of international discourse and action, and the fundamental lens of perceptions by which all events and developments are characterized. In this sense, they are included for their power in framing the general environment governing the dynamics of geopolitics.
16. Each item that appears in the boxes of the matrix in Table 4 is intended to be self-contained. While it is clear that some are quite related to others that appear in this list, Table 4 is not intended to imply the existence of a dialectic dynamic, read from left to right. Rather, some of the major trends continue while others appear as new entrants not previously present or seen as dominant. While some of the trend-breaking events may, indeed, play a part in affecting the trajectory of trends, that would require analysis beyond the simple heuristics of Table 4.

17. At the time of this writing in early 2011, the full extent of change in the Arab world is unclear. But the fact that popular dissent was able to force the departure of Hosni Mubarak from power in Egypt and perhaps transform the basis of government that has operated in that country since 1952 is in itself an event that changes perceptions. It further will require, at the very least, a revisiting of Israel's basic security concepts and will clearly have an effect on wider Jewish interests in a manner presently difficult to foresee. And, as indicated in other evaluations presented in this Annual Assessment, it is one more potential factor affecting the triangle of Washington, Jerusalem, and American Jewish perceptions and questions about each other's roles. Although this is an event that falls outside the intended timeline of this section, it would appear remiss not to take advantage of the opportunity to examine how well such a potentially important event may be accommodated within the framework presented in this paper.

## **PART 2**

# **Significant Global Developments and Challenges: Possible Implications for the Jewish People**





## Developments in the Geopolitical Arena and their Possible Implications for Israel and the Jewish People (2009-2010)

The developments in the geopolitical arena in the passing year continue to pose significant dangers and challenges to Israel and the Jewish people. There is a continuation and often exacerbation of negative trends in geopolitical complexes that are relevant to Israel and the Jewish people:

- A. **The Global Complex**, where the erosion in the power and international standing of the US – the superpower whose friendship and aid to Israel are extremely critical, and which is also the home of nearly half of the Jewish people who are enjoying unprecedented thriving – continues.
- B. **The Middle-Eastern Complex**, where Iran continues to make progress towards acquiring nuclear weapons and increases its subversion in a region that is fraught with instability, extremism and terrorism; a region that is also revealing a new regional assertiveness by Turkey, characterized by Islamic and anti-Israeli overtones.
- C. **The Israeli-Arab Conflict Complex**, where the lack of a solution continues to pose a threat

to Israel's security and Jewish-democratic nature, helping to fuel the de-legitimization phenomena against Israel; concurrently, the possibility of reaching a decision point regarding the core issues of the permanent settlements is posing difficult dilemmas, some of which have a significant Jewish dimension.

- D. **The Jerusalem-Washington-US Jewry Relationship Triangle Complex**, which is a crucial strategic resource for the strength of Israel and the Jewish people that could face difficult challenges in the coming year.

These complexes are inevitably affected by each other. A large part of the trends taking place within them is not responsive to any intervention measures by Israel and the Jewish people, but in a limited number of cases, the policy pursued by Israel and the Jewish people could have a major impact. The year ahead could bring to maturation several critical processes which would necessitate either-or decisions whose influence on Israel and the Jewish people would be fateful.

## A. The Global Complex: Changes in the International Arena are Eroding US Relative Power

The defeat suffered by the Democratic Party in the US mid-term elections (November 2, 2010) stemmed from the disappointment caused by President Obama's failure to ensure recovery from the deep economic crisis in which it has been embroiled since 2008. The grim economic

**The Chinese and Indian economies continue to grow and are leading the process of recovery from the global economic crisis**

figures (especially in terms of unemployment and national debt), the dearth of foreign policy achievements and the rise of China, India and other powers all highlight the question whether we are in the midst of a transformation in the US's (and the West in general) international standing.

This question is crucial for Israel and the Jewish people. The unprecedented thriving of the Jewish people in recent decades is significantly correlated with the US, both as home to nearly half of the Jewish people, and as a supportive strategic partner to Israel. Any crack in the US position in the international arena therefore holds dangerous implications for the robustness of Israel and the Jewish people.

The ongoing economic crisis supports the school of thought that argues that the US is on a course of historic decline. Proponents of this approach argue that the uni-polar moment that characterized the

period immediately following the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War has ended, and that the geopolitical arena is consolidating into a new, multi-polar world order. (Some even suggest that until a new and functioning world order is consolidated, the international system will be marked by disorder, making the challenges of the times – which require increased international cooperation – even more difficult to cope with.) According to this view, the economic crisis, the worst in the last 75 years, is a severe blow to the geopolitical power of the West and causes the continued shift of economic might to the East, at the expense of the US and Europe. The economic crisis has exacerbated in Europe trends that undermine the very concept of the European Union and raises doubts regarding the future of the Euro as a viable common currency. The appointment of lackluster figures to EU leadership positions (November 19, 2009) indicates the corrosion in Brussels' position and the increase in nationalist trends, which are blossoming also in response to the growing aversion to the swelling ranks of Muslim immigrants on the Continent.

The Chinese and Indian economies continue to grow and are leading the process of recovery from the global economic crisis (adding a powerful rationale for Israel and the Jewish people to strengthen their ties with the Asian world). In this view, the global center of gravity is slipping farther away from the US, who is going to lack the necessary resources to demonstrate a globe-encompassing strategic activity. Data shows that already by 2015, the US's total debt will equal its GNP (whereas a decade ago the average national debt/GNP ratio was 35%). The harsh national debt figures indicate not only the

bleak situation of the American economy but also the severe constraints on Washington's ability to act in the international arena. The effort to reduce the debt may leave its mark on a wide range of areas: from avoiding any new wars to cuts in the foreign aid budget (which could affect Israel, which is at the top of the list of aid beneficiaries).

The "American Decline" school has its opponents, of course, who argue that the basic variables that dictate the power equation in the geopolitical arena (demography, geography, science, technology, natural resources, culture, education, etc.) have not changed significantly as a result of the economic crisis, and that it is too early to eulogize US centrality. The candidates to replace the US as world leader or at least to become part of the world's leadership are not equipped with an ideology that can compete with the appeal of the American ethos and culture; they are far from eager to claim world leadership; and they are deeply immersed in their internal problems (authoritarian China may soon face increasing demands by its growing middle classes for representation and democratization; India is still poverty ridden, with 400 million citizens still living without electricity).

The mid-term defeat raises the question whether President Obama's desire to focus efforts on foreign policy in general and on the peace process in the Middle East in particular would increase or decrease in the coming years. The coming months should provide some answers, but it is still worthwhile to examine where the President is positioned after two years in office. Obama's political defeat is not due to his functioning in the international arena, but to his incapability to provide achievements in the struggle

against the economic crisis and unemployment. Obama succeeded where his predecessors have failed, and has managed to pass the Health Reform Bill (March 23, 2010), but here too, the bill has spawned controversy and severe criticism, citing misguided presidential priorities in a time when all resources should have been channeled to economic recovery and job creation. The image of a weakened president leading a weakened superpower is eating away at Obama's ability to act successfully in the international arena.

Upon his entry to the White House, and in declared contrast to his predecessor's approach, Obama has introduced a foreign policy that in theory does not claim to impose US values on other countries, prefers dialog to belligerent options and opts to conduct itself in the international arena through collaborative multi-national moves

rather than as a single 'super-player.' Obama turned to US declared enemies in speeches and letters, calling upon them to "unclench their fists" and meet his extended hand in peace.<sup>1</sup> Within a few months he was able to transform the anti-American sentiments that had escalated during his predecessor's term, and even won the Nobel Prize for Peace (October 9, 2009) as a token of appreciation of his wishes and not necessarily his actual accomplishments.

**The image of a weakened president leading a weakened superpower is eating away at Obama's ability to act successfully in the international arena**

Two years later, it appears that these changes of atmosphere are not enough to secure success in the difficult tests threatening world stability: the economic crisis, the ecological crisis, poverty, nuclear proliferation, Iran, North Korea, the Israeli-Arab conflict, radical Islam, terrorism, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and more. It appears that the events and processes that fuel points of crisis around the world may not be exclusively derived from the content and

**Islamic terrorism keeps rising and threatening, and the Arab world is disappointed by the broken promises given by Obama in his Cairo speech (June 2009)**

style of US policy, but are largely the result of rooted problems and long-term trends. Indeed, the picture at mid-term is quite bleak. Iran continues to make progress in its nuclear program, and has not yet succumbed to sanctions. Islamic terrorism keeps rising and threatening, the Arab world is disappointed by the broken promises given in the Cairo Speech (June 4, 2009), and especially by the lack of progress in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and the failure to stop the settlement activity (which, according to Obama in Cairo, is illegitimate and must be stopped). Other fronts of US foreign policy provide reasons for frustration. China is increasingly more aggressive in its dealings with its neighbors, while refusing to obey the US demand to avoid artificial devaluation of the

Chinese currency, in a way that is detrimental to the US economy. North Korea, a nuclear power facing an imminent change of power, is not deterred. It did not hesitate to drown a South Korean warship, causing the death of 46 sailors (March 26, 2010), and to fire deadly artillery (November 23, 2010) on the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong.

US difficulties in leading the world are evident in international forums as well. Thus the Climate Conference in Stockholm ended feebly (December 18, 2009) without reaching a resolution that could effectively curtail global warming. Along with these hardships, there are achievements as well, as in the success to muster international support – especially by China and Russia – which enabled the passing of a sanctions resolution against Iran at the UN Security Council; and the successful effort to "reset" the relationship with Moscow. On April 8, 2010, a new START treaty was signed regarding the reduction of stockpiled nuclear warheads and limitation of strategic offensive arms and launching facilities. There is, however, no encouraging news from the three current warfronts, which have already claimed the lives of more than 5,600 American soldiers.

#### **Iraq:**

As of August 2010, the American presence in Iraq was reduced to 50,000 soldiers, and those are expected to return to the US by the end of 2011. Iran aspires to fill the vacuum created by the US withdrawal, already increasing its subversive activities and managing to push for a new Iraqi government that relies on a Shiite coalition led by

Nouri al-Maliki. Al-Qaeda has proven that it was still a force to be reckoned with by murderous attacks in Baghdad. Thus the question remains open whether Iraq could overcome the religious and ethnic divisions and function as a state, or become a focus of internal violence and external meddling (by Iran, Saudi Arabia and Syria) which could spill out and undermine the stability of the entire region.

### **The Pakistani-Afghani Complex:**

According to October 2010 polls, six out of ten Americans think that the war in Afghanistan is lost, and half of the interviewees do not have any idea what the war is about. Obama made it clear (March 27, 2009) that the US' goal was to defeat al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country in the future. For that goal to be achieved, the struggle against Taliban fighters must go on, as they are harboring and aiding al-Qaeda and thwarting the efforts of the central government in Kabul to govern the country. In his campaign for presidency in 2008 Obama argued that the threat to US security was greater from Afghanistan than from Iraq, and that from his point of view this was "a war of necessity". On December 1, 2009, Obama decided to dispatch 30,000 more soldiers to Afghanistan, while at the same time promising to withdraw them all in July 2011. Commanders in the battlefield have difficulty understanding how they are supposed to achieve victory in such a short time, when according to their view such victory largely depends on a patient reconstruction of

the local government's capabilities. The talks recently initiated between Karzai and the Taliban leaders demonstrate the futility of the aspirations to achieve an unequivocal victory in Afghanistan. These dismal facts were taken into consideration by the NATO members who have decided (in Lisbon, November 20, 2010) to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan by 2014. Instability continued to characterize the situation in Pakistan as well, where in addition to the continued presence of al-Qaeda warriors in the tribal regions on the Afghan border, there are severe economic problems, internal conflicts and ongoing tensions vis-à-vis India. The great floods that inundated 20% of the country's territories (July, 2010) exposed the poor infrastructure and the total incompetence of the corrupt government. These in turn fuel the fears for the fate of the nuclear arsenal possessed by Pakistan and the danger that it may fall into the hands of terroristic and Islamic extremist factors. In this context, the DNI assessment (April 2009), according to which al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations are striving to obtain non-conventional weapons (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) and that they would not hesitate to employ them, is still a major cause for concern.

**October 2010  
polls: 6 out  
of 10  
Americans  
think that  
the war in  
Afghanistan is  
lost, half do not  
have any idea  
what the  
war is about**

## B. The Regional Complex

### Direct Security Threats

These days, in which the present review is being concluded, provide two sharp reminders – in Jerusalem and in Chicago – regarding the direct security threats which stem from the Middle East and which Israel and the Jewish people continue to face. In Jerusalem, Major-General Amos Yadlin, head of the IDF's Intelligence Branch, upon his

**Former chief of Israel's military intelligence: "The processes of re-armament in the region continue, and in the next confrontation we will be facing more than one front"**

retirement, in his final briefing to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee (November 2, 2010), presented an extremely distressing picture of the threats faced by Israel, only a few days after the report that Jewish institutions in Chicago were the destination of intercepted explosive packages which were sent from Yemen by al-

Qaeda activists. Major-General Yadlin said that "the recent calm is unprecedented, but it must not mislead us, because the processes of re-armament in the region continue, and in the next confrontation we will be facing more than one front. That confrontation will be much harder with lots of casualties." The bleak picture described by Yadlin seems to be inconsistent with an atmosphere of relative calm in terms of security and the economic prosperity characterizing Israel

in recent times. In the passing year there have been relatively few security events. Israel's deterrent power seemed effective, vis-à-vis Hezbollah and Hamas' hostile activity, and the Palestinian security forces in the PA proved their competence in maintaining security and curbing terrorist activities. The heads of the Israeli security system describe the level of cooperation with Palestinian security apparatus as unprecedented and praise their performance. This achievement is largely attributed to Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, who is devoted to building the infrastructure of the 'future state' and boasts impressive accomplishments in the Palestinian economy (an IMF periodic report indicates high growth rates in the first half of 2010: 9% in the West Bank, 6% in Gaza). Israel is praised for its handling of the economic crisis and Stanley Fischer, Governor of the Bank of Israel, was crowned by the financial magazine *Euromoney* as Governor of the Year (October 2010). On the UN Human Development Index, published in November 2010, Israel went up to the 15th place (from the 27th in 2009). In a recent visit to Israel (December 2010), Vikram Pandit, CEO of Citigroup, summed up his impression of Israeli economy: "When you look at Israel's 4% growth, 4% deficit, and 6% unemployment, there are few such economies in the world today, and it is truly thanks not only to crisis management, but also to the relationship between the parties. Above all, it is something that touches on the clean way in which everyone works together to create a global competitive advantage and create an economy that is productive, original, and entrepreneurial. It is pleasant to be in such a place in the world where

there is such a feeling, a feeling that is not common in the contemporary economic world." Such positive figures create a background that seems to be diametrically opposed to Yadlin's warnings about the developments going on underneath the surface, which could soon confront Israel with a dramatically different reality. Tel-Aviv, rated third by the Lonely Planet guidebook's list of the top ten cities to visit in 2011, could, according to Yadlin's warning, be the target of a missile attack launched by both Hezbollah and Hamas (not to mention Syria and Iran). In his briefing, Yadlin referred to the entire range of threats: a massive procurement by Hezbollah, Hamas and Syria (who is shopping intensively for advanced weapons from Russia, mainly anti-aircraft systems which would hamper Israel air force's maneuverability, and lethal ground/sea missiles); and, of course, Iran, which is currently forced to cope with technical faults that hinder the progress of its nuclear program. In this context, world media carried reports about sabotage acts attributed to Israel: a computer worm nicknamed Stuxnet, which wreaked havoc on management and control systems in Iranian plants connected with its nuclear program, along with the attacks on two senior nuclear scientists in Tehran (November 29, 2010). Despite these delays, according to Yadlin, Iranians have enough enriched uranium stockpiled to build one bomb, and soon they will be able to manufacture two.

Indeed, the passing year has continued to exacerbate the threat posed by Tehran. On September 25, 2009, it was revealed that Iran has erected another enrichment facility near the city of Qom and concealed its existence. There are no longer any

questions marks surrounding Iran's intention to obtain nuclear arms or the capability to build them quickly. (Bear in mind that in 2007 the US Intelligence Community report asserted that Iran had discontinued its military nuclear program in 2003.) Thus, already in its first report under its new Japanese Director General, Yukiya Amano, in a sharp departure from the ambiguous language that characterized its predecessor, Egyptian Mohamed ElBaradei, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expressed its explicit fear about the possibility that Iran is carrying out clandestine operations to manufacture nuclear arms (February 19, 2010). The American effort to mount an international coalition to impose sanctions on Iran was relatively successful. Washington convinced Russia and China to impose another sanction package (the fourth in a row) on Iran in order to persuade it to stop uranium enrichment and allow effective supervision of its nuclear program (June 9, 2010). These sanctions are designed to prevent Iran from acquiring heavy weapon systems (and indeed Russia announced that it will not supply Iran with the S-300 ground/air missile systems), as well as curtail the activity of financial institutions and specific persons involved in the nuclear program. Washington was even successful in convincing a number of countries (Europe, Australia, Canada, Japan) to impose additional sanctions on Iran.

**The American effort to mount an international coalition to impose sanctions on Iran was relatively successful**

The US thus seems to have gained some ground in applying its declared strategy vis-à-vis Iran: both in terms of consolidating the international coalition to impose sanctions and the impression that these measures are causing real damage to Iranian economy. The Iranians, however, do not seem to have succumbed to the pressure and refuse to take Obama's extended hand offering dialog. They continue to pursue their nuclear program, preventing effective supervision and increasing

**An Israeli attack on the Iranian nuclear project taken against US position could cause a crisis in the US-Israeli relationship**

subversion in the Middle East. Paradoxically, the exhaustion of the American strategy (concurrently with Iran's progress towards obtaining nuclear arms) is bringing closer the moment of decision, should this non-violent strategy come to no avail.

Only then would the meaning behind Obama's repeated commitment, i.e. "The United States is determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons", become clear.

In the period ahead Israel will keep facing the dilemma, whether to act militarily and independently against Iran, or to wait for the international effort led by the US to bear fruit. From Israel's point of view, Iran's possession of nuclear weapons changes entirely the regional strategic picture, because it would create a nuclear threat to Israel, increase Iran's subversion in the region and drive other countries in the Middle East (headed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey) to acquire

nuclear capability. Even assuming that Israel has the capability of significantly hindering the Iranian nuclear project and cause its completion to be delayed, Israel must calculate carefully the possible costs of such an offensive, which include the increased incentive of Iranian leaders to obtain a nuclear bomb at all costs; positioning Israel as a more concrete target for an Iranian nuclear revenge; the reinforcement of the Ayatollahs' regime, and increased public support of the regime against an attack by an external force; a possible crisis in the relationship with the US should the Israeli move be taken against the US position, thereby putting US soldiers, citizens and interests at risk; an Iranian military reaction against Israel; a terrorist attack against Israeli and Jewish targets; igniting the northern front (marked by calm in the passing year) using Hezbollah, and pushing Hamas to attack southern settlements up to Tel-Aviv with missiles and mortar fire.

**Regional Processes of Change and Realignment that Threaten to Damage Israel's Strategic Power**

The threat posed by Iran and Iran's striving for regional hegemony have a significant impact on the geopolitical picture of the Middle East. Upon this background the unprecedented weapons deal – worth \$60 billion – signed between the US and Saudi Arabia is salient (October 2010). Israel is faced with a complex reality: On the one hand, Saudi Arabia's armament is designed to curb Iran's ambitions; on the other, is it safe to rule out the possibility that these weapons may one day be turned against Israel? Along with the potential

nuclear threat, the Iranian component has implications for almost any issue relevant to Israel's strategic environment. Iran supports the Hezbollah and Hamas both militarily and financially. Iran has a strategic alliance with Syria. It seeks to fill the vacuum created by the US imminent withdrawal from Iraq, and threatens the stability of the regimes of moderate Arab countries. The "Israeli Card" serves Tehran's subversion very effectively (Tehran is vehemently opposed to the Arab peace initiative), and its speakers' belligerent and anti-Israeli rhetoric is well-received by the Arab street. The abundance of confidential cables exposed by Wikileaks reveals, among other things, how the 'Arab Street' works to deter Arab rulers from saying in public what they believe should be done against Tehran (the Saudi king is quoted in leaked reports as urging the US to "cut off the snake's head" ...).

The passing year has accelerated the regional dynamics which is unfavorable to Israel. Although referring to Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, Syria and al-Qaeda as a consolidated and coordinated axis may be an exaggeration, one should not ignore the common denominator: severe hostility towards Israel. The radical camp is highly energized and keeps accumulating achievements. The sophisticated terrorist attempt using explosive packages sent from Yemen in cargo airplanes, as well as the series of suicide bombings in Baghdad on the eve of US mid-term elections suggest that global Jihad is far from vanquished, and that when displaced from one base it is quite capable of finding alternative bases. Despite the economic sanctions, Iran has not given any ground yet, and continues to get closer to a situation in which it

possesses nuclear weapons and the capability to launch them (alternatively, Iran could stop on the brink, a 'turn of the screw' away from this capability, so that it is still able to claim that it does not have a nuclear bomb). Concurrently, Iran is branching out to the entire region, building outposts and alliances from Baghdad to Gaza. Ahmadinejad's recent visit to Lebanon (mid-October 2010) and his declaration there, that "the Zionist entity will disappear", have demonstrated Tehran's scope of influence. The power of Iran and Syria weighs against the moderate and pro-Western forces in Lebanon. The 'pilgrimage' of Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri to Damascus (December 19, 2010) and his embrace of the Syrian President, whom he regarded until very recently as responsible for his father's murder, reflect the victory of anti-Western forces in the Lebanese arena. Lebanon's fragile stability is expected to face a significant test soon, when the International Court of Justice will point at several Hezbollah operatives as responsible for Hariri's assassination. Backed by Tehran, Hezbollah leader Nassrallah has declared that he did not recognize the authority of the International Court, would not allow his people to be extradited, and would not have his organization disarmed. Iran's meddling in various locations in the Middle East, including its efforts to influence the composition of the government in Baghdad, give rise to great

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concern in Arab capitals as well as in Jerusalem. The stability of the Arab countries may be affected by the leadership changes expected in both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, whereas the chance of mounting a regional alignment which would include Israel against Iran and the extremist forces, is conditioned, according to observers in the Arab world, on substantial progress in the Israeli-Palestinian process.

The negative regional trends have been augmented

**The negative regional trends have been augmented last year by the sharp deterioration in the Israel-Turkey relationship**

last year by the sharp deterioration in the Israel-Turkey relationship. This relationship, which had been jeopardized by Operation Cast Lead (December 27, 2008 – January 18, 2009), took a turn for the worse following the Gaza Flotilla incident (May 31, 2010), in which nine Turkish

citizens were killed after the Israeli soldiers who raided the ship encountered extremely violent resistance which endangered their lives and forced them to use live fire. Along with the obvious hostility towards Israel and the revocation of most of the special security accords between the two countries, the Ankara government, led by the Islamic Justice and Development party, is tightening its relationship with Syria and Iran. The new orientation of Turkey's foreign policy, shaped by Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, is causing alarm in the West as well. Ankara's attempt, in collaboration with Brazil, to reach a compromise with Tehran regarding the

nuclear issue (May 2010), their objection to the sanction in the UN Security Council (June 9, 2010), the reservations raised by Ankara regarding NATO's decision to deploy an anti-missile system against the Iranian threat (November 2010), and of course its blatant policy towards Israel, are only some of the manifestations that intensify the question marks in the West surrounding Turkey's long-term intentions.

One should not be carried away and lump Turkey together with Iran, although it is difficult to assess where Ankara's voyage back into Islam is going to stop. While Turkey demands an apology and compensation for the Flotilla incident, it does not call for the eradication of Israel (and was also quick to help put out the huge fire in the Carmel forests in early December 2010). Turkey's President stated in the last UN Assembly (September 2010) that "Turkey has always supported every effort to achieve peace in the Middle East, and Turkey welcomes the talks between Israel and the Palestinians and hopes they will produce an agreement." Following Israel's consent, the UN set up (August 2, 2010) an international inquiry team to investigate the Gaza Flotilla events; the resulting conclusions may serve as a basis for stopping the erosion in the relationship. Signs of a potential erosion may be found in leaks from a paper written by the Turkish National Security Council, in which Israel's policy is defined as conducive to instability in the region and an arms race, thereby creating a strategic threat to Turkish interests (October 31, 2010), as well as in Erdogan's statement during his Lebanon visit, that "Turkey will not be silent and will stand by Lebanon" in case the latter is attacked by Israel (November 25, 2010).

## C. The Israeli-Arab Conflict Complex

The passing year has not yielded any breakthrough in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Lack of agreement regarding the issue of building in Judea and Samaria continues to hinder the effort to discuss the core issues and make progress towards the negotiation of a permanent agreement. In November 2009 Israel announced a 10-months temporary freeze on housing construction in the territories. In early March 2010 the Palestinians acceded to “proximity talks” moderated by American envoy George Mitchell, but Israel has clarified that essential issues would only be discussed in direct talks. Indeed, after a persistent pressure campaign, the Palestinians, backed by the Monitoring Committee of the Arab League, agreed to begin direct talks. The talks commenced on September 1<sup>st</sup> with an impressive launch ceremony in Washington (attended by Pres. Obama, PM Netanyahu, Pres. Abbas, Pres. Mubarak and King Abdullah of Jordan), followed by three meetings between Netanyahu and Abbas. In their meeting, the latter made it clear to Netanyahu that if construction in the settlements was resumed (the end of the 10-month moratorium was scheduled for late September 2010), the Palestinians would withdraw from the talks. And indeed, following Israel’s refusal to accept the US request to extend the freeze by two more months (in return for a generous “compensation package” which included significant political and security components), the Palestinians announced the termination of direct talks with Israel for as long as construction in the settlements continues, albeit leaving a time frame

for American diplomacy to persist in its attempts to formulate with the parties a solution for the construction problem in Judea and Samaria so that the direct talks can be resumed. These efforts ended in failure after Israel and the US announced (December 7, 2010) that they could not reach an agreement on a formula that would have enabled a new three-month freeze, an accelerated discussion of the borders and security issues, in return for the free supply of 20 F-35 fighter planes and additional diplomatic support and security guarantees. This failure leaves many question marks regarding the future. Is there an alternative way to kick-start the political process, or are we going to witness a double crisis: between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israel and the US (and the West in general). The picture emerging as these lines are being written suggests that the US intends to continue its efforts to bring the parties to signing a permanent agreement. The Secretary of State has clarified (December 10, 2010) that it was time to discuss the permanent issues and that the US would take an active role in leading this move:

**Lack of agreement regarding the issue of building in Judea and Samaria continues to hinder the effort to discuss the core issues**

It is time to grapple with the core issues of the conflict on borders and security; settlements, water and refugees; and on Jerusalem itself [...] The United States will not be a passive participant. We will push the parties to lay out their positions on the

core issues without delay and with real specificity. We will work to narrow the gaps asking the tough questions and expecting substantive answers. And in the context of our private conversations with the parties, we will offer our own ideas and bridging proposals when appropriate.<sup>2</sup>

The discussion of the sensitive issues of the permanent agreement is thus at the core of American strategy, and the very need to lay out explicit positions regarding the borders, Jerusalem,

**The Palestinian leadership refused to recognize Israel as the Jewish people's historic homeland, but stated: "Israel is entitled to define itself in any way it wishes"**

refugees, etc., may ignite an intense controversy in Israel and the Jewish people. In this context it should be noted that Prime Minister Netanyahu, having repeatedly committed to not retract on his decision to refuse to extend the construction freeze, said in a speech in the Knesset (October 11, 2010) that "If the Palestinian leadership will say unequivocally to its people that it recognizes Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people, I will be ready to convene my government and request a further suspension of construction for a fixed period." (the Palestinians instantly rejected Netanyahu's offer).<sup>3</sup> The proposal advanced by Prime Minister Netanyahu sheds light on the "Jewish dimension" of an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. Because according to the current outline of the peace process, the parties are supposed to discuss a permanent agreement

(and not interim arrangements), the core issues, which matter the most to Jews wherever they are, are now up for discussion – and first and foremost, the future of Jerusalem. There are also several historically significant dilemmas, such as, could an Israeli-Palestinian agreement mark a positive turning point in the history of the relationship between Judaism and Islam? The content of the answers to such questions could affect not only Israel's positions in the negotiations but also the architecture of the entire political process.

In his Bar-Ilan speech (June 14, 2009) Prime Minister Netanyahu described the roots of the Israeli-Arab conflict as stemming from a refusal to recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state of its own in its historic homeland." In that light, he goes on to assert Israel's demand: "The fundamental condition for ending the conflict is the public, binding and sincere Palestinian recognition of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people." The Palestinian leadership responded negatively to this demand. Official Palestinian spokespersons stated that they were ready to sign a peace agreement and recognize the state of Israel, and as far as they were concerned Israel was entitled to define itself in any way it wished. The Palestinians explain that accepting the Israeli demand in a negotiation process would be received with great hostility by the Palestinian public, which, they argue, is "now required to formally agree that their expulsion from their land was just and based on the right of the Jews". In addition, the Palestinians explain that their brethren – the Israeli Arabs – object to a Palestinian recognition of Israel as a "Jewish state" because this "would exacerbate the deprivation they suffer as

a minority, and may even, so they claim, lead to their expulsion from Israel.” In Israel, opinions are divided regarding the importance of insisting on a Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state. Its proponents attribute critical importance to a historically, nationally and religiously significant Arab acknowledgement that the roots of the Jewish people are in the Land of Israel, and that the Jewish people is therefore its rightful owner. Indeed, this is the spirit in which the Prime Minister presents the issue as a “fundamental condition” for an agreement. Others, however, are of the opinion that this is not a critical stance, because Israel’s identity would always be determined by Israel itself, and not by the declarations of its neighbors.

The current Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people reflects a stance that is more rigid than stances previously held by the Palestinians. For example, in an interview to Haaretz (June 18, 2004), Arafat responded that he “absolutely” accepted that Israel is and would remain a Jewish state. According to Arafat, the Palestinians accepted this publicly and officially in the session of the Palestine National Council in 1988, and remained committed to this tenet ever since. Indeed, that session (November 15, 1988) adopted the “Palestinian Declaration of Independence”, which states that “the UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (1947), which partitioned Palestine into two states, one Arab, one Jewish, [...] is [the] Resolution that still provides those conditions of international legitimacy that ensure the right of the Palestinian Arab people to sovereignty.” (It should be mentioned that extra-governmental initiatives such as the Ayalon-Nusseibah initiative and the

Geneva Accords, which are Israeli-Palestinians attempts to reach a model of a peace accord, do include a reference to Israel’s Jewish character). It therefore appears that an Israeli “insistence” on the inclusion of this provision in an agreement might be accepted, especially if the negotiators on the Israeli side are willing “to pay a price” for this achievement. Of course, the question remains open how vital it is – from the perspective of the interests of the Jewish people – to insist on the issue in a negotiation of a permanent agreement. An equally important question is, in case Israel decides to insist on this demand in the negotiation, whether it is sufficient for the Palestinians to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, or should the demand be addressed to the entire Arab world.

**The current Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people reflects a more rigid stance than stances previously held**

The Arab Peace Initiative (Beirut, 2002), the result of a Saudi move, manifests an Arab willingness for a comprehensive peace with Israel, the end of the conflict, normalization and a good neighborly relationship. The language expresses a significant shift, especially when compared to the language of the Khartoum Resolution (1967): No peace, not recognition, no negotiation with Israel. Since 2003 the Arab Peace Initiative has won the support of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which incorporates 57 member countries. Recently this position has been re-endorsed by the OIC

Council of Foreign Ministers in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (May 18-20, 2010). The Council's declaration, which included harsh criticism of Israel's policy, also stated support for the Road Map. Opinions in Israel are divided regarding the value of the Arab Peace Initiative and the wisdom of relying on it in order to advance a permanent Israeli-Arab agreement. Proponents argue that the initiative reflects a fundamental change in the position of the Arab world and a declared willingness to recognize

**A peace agreement which includes a land swap of 5% of the West Bank would necessitate the evacuation of 100,000 settlers out of 300,000**

Israel. Opponents point to the price attached to the initiative: return to the 1967 borders, division of Jerusalem, and an agreed-upon solution to the refugee problem based on UN Resolution 194 (which, according to opponents' interpretation, stipulates that Israel must recognize the Right of Return of the 1948-9 refugees into the

territories of the state of Israel within the 1967 borders). The support of the Muslim world for the Arab Peace Initiative (excluding Iran) underlines the question whether a political peace agreement can significantly thaw the historical Islamic hostility against the Jewish people. A positive answer to this question may increase the interest in choosing this architecture of a comprehensive regional negotiation over a sequential progress based on one bi-lateral negotiation after another. According to this reasoning, talks about a general agreement and settling all the bi-lateral conflicts

simultaneously may provide Israel and the Jewish people with vital achievements that are unattainable in a bi-lateral negotiation lacking a regional dimension (such achievements refer not only to a substantial thawing of Judaism-Islam relationship, but also to an overall normalization and peace with all the Arab countries, regional security arrangements, and more).

An Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement based on the two-states solutions (which Israel has accepted) would hand over to Palestinian sovereignty the majority of the Judea and Samaria territories (except for the settlement blocks, security areas, and other territories adjacent to the 1967 lines, to be transferred to Israeli sovereignty as part of land swaps arrangements). So for instance, a peace agreement which includes a land swap of some 5 per cent of J&S would necessitate the evacuation of 100,000 settlers out of the 300,000 settlers now residing in J&S (not including some 200,000 residing in the Jewish neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem, who are expected to remain there). Hilary Clinton's formula, which has been repeated by various representatives of the American administration over the past year, is an indication of the US position, as the leader of the political process:

We believe that through good-faith negotiations the parties can agree to an outcome which ends the conflict and reconciles the Palestinian goal of an independent and viable state based on the '67 lines, with agreed swaps, and Israel's goal of a Jewish state with secure and recognized borders that reflect subsequent developments and meet Israel's security requirements.

Beyond the security implications of an Israeli withdrawal, the move bears substantial Jewish consequences: both the retreat from the land walked on by the biblical heroes, where the roots of the Jewish people lay deep (Cave of the Patriarchs, Rachel's Tomb, Joseph's Tomb and many other sites), and the need to evacuate tens of thousands of Jewish settlers (some of whom are expected to oppose the evacuation by force). The debate over the future of J&S territory and the great settlement project is expected to raise a highly emotional political, security, national and religious controversy. Some expect the evacuation to be accompanied by brute violence, civil disobedience and the refusal to obey orders by the forces assigned the task. In any case, the evacuation is expected to be traumatic and deepen the divisions among the Jewish people in Israel and the Diaspora. It also raises questions about how are Israel and the Jewish people are going to cope with the expected trauma and whether its impact can be reduced (through appropriate monetary compensation, smooth re-absorption, "ideological compensation", an empathic and "embracing" attitude, an Israeli insistence on the inclusion of a provision allowing Jews to continue to reside the J&S under Palestinian sovereignty, etc.).

The most charged and sensitive of all is of course the issue of Jerusalem. The Holy City symbolizes like nothing else the focus of the Jewish people's aspirations and identity throughout history. Following the Six Days War, Israel has extended its sovereignty by law over the eastern parts of the city. There is currently no Palestinian or Arab party willing to sign a peace agreement with Israel which

would leave its sovereignty intact in the Arab neighborhoods in the eastern city and the sites sacred to Islam. Any agreement that is based on a compromise in Jerusalem implies the revocation of current Israeli sovereignty in various parts of the city, including the Holy Basin. According to this scenario, Israel will have to reach a historic decision that touches upon the very focus of identity and holiness of the Jewish people as a whole. The internal debate could be extremely bitter, which would revolve, first and foremost, on the actual concession in Jerusalem, and then, on the nature of the preferred compromise. Very weighty questions would fill the agenda of Israel and the Jewish people: What are the implications of a compromise in Jerusalem on the Jewish people? Will it cause a trauma that would split the Jewish people and create an irreparable rift? And if a decision is made to compromise, what form of arrangement would best suit the interests of the Jewish people? Should the compromise over Jerusalem be reached in negotiations with the Palestinians only, or is it better to involve the entire Islamic world (with a view to acquire Islamic legitimization for the agreement and make it a turning point in Islam-Judaism relationship)?

The negotiation of a permanent agreement vis-à-vis the Arab world thus put on the agenda highly sensitive issues close to the heart of the Jewish

**Beyond the security implications, a retreat from Judea and Samaria bears substantial Jewish consequences**

people in Israel and the Diaspora alike: Securing the state of Israel's safe existence, the future status of the holy places and historical sites in Judea and Samaria, the evacuation and dismantling of settlements, preserving the Jewish majority in Israel and the Jewish-democratic nature of the state, and above all, the nature of the agreement over Jerusalem. It is therefore no surprise, that in anticipation of the possibility of the subject being raised in the negotiation led by Ehud Olmert in

**The impending moment of decision raises the question whether the Diaspora Jewry is entitled to and must take an active part in the public debate of these issues in Israel**

2008, the President of the World Jewish Congress, Ronald Lauder, wrote to the Prime Minister of the state of Israel (January 8, 2008):

Jerusalem has been both the capital of Israel and the capital of the entire Jewish people for 3,000 years. While recognizing Israel's inherent prerogatives as a sovereign state, it is inconceivable that any changes in the status of our

Holy City will be implemented without giving the Jewish people, as a whole, a voice in the decision.

The impending moment of decision in the permanent arrangement issues is straining and threatening internal solidarity in Israel and in the Diaspora, raising the question whether the Diaspora Jewry is entitled to and must take an active part in the public debate of these issues in Israel, and whether new effective channels and mechanisms should be established so that the voice

of Diaspora Jews is taken into consideration in the decision-making processes taking place in Israel on issues concerning the Jewish people as a whole. This dilemma is a practical test for the discourse currently emerging about the necessity of a new "paradigm" in Israeli-Diaspora relationship. This new approach seeks a pattern that is based on more equality, relinquishing patterns implicitly based on a "senior/minor partner" hierarchy between Israel and the Diaspora. Will the "theoretical" commitment to more equality in this relationship be translated into actual steps as the process approaches the historic decisions involved in the peace agreements and which concern Jews wherever they are? Controversies among the Jewish people in the Diaspora regarding the way in which the Israeli-Arab conflict should be resolved have existed for many years, and in a sense they are a mirror image of the controversies dividing Israel itself on this issue. It is no coincidence that as the political negotiation approaches the sensitive core issues, so does the intra-Jewish debate heat up – and not just about the opportunities or threats embodied in the process, but also regarding the question whether (and how) should Diaspora Jewry take part in these historic decisions which could affect the future of Jerusalem, Israel and the entire Jewish people. The very emergence of J-Street, which is perceived as a lobby with an alternative message to that of AIPAC, and the foundation of J-CALL, its European counterpart, are an indication of the eruption of the intra-Jewish debate in the Diaspora about the political process: both about the stances Israel should adopt on the issue, the very legitimacy of promoting views

that are opposed to those of the government of Israel by Jewish organizations, and the nature of actions vis-à-vis the American administration and other governments (such as, how legitimate is it for a Jewish organization to ask the American administration to exert pressure on Israel in order to promote peace agreements?) In this context, it should be mentioned that the Palestinian side has also realized the importance which the American administration attributes to the position of the Jewish Community in the US. Thus the Palestinian President has used his visits to Washington (June 2010) and New York (September 2010) to meet with the leaders of the Jewish community in the US in order to convince them of the sincerity of his intentions to achieve peace with Israel (among other things, Abbas clarified in these encounters that he did not deny the roots of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel and emphasized that he had instructed his ambassadors in Poland and Russia to attend Holocaust Memorial ceremonies in their countries of service).

## D. The Dynamics of the Triangle: Jerusalem-Washington-US Jewish Community

The Jerusalem-Washington relationship does not follow the common bi-lateral pattern, and must be examined in a tri-lateral framework: Washington, Jerusalem, and the Jewish community in the US. US Jewry, which constitutes a major part of the fabric of this relationship, has a profound effect on its contents, and is in itself influenced by the dynamics within it. US attempts to promote the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians in the passing year, which have yet to bring about a significant breakthrough, have manifested two key components of these dynamics: (1) Sympathy and deep understanding of Israel's concerns and needs, along with the administration's frustration and criticism of Israel's settlement policy (the administration is highly critical of the Palestinian side as well); (2) The administration is mindful of the political and financial might of the Jewish community in the US (especially towards the mid-term elections on November 2, 2010). At this point it is hard to determine to what extent the current American policy towards Israel is a "voluntary" product of its deep-rooted empathy and sympathy towards Israel and the Jewish people (an attitude

**The Palestinians have realized the importance which the American administration attributes to the positions of the Jewish community in the US**

that is deeply anchored in the American public and Congress), and to what extent it is a product of cold calculations, political timetables, pressure equations and “hand-forcing”. As the American policy towards Israel is increasingly more affected by the latter, the danger of negative policy changes increases as well. Along with generous

**Along with criticism, US officials are careful to describe the depth and quality of the American-Israeli relationship**

manifestations of friendship, in the past year Israel has also had the opportunity to experience Washington’s “cold shoulder.” This was clearly demonstrated in the White House preventing the craved photo-op at the meeting between President Obama and Netanyahu (March 23, 2010).

The President’s fundamental attitude to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the importance he sees in its resolution are part of a broader conception and a comprehensive strategic perspective. It is not the product of a single man’s mind, but rather the reflection of deep trends and a fairly broad American consensus on foreign policy. The establishment of a Palestinian state is perceived as consistent with a deep American interest. General David Petraeus explained this reasoning to the Senate’s Armed Services Committee (March 16, 2010):

The enduring hostilities between Israel and some of its neighbors present distinct challenges to our ability to advance our interests in the AOR (US Central Command’s Area of Responsibility). Israeli-

Palestinian tensions often flare into violence and large-scale armed confrontations. The conflict foments anti-American sentiment, due to a perception of US favoritism for Israel. Arab anger over the Palestinian question limits the strength and depth of US partnerships with governments and peoples in the AOR and weakens the legitimacy of moderate regimes in the Arab world. Meanwhile, al-Qaeda and other militant groups exploit that anger to mobilize support. The conflict also gives Iran influence in the Arab world through its clients, Lebanese Hezbollah and Hamas.<sup>4</sup>

And indeed, Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu was forced to accept the two-states principle (Bar Ilan Speech, June 14, 2009), and even passed the decision to freeze housing construction in J&S for ten months (November 25, 2009). The disagreements between Washington and Jerusalem on the subject flared up seriously during Vice-President Biden’s visit to Israel, when in the midst of the visit (March 9, 2010), the plan to build 1,600 housing units in Ramat Shlomo was made public.

Along with the criticism, administration officials are careful to describe the depth and quality of the relationship between the two countries. Thus, for example, in an address by Special Assistant to the President, Dennis Ross, to an AIPAC function (October 25, 2010), he stressed that the strategic dialog between Jerusalem and Washington is unique in its intensity and depth and range of issues, and that this degree of operative-defense coordination is unprecedented. Among other things, Ross mentioned the President’s decision “to supplement our annual \$3 billion in military assistance to Israel with a \$205 million request to

Congress to support [...] the Iron Dome short-range rocket defense system”, the joint military exercises with the IDF, US diplomatic support in defeating efforts by international forums to single out or de-legitimize Israel, and the successful coordinated opposition to the IAEA General Conference singling out Israel’s nuclear program for rebuke.

The sensitive nuclear issue should be examined in the context of President Obama’s overall nuclear policy. In his Cairo speech, the President expressed a vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. It is important to emphasize that what may seem at a first glance as a utopian wishful thinking has actually won the support of esteemed figures such as Henry Kissinger, George Shultz and other senior officials,<sup>5</sup> and under certain circumstances in the future could become a concrete policy, which has implications for Israel. Thus, the final resolution document of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (May 28, 2010) included a clause calling upon Israel to join the NPT treaty, and accordingly, to open its nuclear facilities to the inspection of IAEA. Another clause calls for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other non-conventional weapons (biological, chemical); for which a regional international conference should be convened in 2012. To promote the idea of the conference, a special coordinator will be appointed and supervised directly by the UN Secretary General. While the US announced that it “deeply regrets” that the Conference’s resolution is focused on Israel, media sources have publicized that the US had in fact conceded to pressures from Egypt and other

Arab countries in order to prevent the conference from ending in failure once again. This is despite the fact that there are historical understandings between Jerusalem and Washington since 1969, which were continuously renewed by all succeeding administrations, including Obama’s, according to which the US shall not exert pressure on Israel to join the NPT and open its nuclear facilities to external scrutiny. Indeed, to Jerusalem’s relief, in the press conference following his meeting with Netanyahu at the White House (July 6, 2010), President Obama clarified “that there is no change in US policy when it comes to these issues. We strongly believe that given its size, its history, the region that it’s in, and the threats that are leveled against it, that Israel has unique security requirements. It’s got to be able to respond to threats or any combination of threats in the region. [...] And the United States will never ask Israel to take any steps that would undermine their security interests.” In that spirit, at the 54th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (September 20-24, 2010), the US worked hard to block a resolution calling upon Israel to join the NPT and subject its facilities to IAEA inspection. This sensitive issue will probably continue to top the

**In reference to the nuclear issue, Obama clarified: “Israel has unique security requirements, and must be able to respond to any combination of threats in the region”**

agenda and Israel will continue to need American assistance (for instance, Iran insists on including the eradication of Israel's nuclear capabilities on the agenda it seeks to impose on the discussions of its own nuclear capability).

The passing year has exposed the sympathetic and supportive face of the American administration, but at the same time its ability to be irate and angry with Israel. Israel's immense dependency on the US requires very careful conduct and avoiding

**If the peace process is stalled and Israel is portrayed as the guilty party, the Jewish community in the US may find itself in an inconvenient position**

the portrayal of Israel as a "spoiled brat" who keeps acting in contradiction to the American interest, as written by Thomas Friedman in reaction to Israel's refusal to accept the President's request for a construction freeze extension:

How spoiled Israel has become that after billions and billions of dollars in U.S. aid and 300,000 settlers already ensconced in the West Bank, Israel feels no compunction about spurning

an American request for a longer settlement freeze (*The New York Times*, October 19, 2010).

If the US indeed pursues its declared intention and leads the parties in the coming year to a detailed discussion of the permanent agreement issues, it is also safe to assume that it would put pressure on Israel (as well as the Palestinians) to agree to painful bridging formulas. As a result, tensions may rise in the Washington-Jerusalem relationship.

Tensions could also flare up, of course, in case Israel is portrayed as the guilty party for the fact that the peace process is stalled. The Jewish community in the US may find itself in an uncomfortable position, especially in light of the claims that American foreign policy in the Middle East is influenced by Israel and the Jewish lobby in a manner that is contrary to US interests.

This reality, in which Israel is named as the party that hindered the effort to make peace may lead, among other things, to the exacerbation of violence in the territories, a unilateral American plan for a permanent agreement, the increased political isolation of Israel, the rekindling of de-legitimization moves, and acceleration of the trend by world countries to recognize a Palestinian state within the 1967 border, as already proclaimed (December 2010) by Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

The central and most urgent topics on Israel and the Jewish people's agenda – the Israeli-Arab conflict and the Iranian nuclear threat – each bear weighty strategic implications. These issues, which are affected by the dynamics in the global arena and the US global standing, are involved in another strategic component whose importance cannot be overestimated – the Jerusalem-Washington-US Jewry triangle. The maturation of these issues into decision points may confront Israel and the Jewish people in the coming year with the need to make fateful historic decisions.

## Endnotes

1. The president tried on several occasions to send positive signals to Tehran. Thus, before the Iranian New Year (March 19, 2009), he sent a video message in which he expressed his wish for dialog and thawing; again, in his Cairo speech (June 4, 2009) he presented in an almost symmetrical manner the wrongs done by Iran alongside with the wrongs done by the US (when in 1953 it took part in the overthrow of “a democratically elected Iranian government”), clarifying that he understood those who protest against a reality in which “some countries have weapons that others do not”).
2. Hillary Rodham Clinton, US Secretary of State, remarks at the Brookings Institution’s Saban Center for Middle East Policy Seventh Annual Forum, Washington, DC (December 10, 2010).
3. Palestinian spokespersons said that in the absence of progress in the process as outlined so far, they will consider approaching the international community and the UN for recognition of a Palestinian state in the 1967 borders (an idea rejected both by Israel and the US).
4. Statement of General David H. Petraeus, US Army Commander, US Central Command, before the Senate Armed Services Committee On the posture of US Central Command, March 16, 2010.
5. “A World Free of Nuclear Weapons,” *The Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2007, By George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger and Sam Nunn.



# 5

## 2010 – The Triangular Relationship between Washington, Jerusalem, and the Jewish Communities

Following Obama and Netanyahu's second year in office, the developments in the triangular relationship between Jerusalem, Washington, and the American Jewish community remain shrouded in a fog of uncertainty and an atmosphere of mutual distrust hangs between the two administrations. Both leaders continue to deal with complex political situations internally, and with unprecedented external challenges.

### Washington

Obama's party suffered a significant loss of power in the midterm congressional elections, losing the House majority while also sustaining a significant decrease in the Senate. These losses are perceived as resting on the shoulders of the President. Obama's approval rating is relatively low, mainly the result of increasing difficulties in the domestic arena and his inability to signal a significant change in dealing with the economic crisis that broke out towards the end of the Republican Bush administration. Obama's administration is finding it difficult to make up for the lack of jobs, and the high rate of unemployment. Having said

that, some recent improvement in the economy and unemployment numbers is perceptible and is received with satisfaction by the administration. His foreign policy also has not been able, to date, to show positive movement in the United State's position in the world in general, and in Muslim countries in particular.

With the beginning of the revolt in Egypt, the American position, which expressed reservations nearly to the point of abandoning Hosni Mubarak's regime, raised alarms among its allies and among Middle Eastern rulers identified with the moderate Sunni axis. For thirty years the deposed Egyptian president was one of the pillars of Egypt's closer relationship with the West, and he led the moderate axis in the Middle East. In return for his moderate policies he received military aid and economic and political support. The peace between Cairo and Jerusalem was the cornerstone of American influence in the Middle East.

**A deterioration leading to regime change in Arab states belonging to the pro-West axis may transfer US military and technological capabilities and know-how into the hands of fundamentalist, hostile regimes, which could then turn them**

against the United States and its allies. The first signs of the American policy, which was interpreted as supporting the opposition to the regimes in moderate Arab countries, was received in Israel and the region with frustration and incomprehension, and may further erode America's image in the world, already damaged due to the administration's restraint vis-à-vis the provocations of North Korea and Iran. The subsequent unrest in Bahrain was a warning

**despite the impressive response to the economic crisis, the social gap is increasing in Israel, and there is erosion in the position of the middle class**

signal and raised the need for a reevaluation of regional policy. On the other hand, the fact that the uprisings in the region were led by many secular activists may lead to a positive and progressive shift in the future.

Under Obama's leadership, the erosion of the West's strength and influence in favor of Asia continues, although the process is slow and does

not herald an immediate reversal in the world order. Even his successes – passing the Health Care Bill and the new START agreement with Russia – have been met with harsh opposition and criticism. Among Jews, even though the rate of support for the Democratic Party has not reflected the downward trend in the general public, there is obvious disappointment with Obama over what is perceived to be an intransigent attitude towards Israel and Netanyahu's government and a reserved attitude towards the Jewish community and its leadership.

## Jerusalem

During his second year in office, Netanyahu continued to deal with a problematic coalition, which raised obstacles in setting an agenda with regards to domestic affairs and the political process. The Iranian threat continued to be an existential challenge to Israel in the year 2010. Despite success in the economic realm, joining the OECD, and as of now, the impressive response to the economic crisis, the social gap is increasing, and there is considerable erosion in the position of the middle class. In this context, there is an increase in social tensions between the productive, participatory sector of the economy, which bears the brunt of the burden in addition to contributing to the country's security, and other sectors of the population: the Ultra-Orthodox, which is perceived as utilizing its considerable political power to gain benefits for its constituency bearing no relation to its contribution to society, and some of the Arab minority, which does not feel part of Israeli society.

The stagnation in the political process between Israel and the Palestinians – widely treated in the geopolitical section of the document – has been met with mixed emotions in Israel. The calm based on the success of routine security measures along with disappointment and mistrust of the Palestinian partner, fed by the lessons of the Second Intifada and the rocket attacks on the Western Negev that followed the Gaza disengagement, give Netanyahu's government political breathing room.

**At the same time, there is a growing fear that the lack of an Israeli political initiative along with its**

**refusal to freeze construction in the settlements are contributing to the strained relations with the Obama administration and may prevent a future two-state solution. The alternative, a bi-national state, endangers the Zionist movement's aspiration to establish a Jewish and democratic state that would constitute a national home for the Jewish people, in the Middle East.**

2010 ended with the former president, Moshe Katsav, convicted of rape, sexual harassment, and obstruction of justice. This terrible affair constitutes a peak in a series of investigations and legal actions aimed at Israeli leaders, some of which have yet to be concluded. The year 2011 began with the initiation of a criminal investigation into the Boaz Harpaz "forged document" affair, which was meant to influence the Chief of Staff appointment. This scandal reveals misconduct among the IDF's top echelon. In addition, the appointment of Yoav Galant to Chief of Staff was revoked as he was accused of appropriating land that did not belong to him, and of submitting to the court two affidavits containing inaccurate statements. The revocation of Galant's appointment, an outstanding officer and exemplary warrior, closes a circle that began during the premiership of Ariel Sharon. The main damage during this period was the silent acceptance and even legitimization – granted by the media and a significant part of the Israeli public – of problematic conduct and improper use of governmental power.

Misconduct of public figures has occurred in the past as well, but for the most part such missteps were investigated and resolved. During Sharon's time, senior journalists in Israel preferred to treat

him like a "*Sukkot etrog*, (citron)" – with infinite care and delicacy, turning a blind eye to some improper conduct in his immediate environment. These elements justified their approach with their appreciation of his leadership and political about-face – the disengagement from Gaza – that characterized his term of office. The indictments of Katsav, former finance minister, Avraham Hirschson, former prime minister, Ehud Olmert, and others marked the beginning of the end of this period. It must be emphasized that no criminal allegations have been raised against Galant, and the background of his actions is completely different from those under indictment. However, the revocation of his appointment to Chief of Staff may signal the end of the "*etrog*" phenomenon, and with it the willingness of the public to suffer breaches of proper conduct.

**the revocation of Galant's appointment to Chief of Staff may signal the end of the willingness of the public to suffer breaches of proper conduct**

## The Jewish Community

In the United States too, the Jewish community was in uproar over several episodes of corruption and misconduct by prominent Jews. Past annual assessments of the Jewish People Policy Institute have pointed out the possibility of damage to the self-image of Jews as a consequence of these incidents and warned of the risk to the desire of the world's young generation of Jews to identify

with their Jewish roots. Although the State of Israel has shown its ability to deal with these negative disclosures with greater courage and determination than other Western countries, the trend of distancing among the young generation has grown stronger this year, due also to the growing processes of de-legitimization.

This campaign, aimed at undermining the Jewish people's right to sovereignty, is fostered not only by elements outside Israel or the Jewish people, such as anti-Semitism or the Arab-Islamic BDS

**in crucial subjects concerning vital areas of Israel's security, the American administration has continued and even intensified cooperation between the two countries**

campaign, it is also fed by harsh criticism in the world media of the degrading treatment of radical Israeli elements towards Palestinians and the Arab minority in Israel, as well as the aggressive conduct of the security forces. In the view of many, these phenomena, alongside the political standstill, are seen as harming liberal values dear to many young Jewish Americans.

The special chapter in this annual assessment on North American campuses shows that the de-legitimization phenomenon primarily causes internal damage, harming Jews and friends of the Jewish people, even though it is widely agreed that a double standard is applied to Israel compared to other countries in the East and West. Although, in the past year, the standing

of the new Jewish organizations attempting to build a lobby in opposition to the Jewish and Israeli establishment has deteriorated, there is a continuing trend among young adults in the Jewish community to organize independently, without any establishment or Israeli connections, for the purpose of promoting a Jewish agenda.

## **The Challenge to Israel: American Bi-Partisan Support**

The twisted obstacle course that has characterized the relations between Israel and the United States ever since the change of administrations in Washington and Jerusalem is not a new phenomenon. The two countries have proven in the past, ever since Jewish sovereignty was established in the Middle East, that their shared cultural and democratic values and mutual interests can overcome harsher disagreements and crises than the current one: the 1956 Sinai War, the "reevaluation" after the second Sinai disengagement agreement in 1975, the Pollard Affair in 1986, and the suspension of loan guarantees in 1991.

And indeed, in crucial subjects concerning vital areas of Israel's security, the American administration has continued and even intensified cooperation between the two countries. In the case of Iran for instance, where Obama himself promised to do his utmost to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, the administration has not only joined the efforts to apply sanctions, but also initiated covert American activities intended to delay the program's development. In the UN and in other

**political forums, the United States continues to grant Israel political support, as seen in the wake of the Goldstone Report, Turkish flotilla affair, and its February 2011 security council veto of a resolution condemning settlement construction. However, this support cannot be considered automatic and may be used to leverage pressure in the future.**

The main point of contention with the Obama administration resulted from the stagnation of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which is perceived as an American strategic interest, and the ongoing construction in East Jerusalem. But the Israeli refusal to extend the construction freeze east of the green line after the conclusion of the ten month freeze agreed upon at the end of 2009 also had a part in damaging the trust between the two administrations. The Palestinians demanded extending the freeze as a pre-condition for resuming direct talks. In the context of political standstill and other developments, an internal American debate re-surfaced around the question of whether Israel is an asset or a liability. In this context, several extremely harsh remarks were attributed to Vice President Joe Biden and to International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan Commander, General David Petraeus, both of whom were quoted as warning that Israel's activities in the territories may bring about further American casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In June 2010, the American magazine Commentary conducted a written symposium headlined: "Obama, Israel, and American Jewry: the Challenge." The editorial board gathered 31 critical essays by prominent Jewish writers and activists

representing a broad range of opinions from Right, Left, and Center. Among the participants were: the Head of the Middle East Forum, Daniel Pipes; CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, Abe Foxman; Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz; former deputy to the Head of the National Security Council and current senior fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations, Elliott Abrams; Brandeis University historian, Prof. Jonathan Sarna, who is also a senior fellow of the Jewish People Policy Institute; Director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Robert Satloff; Aaron Miller from the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington; the President of the Union for Reform Judaism, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, and others.

Upon reading these essays and after discussions held with some of the authors and with additional prominent figures in the Jewish community in preparation for this chapter in the annual assessment, it seems that the attitude towards Obama is loaded and suspicious. Although some still express support for the President out of traditional loyalty to the Democratic Party and its values, most believe that his actions and policies in the Middle East must be watched closely in order to prevent him from trying to pay with Israeli currency for closer relations with the Islamic countries.

**"Obama's actions in the Middle East must be watched closely in order to prevent him from trying to pay with Israeli currency for closer relations with Islamic countries"**

As to the question of how the Jewish community will or should deal with the tensions between Jerusalem and Washington, opinions are divided. It is assumed that as long as there is no existential threat to the State of Israel from Iran's nuclear project or from an overall military attack on Jewish sovereignty in the Middle East, the community will not rise to take extensive action. Prof. Alan Dershowitz describes it thus: "the line in the sand for me has always been Israel's security...I'm worried

**the Jewish vote does not carry a decisive weight, but the financial support and the organizational ability of the Jews in the election campaign are very significant**

about the direction that the Obama administration seems to be taking with regard to Israel's security. I will not join the chorus of condemnations by right-wingers directed against the Obama policy with regard to the settlements, or even with regard to a divided Jerusalem. The Obama administration has not yet crossed my line in the sand. I hope it never does so, but if it does, I will

be extremely critical. In the meantime, those of us who supported Obama must continue to pressure him against compromising Israel's security and against suggesting a false and dangerous linkage between Israel's actions and the safety of American troops."

Traditionally, most American Jews support the Democratic Party, out of many considerations, especially internal American ones. Israeli issues do not usually top the agenda, as long as the subject

of security is not involved. In the 2008 presidential election, four out of five Jews supported Obama, despite apprehension about his attitude towards Israel. This level of overwhelming support is not guaranteed in 2012. Indeed, although the Jewish vote does not carry a decisive weight in the elections, the financial support and the organizational ability of the Jews during the election campaign are very significant. One leader defined it as follows: "if there is one thing I will not forgive Obama regarding his behavior towards Israel and the Jewish community, it is if I am driven to vote for the Republicans."

Prof. Jonathan Sarna's analysis matches the spirit of those words: "Much can change between now and 2012, but signs abound that support for the Democratic administration is waning. The real question, looking ahead, is whether the Republicans will be able to use this to their advantage. To do so, history suggests, they will need to nominate a candidate whose views on American policy, foreign and domestic, comport with those most Jews hold dear. If Jews decide that the Republican candidate in 2012 more closely aligns with their views than Barack Obama, it is a safe bet that the Republican candidate will win many more votes than McCain and Palin did in 2008."

In this context, one must also refer to the rise, prior to the elections, of the "Tea Party" movement, which was meant to garner support for fiscally conservative Republican candidates on a local basis. Although it is still too early to estimate the future significance of this phenomenon on the national level, it must be noted that alongside support of Israel, some of the "Tea Party" supporters hold contrary tendencies: an isolationist approach with

cross-the-board cuts in foreign aid. That said, the Jewish community has duly noted that Republican support of Israel has been stable and has even risen, compared to the erosion of Democrat support of Israel.

An October 2010 survey conducted for The Israel Project by the prestigious strategic consulting firm, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, shows that for the first time since June 2009, support for Israel in American public opinion dropped below 50 percent. The gap in favor of Israel as opposed to the Palestinians is still large – 44 percent in favor of Israel as opposed to 8 percent in favor of the Palestinians, but the problem is more notable using a party cross section. Among Republicans, support for Israel is 62% as opposed to 2 percent for the Palestinians. Among Democrats, support for Israel drops to 32 percent while support for Palestinians rises to 14 percent. The results are affected by media criticism of Israel's conduct towards the Palestinians, and the de-legitimization campaign against the right of Israel to maintain its Jewish character in the context of liberal positions held by the Democrats.

The attitude taken by the American administration with the onset of the Egyptian riots, and the cold shoulder shown to Hosni Mubarak by President Obama have left a bitter taste and bolstered doubts of the current administration as a source of support, not only among leaders in the moderate Arab camp, but also in Israel and among some of the Jewish leadership in the United States.

**Israel's standing in the United States, since its establishment, and the influence of the American Jewish community derive, to a large extent, from**

**a bi-partisan approach concerning the Middle East. The picture currently being formed must set off alarm bells in Israel and among Jewish organizations in the United States, due to the threat of the Arab-Israeli conflict being turned into a point of contention between the two parties, thus endangering the desire to preserve Democratic as well as Republican support for Israel.**

## Politics and Statesmanship

On January 17, 2011, Defense Minister Ehud Barak surprisingly announced his resignation from Labor along with four other Members of Knesset, and the establishment of the "Independence Party." In so doing he acted preemptively, avoiding a blow he would likely have suffered due to the creation of a majority bloc against him in the Labor Party, which could have led to his ouster. The same day Labor Ministers Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, Avishay Braverman, and Isaac (Buji) Herzog, announced their decision to immediately resign. Despite the numerous inner controversies, the eight remaining Labor MKs decided to refrain from an additional split.

**Barak's resignation from Labor was preemptive, designed to avoid the creation of majority bloc against him in the party**

Seemingly, the coalition's base has narrowed, but in practical terms, the Labor Party's exit from the

government may prolong its existence, even though at the same time it increases the negotiating power of Yisrael Beiteinu, headed by Avigdor Lieberman.

Barak's move took the entire political system by surprise, even though he had coordinated it beforehand not only with the MKs who joined him, but also with the Prime Minister, who wished to avoid a future, abrupt exit of the entire Labor party from his coalition. Such a development could have set off a dynamic leading to new elections.

**The Netanyahu-Barak partnership seems stable, and one cannot discount their standing for the next elections in a joint bloc**

The prior evening former Minister of Interior, Aryeh Deri, announced his intention to return to political life. Deri, one of the founders of Shas, was convicted of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust, served a three-year sentence in prison, and finished a seven-year period of disgrace that until recently

had prevented him from returning to the political sphere. On the eve of Barak's resignation, Deri said that he had not yet decided in which framework he will be running for office, and that he may join a non-religious party. Although it seems that his natural place would be in Kadima given his public political statements and his close relationship with Kadima's Council Chairman, Haim Ramon, it is possible that he wishes to join a new, secular party. The establishment of the new Independence party provides him with an opportunity to begin from an enhanced negotiating position. This, due to the support he enjoys from the religious Sephardic

public and among secular voters who appreciate his skills, are convinced that he has "paid his debt to society," and has learnt the obligatory lessons.

Another possibility is that Barak and company's resignation from the Labor Party and their continued support of the coalition are part of a broader political move that may secure the government an additional safety net. Lately, several new figures have joined the Kadima Party, including former Chief of Staff, Dan Halutz; Chairman of Mizrahi-Tefahot Bank and former Head of the Israeli Internal Security Service, Yakov Perry; and Gilad Sharon, son of former Prime Minister and Kadima founder, Ariel Sharon. Such reinforcements may spur several Kadima veterans to leave the party and join the coalition headed by Netanyahu, since they may fear that their chances of reelection have been diminished. The Prime Minister still holds two unmanned, ministerial portfolios: the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry for Minority Affairs, as well as having overwhelming influence over several other senior political appointments. If several opposition members cross party lines, Lieberman's position and his ability to dismantle the coalition will be weakened.

**The main question begging for an answer in light of these possible changes to the political map is: "For what purpose?"** The assumption is that Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Barak have their sights on the political horizon, beyond the completion of the current government's tenure. Their partnership seems stable at this stage, and one cannot discount their standing for the next elections in a joint bloc.

**In order to increase their chances of reelection, Netanyahu and Barak require impressive achievements in the political arena: an agreement with the Palestinians (and perhaps Syria) as a part of the Arab world's process of acceptance, or an achievement in the defense arena vis-à-vis Iran. In short, making peace or winning war. As of now, it is unclear if they have decided where they are headed.**

**The American administration has the data and the ability to read the situation in Israel. It is possible that this is the reason Netanyahu was offered a "security package" at the end of 2010 in order to enable the resumption of direct talks between Netanyahu and Abbas.**

However, the political considerations have additional components. It is possible that Netanyahu had the political power required to make a far-reaching political move even without changes to the political map. The various components of the coalition have no interest in breaking up the partnership. Even before his departure from Labor, Barak and his party did not enjoy widespread approval among the public. If Barak felt that he would be able to increase his power in elections, it is likely that he would have led a move to dismantle the government, regardless of the peace process. Shas leader, Eli Yishai, is not in a position to ignore Aryeh Deri and the in-fighting of his own party. One may assume that Yisrael Beiteinu leader, Avigdor Lieberman, who may be facing indictment - depending on the Attorney General's impending decision - will be faced with a dilemma: whether to leave the coalition and go forth into the unknown or to preserve his political power. It must be noted

that if the Attorney General decides to indict him, that is not the end of the matter, as Lieberman will obviously be given the right of a fair hearing and will be able to argue against his indictment, a process that could take many months.

**It is possible that Netanyahu's difficulties are based, among other things, on the fear of the wider Israeli public that Abbas intends to promote a two-state solution: one Palestinian and the other bi-national, which will eventually unite, thus putting an end to Jewish sovereignty in the region. The lack of trust among a significant part of the public, which was evident in the results of the last election, was also influenced by the memories of the Second Intifada, which erupted after Barak's far-reaching offer to Arafat at the end of Bill Clinton's presidency, as well as by the memory of the rockets hurled at Sderot and other towns in the south after Sharon's Gaza disengagement.**

**the Israeli nightmare – a two-state solution, one Palestinian and the other bi-national, which will eventually put an end to Jewish sovereignty**

**The American administration too has doubts, mistrusting the current Israeli government's sincerity with respect to the peace process. These doubts grew as a result of what was seen as, on one hand foot-dragging in the political process, and a series of decisions to resume construction in the settlements and in East Jerusalem on the other. On the Israeli side and among parts of the American Jewish community, there is concern**

stemming from doubts about Obama's approach to the Middle East conflict, his appreciation of Israel's existential concerns, and what is seen as an alienated attitude toward the Jewish community. President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton's reaction to the riots in Egypt, which have spread to other countries belonging to the moderate axis, has not strengthened trust in the current administration as a source of support and alliance that can be trusted.

**the American response to the upheaval in Egypt, symbolized by the "cold shoulder" shown Mubarak, has been a matter of concern to other allies in the Middle East**

In this context, we must refer to the Israeli demand that the Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state and as the national home of the Jewish people. If the agreement that is taking shape is based on the 1967 borders, with several amendments accompanied by land swaps, then the only concessions the Israeli public may have gained are the end of the conflict, legitimization of the Zionist project and improvement of the security situation.

As the contours of a viable agreement have been set, and with the stalled peace process in mind, the possibility once again arises that the United States will place its own mediation proposal on the table, and work to implement it. The success of such a move primarily depends on forestalling a unilateral Palestinian attempt to garner

international recognition of their independence, rebuilding mutual trust and in early coordination between both sides. Significant steps should be taken by Obama, with the support of the Quartet, to reestablish Israeli confidence in his administration.

## Concluding Remarks

Despite efforts by both Washington and Jerusalem to reach an understanding in light of the mid-term congressional elections and the problems of the coalition in Israel, the challenges facing the triangular relationship remain. The American response to the upheaval in Egypt, symbolized by the "cold shoulder" shown Mubarak, has been a matter of concern to other allies in the Middle East. Yet the new situation may also empower new reformists and progressive regimes and reinforce mutual interests between Israel and the United States which may draw them closer. As such, it is a primary interest of Israel and the Jewish people globally that the status of the US as the leading superpower doesn't erode.

Past experience shows that cultural values, democracy, and common interests of Israel and the United States eventually overcome controversies and even severe crises. The most recent events require intensifying efforts to achieve strategic cooperation and coordination between the United States, Israel, and the Jewish community.

- The challenges facing Israel in light of regional changes require its leadership to make a

decision as to its direction, to confront the challenge of preserving its Jewish character, take the initiative in areas that require urgent intervention, and be alert to other arenas in order to adapt policy accordingly.

- Every possible effort should be made to prevent the Middle East conflict from becoming a point of contention between the Republican and Democratic parties in the United States, and to remove Israel and the Jewish community from the American, internal political debate.
- The concern of a possible erosion in US international status on one hand, and the general support that Israel and the Jewish people enjoy in North American public opinion on the other hand, require a continuous effort to reinforce the strength and economic power of the US. Israel and the North American Jewish community should make every effort to strengthen their ally.
- Israel should be conscious of American global interests without diminishing its own critical security requirements on one hand, and on the other, it should consider a “Buy American” campaign that encourages, for example, purchasing American cars by Israelis and for the fleets of the State of Israel and the IDF and promoting the import and use of US goods and services.
- With former President Katsav's conviction, indictments of other leaders and measures taken against other senior figures, Israel may be parting ways with the attempt to grant

legitimacy to the improper conduct of public figures. This is the beginning of a welcome process that may eventually improve trust of the young Jewish generation globally and contribute to strengthening the ties between Israel and the Diaspora. This process should be encouraged.

- The de-legitimization phenomenon aiming to subvert the right of the Jewish people to sovereignty in the Middle East harms not only Israel but also Jewish affiliation, support of friends of the Jewish people, and Israel-Diaspora relations. The phenomenon requires a comprehensive evaluation and treatment in various arenas to minimize damage.

**Despite the erosion of the standing of new Jewish organizations that attempted to establish a lobby in opposition to the Jewish American establishment and Israel, there is a continuing trend among the young American generation to organize independently to promote agendas, unrelated to the establishment or Israel. Against this background, Jewish organizations must make a special effort to open their ranks to the young and encourage them to assume key roles in the community. Israel, for its part, must use its resources to increase its investment in the future of the young generation, in education and in expanding the frameworks shared by Israel and the Diaspora.**





# Global Economic Changes: Implications for Israel and the Jewish People

Last year's Annual Assessment (2009) focused on the economic status of the Jewish people and the implications of the global financial crisis on Jewish philanthropy. In this year's Assessment we focus on the global crisis itself, its causes and its nature, and especially its differential impact and policy treatment in the US and Israel.

The global financial crisis has had important effects in four arenas of central importance to Jewish people policy: 1) The international arena in which a major re-alignment of power relations is occurring 2) the Israeli economy 3) the Jewish communities in the Diaspora 4) the relationships and equilibrium between Israel and the Diaspora communities.

Thus we are providing a brief analysis of the origins and nature of the global crisis, the policy responses to it and their influence on the above four arenas in the hope of formulating a more effective Jewish people policy. We will especially focus on the US and Israel as a backdrop to understanding the changing relationship between the American and Israeli Jewish communities.

## 1. Introduction – A General Description of the Financial Crisis

Israel and the United States are the two countries with the highest concentration of Jews. Therefore, their economic situation must assume an important place in any assessment of the situation of the Jewish people. This claim is true every year, but even more so in years in which the financial crisis is prominently featured in world news. Understanding the current economic situation and the measures required to improve it in Israel and the United States is necessary for the formulation of an assessment of the situation in the two countries and the Jewish communities residing in them.

The 2008-2009 financial crisis, which has yet to end, is commonly considered to be the worst since the 1929-1932 crisis. Since that time there has not been a recession with such consistent and continuous drops in economic activity, as measured by gross domestic product (GDP); no recession since then has had rising unemployment rates that refused to go down for such a long time; no crisis arose in which the government was forced to inject

hundreds of billions of dollars in order to save the financial system from collapse.

Notwithstanding the above, the current crisis is minor, relative to its predecessor of eighty years past. In the previous crisis, the rate of unemployment was 25%, and in the current one it is close to 10%. In the previous crisis the United States experienced a 33% drop in production, in the current crisis a drop of only 2.4% in one year – 2008.

**The large, expected American budget deficits in the coming years and the need to deal with them undermine the US' ability to intervene militarily in regional conflicts**

insurance and bank oversight, a substantial increase in the government share of production, etc. This rise in involvement did not stem from an ideological change, but from the urgent need of the government to take care of its citizens and prevent dangerous political instability that could have evolved into a regime change. Therefore, Roosevelt's policy was not Keynesian. Contrary to a common misconception, the great economist

The magnitude of the previous crisis brought about far reaching political changes and instability in the international arena. Nazi Germany was established in 1933 out of a longing for an order and a regime that had been shaken by the financial crisis (and prior to it, due to the hyper inflation of the 1920s). The United States underwent an essential change in the extent and volume of government involvement in the economy: the establishment of a social security system, deposit

John Maynard Keynes, who met with Roosevelt, did not succeed in convincing the American president of the advantages of a federal deficit as a way out of the recession. And indeed, the moment the American economy slightly recovered, Roosevelt attempted to balance the budget, and there are those that believe that this policy caused the recession relapse of 1937.<sup>1</sup>

The current crisis is not accompanied by political instability in any Western country. The American voter punished the Democrats in the mid-term elections (November 2010) but did so within the framework of the regular political process. Stormy political arguments are conducted between the left and the right, and there is an upsurge in radical, anti-government sentiment (represented, among others, by the Tea Party). However, unlike the 1930s, there is no totalitarian model pointing toward an alternative to the current democratic regime – not the Soviet Union, nor Germany, nor Italy, and therefore the political changes are conducted according to the legitimate, democratic ground rules.

Yet, even if changes are not expected in the political arena within countries, in the international arena the crisis may have significant effects. The strength of the United States as a sole super power derives in large part from its economic might. This might is directly expressed in the United States' ability to finance a global army and navy and indirectly in the standing of the dollar as an international currency. The large, expected American budget deficits in the coming years and the need to deal with them undermine the United States' ability to intervene militarily in

regional conflicts. **It is apparent, therefore, that the United States' ability to project power as it has done in past decades is questionable.**

Negotiating the current crisis shows that contrary to what is sometimes believed, the lessons of a previous crisis can aid the negotiation of the next crisis, as is currently the case. United States Federal Reserve Chairman, Ben Bernanke, acted quickly and decisively to save the financial system from collapsing, and he succeeded in doing so. Citizens are much better protected today thanks to the safety net erected during the Great Depression of the 1930s: social security, unemployment insurance, larger government expenditures that guarantee demand will not decrease sharply, and so on. Success in preventing a deeper crisis has an ongoing price. The price that everyone is aware of is the government debt, which grew from 42% of GDP in 2007 to 66% of GDP in 2010 and is expected to reach 85% of GDP in 2015. President Obama recently announced a series of measures intended to reduce the debt, yet the larger price is manifest in a decline in the capacity to deal with the structural problems of the United States; the very problems that were the background of the crisis and to which we will refer in the following.

In Israel, the impact of the crisis was smaller. There nearly was a crisis in the corporate bonds market but it was averted in the end. It must be noted that the situation in Israel is not as brilliant as the aggregate data show. Israel suffers from severe problems of income inequality and many years of neglect along various fronts including education, infrastructure, the geographical and socio-economic periphery, and specific groups, such as

the Arabs and the ultra-Orthodox. Infrastructure neglect was chillingly apparent in the effort to extinguish the large and severe Carmel fire, at the beginning of December 2010. Another structural issue is the need to protect the Shekel's exchange rate by increasing Bank of Israel reserves, a policy that has been internationally criticized as of late.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The Crisis in the United States<sup>3</sup>

The financial crisis began with the sins of credit, which grew unregulated and unchecked in the parallel banking system of investment banks to which Lehman Brothers belonged, and which almost caused the collapse of the entire world system.<sup>4</sup> The credit that grew unrestrained by matching equity capital (Lehman reached a 1:30 relation between capital equity and credit – an enormous degree of leverage), led to a situation in which every minor shock impaired borrower ability to repay loans. This credit served to fuel the real estate bubble, as it allowed households and entrepreneurs to borrow ever more, in the hope that they would continue to profit from real estate deals. When housing prices fell, the borrowers and lenders fell with them. As lending banks did not hold enough reserves to absorb the loss, several were forced to declare bankruptcy. The collapse of some major financial institutions led to a series of collapses, as

**Households and entrepreneurs borrowed ever more, in the hope that they would continue to profit from real estate deals**

Table 1

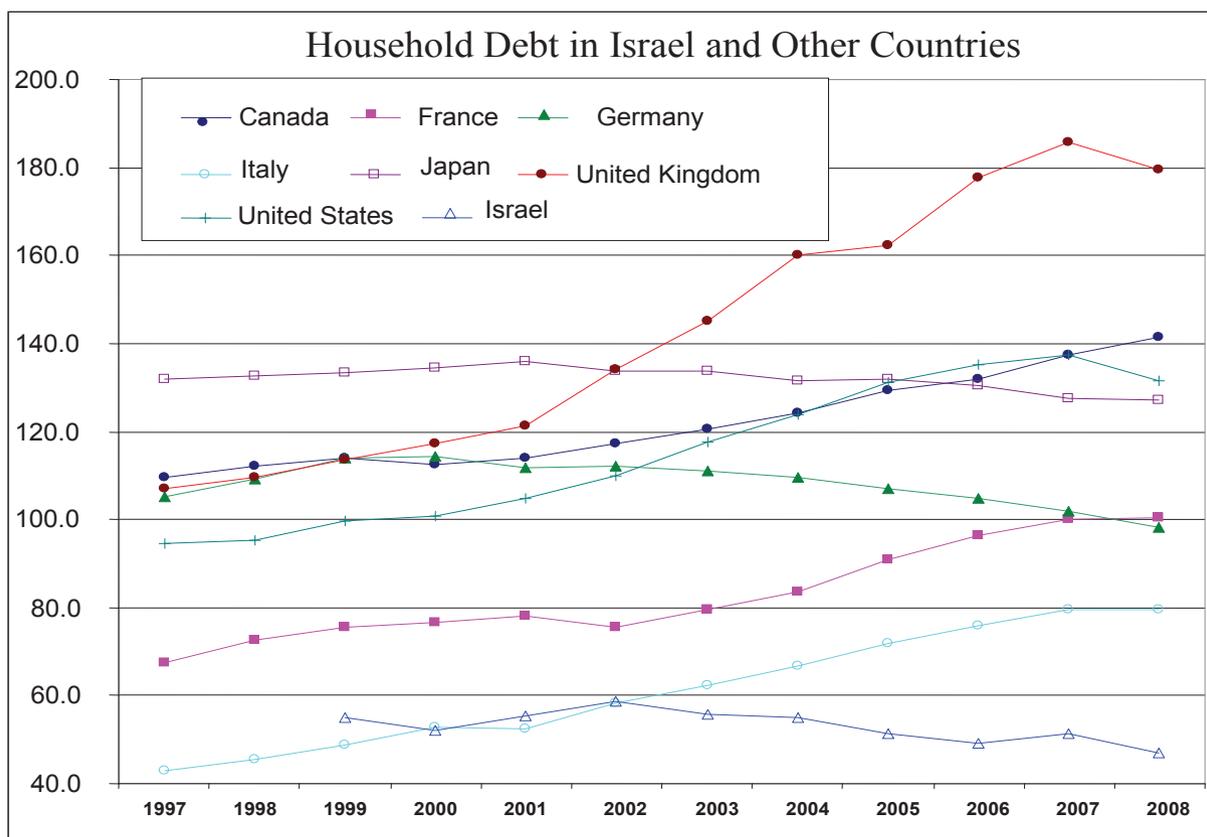
	Main Macro-Economic Aggregates										
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Real Growth of GDP (% change)	Canada	5.2	1.8	2.9	1.9	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.2	0.5	-2.5
	France	4.1	1.8	1.1	1.1	2.3	2.0	2.4	2.3	0.1	-2.5
	Germany	3.5	1.4	0.0	-0.2	0.7	0.9	3.6	2.8	0.7	-4.7
	Italy	3.9	1.7	0.5	0.1	1.4	0.8	2.1	1.4	-1.3	-5.1
	Japan	2.9	0.2	0.3	1.4	2.7	1.9	2.0	2.4	-1.2	-5.2
	Britain	3.9	2.5	2.1	2.8	3.0	2.2	2.8	2.7	-0.1	-5.0
	United States	4.1	1.1	1.8	2.5	3.6	3.1	2.7	1.9	0.0	-2.6
	OECD average	4.2	1.2	1.7	2.0	3.2	2.8	3.1	2.7	0.3	-3.4
	Israel	9.2	0.0	-0.4	1.5	5.0	4.9	5.7	5.4	4.2	0.8
Per Capita Growth of GDP (% change)	Canada	-	0.7	1.8	0.9	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.2	0.2	-3.3
	France	-	1.2	0.3	0.4	1.8	1.3	1.6	1.8	0.0	-3.1
	Germany	-	1.1	-0.2	-0.3	1.2	0.8	3.5	2.8	0.3	-4.8
	Italy	-	1.8	0.1	-0.8	0.5	-0.1	1.5	0.8	-0.5	-5.2
	Japan	-	-0.1	0.1	1.3	2.7	1.9	2.0	2.4	-1.0	-5.1
	Britain	-	2.1	1.7	2.4	2.5	1.5	2.3	1.9	-0.2	-5.6
	United States	-	0.1	0.9	1.6	2.6	2.1	1.7	1.2	-0.6	-3.4
	OECD average	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Israel	-	-2.1	-2.5	-0.3	3.2	3.0	3.8	3.5	2.5	-0.9
Unemployment Rate	Canada	6.8	7.2	7.7	7.6	7.2	6.8	6.3	6	6.1	8.3
	France	9	8.3	8.6	9	9.2	9.3	9.3	8.4	7.8	9.5
	Germany	7.5	7.6	8.4	9.3	9.8	10.6	9.8	8.4	7.3	7.5
	Italy	10.1	9.1	8.6	8.5	8	7.7	6.8	6.2	6.8	7.8
	Japan	4.7	5	5.4	5.3	4.7	4.4	4.1	3.9	4	5.1
	Britain	5.4	5	5.1	5	4.7	4.8	5.4	5.3	5.6	7.6
	United States	4	4.7	5.8	6	5.5	5.1	4.6	4.6	5.8	9.3
	OECD average	6.2	6.5	7.1	7.3	7.1	6.8	6.3	5.8	6.1	8.3
	Israel	..	9.3	10.3	10.7	10.4	9	8.4	7.3	6.1	7.6

every bank limited the credit available to others, as they doubted their ability to recover it. In order to prevent the collapse of the entire financial system following the collapse of Lehman Brothers, massive government intervention was needed. The global collapse was indeed averted by massive injections of capital and liquidity made by central banks and governments in various countries, led by the United States (and Britain) the epicenter of the financial earthquake.

What fundamental elements enabled the expansion of credit and prevented government

oversight? The first is an increasingly widely shared pro-market ideology, a belief that markets are capable of running themselves and that they do so optimally without oversight. The academic foundation for this ideology was the “efficient market” doctrine that argued, and showed with statistical data, that financial markets work efficiently – and therefore do not require government oversight.<sup>5</sup> The previous Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, presided over the final deregulation of the capital markets in President Clinton's time, a policy that had bi-partisan support. During his time the Federal

Figure 1



Reserve also employed a low interest rate policy that fueled cheap money and the search for higher returns through taking bigger risks.

Other fundamental factors relate to structural problems in the American economy, some of which are known and others less so. Today it is already known that the very low level of American savings was responsible for the crisis due to two factors that are connected to it.

**The government deficit created during the George W. Bush presidency depleted all the reserves accumulated in the social security system during Clinton's presidency**

First, the surplus in consumption was funded by credit – the same credit that expanded and fed the real estate bubble.

As can be seen in the graph, American credit rose from 94.6% of income in 1997 to 137.6% in 2007; in other words it multiplied by a factor of almost 1.5. In 2008 a decline can be seen. A higher rate of increase can be found only in Britain – an increase by a

multiple of 1.7, from 107.1% to 185.8% in the same period. And indeed these two countries were the major casualties of the crisis. It is noteworthy that European countries borrowed much less, as did Canada, which did not increase consumer credit in the decade prior to the crisis. And indeed, the banking crisis was considerably more moderate in these countries. In Israel consumer credit is much smaller than in the other countries shown in the graph, and it is even trending down.

Second, alongside the low level of private savings in the United States, which continued to decline and actually reached zero before the crisis, there was a government deficit created during the George W. Bush presidency, which depleted all the reserves that had accumulated in the social security system during Clinton's presidency. Negative national savings are usually manifest in a deficit in the balance of payments, which was indeed the case in the United States.

Table 2 shows the development of the deficit in the American BOP and its deterioration up to 6% of GDP in 2006, compared to an average deficit of zero among OECD member countries. The table also shows the relative strength of the German economy, with a large export surplus that pulled it out of the crisis, the surplus in Japan's exports and Canada's quite reasonable situation. In Israel there is a notable and constant improvement in the current account, which transitioned from negative to positive in the beginning of the decade.

The policy of expanding consumption to raise aggregate demand, thereby creating growth, is not new to the United States where consumption is the main engine of growth. Every year, in the period before Christmas, the economic press observes with trepidation consumer spending – waiting to see if it is large enough to herald continuing growth. The novelty is that consumption had grown without growth in income and, therefore, had to be funded by a growth in credit. The American economy indeed did grow in the previous decade, but due to the growth in inequality, the added income went to the top income decile and primarily to the top percentile.

At the global level, the country that allowed the United States to enjoy continued growth by increasing consumption, the country that funded the consumption of the richest country in the world was a lot less well off – China. For the past several years China has been maintaining the rate of exchange of its currency at a higher level than that of equilibrium, and in order to prevent the strengthening of its currency it purchases hundreds of billions of dollars and invests them in US government bonds and other assets. In this manner China can maintain an export surplus at the expense of an American import surplus,

and at the same time China experiences growth and accumulates wealth while the United States becomes poorer and grows only artificially, at the expense of debts to China and the rest of the world.

Therefore, the adjustment required by the United States is seemingly simple: reduce growth in consumption, increase exports and investment in the United States and reduce the federal deficit. For this purpose the dollar must be devalued in real terms relative to other world currencies and especially relative to the Chinese Yuan. Such a

**Table 2**

<b>Balance of Payments (BOP) - Current Account (percent of GDP)</b>										
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Canada	2.7	2.3	1.7	1.2	2.3	1.9	1.4	0.8	0.4	-2.9
France	1.4	1.8	1.2	0.7	0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-1.0	-1.9	-1.9
Germany	-1.8	0.0	2.0	1.9	4.6	5.1	6.4	7.7	6.7	4.9
Italy	-0.6	-0.1	-0.8	-1.3	-0.9	-1.7	-2.6	-2.4	-3.6	-3.2
Japan	2.5	2.2	2.9	3.2	3.7	3.6	3.9	4.9	3.2	2.8
Britain	-2.6	-2.1	-1.7	-1.6	-2.1	-2.6	-3.4	-2.6	-1.6	-1.3
United States	-4.2	-3.7	-4.3	-4.7	-5.3	-5.9	-6.0	-5.1	-4.7	-2.7
OECD average	-0.4	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.4	0.0	-0.1	0.3	-0.2	-0.6
Israel	-3.2	-1.5	-1.1	0.8	1.6	3.3	5.2	2.6	1.0	3.9

devaluation will encourage exports, make American citizens effectively poorer, and will therefore encourage savings and discourage consumption. This is a structural change that takes time as the economy and all its units must adjust to it. However, the American government does not have time. The ongoing crisis exacts two, heavy political prices. First – a high rate of unemployment that does not decrease despite relative growth (jobless recovery) and second – a continued increase in the deficit and in federal debt.

**Israel managed to negotiate the crisis quite well, relatively speaking, but it suffers from structural problems**

These are fundamental, structural elements and therefore the resolution of the crisis depends on fixing them. The problem is that fixing these elements makes it difficult for the United States and the rest of the world to quickly emerge from the crisis.

Remaining in crisis means an unemployment rate that does not decrease and this, in turn, exacts a heavy political price from the American government.

In the immediate term, the way out of the crisis is to be found – despite everything – in increased consumption, since, as yet, no other element has managed to replace it as an engine for growth.<sup>6</sup> In the long term, other elements of American aggregate demand must rise, such as an export surplus or fixed investments, in order to bridge the gap that will be created between the drop in consumption and the rise in national savings.

The increase in inequality of income is attributed by many economists to the technological and economic changes of the past decades, which created a high premium for education. The United States, which was a world leader in secondary and university education, now trails behind Europe in the number of university graduates and thus loses growth potential. American infrastructure also lags behind European infrastructure.

In order to put the United States back on a track of sustainable growth, structural changes are needed that will support a more balanced growth in incomes and higher productivity of the American worker. Mainly, this means improving the education system and infrastructure. But in the shorter term, the fiscal aspect will also require treatment in order to ensure a decrease in debt relative to GDP.

### 3. The Israeli Economy

Two international reports provide a suitable starting point for understanding the Israeli economy at this time: the annual report of the IMF and the report published by the OECD in preparation for Israel's membership.<sup>7</sup>

Both reports note that Israel managed to negotiate the crisis quite well, relatively speaking, but that it suffers from structural problems it must deal with in the future. The problems that everyone has been talking about for years are income inequality, which is the highest among OECD members (at a rate similar to that of the United States); deficiencies in infrastructure and education; and the economy's need to integrate

groups that constitute a significant share of Israeli children – Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews. Less is said about governmental failures – the inability of the state to carry out tasks for reasons that will be detailed below. The basis of this failure is a lack of long-term thinking but also an inability to maintain systems such as the firefighting service, whose severe problems were exposed during the Carmel fire at the beginning of December, 2010. The inability of the state to carry out national tasks and prepare for emergencies is especially disturbing, considering the strategic threat of conventional missiles covering the entire area of the country. The economic-administrative issue advances, therefore, to the head of Israel's strategic considerations, while hitherto it concerned only businessmen and professionals.

The growth rate in 2010 totaled 4.5%, with unemployment dropping to 6.6%, and additional jobs spread out over the entire economy. Unemployment is at an historic low. Since 1987, with an unemployment rate of 6.1%, the Israeli economy has always had higher rates of unemployment, except for 2008 when the rate returned once again to 6.1%.

These data point to a feeling of optimism. Employers do not raise the number of their employees if they do not believe that they can sell additional products. Investment in structures and equipment rose by 6.1%, and private consumption rose by 5.9%, a testimony of consumer trust in their own economic prospects. Rising above all of these is the sector that is leading growth in Israel - exports, which rose by 16.5%. However, the future looks less bright, as it is reasonable to

assume that this expansion will not continue at the current pace. The CBS estimates that in 2010 exports rose by 6.7% and industrial exports by 11.2%. In contrast, in 2011 exports are predicted to rise by 4.3% and industrial exports by 5.5%. The expected result is a more moderate growth. Still, these data are excellent compared to 2009, which had an infinitesimal growth rate of 0.8% and a peak unemployment rate of 8.0%.<sup>8</sup>

In order to understand why the Israeli economy did not experience the powerful financial and economic crisis that engulfed the United States and Europe and how the current economic recovery is taking place in Israel – which is contrasted by the lackadaisical growth and high unemployment characterizing the American economy – one can utilize economic and statistical analyses that examined the question: what caused the variations in the magnitude of the crisis?

Such data concerning differences were provided in the tables above, which show that Canada suffered less from the crisis, although it is the United States' neighbor and largest trading partner. These analyses show that the increase in private credit explains the magnitude of the crisis.<sup>9</sup> And indeed, in Israel, private consumer credit did not expand. Analyses of the events point to the role of the

**The inability of the state to prepare for emergencies is especially disturbing considering the strategic threat of conventional missiles covering the entire area of the country**

banking system: where the damage to the banking system was smaller, so was the crisis. Therefore the basis for understanding the situation in Israel is the strength of the financial system: in Israel, banks did not go bankrupt and did not even experience difficulties requiring Bank of Israel intervention. There was no outbreak of inflation or rush to foreign currency, nor was there a significant drop in credit available to companies and households. Another explanation is that Israel's main export market

**The continued growth in exports established the Shekel's strength and made it easier to conduct a policy aimed at preserving stable prices**

– the high-tech sector – recovered quickly from the crisis, and therefore the country did not suffer a problem in demand for its primary export component. Is the absence of a financial crisis a result of good fortune or good thinking? Apparently, a little bit of both. Several mistakes were made, but they were overcome with good fortune.

Paradoxically, and fortunately for Israel, the global crisis of 2002 hit Israel harder than the rest of the world. The crisis, a result of first the bursting of the high-tech bubble amplified later by the economic aftershocks from 9/11, was accompanied by the Second Intifada and therefore greatly damaged Israeli exports. It was preceded by a financial crisis in which the banks suffered losses, and faith in the system dropped. At the same time inflation began once again, due, among other things, to a one-time reduction in the interest rate, which caused

a large devaluation of the Shekel and low public confidence in price stability. At the height of the crisis, the rate of exchange reached 5 NIS per dollar, and there was fear of a significant devaluation. The government could not borrow from the local market, as interest rates on government bonds had peaked. This crisis was averted by rapid action on the part of the Bank of Israel and the government, in the form of a raise in the interest rate and budget cuts. These actions restored confidence in the financial system.

The lessons from this crisis were that the Bank of Israel should be allowed to control the interest rate without interference, that the Ministry of Finance must have control of the deficit, and that it is necessary to reduce the ratio of debt to GDP, since the fear of government bankruptcy decreases when its debt is reduced. Another conclusion was that bank supervision must be tightened to ensure that they hold a larger share of equity capital in relation to the credit that they provide in order to be able to withstand future crises. All of these items were implemented and thus strengthened the foundations of the economy, which allowed it to withstand the economic earthquake that is the current crisis. The continued growth in exports established the Shekel's strength and made it easier to conduct a policy aimed at preserving stable prices.

On the other hand, in the United States, again paradoxically, the problem was that the 2002 crisis was less severe and was quickly ameliorated by aggressively lowering the interest rate, a measure taken by then Federal Reserve Chairman, Alan Greenspan. The temporary success of this policy

concealed the need to deal with the structural economic problems. Meanwhile, the savings problem was exacerbated when the Bush administration turned the budgetary surplus inherited from Clinton administration into a record deficit due to tax cuts and large expenditures on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### **The 2008-2009 corporate bonds market crisis**

The routine reports regarding the Israeli economy and its resilience in the face of the crisis do not represent the complete financial picture. There was a severe problem in the capital market, although not in the banking system. Beginning from 2004, Israel experienced a financial reform outside the banking system which was tied to the propensity for deregulation but which almost resulted in a local financial crisis. The issue was credit provided by institutional bodies to business corporations, in the form of corporate bonds. A series of reforms conducted in the capital market and in long-term savings (the Bachar Reform was just one of them) brought forth a situation in which the institutional bodies - provident funds, pension funds, and insurance companies - searched for investment avenues for their clients. The banks were not interested in these monies, and the institutional bodies, for their part, were not overly interested in investing in the banks. The result was that Israeli corporations, both large and small, issued their own bonds - corporate bonds - which were snapped up like hotcakes without sufficient consideration of risk. Bonds issued by corporations owned by tycoons who invested in foreign real estate were

traded with low interest, close to the rate of the banks and the cell-phone companies, despite their significantly higher risk. And indeed, when the crisis arrived, the risk became reality. The interest rate on real estate company-issued bonds, such as those of Africa-Israel, rose by several dozen percentage points, and finally there was a series of bankruptcies, most of which concluded in creditor arrangements.<sup>10</sup>

The corporate bonds crisis brought about a complete halt in bond issues during the months of the crisis at the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, and there was concern that this market would collapse. The account holders in the provident funds, who lost dozens of percentage points off their investments, began to increase their withdrawal rate. Fortunately, the panic did not spread to most of the Israeli public, which understood that it would be preferable not to sell at the height of the crisis. In addition, the Ministry of Finance supplied a safety net - quite limited in scope, to be sure - but apparently it helped calm the market.<sup>11</sup>

**The Ministry of Finance supplied a limited safety net that helped to calm the corporations' bonds market**

The corporate bond market is, therefore, an example of luck overcoming a lack of solid thinking on the part of the economic policy makers. It is noteworthy that other reforms planned by the Ministry of Finance were not implemented - reforms that were supposed to bring to Israel

American-type institutions and arrangements, the very foundation of the current crisis. One such reform was the creation of mortgage-backed securities (MBS), the same financial products at the root of the recent world crisis. It thus appears that the Israeli bureaucracy actually contributed, in this case, to the stability of the economy.

#### 4. The Strategic Risks Facing the Israeli Economy and its Structural Problems

There still exist several considerable risk factors regarding continued growth and its contribution to Israeli national resilience.

1. **The global economic situation and its effect on exports.** Indeed, Israeli high-tech has almost returned to the level of activity before the crisis, but it is not insulated from the local and global economy and as such, the expected rate of growth in exports is expected to steeply decline in 2011, as mentioned above. On the other hand, the financial crisis has severely harmed the funding sources of Israeli high-tech research and development, which threatens the growth of this sector.
2. **The security situation.** Peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians are currently in crisis. In order to reach rates of growth that will close the gap between Israel and the most developed countries, peace, which will permit the reduction of the burden of security on the economy, is required. Moving away from peace does not bode well for the economy. Also,

war or an intifada involve financial risk which can hurt the economy, just like in the Second Intifada (although in the Second Lebanon War this risk was not realized).<sup>12</sup>

3. **The political situation.** Political isolation of Israel can turn into economic isolation. This is, apparently, a long-term threat, since currently the trend is opposite, as evident in Israel becoming a member of the OECD.
4. **The structural problems of the foreign currency market.** Since its inception, Israel has suffered from a chronic lack of foreign currency. In the past few years this trend has reversed itself: exports are growing faster than imports and there is a surplus in the current BOP. This surplus creates pressure for a revaluation of the Shekel. Due to home bias (the preference of investing in the local capital market), this surplus does not find its way abroad in the form of investments of the institutional bodies. This preference is strengthened by the good performance of the local market in recent years. Therefore, there is concern that the blessing will turn into a curse, since continued growth depends on the leading sector, which is exports, which, in turn, requires a comfortable rate of exchange. The probability of a significant increase in foreign currency savings due to the offshore natural gas discoveries greatly aggravates this problem. The Bank of Israel cannot continue to buy foreign currency without limit, and therefore a government-sponsored fund must be established, which will invest the surplus abroad to the benefit of the younger

generations. Recently, it has been reported that the government is indeed examining the possibility of establishing a fund for government investment abroad in which part of the income from the natural gas discoveries will be invested.

5. **Government functioning.** The Carmel conflagration at the end of 2010 focused public attention on this structural problem, which constitutes a long-term risk for growth. The fire showed that the government is sometimes incapable of dealing with long-term issues, although the need was clear and there were government decisions concerning this matter. The dysfunction of the government in matters such as the firefighting service is also a security problem, as it is estimated that in the next war the home front will be attacked by thousands of missiles.
6. **Structural problems.** The structural problems of the Israeli economy have been discussed for years without any actual improvement. The OECD report notes many of them: the education system – elementary and secondary schools as well as the university level – is in crisis; transportation and water infrastructure have fallen behind; and the electrical infrastructure is also at risk due to the inadequate capital structure of the Israel Electric Corporation. There are massive gaps, which include the lack of integration of Arabs and the ultra-Orthodox in the economy; housing prices have risen by 40% in the past two years and have made housing for young couples extremely difficult to attain; and a decrease in perceptions of personal security due to insufficient policing.

The final two items, 5 and 6 are related. Economic growth permits allocation of resources to these issues, although this has not happened in the past few years owing to the government's inability to deal with them.

### **The decline of the public sector and the problem in government functioning**

The weakening of the public sector is a strategic threat to Israeli society. A society that is at peace and does not have enemies on its borders can allow itself to weaken the government's ability to act in an organized manner at all levels, from the central government to the local government. This is the situation in the United States, Britain, and Europe. But in adopting American and British approaches, one must take into account the country's unique geopolitical situation.

The root of the problem seems to be that the Israel governmental process has increasingly shown itself as being incapable of weighing costs and benefits across several dimensions effectively and within both the short and long-term time frames. This problem is systemic, having to do with the structures of government but also is a reflection of the changing needs of Israel as it grows and is transformed, and occurs within most if not all of the major institutions of the Israeli governing system. When dealing with an issue of sufficient complexity that it requires a cross-agency process and response, the entire system enters paralysis. Crucial decisions are put off for decades, or are hastily taken on an *ad hoc* basis, or even, too often, both. In response to this paralysis, the Budget office of the Ministry of Finance takes over the decision

making power and makes decisions concerning the entire governmental system.<sup>13</sup> Naturally, it makes those decisions based upon its point of view and perspective which is that of reducing the role of government in the economy, balancing the budget, cutting taxes, removing barriers to competition, including in the labor market and in the export and import markets, and so on.

The failure to deal with the large fire in the Carmel in December 2010 exemplifies the problem. In the

**In Israel, crucial decisions are put off for decades, or are hastily taken on an *ad hoc* basis, or even, too often, both**

absence of a set procedure for implementing cross agency decisions, the attempt to implement reforms in the firefighting service turned into a standoff between the firefighters and the Ministry of Finance, with the firefighters demanding large

improvements in their pay and benefits in exchange for giving up the right to strike and the Finance Ministry withholding all funding for expanding and improving the firefighting service until the personnel issue had been resolved. Similar standoffs occurred in regard to the prosecutors' strike and the strike in the Foreign Ministry. The prosecutors' strike caused severe damage including the release from custody of those accused of severe crimes, among other reasons, because the Ministry of Finance refused to even talk to the strikers. The strike in the Foreign Ministry caused damage to foreign policy, brought about the cancellation of the visit

of the President Medvedev of Russia and caused disruption in the provision of consular services to citizens.

In this connection, it is of note that two former senior officials of the Bank of Israel, Prof. Ben Bassat and Dr. Momi Dahan wrote a book for the Israel Democracy Institute (Ben Bassat & Dahan, 2006) in which they detail the need to decrease the elaborate control that the Ministry of Finance has over the government. They explain the technique through which the Ministry of Finance has taken over the entire civil service, including the prime minister's role in this process, and they suggest strengthening the Economic Council in the Prime Minister's Office so that it will constitute a counterweight to the Budget Department in the Ministry of Finance during preparation of the national budget.

## Discussion and Summary

### The International Arena

As we indicated at the beginning of this Introduction, the financial crisis has serious implications for four areas of Jewish people policy planning. The first is the international arena. In connection with the financial crisis, we are witnessing a global realignment and redistribution of power. Whereas between 1991 (the collapse of the Soviet Union) and 2008 the United States enjoyed significant global dominance, today it is being increasingly forced to share economic and political power with rising states, most notably China but also Brazil, India and Turkey.

As we have seen, the United States has incurred a number of long-range, structural economic problems. These include a huge federal deficit (along with state and municipal deficits) financed by huge federal debt, a very large portion of which is held by foreign countries, some of which like China, are emerging as rivals to the US. This foreign debt itself is a point of strategic weakness as Richard N. Haas and Roger Altman have pointed out:

"...During a crisis over Taiwan, for example Chinese central bankers could prove more dangerous than Chinese admirals. A simple announcement that China was cutting back its dollar holdings could put huge pressure on the US dollar and/or interest rates. This would be similar to the way the United States used economic pressure against the United Kingdom during the 1956 Suez crisis, when Washington refused to support an IMF loan to the British government unless it agreed to withdraw its military forces from Egypt."

In addition, the requirement to rein in the deficit could pressure cuts to the American defense budget and will also inhibit America's ability to intervene militarily especially in wars of choice, and its presence in Iraq and Afghanistan will be affected. Furthermore, the authors point out, budgetary pressures will also affect humanitarian interventions, foreign aid, intelligence and homeland security.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, the US will have a weaker voice within the IMF and other global institutions, it will be unable to undertake direct financial interventions, and perhaps most importantly, the soft power of the US is being undermined.

The US, most of Europe (with the exception of Germany) and Japan are all suffering from deleveraging, slow growth and high unemployment. In contrast to both China and Israel, US annual growth in the third quarter was 2.60%. The US model of political freedom and market-based capitalism is seen as risk-prone and discredited after the financial crisis and that it ultimately may lead to poorer societies and lower standards of living.

In contrast China in 2010 enjoyed around 10% growth as it has averaged for the past three decades. It is the world's leading exporter and manufacturer and China's economic prowess is already allowing Beijing to challenge American influence all over the world. The Chinese are the preferred partners of many African governments and the biggest trading partner of other emerging powers, such as Brazil and South Africa. China is also stepping in to buy the bonds of financially strapped members of the Eurozone, such as Greece and Portugal. Fortune's latest ranking of the world's largest companies has only two American firms in the top 10 – Walmart at No. 1 and ExxonMobil at No. 3. There are already three Chinese firms in the top 10: Sinopec, State Grid, and China National Petroleum."<sup>15</sup>

**"A simple announcement that China was cutting back its dollar holdings could put huge pressure on the US dollar and/or interest rates"**

In addition, China is translating its economic rise into new diplomatic and military assertiveness. As Gideon Rachman put it:

At the G-20 summit in November, the U.S. drive to deal with "global economic imbalances" was essentially thwarted by China's obdurate refusal to change its currency policy. The 2009 climate-change talks in Copenhagen ended in disarray after another U.S.-China standoff. Growing Chinese economic and military clout clearly poses a long-

**Fortune's latest ranking of the world's largest companies has only 2 American firms in the top 10, compared to 3 from China**

term threat to American hegemony in the Pacific. The Chinese reluctantly agreed to a new package of U.N. sanctions on Iran, but the cost of securing Chinese agreement was a weak deal that is unlikely to derail the Iranian nuclear program. Both sides have taken part in the talks with North Korea, but a

barely submerged rivalry prevents truly effective Sino-American cooperation. China does not like Kim Jong Il's regime, but it is also very wary of a reunified Korea on its borders, particularly if the new Korea still played host to U.S. troops. China is also competing fiercely for access to resources, in particular oil, which is driving up global prices.<sup>16</sup>

On the military side, the Chinese are developing weapons systems that can challenge the American military, ranging from aircraft carriers and "carrier-killer" missiles to stealth bombers and missile carrying drones.<sup>17</sup>

One of the most important directions of Jewish people policy is to form policies that adequately address this potential shift of global economic and political power, not only to China but also to countries like Brazil, India and Turkey. This assessment addresses the issue in the general geopolitical discussion above and in the special essay on the Jewish people and the rise of Asia.

A second geopolitical area in which the economic crisis has affected the Jewish people is the result of the midterm elections in the US. The Republicans, and especially Tea Party candidates emerged triumphant, taking control of the House and narrowing the Democrat majority in the Senate. This seems to be due to the combination of continued very high unemployment and hard times on "Main Street" on the one hand, together with a perceived "moral deficit" in the administration policy vis-à-vis Wall Street on the other. The US government (albeit the prior Republican administration) bailed out those financial institutions that were deemed "too big to fail" (such as AIG), yet could not put an end to the huge profits and huge bonuses of the Wall Street firms. Thus, Wall Street firms were not perceived as having paid for the economic misery that they brought upon the nation. This fueled and gave credence to the anti-government sentiment that the Republicans and especially the Tea Party propagated.

The Republican victory produced a House of Representatives that seems to be highly supportive of Israel and the current Israeli government and its policies. It also entailed the election of many candidates who had Tea Party associations. While

these candidates are largely pro-Israel, the Tea Party does have isolationist leanings which could have implications for US foreign aid to Israel (especially in light of the budget deficit) and for involvement in the Middle East. If, as certain indicators show, the American economy is improving, it could have positive electoral implications for President Obama and the Democrats in 2012. (See the essay on the Jerusalem-Washington-Jewish Community triangle for further elaboration).

### **Israel and Its Economy**

The two main countries in which most Jews currently reside, Israel and the United States, experienced the financial crisis differently: Israel was barely harmed while the United States is still in the midst of the crisis and its aftermath. Yet, both are in need of significant structural changes.

Structural changes in the United States are related to fixing global imbalances such as a lack of savings in the United States compared to a surplus of savings in China. Structural changes in Israel are necessary to renew growth and to solve urgent social problems. Both countries are in need of significant improvement in infrastructure and the education system. The deficiencies of the education system in both countries are partly responsible for the high degree of socio-economic inequality, which has risen sharply in recent decades. Improving these systems is also necessary to maintain and enhance their technological advantages which permit the two countries – still – better economic performance, relative to the rest of the West.

Internal structural changes, if implemented, will allow Israel and the United States to face the

challenge of a rapidly changing world. As we have seen, the first decade of the new millennium featured the rising prominence of China and India. Israel will suffer if the shift of exports from the West to the East encounters difficulties and if growth in the West is not renewed. In the foreseeable future the United States will continue to be Israel's main export market due to Israel's focus on high-end, innovative technologies.

But the risk inherent in the profound global structural changes is also accompanied by opportunity. Israelis are renowned for their ability to identify opportunities and realize them due to the flexibility of the Israeli way of doing things. Israeli business culture has many disadvantages – the price paid for flexibility – yet, in a swiftly changing world, this culture has advantages. Therefore, it is entirely possible that Israel will emerge from the crisis in better condition than its competitors in the rest of the world. Non-Israeli Jews share this cultural attribute of being able to identify opportunities and being innovative and original.

**In the foreseeable future, the US will continue to be Israel's main export market due to Israel's focus on high-end, innovative technologies**

What is the role of the Israeli state and the institutions of the Jewish people in these special circumstances? In Israel, all the government bodies must be made more capable of identifying changes and acting flexibly in new circumstances, to create infrastructure that will permit realizing

these opportunities on the one hand, and to minimize the damage caused by changes on the other. In Israel, the venture capital funds, whose creation was inspired by the state, are an example of a most successful governmental action: the establishment of the infrastructure necessary for realizing the opportunity in creating a high-tech industry. In contrast, the failure to deal with those cast out of the textile industry, along with the entirely unnecessary rapid pace in which the

**A central issue in which the economic capabilities of the Jewish community has significance for the continued Jewish life is the cost of living Jewishly**

industry was exposed to competition from China and India is another example of the problems of Israeli governance system. In addition, in order to stay competitive vis-à-vis economies such as Singapore, New Zealand, Chile and Eastern Europe, Israel has to improve its ability to mobilize effective collective action to strengthen its educational system and its various infrastructures (transportation, civil defense, civil service etc.). Such strengthening may involve changes regarding the relative strengths of the various arms of government, such as the Department of the Budget in the Finance Ministry and their role in the budgetary process. In addition, Israel has to integrate the ultra-Orthodox and Arab sectors into the workforce and the productive economy.

## The American Jewish Community

As mentioned, the United States requires structural changes.

In the United States, Jews are on average better educated and have therefore enjoyed a higher return on human capital in the United States and have attained a larger share in growth relative to their proportion of the population.<sup>18</sup> However, factors that harm the US economy or lead to declines in living standards will surely affect the well-being of American Jews.

The institutions of the Jewish people, for their part, must be aware of the economic structural changes, identify their effect on the Jewish people, and prepare for them with appropriate infrastructure. A central issue in which the economic capabilities of the Jewish community, as individuals and as a collective, has significance for the continued existence of Jewish life is the cost of living Jewishly. Educational and communal infrastructures of Jewish life are not cheap, and there are those who are already claiming that the cost of participation distances Jews from participating in Jewish life. If the economic capabilities of Jews as individuals and as a collective changes for the worse, it will require thinking through and finding solutions. At this point, the issue must be watched and preparations made for the various possible scenarios.

As pointed out in last year's Annual Assessment, the analysis of the cost of living Jewishly is quite complex and involves a range of choices and preferences. Nevertheless, one area in which economic considerations seem to have played a role is that of Jewish day school enrollment.

As pointed out in the 2009 Annual Assessment, "Jewish day schools have also been hard hit by the whipsaw of declining enrollments and increasing demand for financial aid; during the past year, at least a half-dozen day schools closed their doors."

This decline in enrollment also continued from the 2008-2009 to the 2009-2010 school years, though not as much as feared. For schools with over 250 students, total enrollment dropped an average of 3%. However, schools with fewer than 100 students experienced a drop of 7%. Simultaneously, there was also an increase in financial aid. Solomon Schechter Day School Association schools reported a 14.9% increase in the amount of tuition assistance. Five of the 16 Progressive Association of Reform Day Schools schools benefited from emergency aid provided by the Jim Joseph Foundation. With the exception of Cleveland, each community in PEJE's (Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education) data reported increases in the amount of financial aid awarded. Boston's 2% drop in enrollment benefitted from a 24% increase in financial aid awards. Phoenix drop of 3.2% was accompanied by a 15% increase in awards amounts.<sup>19</sup> One response to these emerging economic difficulties in regard to Jewish education has been the emergence of a small number of public Hebrew charter schools which provide Jewish/Hebrew education for free. (See the brief discussion of this phenomenon in the Developments to Watch section below.)

Another area that has been adversely affected by the financial crisis has been philanthropic donations. While the decline in donations has continued from 2008 into 2009 the rate of decline has slowed. Thus the decline, year to year,

in donations to the Jewish Federations of North America had in 2008 been 25%, but in 2009 it was 19%.<sup>20</sup> In 2010 donations seem to have entered a slow "thaw." "Charities," says the Chronicle of Philanthropy concerning general giving in the US, "that raise the most from private sources are expected to eke up by a median of just 1 percent this year, meaning that half expect to do less well and half anticipate doing better. That is a big improvement over 2009, when donations tumbled by a median of nearly 6 percent, but still a long way from the sums most groups were raising before the economy slowed."<sup>21</sup> In addition, as last year's Assessment noted, the Madoff scandal also egregiously harmed American Jewish philanthropy. The effects of the scandal continued to reverberate this year, as certain philanthropic endeavors such as Hadassah Women returned gains acquired by investing in Madoff's fraudulent funds and other organizations are under the threat of the "clawback" of these funds.

But even if the American economy, as certain indicators are starting to show, fitfully improves, the structural weaknesses and the steps needed to repair them may not only keep the American Jewish community weaker than it had hitherto been, but also may encourage a change in relations between the American Jewish diaspora and the State of Israel.

**"Jewish day schools have been hard hit by the whipsaw of declining enrollments and increasing demand for financial aid"**

## The Relationships and Equilibrium between Israel and the Diaspora Communities

The salient economic fact in the Jewish world today is the discrepancy between the Israeli economy and the economies of the countries of residence of the other large Jewish communities – The United States and Western Europe. As we have seen, the American economy is still in the throes of unemployment of over 9% and low growth, even though the Great Recession has

**Israel needs to contribute more in regard to projects designed to enhance the well-being and strength of the Jewish people**

formally ended. Similarly, economists foresee a decade of slow growth for Europe due to austerity measures undertaken to stem market fears about surging public debt levels and a central bank focused more on controlling inflation than boosting growth.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, global market forces and

US actions have put in place a real devaluation of the dollar meaning that America's relative purchasing power has declined and will likely continue to do so.

Israel, on the other hand, enjoys growth of 4.5% and record low unemployment (6.1%). The NIS has been gaining in strength and Israel has very large foreign currency reserves. Furthermore the recent discoveries of major natural gas reserves hold the prospect of providing Israel with a domestic energy source with both positive economic and security implications. On the individual level, Israel has in the past two decades developed a substantial

wealthy class.<sup>23</sup> All these developments point to the fact that there needs to be a "rebalancing" of Israel-Diaspora relations. Whether in terms of government or private funds, Israel needs to contribute more, and in certain areas, take the place of Diaspora funds, in regard to certain projects designed to enhance the well-being and strength of the Jewish people.

To a certain extent, this is already happening. As pointed out in last year's Annual Assessment, American Jewish philanthropy to Israel in recent years has focused upon the "third sector," the non-profit, non-governmental sector which advances projects for social amelioration and change. As American Jewish philanthropic donations have declined, the Israeli "third sector" has also suffered greatly. In response, the Israeli government allocated a NIS 200 million package to help struggling social welfare organizations for the years 2009-2010. This program was designed to replace or supplement American Jewish funding of these organizations. This program has been renewed for 2010-2011.

Another, much smaller, initiative involves private donations. A consortium of American Jewish philanthropic organizations (The Avi-Chai Foundation, The Jewish Federation of New York, The Jewish Funders Network and Keren Tmurah) undertook during 2010 to match donations given by Israeli individuals to organizations and projects dealing with Jewish renewal. The consortium matched gifts from 40,000 NIS to 200,000 NIS. The express purpose of the program was to encourage and increase Israeli private philanthropy. Finally, the Israeli government has just announced that it will

greatly expand its support for "Birthright" reaching 350 million NIS over three years. This move has induced the American Jewish supporters of the project to expand their funding so as to maintain the 2:1 ratio of private American Jewish support to Israeli government support.

When future trends are analyzed it is important not to fall into the trap of accentuating short-term trends and ignoring the long-term trends that balance them. For instance, although Israel traversed the crisis better than the United States, there is no basis to the claim that Israeli Jews will, in the coming years, be wealthier than Jewish Americans. The demographic and technological forecasts predict high growth for the United States, relative to Europe, and in the index of GDP per employee, Israel has not grown faster than the United States in the past thirty years. Not only is it too early to eulogize the United States as the wealthiest nation in the world, it is also too early to say that Israel is closing the economic gap between it and the rest of the developed countries in the Western world.

## Endnotes

1. This issue has been widely discussed in Roosevelt's new biography. See Brands, 2008. Regarding the crucial importance of the crisis for making changes in the American economy, see Bordo et al., 1997.
2. See the IMF for veiled criticism of Israel <http://www.imf.org/external/np/ms/2010/112910.htm> and the OECD report upon Israel's membership [http://www.oecd.org/document/54/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_33733\\_44392758\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/54/0,3343,en_2649_33733_44392758_1_1_1_1,00.html)
3. Many of the ideas raised here can be found in several recently published books about the crisis: Rajan (2010); Johnson-Kwak (2010); Akerlof-Shiller (2009); Reinhart-Rogoff (2009).
4. A professional description, which can be understood by any layman, may be found in Johnson-Kwak (2010); a more technical explanation may be found in Brunnermeier (2008).
5. This position is emphasized in Johnson-Kwak (2010), pp. 67, 71.
6. One of the goals of the quantitative easing initiated by the Federal Reserve was to make the public feel richer and thus consume more.
7. OECD (2010). IMF (2010).
8. At the time of this writing, we were notified of a development that can contribute greatly to the development and prosperity of the Israeli economy: a discovery of large quantities of natural gas in the "Leviathan" field, off the Haifa coast.
9. See Lane and Milesi (2010).
10. See: Spivak (2010, In Hebrew) and also Ahdut-Spivak (2010, in Hebrew).
11. See: description of the safety net in the Ministry of Finance's website [www.mof.gov.il/hon](http://www.mof.gov.il/hon), Report of the Supervisor of the Capital Market, 2009.
12. At the time of this writing, the stability of the peace with Egypt has become a concern again for the first time in decades.
13. See (Ben Bassat & Dahan, 2006) who explain the technique through which the Ministry of Finance has taken over the entire civil service, including the prime minister's role in this process, and they suggest strengthening the Economic Council in the Prime Minister's Office so that it will constitute a counterweight to the Budget Department in the Ministry of Finance during preparation of the national budget.
14. Roger C. Altman and Richard N. Haas, "American Profligacy and American Power: The Consequences of Fiscal Irresponsibility," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2010.
15. Gideon Rachman, "American Decline – This Time it's for Real", *Foreign Policy*, January-February 2011. See also Martin Wolf, "In the Grip of a Great Convergence", *Financial Times*, January 4, 2011.
16. Rachman, "American Decline".
17. "A Chinese Stealth Challenge," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 5, 2011.

18. It is reasonable to assume that Jews have a larger part, relative to their share of the population, in the financial sector in the United States and Britain. This is one of the sectors that lead growth in the past decade, and it is also the sector that is currently facing uncertainty as to its future.
19. MOFET-JTEC, <http://jtec.macam.ac.il/portal/ArticlePage.aspx?id=543>
20. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, Oct. 17, 2010, <http://philanthropy.com/section/Philanthropy-400/237/>
21. <http://philanthropy.com/article/Charities-Change-Tactics-to/124942/>
22. <http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2011/01/07/economists-say-europe-faces-low-growth-for-a-decade/tab/print/>
23. According to a survey conducted by Merrill Lynch Israel enjoys the third fastest growth rate of millionaires in the world. <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3909038,00.html>

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# Asia's Rise: Implications for Israel and the Jewish People

## 1. China and India on the Way to Great Power Status

Since the early 1990s, a steady shift of global power has been in the making. It is the slowly accelerating transfer of power from West to East, particularly China and more recently and slowly India. Many observers agree today that this trend will transform both countries – certainly China and probably India – into great powers in less than a generation, with regional dominance and major continental or global influence, economically, politically and militarily.

Very few predicted the rise of China and India before and even after World War II. One of the few and most remarkable among them was Israel's founding father David Ben-Gurion. In 1963 he predicted with some anticipation that before long the two Asian states – China and India – would become the greatest powers in the world.

To this day quite a few Western and Russian commentators follow Asia's rise with an air of disbelief, dismay or disapproval. They have correctly assessed that both China and India still

face enormous internal and external challenges. Their long-term military and economic power, their ability to absorb great external shocks and their willingness to help protect global peace and the environment and project a meaningful message to the world are not at all guaranteed. In fact, both countries are likely to encounter major internal and external bumps in the road, but no country has ever become a great power without overcoming obstacles.

So far the doubters have been wrong and Ben-Gurion proved right. Of course he did not ignore that China, in his time, was enduring self-imposed isolation, foreign embargoes, political turmoil and ruinous economic experiments while India was stagnating politically and economically. But he was not impressed by the daily events. He tried to look further ahead and understand the deeper forces that were driving these oldest, surviving and proud civilizations. He knew that they remembered their great past and would struggle to reclaim their place in history, temporarily lost to the West. In fact this loss was very recent. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, China was a great power, and India a very important power. Cultural and religious immobility

and an inability to incorporate modern science and technology, but also foreign intervention and internal strife then sapped their independence and economic strength. But the memory of a recent, more glorious past explains both China's and India's sense of identity and the strong "will to power," to use Nietzsche's term, that can be found in the elites of both countries and in large parts of their populations. In contrast, the "will to power" seems to have waned in Europe and it may be weakening in the United States.

**2/3 of Asian countries' oil imports come from the Middle East, and Asian dependence on the region will rise to 80% by 2030**

## **2. Asia Moves into the Middle East**

Asia's rise and its global implications are well known and widely discussed. Much less known are the economic and geo-political implications for the Middle East. To the term 'Middle East' which they disregard as Eurocentric, Chinese and Indians prefer

the designation 'West Asia,' in accordance with the geographical proximity of the region to the Asian subcontinent and long-standing historical ties between the two sides. The growing relations observed today between Asia and the Middle East are revisiting and reinvigorating ancient ties. In the recent period, owing to the rise of China and India as global economic powers and to the remarkable growth of other Asian economies, links between Asia and the Middle East have expanded to an unprecedented extent.

Energy is the determinant driver of greater relations and interdependence between Asia and the Middle East in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, although it is not the only driver. Asian countries heavily depend on the continuous supply of energy to sustain their booming economies and growing populations and to alleviate energy poverty among the rural masses. The resulting surging demand in Asia for oil and gas, conjugated with the immense hydrocarbon resources of Mideast countries and the geographical proximity of the two regions, have made Asia and the Middle East close energy trade partners. Today, the Asia-Pacific region is the destination of over two-thirds of the Mideast producers' total petroleum exports. Conversely, no less than two-thirds of Asian countries' oil imports come from the Middle East, and most projections indicate that Asian import dependence on the region will rise to eighty percent by 2030.

Non-energy trade and investment constitute another significant driver of growing interdependence between the two regions, although to a lesser extent than the energy factor. Today about a third of the Middle East's total imports come from Asia, and over half of its non-energy exports are destined to Asia. Asia has thus become the Middle East's first export destination, far ahead of Europe and North America. Trade between the two regions is likely to continue expanding over the next decade, especially once the Gulf Cooperation Council concludes bilateral free trade agreements with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, China and India. Investment flows between the two regions are also expected to continue expanding. For Middle East investors, Asian countries, with their high and

sustained economic growth, cheap skilled workforce and dynamic markets, have become more attractive investment destinations than the West.

Human flows constitute the third major driver of increasing interdependence between the two regions. They include, first and foremost, the massive presence and continuing arrival of Asian workers in the Persian Gulf, who began migrating to the region after the 1973 oil price increase gave rise to a massive investment program by Gulf oil-producing states, resulting in growing demand for foreign labor. Today, the total population of Asian workers in the Persian Gulf is estimated at around 8.5 million, nearly half of them Indians. Asia and the Gulf countries are increasingly interdependent; the economy and society of several Gulf countries could no longer function without their Asian labor force.

Concurrently with the development of economic links, Asian countries have endeavored to advance mutual understanding and closer political and diplomatic cooperation with their western neighbors. Senior Asian government officials have stepped up official visits to Mideast countries over the last decade, and the governments of the two regions have signed major bilateral agreements in fields ranging from business development and education to the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking.

Ensuring the safety of the Indian Ocean's sea-lanes is critical to both Asia and the Middle East because the bulk of oil and gas supplies as well as trade flow through these lanes. For the time being the safety of the sea lanes is protected by the US Navy, but Asian countries do not wish to depend completely

on the US. Therefore, Asian and Middle Eastern countries have greatly increased bilateral naval cooperation in recent years. India in particular, has undertaken on several occasions joint naval exercises with Persian Gulf states, including Iran, Oman and Qatar. Besides, reports have emerged recently that China might be considering setting up military bases and deploying forces in the Middle East over the next decade, as a means of protecting its access to strategic resources, especially oil, and substantial Chinese investments in the region.

Asia already has some form of military presence in the Middle East, as Asian states contribute personnel to the UN peacekeeping forces operating in the region. Today, no less than eight Asian-Pacific states (Bangladesh, Brunei, China, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia and Nepal) contribute to the UNIFIL force operating on the Israel-Lebanon border, providing over 5,000 peacekeepers out of a total of about 12,000. China likes to show its contingent in Southern Lebanon on Chinese domestic television, perhaps with the double aim of demonstrating China's contribution to world peace but also of making the Chinese people familiar with the Chinese army's presence in remote countries.

Asia's economic, military and diplomatic clout in the Middle East has increased considerably in

**China may consider setting up military bases and deploying forces in the Middle East over the next decade to protect its access to strategic resources, especially oil**

recent years, and Asia's strategic footprint in the Middle East is likely to grow stronger. Looking at this trend, various long-term scenarios are possible depending on whether the current reduction of America's commitments and military presence in the Middle East turns out to be permanent, or whether America will again project its power into the Middle East in order to compete with Asia for control of the region's precious energy resources. In the first case, it does not take an

**In contrast to Western and Islamic countries, China and India carry no negative historic and religious baggage with regard to Jews**

exuberant fantasy to imagine a very different Middle East in twenty or thirty years. The West's military presence and its capacity, or will, to intervene might then be a thing of the past, its economic influence greatly reduced and its political power to affect events non-existent in the case of a disunited Europe and declining in the case of the United States. In

that case China's and India's need to protect their vital energy imports, their immense investments and their millions of citizens working in the region will draw them into the Middle East both politically and militarily, whether they like it or not. The safety and stability of the oil-producing Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, will be a national security priority for both China and India. This might change again but only if and when new pervasive energy technologies or major new oil producers outside the Middle East emerge, and this could take another ten to twenty years.

### 3. The Stakes in Asia are High

For Israel and the Jewish people the stakes in Asia are high. Sixty years ago, and within no more than twenty-six months, three of the world's oldest living civilizations went through extreme changes: India reclaimed its independence and statehood in 1947, Israel did so in 1948, and the new Communist China came to be in 1949, after many years of civil strife and a partial conquest by Japan. All three had strong cultural roots and similar historic claims. The leaders of India and China, Gandhi, Nehru, and Mao Zedong, were absorbed by their national struggles and not interested in similarities with others. For India and China, the emergence of tiny Israel was irrelevant. However, for Israel the re-emergence of these two great Asian civilizations was potentially of enormous consequence.

Both China and India carry no negative historic and religious baggage with regard to Jews, in contrast to the Western and Islamic worlds. They knew no indigenous anti-Semitism, and when anti-Jewish or anti-Zionist statements were made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were imports from the West, Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, the Muslim world or Japan. The absence of age-old prejudices in the main Asian nations could offer Israel and the Jews new opportunities, even if these nations are not always aware of the contributions of Judaic civilization. The most obvious of these opportunities, and the best known, are economic. Israel, like all export-oriented countries, and Jewish businessmen all over the world, benefit from Asia's rapid economic growth. Many Jews and Israelis report that they are well received and respected in Asia, particularly in

China. But there is perhaps another, less material advantage, more valuable for Israel than for any other country. Whether the Arab-Israeli conflict is solved or at least greatly reduced and stabilized in twenty or thirty years, or even if the confrontation continues, Israel may draw a long-term existential benefit from a newly powerful Asia that has no history of hostility to Jews – as long as Israel's conflict with its direct neighbors does not threaten vital Asian interests in the oil-producing Gulf countries.

In comparison to the West, China and India relate differently not only to Jews, but also to Islam and the Middle East, and this too could have positive consequences for Israel, as will be shown later. If Middle Eastern countries have increasingly to rely on Asia's giants for long-term protection they will also tend to listen to these giants.

For the time being, and despite a noticeable improvement of bilateral relations with Israel since the early 1990s, Asian voting records and speeches at the United Nations – especially at the General Assembly – on issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict remain resolutely in favor of the Arab states. This pattern results to a large extent from the concerns of Asian states not to impair close ties and strategic interests with the Arab world, rather than real interest in or concern with the Arab-Israeli conflict. In fact, notwithstanding their participation in UN peacekeeping forces in the Middle East, there is little evidence at the moment that Asian states aspire to play a central role in Arab-Israeli diplomacy or in other Middle Eastern issues.

However, this could change in the next decades. It is likely that China's and India's aspirations to global power status will lead them to seek greater influence and responsibility in resolving conflicts and challenges in the Middle East. China's activism in the UN Security Council on the Iranian nuclear issue is notorious. Although it has voted in favor of a number of Security Council resolutions sanctioning Iran, China has also consistently worked to water them down and has succeeded to do so on several occasions.

In private, the language of China and India towards Israel is more understanding than in public. When they established diplomatic, economic and even military relations with Israel they signaled that they regarded Israel's presence in the Middle East as legitimate and permanent. They have repeated this position in

**At the present moment, there is no evidence that Asian states aspire to play a central role in Arab-Israeli diplomacy or in other Middle Eastern Issues**

various, quiet ways, particularly in their discussions with Iran. Chinese representatives informed Jewish and Israeli contacts that they have conveyed to Iran their country's disapproval of the threats Iran's leaders routinely utter against Israel. There is a considerable reservoir of interest and sympathy for Israel and the Jewish people among some of Asia's, particularly China's, elites and in segments of the general public, although this sympathy does not often find public political expression. But China's and India's growing power could lead

them to express their views more explicitly and assume a much more active role in stabilizing a future Middle East. Friendly relations with Israel, in parallel to friendly relations with the Muslim states, could also become a subtle way for China and India to convey to their partners that great powers decide their own policies and do not depend on

**An Indian minister: great powers decide their own policies and do not depend on outsiders, not even their oil suppliers**

outsiders, not even their oil suppliers. During the years when the Hindu nationalist party, the BJP, governed India, a government member once gave this reply when he was asked at a press conference how his country could afford to improve its relations with Israel when it depended so much on Arab oil.

#### 4. China, the Jewish People and Israel

Small Jewish communities, the best known one in Kaifeng, lived in imperial China for centuries without encountering any hostility. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century close to thirty thousand European Jews found refuge and safe haven in Shanghai and Harbin. Chinese intellectuals became aware of a world-wide Jewish people only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and also learned that this people was often mistreated.

A feeling of affinity partly based on shared suffering has played a certain role in the relations between China and the Jews and Israel. In 1920, Sun Yatsen, the greatly respected founder and first president

of the Chinese Republic, endorsed the Zionist program and praised the Jewish contribution to world civilization.

No negative references to Judaism or Zionism can be found in the early statements of Mao Zedong. In January 1950 Israel became the first country in the Middle East to recognize the People's Republic of China, which some Chinese still remember. During the Korean War (1950-53) the United States demanded that Israel cease all contacts with China. This was the first episode in an unending history of tensions between the United States and Israel caused by policy divergences regarding China. From then on until the end of the Mao era (1976), China pursued a policy of strident public hostility to Israel, though Mao Zedong told Henry Kissinger in 1974 that he felt no antipathy toward Jews, on the contrary, and that he also encouraged all American steps to stop Soviet expansionism in the Middle East – which implicitly meant military support for Israel. In 1978-79, long before China and Israel established diplomatic relations, a secret military relationship developed between the two countries, both of which were under serious Soviet military threat. Israel shipped large quantities of weapons to China after it had performed poorly in a military confrontation with Vietnam, a Soviet ally.

In 1992, and in a complete break with the past, China established diplomatic relations with Israel. There were many reasons for this change. One was Chinese appreciation of the influence of the American Jewish community, and the hope that Jews might have some understanding for China and help ease the always-difficult relations between

China and the United States. High-level bilateral visits followed at a brisk pace, and economic, agricultural and military links grew. Reports began to appear in the Chinese media describing Israel's achievements, for example in agriculture, with obvious sympathy, and several Chinese universities started or expanded study programs on Jewish and Israeli history and civilization.

## 5. The Intervention of the United States

The relations between Israel and China came to a precipitous halt in 2000 when massive American pressure forced Israel to break a legally binding contract to sell China an Israeli-developed airborne early warning system, the Phalcon. The deal was six years old, not a secret to anybody, and nearly completed. This provoked the most serious crisis in Sino-Israeli relations thus far. In 2004 a similar incident occurred, though on a smaller scale, when the United States forced Israel to renege on the overhaul of Israeli-made aerial drones China had sent back, again in line with a legally binding contract. No American components were involved in any of these Israeli technologies. The American explanation was that these systems could affect the military balance in the Far East. China, of course, found other ways to satisfy its needs, and its anger with Israel dissipated after a few years. Relations with China are growing again in nearly all fields, but Israel is now obliged to ask for US approval of all high-tech exports to China, whether military or not – a constraint that has not been imposed on any other sovereign country. The end effect of

these American induced crises is that Israel's value to China has been greatly reduced. Until 2000 Israel was an important, highly respected country for China, a strategic player, probably one of the twenty most important countries. It has dropped from this list. China is likely to regard Israel now as an American vassal of dubious reliability. The net advantage that America added to its global geo-strategic position by prohibiting Israeli military sales to China was very small. But the damage that Israel suffered in its long-term, global geo-strategic position is substantial. The Chinese never believed that Israel was in serious existential danger. They have even less incentive now to take into account Israel's concerns, particularly in regard to the Iranian danger.

**US capacity to exert pressure on Israel has reduced significantly the value of Israel to China**

Israel had no choice in this matter. America's political and military support is indispensable to Israel and preserving the close links between the two nations must override many other considerations; nothing that China could say or do today could replace even a part of America's support. America's intention was not to harm Israel, but it was indifferent to Israel's long-term strategic needs in Asia because it viewed Israel's future only in the Middle Eastern context.

American concerns about Israeli defense links with China were most certainly genuine though for much more complex reasons than those officially given. China's emergence as an economic powerhouse

has created a new, unusual situation with which the United States does not yet know how to cope. In China, the United States faces for the first time in its modern history a big challenger that draws its primary strength not from military power as Nazi Germany, imperialist Japan and the Soviet Union did, but from many of the same virtues that have made America powerful: the hard work of a large, diligent population, infrastructure expansion and technology, large foreign investments, and

**China feels threatened by the chain of American military bases surrounding it and by the US support of Taiwan**

international trade and currency interventions. But America still tends to look at the Chinese challenge from a military angle and reacts by strengthening its own military posture and its defense and other links with China's neighbors, in pursuit of traditional geo-strategic principles. The Chinese in turn feel threatened by the United States, particularly by the string of military bases surrounding China and by American support for Taiwan, and they seek countervailing powers. This is one of the main reasons why China wants to maintain good relations with Iran and opposes really effective, biting sanctions against it: Iran is America's most resolute opponent; it is its "Achilles heel" and poses the most comprehensive threat to America's strategic interests in the Middle East and beyond. China cannot and does not wish to challenge American military power in the Far East by direct means. Therefore, the Chinese sometimes react to what they regard as American provocation

in the Far East by squeezing America's "Achilles heel" in the Middle East. Some Chinese actions in the Middle East were "tit-for-tat" policies, for example when China, more than ten years ago, sold Iran anti-ship missiles after the United States had approved new weapons sales to Taiwan, or in October 2010 when China participated in aerial maneuvers with the Turkish air force over Turkish territory shortly after it had protested against joint American-South Korean maneuvers in the Far East near Chinese territory.

Iran's energy resources are important, but Western commentators who believe that they are the only reason for China's opposition to Western demands of Iran are mistaken. In the last few years China has carried out a fast and massive policy reversal to reduce its energy dependence on Iran. Two or more years ago approximately fourteen percent of China's energy imports came from Iran. Today it is only approximately five to six percent. There could be no clearer indication that oil imports are not the only, and perhaps not even the main reason for Chinese links with Iran.

To sum up, Israel paid a double price as a result of the Sino-American rivalry. It had to cut its strategic defense links with China, and it has to face Iranian threats the world has failed to curb so far, partly because of Chinese opposition. That said, it is not certain that the strong military links between China and Israel would have continued or expanded for many more years. China or Israel might have had reasons to reduce their military links, but this did not have to occur in 2000, and not through a humiliating public rupture and breach of contract that damaged the interests of both countries.

## 6. India, the Jewish People and Israel

Jewish communities have lived and flourished in various parts of India for probably two thousand years. India and China are the only civilizations where Jews lived for centuries without encountering any hostility from the native population. The founding fathers of modern India, Gandhi and Nehru, knew that Jews had often been persecuted in other parts of the world, but in stark contrast to China's Sun Yatsen, they rejected the Jews' right of return to their ancient homeland to become again a sovereign nation. In 1921, one year after Sun Yatsen applauded the Zionist program, Gandhi rejected it: "The Jews cannot receive sovereign rights in a place which has been held for centuries by Muslim powers by right of religious conquest." The hostility maintained by India toward the Jewish state during the entire Cold War period was not merely the result of Gandhi's and Nehru's ideological opposition to Zionism. It sprang from durable national interests and constraints, in particular those related to India's close links with the Soviet Union and with the Muslim world, as well as from India's concern about its own sizeable Muslim domestic population. India and Israel established full diplomatic ties in January 1992, just a few days after China normalized its relations with Israel.

The imperative for India to build sound relations with the US, the sole superpower in the new international system, was one of the key factors – if not the most determinant – that pushed India toward normalization with Israel. India, just like

China in the same years, came to believe that improving relations with Israel would not only enhance India's standing vis-à-vis the American Jewish community, but also, in turn, help advance links with the US. The Indians, like the Chinese, were and are still convinced that the American Jewish lobby has major influence on the foreign policy decisions of Washington. This perception was also the result of the active diplomacy engaged early on by several American Jewish organizations, for example the American Jewish Committee (AJC), the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and B'nai B'rith International, to promote links between India and Israel, including valuable support provided to the formation of an Indian lobby in the US. The joint cooperation between American Jewish and Indian lobbies played a role in obtaining the Bush administration's approval for Israel's sale of the Phalcon aerial reconnaissance plane to India – probably seen by the Americans as part of their response to a perceived "Chinese threat." The Jewish and Israeli lobby in the US has also worked actively for congressional support of the US-India civilian nuclear agreement, a bilateral accord on full civil nuclear cooperation approved in 2008.

As in the case of China, Israel's military links with India, including cooperation between air forces, was the beginning, and for a long time, the

**The Indians, like the Chinese, hold the view that the American-Jewish lobby has major influence on the foreign policy decisions of Washington**

core of the Indo-Israeli relationship. Since 1992, Indian purchases of Israeli weapons systems and technologies have considerably increased, and in early 2009, Israel overtook Russia as India's first military supplier. Indo-Israeli military cooperation has gone far beyond a buyer-supplier relationship, with major joint research and development ventures initiated by Indian and Israeli defense firms, and extensive bilateral cooperation in intelligence and counter-terrorism.

**Indo-Israeli military cooperation encompasses joint R&D ventures and extensive bilateral cooperation in intelligence and counter-terrorism**

However, numerous constraints continue to weigh on the development of Indo-Israeli ties, from issues of bureaucracy and claims of corruption to dissimilarities in business culture and competition from foreign companies. The United States regard Israel's defense and security cooperation with India as positive, in contrast to its hostility to Israel's past military links with China.

Nevertheless, according to some reports, there is American opposition to some planned arms deals between India and Israel. The United States may see the military cooperation between India and Israel as a means to balance China's rise in Asia. This is still far from a tri-partite strategic alliance against China. India remains deeply allergic to any idea of being used by one great power against another major power, and the very last thing Israel wishes is to see its relations with China further damaged by appearing as a

pawn in a global anti-Chinese strategy orchestrated by the United States.

The strong hostility of the Indian left to close ties with the Jewish state (especially in the military sphere) has been perceived as potentially threatening to Indo-Israeli cooperation. And yet, the Indian left has not succeeded in bringing about any far-reaching changes in India's Israel policy, and its political weight has significantly decreased since the last 2009 Indian general elections. However, the Indian left's posture on Israel continues to permeate the views of the Indian intellectual elites, which have very little knowledge of Israel or Judaism, if any. This is a major problem that a much broader Jewish and Israeli cultural policy in India should try to address. A considerable part of the Indian intelligentsia has bought the one-sided Arab narrative of the expulsion of the Palestinians by Israel, but chooses to ignore the flight and expulsion of nearly all Jews from Arab lands. Still, the sympathy conveyed to the Palestinians does not express itself in hostility to or criticism of Jews in general, including the large majority of Indian Jews who left for Israel. And even Israel's most vocal critics do not call for its elimination, as is the case in some radical leftist circles in the West. In India, in contrast particularly to Europe, new anti-Zionism is not the bastard child of old anti-Semitism, and therefore it might be easier to modify. Weighing more significantly on India's Israel policy are India's sizeable Muslim population and its close ties with the Arab and Muslim world, as we shall show in the following section.

Indian ties with Iran present a challenge to US and Israeli interests. It is true that in accordance

with its consistent support for the principle of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the Indian government opposes Iran's nuclear program and voted in favor of UN resolutions sanctioning Tehran. Yet, a series of strategic interests makes India unwilling to sever ties with Iran. As in the case of China, Iran is an important supplier of oil and gas to India, but even more than for China, this is not the only reason for India's close links with Iran. In early 2003, India and Iran signed a declaration proclaiming a "strategic partnership" between the two countries. Only two months later, for the first time, India and Iran conducted joint naval exercises in the Persian Gulf. Military ties between the two countries have since expanded, including India's training of Iranian military personnel, bilateral exchanges of defense and intelligence officials and, according to reports, minor Indian weapons sales to Iran.

India's rapprochement with Iran largely relates to India's acute concern with neighboring Pakistan. The deepening of Indo-Iranian ties serves as a powerful counterweight to Pakistan and to the upsurge in Sunni Islamic extremist groups throughout South Asia. To a certain extent, by moving closer to Iran the Indian leadership has also sought to express India's resentment that the US has never fully supported it against Pakistan and has even developed close security ties with Islamabad. The US forces are set to begin withdrawing from Afghanistan in July 2011, and India fears that the "Af-Pak mess" – as some Indians call the interrelated troubles in Afghanistan and Pakistan – will worsen after this withdrawal. If this is the case, India is likely to move even closer to Iran particularly as Iran's past relations with a

Taliban-ruled Afghanistan were very bad, and its relations with Pakistan not good either. Although India is very aware of Israeli and US concerns about Iran, its own national security concerns are more compelling as could be expected.

## 7. The Trouble with Islam

It is useful to reflect on the historic origin of Jewish, Indian and Chinese relations with Islam because this origin can still explain current problems. When the waves of Arab horsemen streamed out of the Arabian Peninsula to conquer the world, they changed history profoundly, not least the history of the Jewish people, India and China. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, almost the entire Middle East and North Africa, where more than ninety percent of all Jews lived, fell under Arab domination. During the same years the Arabs conquered and Islamized for the first time an important province of India which was followed by centuries of Muslim invasions. A century later, in 751, an Arab army defeated and destroyed the Chinese army in present-day Kirgizstan which led to the collapse of Chinese rule in Central Asia and the Islamization of this vast region. In the following centuries Arabs and Central Asian Muslims kept immigrating to China.

**India's rapprochement with Iran is seen by India as a powerful counterweight to Pakistan and the upsurge in Sunni extremist groups through South Asia**

Thus, there is a certain historic commonality between Jews, Indians and Chinese which has rarely been noticed. The Arabs defeated or occupied all three in the same early centuries and hence, Islam has become a part of their own history and not only an external threat as in the case of Europe.

The precise impact of Islam varied greatly between these nations. India's Muslims represent fifteen to twenty percent of its total population. India has found a stable and mostly peaceful modus vivendi

**Chinese experts and officials admit privately that they regard Islam as China's biggest internal threat**

between all its religions, but the trouble with Indian Kashmir and the uncertain political future of Pakistan remain sources of deep concern.

In China, the Muslim presence was for many centuries unproblematic and had virtually no impact on Chinese civilization. This

changed in the mid- and late 18<sup>th</sup> century when there were violent, severely suppressed Muslim rebellions against Chinese rule, repeated in several parts of China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today Muslims represent only two to three percent of the total population, but many of them are Turkic-speaking Uyghurs who live in China's largest, strategically important province that shares a common border with Muslim Central Asia and Pakistan. The incidents that occurred in this region not long ago show that China has trouble with Muslim Uyghur nationalism and separatism. Saudi Arabia and perhaps other oil exporters use their enormous financial resources to build new mosques all over

China and finance Arab and Muslim libraries, when possible also in China's universities. In fact, some Chinese experts and officials view these activities with great unease, are not sure how to cope with them and admit privately that they regard Islam as China's biggest internal threat. In public the issue is considered to be too delicate to be mentioned.

Thus, the trouble with Islam has affected and continues to affect the relations between the Jews, Israel, India and China. From the time of the Balfour Declaration, Asian nations have looked at Zionist and Israeli aspirations with an eye on their Muslim minorities and sometimes on other Muslim nations – for reasons of “realpolitik” only. China supported Zionism in the early 1920s, but in 1947 yielded to internal Muslim and foreign Arab pressure and abstained in the United Nations' vote to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. The leaders of India were from the 1920s to 1992 entirely hostile to Zionism and Israel, in deference to Muslim and Arab wishes. In 1947 India was the only democratic country that voted with all Muslim countries against the UN resolution.

Widely spread among the Indian political establishment was, and partly still is, a perception that India has to be careful when dealing with Israel, lest the parties in power lose Muslim votes and the country jeopardizes its strategic interests in Arab and Muslim states. It must also be said, however, that this argument lost some of its credibility when it became clear to India in the early 1990s that even its most enthusiastic support for Arab causes did not, and will not affect Arab support for their sister-Muslim country, Pakistan, whenever it clashes with

India. The argument became even weaker when the bulk of India's Muslims barely reacted to the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel. There were a few protests but no major violence. Today however, there are new fears that a segment of India's Muslim population could be drawn to Muslim fundamentalism and terrorism coming from outside India, and that a too visible and cordial relationship with Israel could hasten such developments.

The trouble and concern with Islam can still be a dominant factor disturbing, delaying or preventing the development of closer, publicly visible ties between Israel and Asia's main nations. On the other hand, many in China and India, including particularly their defense establishments, also recognize that they share a common enemy with Israel, namely Muslim extremism and terrorism. They appreciate Israel's competence and success in fighting these threats as well as Israel's military power and defense technologies. In fact, there is close, but mostly secret cooperation between Israel and both India and China to prevent and combat Muslim terrorism. The current situation is fluid and the future wide open. Repeated and growing Muslim violence in India or China would certainly enrage public opinion in these countries as it did in India after the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai. It could push both countries into closer cooperation with Israel. For the time being, due to the trouble with Islam, Israel gains something but loses more. Currently the balance for Israel seems negative. This situation is unlikely to change soon and in major ways unless there is a lasting breakthrough in the Middle East peace process.

In the very long term, the situation might be less negative for Israel because there are additional elements in this complex equation. It was said earlier that in comparison to the West, China and India relate differently not only to Jews, but to Muslims as well and that this could be a long-term advantage to Israel and the Jewish people. This difference is the direct outcome of the early history mentioned at the beginning of this section. China and India never invaded the Middle East, but were once invaded by Arabs.

The Asian giants have no colonial past in the Middle East, and thus, Arabs and Iranians do not have the same resentment against them they harbor against the West. Conversely, China and India harbor no guilt feelings with regard

**The 2008  
Islamic terrorist  
attacks in  
Mumbai  
enraged the  
public opinion  
in India**

to the Muslim world. They may have tensions with their own Muslims, and these have in fact already gotten in the way of their relations with Israel, but these tensions have had, in the last years, no known negative effects on their links with the Arabs and Iranians. During the 1992 communal riots in Ahmedabad, India, two thousand Muslims were killed, and during the violence between Han Chinese and Muslims in Urumqi in China in 2009 hundreds of people were killed or injured, and afterwards more than ten Muslim rioters were sentenced to death and executed. None of these events triggered particular protests in Arab countries or Iran, and did not threaten links between the two Asian giants and the Middle East. This is very interesting because it

indicates a different kind of relationship compared to that between the West and the Muslim world. China and India want the best possible relations with the Muslim world, but have less need than the West to appease Arab, Iranian or other Muslim grievances at the expense of others. Moreover, the “Holy Places” of Christians, Muslims and Jews are of no interest to their majorities.

As much as China and India seek friendly relations with the nations of the Middle East, the latter want

**The Jewish and Israeli mind-set of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was almost exclusively focused on Europe and America, and ignored Asia**

and need such relations even more. They listen to, and are likely to consult more and more with China and India. The need of Middle Eastern regimes for steady, long-term friends who want stability in this critical region, in addition to or in replacement of the West, is likely to strengthen.

In the meantime, Israel and the Jewish people have various means to influence Asian policies and reduce or neutralize Muslim hostility. One is to seek and strengthen friendly contacts with the Muslims of these countries, invite them to Israel and better inform them about the realities of Israel and the Middle East. Israel is actively pursuing this policy already with the Muslims of India. Another way is to make the main Diaspora communities more aware of the growing importance of Asia for Israel. The aim is to mobilize their cooperation in explaining to China and India that they may have something to gain in the wider world when they do not yield to pressures against Israel.

## 8. Jewish and Israeli Outreach to Asia: The Need for a Long-Term Vision

If Israel and the Jewish people want to ensure that Asia’s growing power in the Middle East will have more positive than negative effects for Israel in the long term, they must become more proactive in Asia now, without expecting, as they usually do, quick political or economic dividends. If there is a dividend it will come only in the longer term and as result of greater Jewish and Israeli attention to Asia, a better understanding of Jewish and Israeli history by Asia’s elites, and of more regular and sustained Jewish and Israeli efforts to contact and befriend Asia’s future leaders. Also, the Jewish people and Israel must offer Asia more than common memories of past struggles or solidarity against common enemies, and they are able to offer more, particularly in the fields of science and technology.

The Jewish and Israeli mind-set of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was almost exclusively focused on Europe and America and ignored Asia. There were objective reasons for this: the strong Jewish communities in the West compared to the minuscule number of Jews in the main Asian countries, and the overriding importance of Israel’s political, economic and military links with the West compared to the support that Asian countries have given to Israel’s enemies over many years. But there is also a deeper problem with the dominant Jewish and Israeli perceptions of the world. The Israeli Asia scholar Prof. Yitzhak Shichor paraphrased this perception gap by inverting a poem of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Spanish

Jewish poet Yehuda Halevi. The poet's famous "Zionist" line says "My heart is in the East [Israel] but I live in the far West [Spain]." In contrast, the Jewish and Israeli lament has for too long been the opposite: "My heart is in the West and I live [unfortunately] in the East!" Until the late 1980s the Jewish people and Israel barely understood Asia and with some exceptions, did not try to reach out to the continent. The exhortations of Ben-Gurion mentioned at the beginning had long been forgotten, except by a small number of exceptional, dedicated Israeli diplomats who nearly all came from the defense establishment and not from the ranks of Israel's Foreign Ministry which was then completely oriented towards the West. Apart from the defense establishment's secret links with China and India before the establishment of diplomatic relations, Asia was completely marginal to Jewish and Israeli consciousness.

Since China and India established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992, more Jews and Israelis have begun to show interest in Asia. Political and other relations began to grow, tourism to Asia expanded, books and articles about Asian countries have appeared more frequently and Asian restaurants have opened in Israel. Israeli youth keep visiting Asia in large numbers, particularly India and Nepal. Today, Jewish and Israeli politicians are very aware of Asia's importance, and Israel's diplomatic representations in China and India have grown larger. Also, business enterprises, non-governmental organizations and individuals are reinforcing links with China or India, and the number of Israeli students who study Asian languages, mainly Mandarin Chinese, or Asian

history and economic development is growing year by year.

Yet in many other contexts the old mind-set has not disappeared, and Asia remains marginal. Jewish and Israeli media give little time and space to Asian affairs. Asia has never been important enough for Israel's media to send permanent correspondents to the continent, in contrast to the Israeli and Jewish media presence in the West. The great American Jewish fiction writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their Israeli colleagues

who are known across the world, including in China and India, have written many famous novels, but none with an Asian theme or background, as far as we could ascertain, with only one exception. It is A.B. Yehoshua's *Return from India* (in the English

**The Jewish people and Israel need a long-term vision of their relationship with Asia's rising powers**

translation, *Open Heart*). Another sign of Asia's marginality appeared at the opening of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in summer 2010, after many years of repairs. The only section not yet completed was the Asian art wing. Art is the most accessible and attractive way to connect with remote but important civilizations, and this is why many art museums of the West are currently refurbishing, exhibiting and enriching their Asian art collections – but not so Israel. In general, the Israeli public has very few opportunities to become familiar inside Israel with Chinese, Indian or other Asian cultures, be it the visual arts, literature, music, theater, film or dance.

Asian understanding of Israel and the Jewish people, and knowledge of their history, culture and religion, is equally limited, in spite of considerable interest that can be found in many places. The ignorance is particularly noticeable in India although Indians have unlimited access to information. But while Asia can afford to be ignorant of Israel and the Jews, the latter cannot afford to be ignorant of Asia. What they need is a long-term vision of their relationship with Asia's rising powers. This vision should underpin a large, sustained and more generously funded outreach to Asia, focusing on cultural policies and information exchanges, science and technology policy, Judaism and Israel studies in Asia, Asian studies in Israel and more. Israel can and should not do this alone, the Jewish people across the world has to participate in this effort. It will take time because long years of mutual neglect cannot be overcome quickly. Also, it is clear that politics and national interests will ultimately be the main drivers of Chinese and Indian policies, but this does not mean that Israel and the Jewish people cannot do more to affect these policies.

The relative Jewish and Israeli neglect of Asia, and their fixation on America and Europe has an additional reason not mentioned above. Asia is the future, and Jews and Israelis have rarely been able to think of, or prepare for a long-term future. They plan for the next day, the next year, as if there is no long-term future. Asia is a test. Can the Jews and Israel this time, envisage and prepare for the long term?



# Latin American Jewry Today

## Introductory Remarks A Region Under Change

Latin American societies are going through deep transformations. The region currently experiences an increasingly expansive force of democracy amidst global cycles of economic crisis and social conflict. The emergence of a new political and cultural climate of pluralism follows a different path in Latin America in the framework of globalization processes and their multifaceted and contradictory character. Collective identities are exposed to redefinitions and recreations. Elective bonds coexist with ethnic and/or religious affiliations, linking individuals and communities in diverse and sometimes opposing ways. The recognition of differences, the politics of identity and the emphasis on heterogeneity act as a substratum that widens the scope of civil society and the public sphere. Simultaneously, new expressions of essentialism and primordial affirmations may act as sources of exclusion.

Changes follow non-linear trends. When noting commonalities that cut across the different Latin America societies, one should be certainly aware

of the inner-differentiation within the continent. Neo-liberal citizenship regimes coexist with corporatist political forms, popular mobilization and plebiscitary democracy. In Euro-American societies such as Argentine and Uruguay, where massive immigration changed the socio-ethnic landscape, democratic transitions have been characterized by increasing civic participation and pluralization of social and political actors in the public sphere. In Indo-American societies, where immigration was limited and did not alter the original socio-ethnic demographic composition, the bigger the polity, as in Brazil and Mexico, the greater the tendency of hegemonic sectors to substitute grassroots democratic participation with sectorial representation (Avni, 1988; Bokser Liwerant, 2008).

Economic liberalization offers a disparate picture in which structures have been stabilized even though the region has not reached a generalized macroeconomic health. Latin America is undergoing a process of incomplete integration into international economic systems. Growing inequality, therefore, points to the fact that the search for inclusive political forms parallels strong

and persistent trends of exclusion, thus hindering democracy itself (Kacowitz, 2009; CEPAL, 2009).

New opportunities for collective recognition and new interactions between majorities and minorities are on the move and different social movements attract vast middle-class sectors, including Jews, as civic participants in the national arena (Sznajder, 2011).

However, the demands for participation lead not only to the interplay of recognition and inclusion, but also to resistance, protest and diluting actions. The fact that, in spite of the consolidation of democratic regimes, since 1993 fifteen presidents have not been able to complete their term of office illustrates this phenomenon<sup>1</sup> (Bokser Liwerant, 2011).

**Though affected by economic and political crises, Argentina still hosts the largest Jewish population in Latin America (slightly over 180,000)**

## To Dwell in Transitions

Although Latin American Jewry has historically grown out of large-scale immigration, during the last decades migration patterns have tended to be outwards: from Latin America to other destinations, mainly the United States, Israel, and to a lesser extent countries in Western Europe – primarily Spain – and Canada (Bokser Liwerant, DellaPergola and Senkman, 2010).

The number of Jews in Latin America dropped from 514,000 in the 1970s to 390,000 in 2010

(DellaPergola, 2010). During the 1970s, violence and authoritarianism determined regional and international emigration as well as political exile, especially in the Southern Cone. A decade later, re-democratization was a pull factor for Jewish exiles and some others to return to their homelands. But in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the intertwined complex of economic crises and security problems pushed Jews again into a global international migration pattern. Since then, this tendency has grown, though intermittently. The most recent phases of accelerated globalization processes have witnessed significant increases in the number of Latin American migrants.

Though affected by acute economic and political crises, Argentina still hosts the largest Jewish population in Latin America (slightly over 180,000). The demographic profiles of Jewish populations in Mexico and Brazil have been more stable due to more traditional socio-demographic patterns and the influx of Jews from other parts of Latin America. Panama remains the only country in Latin America that has significantly increased its Jewish population since 1970. More recently, Venezuelan Jews have emigrated as a consequence of Hugo Chavez's populist regime.

Globalization and economic liberalization have led to increasing disparities within Jewish communities, reflecting a strong polarization. Globalization, however, is twofold. On the one hand, it generated a middle class crisis, the impoverishment and unemployment of professionals, a decline of manufacturers who had enjoyed the protection of autarchic industrial policies, a deterioration of the economic standing of various sectors of the

Latin American communities, and an increase of the actual poverty levels among the lower classes. On the other hand, segments of higher-to-middle classes succeeded in incorporating themselves into the most dynamic venues and advantageous positions for tapping into transnational commerce, high technology, services, the sciences, academia and its institutions, and the financial sectors. Among the professional and financial trends, the presence of younger generations is more frequent, thus conditioning in sensitive ways the future composition of Latin American communities (Bokser Liwerant, DellaPergola and Senkman, 2010).

As in other regions, Jewish migration patterns involving Latin American countries have not been unidirectional. There have been known instances of return migration, of repeated and circular migration, and the presence of bi-local or multi-local migrants. All of these features have contributed to the diffusion of transnational networks and identities thus expanding the Latin American Jewish world. Migration has led to new centers of relocation for Jewish life. New places of residence reveal variations of collective behavior in Latin America societies. They also reveal new dynamics of material and symbolic interconnections, reinforcing the global conditions of Jewish life.

Thus, Latin American Jews show a sustained pluralization of options in a context of increased interactions with societies in the region and with the Jewish world. Multiple identification and institutional options have emerged. It is likely that the historical configuration with one

central focal referent – Israel – coexists with new relational networks. The classic Zionist paradigm that marked Jewish life in the region acquires new meanings in various ways, depending on the specific communities, their visions and even the age group. At present, Israel is not necessarily a preferred destination for migrants. Today, when asked about their preferences, 27% of Argentine Jews preferred Spain as their destination, only 24% chose Israel and 14% the United States. Israel's centrality, indeed, remains in other realms of collective identity and of a cultural nature.

With regard to the United States, host of one of the most important groups of Jewish migrants from Latin America, the question of the role that these communities might conceivably play within the context of the

interrelations between Latinos and the US general society takes on growing interest. The quantitative and political importance of the Latino presence in the US renders these questions highly relevant for both the Jewish collective and for America at large (JPPPI, Annual Assessment, 2008).

**At present, Israel is not necessarily a preferred destination for migrants**

## **Jewish Organized Life- Signs of New Patterns**

Societies, regimes and national narratives that highlighted homogeneity are now open to global processes that recognize diversity and its expression

in the public sphere. Traditional Jewish communal patterns have also experienced significant changes as new spaces emerge in response to increasingly integrated communities. The continent that has been able to establish powerful and original patterns of Jewish life and community organization is now experiencing new patterns of collective life that influence the rich array of communal spaces, associations and institutions developed in almost all the central fields of Jewish life.

**In Argentina and Brazil, the rate of out-marriage exceeds 45%, while in Mexico and Venezuela it remains below 10%**

While widening the domains in which collective energies are channeled, Argentina and Brazil represent centrifugal organizational models, while Mexico epitomizes a more centralized model with a recognizable structural profile. A high institutional density characterizes this

“community of communities,” in which average affiliation remains at 80%. Contrastingly, the average affiliation rate has diminished to 50% in Argentina, a reflection of a community weakened by economic crises and a failure of Jewish leadership (DellaPergola and Lerner, 1995; Goldstein, 2008; Bokser Liwerant, 2009).

Although crises and the scarcity of resources have affected Jewish institutions, they have also led to their diverse restructuration. A common thread has been the incorporation of new modalities for social support. In Venezuela, where the Jewish community once numbered 35,000, Jewish institutions continue

to face a heavy financial burden due to the exodus of important community sectors. As an extended tendency in the region, organized communities are overwhelmingly acting as providers of Jewish social services under new pressure to help those in need (Roniger, 2009, 2011).

Concurrently, a global trend in most Latin America Jewish communities has been the transition amidst voluntary leadership towards younger and more pragmatic generations. The number of professionals in charge of organized Jewish life has also increased. In this context of interacting and varied factors, there are also changes in gender roles. In the past, women participated in the organized Jewish world in female-exclusive spheres; today this kind of activism has extended to other social and community frameworks--communal, social and human rights NGOs - or in more individual ways, within public sectors, academia and scientific communities.

A new sign of change in the region is the growing rate of out-marriage in the last decades, which certainly impacts the role of women, family and Jewish communities. Nevertheless, cross-national variations remain present. In Argentina and Brazil, this rate surpasses 45%, while in Mexico and Venezuela it remains below 10%.

The cultural domain of collective life reflects both current differentiating and unifying trends among Latin American Jewish communities. The educational system has been changing dramatically, expressing both religious and cultural developments. The historical, political and ideological currents that gave birth to the original

differentiation of schools have been replaced by new defining criteria, mainly communitarian and religious. While acknowledging the fact that the rise in religious education is a product of the incidence of social policies on communal cultural profiles - as expressed in the support offered through scholarship - it must also be noted that this process reflects an increase in religiosity and observance which constitutes part of the meaningful changes currently sweeping through Jewish life (Avni, Bokser Liwerant and Fainstein, 2011).

One may underscore the spreading of the Orthodox Jewish movement such as Shas and Chabad as part of a transnational religious consciousness, which interacts in complex ways with the historical Zionist ethno-national attachment centered on Israel. They expand as frameworks of belonging and social behavior, and espouse a moral code that expresses the search for unresolved expectations through the organized community.

As part of the Jewish world on the move, the younger generations are encountering new milieus by increasingly utilizing technologies provided by an expanding information society: electronic networks; social, on-line media; cyberspace links, and forum chats among Jews; communication between and within Jewish communities for information, education, cultural enrichment and anti-defamation purposes. Thus, as in other regions of the Jewish world, there are new modalities of engagement of young Jews outside the traditional affiliation frameworks, which are expressed in such virtual communities, the creation of new *minyanim*, various cultural activities, and Jewish learning.

## The Globalization of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The globalization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reveals a complex interplay of international, regional, national and local processes. New meanings are constructed in Latin America as a result of the convergence of processes such as criticism of the Israeli government's dealing with the conflict, of Israel as a whole - beyond particular governments, the framing of an anti-Zionist rhetoric with anti-Semitic content, and the interactions of the above with a historically pronounced anti-Americanism.

Both the prevalence of historically complex relations with the United States and the widespread dissatisfaction with the effects of globalization have opened new opportunities for radical movements in the region, including the neo-populist ones of Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Some of these governments have led discursive campaigns and practices de-legitimizing the State of Israel. Symbolic violence against Israel runs across different national scenarios.

It allowed for the extension of political groups and publics that adhered to narratives and political positions. It has certainly pushed further the deterioration of relations between Israel and Venezuela and its closeness with Iran. Despite

**Young Jews engage outside the traditional affiliation frameworks, e.g. in virtual communities, the creation of new *minyanim* and cultural activities**

the fact that Israel has increased its economic exchanges with the region, as evidenced by the signing of free-trade agreements between Israel and Mexico and with Mercosur (the Southern Common Market), one more factor that needs to be considered is the presence of large Palestinian communities in several Latin American countries, including Chile, Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras and Peru. The largest of these communities in the region – and the largest outside the Middle East – resides in Chile, surpassing 400,000 members. In contrast, the Jewish population is much smaller (20,600 in 2009).

**The largest  
Palestinian  
community  
(over 400,000)  
outside the  
Middle East  
resides in Chile**

through “soft” financing and bankrolling. While Chávez’s government has declared his unwillingness to foster xenophobic hatred, its political dynamic and its polarizing rhetoric (coupled with a strategic alignment against the United States) have reinforced chauvinistic attitudes identifying Jews as allies of the “anti-people” and of enemy countries. Parallel discursive processes and practices de-legitimizing the State of Israel (i.e., the government calling Israel a racist and genocidal state) have been followed by local anti-Semitic acts (e.g. vandalizing the Tiferet Israel Sephardic synagogue in Caracas on January 31, 2009) (Roniger, 2009).

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez has tried to establish himself as a global player and a regional leader in a multi-polar international system. As part of this strategy, he has developed regional oil initiatives – such as Petrocaribe and Petrosur – geared to providing oil

The process involving the problematic social representation of Israel has acquired a new shared pattern in Latin America, although with regional variations. In early December 2010, several Latin American countries announced their formal recognition of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders prior to the Six-Day War. Brazil took the initiative and was followed shortly after by Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas laid the cornerstone for a Palestinian embassy in Brasilia on December 31, 2010. On January 28, 2011 Paraguay also announced its recognition of Palestine. Earlier in January, Chile and Peru stated that they would recognize a Palestinian state but that its borders had to be mutually agreed upon by both sides of the conflict. Chile’s position followed strong pressure from its powerful Palestinian community, as revealed by motions introduced in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies at the end of 2010, and in top-level meetings in the presidential palace with Palestinian diplomats, representatives of the Arab League in Chile, and members of the Palestinian communities and congressional groups. However, its declaration makes no formal reference to the 1967 borders.<sup>2</sup>

Colombia has said it would not recognize a Palestinian state until a mutual peace-agreement is reached. Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama and Belize have not indicated their positions. Several Latin American countries had already recognized a Palestinian state prior to the most recent lobbying efforts, including Cuba, Venezuela (2009), Nicaragua and Costa Rica (2008).

Diplomatic relationships between the Palestinian Authority and Latin American governments continue to grow. Although cancelled due to Egypt's turmoil, Latin American leaders and ten Arab heads of state were planning to participate in the Third Summit of Latin American-Arab Countries (ASPA) aimed at enhancing economic relations, planned for February 12-16, 2011 in Lima, Peru. There was a suspected risk that this summit could provide Palestinian leadership with the opportunity to seek further unilateral and symbolic recognition of a Palestinian state by other Latin American countries.

A sweeping symbolic tide of recognition in Latin America and elsewhere might exert political pressure on other regions. In this sense, according to Israeli diplomatic sources, what began as a "wave of support for Palestine from Latin America may turn into a global, unstoppable diplomatic tsunami."<sup>3</sup> An undercurrent may form, however, if newly elected Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff continues to distance Brazil from her predecessor's attempt to play a leading role in the Middle East. Mexico, following a real and discursive rapprochement with its northern neighbor, has not pronounced itself on this issue.

The globalization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will likely continue if certain conditions are present, such as the continued stagnation of the peace process, the eruption of new cycles of violence in the Middle East, the strengthening of Islamic radical groups in countries currently in political turmoil, the presence of neo-populist governments in the region and the particular interaction between strategic decisions of international, regional,

national and local activists. It is still premature to assess the impact that the wave of crises and changes in the Arab world may have on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as Israel's position in the region.

## Focus on Brazil

### Brazilian Jews: facing challenges to Jewish continuity

In recent years, Brazil has emerged as a leading power, with increasing influence in key global issues. Brazil is a multi-ethnic and multiracial society, with a strong African component. It is the largest and most populous country in South America and according to the 2010 census, its population numbers 185,712,713 people.<sup>4</sup> The new president, Dilma Rousseff (Workers' Party), was elected with 56% of the vote on October 31, 2010, succeeding Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Rousseff is the first woman ever to rule Brazil.

**Israeli diplomats: "the wave of support for Palestine from Latin America may turn into a global, unstoppable diplomatic tsunami"**

The Jewish minority represents less than 0.1% of the Brazilian population, and is estimated to include 100,000 Jews living mainly in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Rio Grande do Sul. The country is predominantly Roman Catholic, but the Church now competes with evangelical denominations

and religions of African origin. Evangelical denominations, which have recorded the fastest rates of growth and have increasing power in the national and states' parliaments, support Israel.

**While contemporary Brazilian Jews do not face restrictions regarding their identity, Judaism is not necessarily their priority**

In the area known as the "Triple Border," at the convergence of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil, a growing Muslim presence is evident. But although the Jewish population of the area is small, there are no conflicts between the two groups.<sup>5</sup>

Brazil is South America's leading economic power and showed remarkable

powers of recovery in the recent economic crisis. Nevertheless, crime and a highly unequal income distribution continue to remain pressing problems.

## Processes of Inclusion and Integration

In their socio-economic and cultural integration, Jews in Brazil have had a singular path in the Latin American scene, where integration is accompanied by endemic low levels of anti-Semitism. Analysts have pointed to socio-political, economic, and cultural factors to account for these outcomes.

Jews are represented in a wide spectrum of industrial, financial, professional, scientific, and artistic activities and, as a result of high economic growth and intense modernization

processes, they have attained significant social mobility.

Culture, identity and a national myth of origin have favored the integration of Jews. A dominant ideology of "whiteness" together with religious syncretism may explain the cultural traits and codes that facilitated social interaction.

The successful social integration of Jews is also evident at the personal level. Jews epitomize the future-oriented outlook of the open society, less attached to collective historical memory and legitimizing ethnic diversity (Sorj, 1997). The closeness between the public and the private spheres has also affected the search for identity, limiting the quest for roots among Jews. Thus, while contemporary Brazilian Jews do not face restrictions regarding their identity, Judaism is not necessarily their priority.

Unlike the situation in other Latin American countries, the absence of a nation-state invested with a strong civic and nationalist ideology that demands undivided loyalties reduced identity conflicts for Jews while favoring, in subtle ways, processes of assimilation.

Anti-Semitism has not been acute, but the 1990s saw a wave of anti-Semitic and racist attacks led by neo-Nazi skinheads who profaned Jewish cemeteries and sprayed graffiti on synagogues and schools. They also targeted blacks, homosexuals, and nordestinos (Brazilians from the north-eastern region of the country).

Several processes in the last two decades—including the 1988 new "citizen constitution," the actions of NGOs and international foundations,

and strong pressure by an organized black movement—have favored the new values of cultural recognition and racial differentiation associated with multiculturalism. For Brazilian Jews, a “soft” version of multiculturalism offers the possibility of living in a society in which ethnic differences acquire legislative legitimation and the constitution forbids the promotion or discrimination of individuals due to color, race, gender, or religion.

## Jewish Communal Life in Brazil in an Organized Jewish World

Amidst intense social interactions and centripetal forces, the Jewish community in Brazil established and consolidated a solid institutional system. Jewish life in Brazil is decentralized and characterized by intermittent and sometimes circumstantial membership in organized frameworks. The communal system, however, has maintained strong solidarity ties and has persistently supported Jewish schools, Zionism, the State of Israel, and the fight against anti-Semitism.

Centralist trends are not prominent in Jewish communal organization since its federal structure, as well as the distribution of the Jewish population across different states, hinder attempts to coordinate communal life at the national level. The São Paulo Jewish Federation, the umbrella organization, has among its members several organizations that are well known all over the world, like the Hebraica Community Center, one of the biggest in the world; the Albert Einstein Jewish Hospital, the largest and best private hospital in Latin America; and its Keren Hayesod, among

the leading fund raisers for the State of Israel in Latin America, and a partner of the Federation, which plays a significant role in supporting and promoting various activities and Jewish education. Jewish newspapers such as Tribuna Judaica or Semana Judaica in São Paulo are also worth noting (Goldstein, 2008). The Jewish Communal School, an established space in the past, has undergone significant changes since the 1990s. While no longer a center of communal life, the rate of attendance at Jewish day schools is still 71%.

Jewish institutions face the important challenge of transmitting Jewish values and traditions even though intermarriage rates between Jews and non-Jews are rising, recently reaching 45%. Synagogue attendance is not frequent.

**The Jewish communal system in Brazil has maintained strong solidarity ties**

The Conservative movement has created a legitimate non-Orthodox alternative, but membership in these communities to a great extent varies in accord with personal and life cycle circumstances and is often undertaken in order to fulfill specific ritual functions (such as Bar-Mitzvah). While Jews are full participants in the cultural, political, and social life of Brazil, the flimsy Jewish identity of the youth has evoked increasing concern. A central challenge for the Jewish community in Brazil is, thus, its continuity, due to the “centrifugal attraction of an open society” (Falbel, 2001).

Globalization has had a twofold impact on education and Jewish religious life. Orthodox groups such as Chabad, especially in São Paulo, have capitalized on the new needs of the Jewish community. A growing and visible process of teshuva points to the need of many Jews for collective belonging and identification (Topel, 2005). But globalization is also evident in the growing preference for languages and technical training oriented toward the United States and the developed world.

## The De-Legitimization of Israel

**Orthodox groups such as Chabad, especially in São Paulo, have capitalized on the new needs of the Jewish community in Brazil**

The ramifications of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have reached foreign policy and public opinion in Brazil, which has favored a complex political and symbolic process: the de-legitimization of the State of Israel and the legitimization of Palestine. An intersection of symbolic discourses, economic interests, and political practices, such as the Workers' Party's highly critical stance on Israel during the eight-year term of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and his rapprochement with President Ahmadinejad of Iran may be seen as important elements in this process. Lula's attempt to consolidate Brazil's regional power and its world role, as evident in Brazil's offer to play a mediating role in the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict, its struggle to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and its championship of the BRIC alliance,<sup>6</sup> are all factors driving this active international policy.

On December 3, 2010, during Lula's last month in power, Brazil became the first Latin American country to grant unilateral recognition to a Palestinian state based on the June 4, 1967 borders. The recognition of the Palestinian state was supported by Mercosur, the South American trade bloc that includes most countries in the region (except for Venezuela). The recognition followed years of contacts between Lula and senior Palestinians representatives.<sup>7</sup> This action was also the culmination of Brazilian promises to the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to extend such recognition at the proper time (i.e., when peace negotiations failed, as stated by the Foreign Ministry). Lula's successor, President Dilma Rousseff, has unexpectedly distanced herself from this policy while seeking a closer relationship with the United States and condemning states that violate human rights, thus signaling her reservations about the Iranian regime.

De-legitimization of Israel is also widening and deepening in the press, the social electronic networks, and the universities. Most newspapers obtain their information from sources that favor the Palestinians. University students are also affected by the absence of non-partisan debate and of Jewish student centers. Most of the Jews prefer not to act or socialize together as a group. Thus they can minimize the objections and questioning concerning the controversies related to Israel.

In response, the Jewish Federation of São Paulo has developed two new programs, Lifnei Ha-Mashber and Esser Dakot, to promote discussions by experts on crucial Middle East issues, as well as to prepare Jewish students to conduct more balanced and rigorous discussions at university campuses (Milkewitz, 2010).

## Conclusions and Possible Scenarios

Processes of globalization have not created a harmonious integrated global world and have not generated homogenous practices and social spheres. They instead reproduce multidimensional, multifaceted and contradictory characteristics. Thus, in Latin American Jewish life we witness the combination of two processes: the recovery of a historic trajectory of ethnic and ethno-national diasporas and the pluralization of new migrant populations.

Migration had a very substantial quantitative and qualitative impact on the original communities and not a lesser impact on the reconstitution of a Latin American Jewish presence in other continents. It is a matter of changing numbers but also of the selective cultural, ideological, socioeconomic and demographic impact of those who left and of those who stayed or arrived.

Both Latin America and the Jewish world express a dual condition. New and complex patterns of interaction and network building underscore the complex dynamics of encounters and articulations that transcend national frontiers. This has been a characteristic process,

historically shaping the Jewish condition worldwide, particularly in Latin America (Bokser and DellaPergola, 2010: 5). Simultaneously, primordial referents such as religion or ethnicity have emerged with an unexpected strength, delineating a tense oscillation between the universal and the particular. Latin America faces the challenge of strengthening connections between diversity, civility and institutionalism, between multiculturalism and democracy, between national and transnational identities. The Brazilian case shows that, in the struggle against anti-Semitism, democratic structures can work as barriers against intolerance. A specific identity, culture, and mythology can reject intolerant positions based on race or ethnicity, but myths of origin and national culture offer no guarantees for the future (Sorj, 2008: 169).

**The Brazilian case shows that in the struggle against anti-Semitism, democratic structures can work as barriers against intolerance**

National values are historical products and, as such, susceptible to change under the influence of new social contexts. The impact of globalization (including the globalization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), of individualization in modern urban life, of poverty, of frustrated expectations, may erode dominant beliefs and come to be exploited by new political movements and charismatic leaders, including anti-Israel and anti-Semitic ones.

The process of de-legitimizing the State of Israel will most likely continue if the peace process remains stagnant and if violence again erupts in the region. The current crisis and changes that are impacting the Arab world will certainly influence the place and image of Israel both in the region as well as in Latin America.

## Endnotes

1. These presidents were: Fernando de la Rúa, in Argentina (2001); Fernando Collor de Mello, in Brazil (1992), Hernán Siles Suazo (1985), Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (2003) and Carlos Mesa (2005), in Bolivia; Abdalá Bucarán (1997), Jamil Mahuad (1999) and Lucio Gutiérrez (2005), in Ecuador; Jorge Serrano Elías (1993), in Guatemala; Jean-Bertrand Aristide (2004), in Haiti; Raúl Cubas Grau (1999), in Paraguay; Alberto Fujimori (2000), in Perú; Joaquín Balaguer (1994), in República Dominicana; Carlos Andrés Pérez (1993), in Venezuela and Manuel Zelaya (2009) in Honduras.
2. On the growing recognition of Palestine by states around the world, see also: [http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/12/03/brazil\\_recognizes\\_palestinian\\_state](http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/12/03/brazil_recognizes_palestinian_state). [http://www.worldbulletin.net/news\\_detail.php?id=67040](http://www.worldbulletin.net/news_detail.php?id=67040)
3. Information obtained mainly from the following electronic sources: [www.adl.org/main\\_International\\_Affairs/Recognition-of-Palestinian-State.htm](http://www.adl.org/main_International_Affairs/Recognition-of-Palestinian-State.htm) [www.globalpost.com/dispatch/chile/101229/palestinian-state-latin-america-recognition](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/chile/101229/palestinian-state-latin-america-recognition).
4. Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. [www.ibge.gov.br/english](http://www.ibge.gov.br/english). The World Fact Book mentions a higher number: 201,103,330. [www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html)
5. [www.globalpost.com/dispatch/chile/101229/palestinian-state-latin-america-recognition](http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/chile/101229/palestinian-state-latin-america-recognition)
6. BRIC is a bloc formed by countries that are newly advanced economies. It includes Brazil, Russia, India and China. BRIC has also been characterized as a political club.
7. Direct meetings began in 2005 and continued in 2009, with visits by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to Brazil. Senior Palestinian figures such as Nabil Sha'ath (Fatah's head of International Relations Commission) also met the Brazilian president. These

direct encounters culminated in the first visit to Palestine by a Brazilian head of state in March 2010. On this occasion, Lula also visited Israel. During Lula's visit to Ramallah, the Brazilian president inaugurated 'Brazil Street' outside the Palestinian Authority's headquarters.

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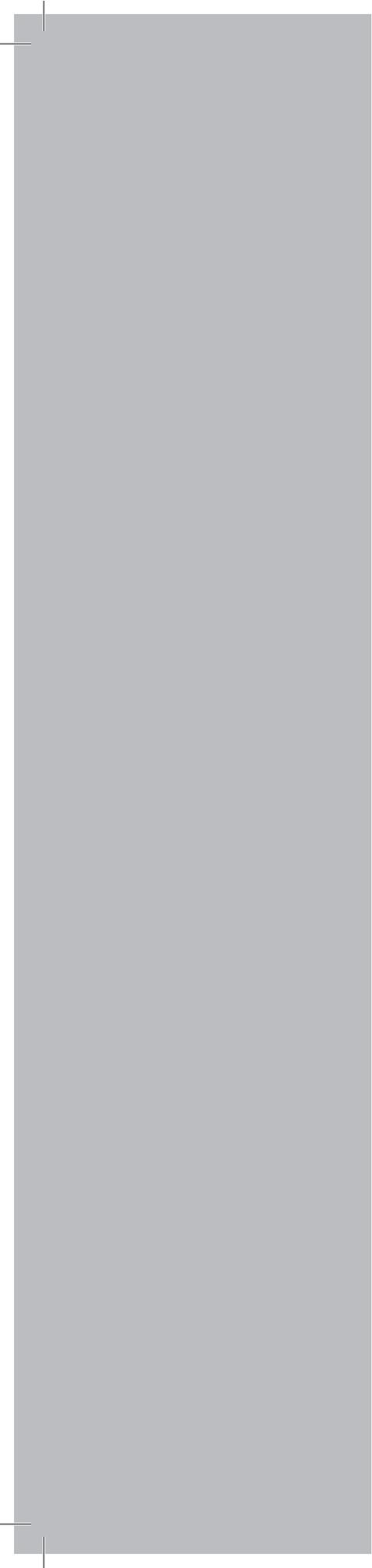
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## **PART 3**

# **Special In-depth Chapter: De-Legitimization of Israel and Israel Attachments Among Jewish Young Adults in North America and Europe**





# De-Legitimization of Israel and Israel Attachments Among Jewish Young Adults in North America and Europe

## Introduction

The subject of this chapter is the effect of the de-legitimization of the State of Israel upon the Israel attachment of young Jews in the Diaspora. Many among Israel's supporters fear that Israel's case is being de-legitimized among highly educated, liberal populations—precisely the demographic of most American Jews. This anxiety is especially intense concerning young Jewish adults, who have been described in some research<sup>1</sup> as less attached to Israel than earlier generations. On college campuses, anti-Israel programs, talks, rallies and petition campaigns have attracted attention.<sup>2</sup> Some observers, both inside and outside the organized Jewish community, have assumed that this "Israel de-legitimization" is a primary factor in putatively decreasing support for Israel among younger American Jews. In a sharply-worded, much-discussed *New York Review of Books* piece, for example, journalism professor Peter Beinart declared, "Morally, American Zionism is in a downward spiral," and accused the organized Jewish community of alienating young Jews by adhering to a repressive policy of blind support

for untenable Israeli policies.<sup>3</sup> Jewish publications produced a flood of responses, ranging in tone from angry defensiveness to expressions of concern to breast-beating admissions of guilt.<sup>4</sup>

While Israel has been the object of de-legitimization for many years, the de-legitimization of Israel has increased in quantum terms in the past decade. It is fast becoming a growing trend progressing from the Middle East and the margins into the mainstream of international discourse. Some observers perceive an imaginary line stretching from the Durban World Conference Against Racism in 2001, which was dedicated to the condemnation of Israel as a racist state, to the Goldstone Report of 2009, which condemned Israel as guilty of crimes against humanity in Gaza and continues to be featured on the UN agenda. A few days before this Annual Assessment went to press, Richard Goldstone published an article in the *Washington Post*, in which he reconsidered some of the conclusions of the Goldstone Report. He stressed that in contrast to Israel, which does its best to avoid civilian casualties and seriously investigates allegations regarding targeting of civilians and war crimes, Hamas commits war crimes and targets civilians deliberately and as

a matter of policy. The Israeli leadership enthusiastically embraced the article, but it is too early to tell what the practical results of the publication of the article will be. Policy makers and research institutes in Israel and the Diaspora have become increasingly alarmed by this trend and are currently devoting significant resources to documenting and analyzing it as well as formulating adequate responses to it and the threat that it represents.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the main focus of this chapter is the critically important but little documented intersection of the Israel attachment and Jewish identity of young Jews with the de-legitimization of Israel that is occurring on many university campuses in North America, Western Europe and Latin America. We will start by taking a short look at the concrete expressions of de-legitimization on college campuses and analyze their main thrust, arguments and appeal. We will then analyze the proximity of some manifestations of de-legitimization to contemporary liberal and globalizing discourses and practices and the implications of this proximity for today's young Jews.

## Part I - De-legitimization on University Campuses in North America and Europe

For over a decade an increasingly sophisticated surge of anti-Israel material has been circulated on college campuses and in the cyberspace venues that are so influential in young adult lives. Some unequivocally anti-Israel rhetoric comes directly from overtly anti-Zionist sources, such as the following recent statement of Palestinian goals for the peace talks:

"The PLO's representative in Lebanon, Ambassador

Abdullah Abdullah, emphasized yesterday that the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, which have started in Washington, are not a goal, but rather another stage in the Palestinian struggle... He believes that Israel will not be dealt a knock-out defeat, but rather an accumulation of Palestinian achievements and struggles, as happened in South Africa, to isolate Israel, to tighten the noose on it, to threaten its legitimacy, and to present it as a rebellious, racist state." [ Al-Hayat Al-Jadida , Sept. 9, 2010]

However, in a contrasting twist, other materials utilized in campus rallies were not originally anti-Israel in tone or intent, but were meant as constructive critiques of specific Israeli policies, often suggested by Jewish peace organizations in Israel and the Diaspora, by human rights organizations in Europe, America, and Israel, and by academics and intellectuals in Israel and elsewhere.

Nevertheless, while the motivations and concerns may be grounded in a passionate engagement with Israel, the evidence and claims they produce are often reframed by anti-Israel groups. Thus, texts created by individuals and groups committed to Israel's survival are frequently appropriated and interwoven in campus events with the language of those who hope ultimately to isolate and weaken Israel.

Finally, in yet another complicating turn, veteran Jewish organizations both in the United States and Israel appear to treat these intermingled attacks as a unified whole. Not only the leaders of Jewish peace and human rights organizations but also younger American Jewish religious leaders, public intellectuals, writers and artists (ages 22-40) who feel deeply engaged with Israel often complain that their critical concerns about Israeli policies

are silenced or marginalized by established Jewish organizations. Indeed, some complain that although their vision of a democratic and just Jewish state is loyal to Zionist ideals, there is no room for them within the current Zionist establishment.

These twists and turns, interminglings and confluences of Israel's friends and enemies make it difficult to determine, as the old joke goes, "Who's on first." **Thus, this essay declares as axiomatic that the pained critiques leveled by supporters of a Jewish State of Israel at specific Israeli policies which undermine their vision of that Jewish state must be distinguished from corrosive attacks on Israel which assume that Zionism is racism and that Israel has failed to earn its right to exist. Since 1967, especially, Israel has been in a problematic position insofar as it has ruled over approximately two million Palestinians or more in the West Bank and Gaza. Without negating or ignoring egregious provocations perpetrated by Israel's enemies, it is critical to acknowledge that many Palestinians have been without political and even civil rights insofar as no political or legal permanent settlement has been achieved. This situation has been the source for a great deal of criticism leveled at Israel from all of these quarters. Nevertheless, this criticism, as indicated must be distinguished from denying Israel's right to exist and the right of the Jewish people to a nation state.**

### **Emergence of academic Israel hatred**

Attempts to de-legitimize Israel on college campuses are part of an international campaign to frame Israel as a pariah state on the model of South

Africa. The goal of many implementers of this campaign is ostensibly to pressure Israel into more humane policies toward Palestinian populations. It is here that the confusion between supporters of Israel who work to change Israeli policies and Israel de-legitimizers often occurs, since Israel de-legitimizers - especially in the United States - often present themselves as only opposing Israeli occupation of the West Bank and incursions into Gaza, not opposing the existence of Israel itself. However, in many college environments the campaign spreads into a broader form of Israel-phobia aimed at de-legitimizing the very concept of a Jewish state.

Although de-legitimization on campuses is currently an acute phenomenon, the intellectual roots of this movement emerged decades earlier, and had multiple sources,<sup>6</sup> including Marxist discourse, Arab agitation against Israel, and the impact of Arab scholars working in the West, such as Edward Said the late Palestinian-American literary theorist and one of the founding figures in postcolonial theory. Anti-Zionist tropes were also produced by post-Zionists and other leftists among Israeli scholars (discussed below), although those ideas took some time to penetrate the American consciousness. Another important stream contributing to anti-Israelism was Marxism in general, and most particularly trends generated

**Attempts to de-legitimize Israel on college campuses are part of an international campaign to frame Israel as a pariah state on the model of South Africa**

by the French intellectual left who, bereft at the realization that communism was not the salvation of the downtrodden, fixed on the "global struggle of political Islam" as its new cause, beginning in the 1980s, as Pascal Bruckner explains in an important new book:

...the Palestinians, or rather the mythical idea that people have formed of them, conjoin two elements that promote [hatred of the West]: they are poor compared with a handful of colonizers, some of whom came from Europe, and they are mostly Muslims, that is, members of a religion that part of the Left thinks is the spearhead of the disinherited. That is how this endless conflict became, between 1980 and 2000, and at a time when revolutionary horizons were shrinking, the incontestable cause of a certain orphaned progressivism.

**“the refocusing on the Palestinian struggle enabled the intellectual Left to slide back comfortably into established habits of anti-Semitism”**

This refocusing on the Palestinian struggle combined "anti-imperialism, anti-Euro-centrism, liberation theology, and the Third World liberationism," comments political scientist Richard Wolin. Moreover, it enabled the intellectual left to slide back comfortably into established habits of anti-Semitism, "to hate Jews in good conscience. When Jews were weak and stateless, they (sometimes) won compassion. With Israelis now perceived as strong-as the aggressors, even as the new Nazis-Europeans are

absolved of their post-Shoah guilt and inhibition. Who knows?," Wolin notes satirically, "Perhaps they were right all along to hate the Jews."<sup>7</sup>

The current international effort can be said to have become apparent during the First Durban Conference in 2001, when the NGO Forum against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Intolerance published a concluding statement calling for "a policy of complete and total isolation of Israel as an *apartheid* state" with "the imposition of mandatory and comprehensive sanctions and embargoes, the full cessation of all links... between all states and Israel."<sup>8</sup>

### **Israel-phobic campus environments**

Episodes ranging from random individual comments to organized protests sometimes make students feel that support for Israel is morally suspect. In many locations, university officials have been caught between the demands of American rights of free assembly and free speech, on one hand, and the potential for events in which an anti-Israel miasma pervades the environment, on the other hand. Binghamton University, Columbia University, University of Chicago, University of Kentucky, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Tulane University, DePaul University, University of Arizona, Hampshire College, University of California at Berkeley, University of California at San Diego, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Emory University, Georgetown University, New York University, Swarthmore College, Temple University, University of Illinois, Chicago, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, University of Minnesota at Minneapolis,

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Rochester, University of Southern California at Los Angeles, University of Texas, and University of Wisconsin at Madison are among the many campuses at which anti-Israel episodes have been reported in 2009 alone.<sup>9</sup>

A specific example illustrates the dynamic: At the University of Chicago in January, 2009, an event entitled "Crisis in Gaza: The U.S. Israel, and Palestine" featured notorious anti-Israel polemicists, including former DePaul Prof. Norman Finkelstein and Prof. John Mearsheimer, co-author of the book *The Israel Lobby*, which misstates and misquotes to "prove" that Zionists pressure America into maintaining policies that go against its own best interests. The event was sponsored by the Muslim Students Association, the university's Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES), and the student chapter of Amnesty International. During the lecture, those who disliked Finkelstein and Mearsheimer's message did not disrupt the proceedings. Nor were there disruptive demonstrations outside the lecture. In contrast, when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert tried to speak at the University of Chicago in a lecture sponsored by its Harris School of Public Policy in the same year, about two dozen students and activists disrupted his lecture with "profanities and calls for his execution." Another 150 demonstrators gathered outside the hall with signs about Israel's "genocide" in Gaza.<sup>10</sup>

Among the many dozens of anti-Israel and antisemitic activities on American college campuses documented in 2009 by the Anti-

Defamation League (ADL) is this description of the way subsequent university events escalated the anti-Israel propaganda:

"Within days, Olmert's critics in the Bay Area were touting the Chicago efforts in promotional materials for a similar effort they were organizing in response to an upcoming Olmert speech hosted by the World Affairs Council in San Francisco. During the San Francisco event, 22 individuals were forcibly removed and arrested after disrupting Olmert with accusations of war crimes and genocide. Nearby, over 200 demonstrators gathered at Union Square, charging, "Olmert, Olmert, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide."...[at Tulane University in New Orleans, students wearing fake-bloodied clothes staged a sit-in outside the auditorium."<sup>11</sup>

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The quiescence of the pro-Israel students, contrasted with the vigorous and disruptive advocacy of the anti-Israel students and outside visitors is noteworthy and oft repeated.

### **Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement**

Among other kinds of political pressure, activities that attempt to isolate Israel and Israelis within the academic world hold a special place. Political scientist Manfred Gerstenfeld documents the strategies and broad attacks on Israel and Israelis within academic and intellectual spheres of

endeavor, providing international examples. His list includes:

- Preventing Israeli academics from obtaining grants;
- Convincing academics not to visit Israel and encouraging academic institutions to sever relations with Israeli academic institutions and academics;
- Blocking the publication of articles by Israeli academics;
- Refusing to review the work of Israeli scholars;
- Refusing to support students who want to study in Israel;
- Blocking the tenure and promotion of academics who have ties with Israel; expelling Jewish organizations from the campus;
- Supporting secret or concealed academic boycotts. Divestment from entities that are presented as benefitting the settlements is a particularly American phenomenon.<sup>12</sup>

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement has had an impact on college campuses, not so much in actually accomplishing divestment as in making the delegitimization of Israel normative and pervasive. One self-description defines the BDS movement as aiming at "pressuring Israel to withdraw from land claimed by the Palestinians." Officially, American BDS groups tend to limit themselves to anti-settlements rather than anti-Israel targets, because, as Hussein Ibish of the American Task Force for Palestine puts it, the "movement has no chance of becoming mainstream inside

the United States as long as it targets Israel proper."<sup>13</sup>

However, the BDS movement is losing this restraint and on college campuses it indulges in overt anti-Israel rhetoric. Campus advocates often target not only Israel's policies in Gaza and the occupied territories but the very existence of Israel. In Hampshire College, for example, the student who heads The Student Alliance for Israel (the campus' only group of this sort) said, "We're called Nazis." When she hung an Israel flag and Hillel posters from her dorm window, "campus officials told her they could not guarantee her safety."<sup>14</sup> Journalist Sue Fishkoff reports that BDS campaigns on college campuses are now far more "organized" and "vitriolic" than in the past years, when "handfuls of anti-Israel students pass[ed] out photocopied flyers." This past year, instead, campuses were visited by "a high-tech traveling exhibit of Israel's separation barrier, complete with an embedded plasma TV showing anti-Israel images."<sup>15</sup>

De-legitimizers and advocates of BDS make extensive use of poetry, drama and other arts, such as the play, "My name is Rachel Corrie." Theatre, film, and the visual arts are used on campuses to stir powerful emotions on behalf of the Palestinian cause, because they have the great advantage that they can be extremely effective without the necessity of arguing a factual case.

On occasion, attacks against Israel overflow and include attacks against Jews. On the campus of the University of California at Irvine, Kenneth L. Marcus, former head of the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights said, "Jewish students were

physically and verbally harassed..." and students were confronted with violently hateful speech:

They were called "dirty Jews" and "f..king Jews," told to "go back to Russia" and "burn in hell"....[students urged] one another to "slaughter the Jews." One Jewish was told, "Jewish students are the plague of mankind" and "Jews should be finished off in the ovens."

### **Official responses and results to anti-Israel advocacy**

While Jewish students on campus report that they feel personally intimidated as Jews and as supporters of Israel by episodes such as those described above, campus efforts to de-legitimize Israel often do not achieve official successes. In only one school, Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, did a BDS resolution pass in a non-binding student body vote.<sup>16</sup> University presidents and administrators have spoken out against anti-Israel rhetoric and/or BDS efforts at Harvard University (Summers, 2002), Columbia University (Bollinger, 2002), Rutgers (McCormick, 2003), University of Pennsylvania (Rodin, 2002), Georgetown University (De Gioa, 2006), University of Michigan (Deitch, 2006), and Brandeis University (Reinharz, 2007). However, in several instances their outspokenness had practical negative consequences for their standing in their own universities. Many have speculated that one group of agitators pushing for the exit of Lawrence Summers from the presidency at Harvard formed when he helped to squelch the BDS effort there. Similarly, a small coterie of Brandeis University anti-Israel faculty complained to *The Boston Globe* about President Jehuda

Reinharz, "over his handling of Jimmy Carter's visit to talk about Carter's book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, as well as the sudden dismantling in 2006 of a Palestinian [student] art exhibit from the university library,"<sup>17</sup> when it was revealed that Palestinian public relations professionals rather than young students had created and promoted the exhibit. This same small faculty group encouraged the 2010 petition against Michael Oren speaking at the Brandeis Commencement (which garnered a mere 125 student signatures) and subsequently boycotted Oren's rapturously received commencement address.

**one Jewish student was told: "Jews should be finished off in the ovens"**

### **De-legitimization, Jews and the Holocaust**

Broadly speaking, by "de-legitimization" we mean the mounting assertion, made both explicitly and implicitly, in elite and popular circles in Western countries, that the State of Israel is somehow not like other states, in two distinct but related ways: its policies and conduct are uniquely unjustifiable and unjust, and it is itself, qua Jewish state, illegitimate.

Sometimes these accusations against Israel on American college campuses are supplied by American academics. Those of Arab origin, like the late Columbia literature Professor Edward Said, certainly have had wide influence. Today, however, some of the most virulent spokespersons are of Jewish descent.

Perhaps the most notorious is MIT Professor Emeritus of Linguistics Noam Chomsky. Much of Chomsky's commentary on Israel defies paraphrase, and is best conveyed through representative verbatim quotes:

"At one time Israel relied on cheap and easily exploited Palestinian labor, but they have long ago been replaced by the miserable of the earth from Asia, Europe and elsewhere ...I wrote decades ago that those who call themselves "supporters of Israel"

**"the world was blind to the selfishness of the Zionist state because of Holocaust guilt"**

are in reality supporters of its moral degeneration and probably ultimate destruction."

Chomsky asserts that Hamas' "positions are more forthcoming than those of the U.S. and Israel," and he advocates "selective

boycotts, carefully formulated" so that they do not reinforce "the harshest and most brutal policies toward the Palestinians."

Finally, it must be noted that Chomsky's scorn for the United States surpasses that for Israel, because America, in his eyes, has "a far worse record of violence and terror than Israel."<sup>18</sup>

One cluster of Israel de-legitimization is linked to the accusation that Jews have exploited the Holocaust for their own purposes, which include the creation of a Jewish racist state, Professor of History Norton Mezvinsky, at Central Connecticut State University, for example, has suggested repeatedly that the world was blind to the selfishness of "the Zionist State" because of Holocaust guilt.

Historian Norman Finkelstein, until 2007 an assistant professor at DePaul University, aroused intense attention among European academics with his book *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (2000). The radical left was delighted with his accusation that Jewish leaders acquired power and money by exploiting the Holocaust for their own purposes.

Finkelstein's attack on the morality of Holocaust memory is particularly dangerous when linked to the enterprise of creating a moral equivalency between the Israeli military and the Nazis, in the hands of academics like Sara Roy, a senior research scholar at the Harvard University Center for Middle Eastern Studies. Roy, Gerstenfeld explains, "exploits being a child of Holocaust survivors," to promote this equivalency, claiming within the context of a Holocaust memorial lecture that "Israeli soldiers openly admit to shooting Palestinian children for sport."<sup>19</sup>

### **De-legitimizing Jewish peoplehood and the Zionist enterprise**

It is "now easier to express criticism towards Israel even when talking on U.S. campuses," Frank Barat notes approvingly in his interview with Ilan Pappé, Israeli Professor of History at the University of Exeter in the U.K., and with Noam Chomsky.<sup>20</sup> The de-legitimization of the State of Israel in its present configuration is ideologically and practically linked to the growing de-legitimization of Zionism and the very concept of Jewish peoplehood in academic settings in America, Europe, and Israel beginning in the late 1960s, roughly after the 1967 "Six Day War." As Ilan Troen notes, "One can delineate

in the academic literature when the regnant paradigm shifted from pro-Israel... to critical or anti-Israel."<sup>21</sup> In the late 1960s and 1970s, veteran Zionist historian Benny Morris, and especially "New Historian" Israeli scholars including Tom Segev, Simha Flapan, Avi Shlaim, and his protégé, Ilan Pappé, promulgated a revised narrative of the emergence of the Jewish state: rather than a tiny band of brave Jewish pioneers fighting a David-and-Goliath-like battle against massive, united Arab armies, Israel had from the beginning a disproportionate level of military power, while the Arabs were destined to be defeated because they were divided by competitive in-fighting. In their revisionist retelling, the Arab population of Palestine did not voluntarily flee from the newly declared Jewish state in 1948, but, instead, putatively were largely forced out, a process which Pappé labels "ethnic cleansing."<sup>22</sup>

Pappé, a former Haifa University professor, has been called "the most hated Israeli in Israel," arguably surpassing Chomsky in his radical attitudes toward the Israel-Palestine conundrum, supporting economic and academic boycotts against Israel, and ultimately a one-state solution. A superstar on the academic lecture circuit, Pappé speaks frequently on American college campuses, and is celebrated in many liberal-left political academic circles.

The "new history" not only reversed the origins of the Jewish state, but also posited a "post-Zionist" attitude toward Jewishness. Broadly speaking, post-Zionism declares that Jewishness is not a true nationality, since Jews who have visibly different ethnic origins, practice a bricolage of different

customs, and do not live contiguous to one another, cannot constitute a nation-race. Tel Aviv University historian Shlomo Sand, for example, argues in *The Invention of the Jewish People*, that the original Jews of the Second Temple were never effectively exiled, and that current populations of Jews in Israel and around the world are descended from eclectic, multi-ethnic groups who retroactively imagined and reimagined themselves into an ersatz peoplehood in response to external stimuli.<sup>23</sup> Political scientist Oren Yiftachel, in *Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine*,<sup>24</sup> says Israelis have deliberately used constructions of Jewish ethnicity as a power tool of colonial oppression in their "creeping apartheid" over four decades. These charges remove from the Jews the dignity of being an authentic, historical people, and go far beyond Benedict Anderson's dictum that all "nations" are socially constructed, and "imagined."

In its more extreme form, post-Zionism seems to tacitly agree with the concept that classical Zionism equals racism; that is, any formulation of Israel as a "Jewish state" - rather than as one state among many that happens to have many Jewish citizens as well as non-Jewish citizens-is not a legitimate mode of statehood in contemporary times, and Zionism is an illegitimate basis for statehood.

A related trend in Israel de-legitimization is the declaration that Zionism and Israel as a Jewish state

**The "new history" not only reversed the origins of the Jewish state, but also posited a "post-Zionist" attitude toward Jewishness**

are failed enterprises, and that Israel's only hope is to be reconstituted as a secular, bi-national state, as recommended by British Jewish historian Tony Judt. As Steven Bayme notes, Judt argued that Israel's very existence is anachronistic and mistaken, "since Israel was born as a nation-state in an era of post-nationalism."<sup>25</sup> Charging that Israel has become a "belligerently intolerant, faith-driven ethno-state,"

**British-Jewish historian Tony Judt: "Israel has become a belligerently intolerant, faith-driven ethno-state"**

Judt argued in 2003 that Israel should abandon its Jewishness and become a secular state comprised of Israel, Gaza, the West Bank, and all of Jerusalem, with Jews and Arabs living where they wished throughout.<sup>26</sup>

Judt's ideas, frequently articulated in *The New York Review of Books* as well as in

volumes he authored, have had great cache in many academic circles.

### **Other Israeli sources-deliberate and unwitting-for de-legitimizing Israel**

As anyone who has spent time in Israel can testify, Israel is a country in which the free exchange of ideas-and opinions-often reaches cacophonous levels. Ironically, one of the most common accusations of Israel's de-legitimizers inside and outside the country is that the Zionist establishment in Israel and the Diaspora silences and squelches dissent. Just the opposite is true: because Israel does not impede the expression of unconventional ideas, leftist Israeli academics and human rights activists have played a significant

role in providing materials<sup>27</sup> employed by Israel de-legitimizers in international settings.

Michael Galchinsky's sympathetic study of Israeli human rights efforts is particularly useful in tracing the organizational and individual players; Israeli human rights activism has been rising over the past few decades, even as Diaspora Jewish activism has been muted, Galchinsky asserts. Human rights organizations such as HaMoked (Center for the Defense of the Individual), B'Tselem (Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), PHR (Physicians for Human Rights-Israel), PCATI (Public Committee against Torture in Israel), RHR (Rabbis for Human Rights), ACRI (Association for Civil Rights in Israel), and other Israeli domestic NGOs have utilized international law as "a crucial tool in their struggle for social justice," with the aim of directing "the tools of international human rights and humanitarian law toward Israeli policies and practices." In an effort "to advance Israeli democracy at home," they "engaged in public campaigns to expose" Israeli practices that allegedly violate human rights standards.<sup>28</sup> Among their "numerous strategies to puncture the public's denial, apathy, lack of empathy, and indifference in the face of high threat perception," NGOs have created materials that are easily transported and adapted for non-Israeli audiences, including "sophisticated media appeals" such as B'Tselem's music video, "Eyes Wide Open," which received 36,000 hits its first year.<sup>29</sup> While in the Israeli domestic context these activities are part of the democratic exchange of ideas and have their place, once taken out of that context they serve as "ammunition" in the de-legitimization battle.

## De-legitimization of Israel and its Implications for Jewish Engagement in Europe

The de-legitimization of Israel now emerging in North America has been present in Europe in what is arguably a more virulent form for the last thirty years. Four major interconnected developments in Europe that may have implications on local Jewries are:

- The demographic increase of Muslim populations in Europe;
- The emergence of a dialectical cultural movement with aspects of both post-nationalism and nationalism;
- The deteriorating image of Israel;
- The resurgence of anti-Semitism.

Taken together, these trends point to an increased polarization of European Jewry: a minority of more identified Jews have become socially and culturally more connected to other Jews while a much larger majority have become increasingly reluctant to affiliate with organizational Jewish life and for whom Jewish identity and identification have progressively diminished.

The European de-legitimization campaign, which has a voice on North American campuses, has its historical roots in various European countries, but especially in the UK. Europe is the incubator of academic and economic boycott initiatives, intellectual anti-Zionism, Holocaust denial or revisionism, and "philosophical" anti-Judaism. All over Europe, Israel and Judaism are positioned as controversial issues, and some universities have become bastions of anti-Israeli activism.

Despite the scarcity of quantitative data<sup>30</sup>, the overall evidence is that significant numbers of young European Jews avoid identifying as Jews and appearing sympathetic to Israel on campuses. On many campuses, holding rallies for Israel, solidarity events for the residents of Sderot and other Israeli localities under fire, or demonstrating support for Israeli military operations are either unthinkable or, when they do occur, may jeopardize organizers' safety. This situation is also common in the workplace. Israel and Judaism are controversial and young Jews who work in large companies prefer not to address Israel and Jewish issues in professional environments. This is arguably a major difference between Europe and the United States. Very few students dare to present the Israeli perspective at pro-Palestinian demonstrations, and few challenge exhibitions and petitions meant to advance the Palestinian cause.

**Significant numbers of young European Jews avoid identifying as Jews and appearing sympathetic to Israel on campuses**

As European Muslims are tenfold more numerous than European Jews, public opinion is highly critical of Israel and supportive of Palestinian and Islamist activists, who are more self-confident, passionate and energetic than their Jewish counterparts. **Public discourse is lost to Arab and anti-Israeli voices.** With the recent development of new nationalistic and anti-Islamic movements in Europe, public opinion seems to be in the middle of a shift. For the moment, strong criticism of Islamic activism

works together with strong criticism of Jewish ethno-religious activism, and public discourse remain very critical of ethno-religious expressions of Israeli policy.

Jewish "activism" on European campuses is mainly limited to providing kosher food and other cultural services rather than political organizing and engagement. This doesn't mean that Jewish students are altogether indifferent to Jewish identity, but only a minority meets off-campus in

**Palestinian and Islamist activists are more self-confident, passionate and energetic than their Jewish counterparts**

communal Jewish spaces, while the bulk, averse to what it perceives as "self-segregation" with its tribal-like connotations, excuses itself from organized Jewish society. Today, Israeli film festivals, Jewish book fairs and Jewish music festivals are disappearing from campuses. All

over Western Europe, high school principals, in order to avoid controversy, do not include Hebrew language courses in their curricula and discourage Jewish expression in their schools. On several campuses, university administrators, acquiescing to community sentiment, program fewer courses on Israel, Hebrew and Yiddish language, and Jewish history and culture. In order to advance an affirmative identity that does not frontally hurt the consensual dominant dogma, the Jewish student activists have often to be tightrope walkers. In France, to avoid the unequivocal condemnation of Israel that is tacitly

expected of them, and in order to suggest a significant ideological platform of compromise that motivates Jewish activism without clashing with the pro-peace and pro-Palestinian ethos on many campuses, Jewish student leaders coined the slogan, "I am Zionist and pro-Palestinian." This is worth mentioning because in a context in which Zionism is conflated with the 20<sup>th</sup> century sins of colonialism, racism, Nazism, ethno-religious imperialism, ethnic cleansing, and anti-peace militarist activism, Jewish students increasingly reject the intellectual construct that support of a Jewish sovereign state necessitates denying the similar right of the Palestinians to national sovereignty. Israeli political positions are routinely examined at the prestigious School of Oriental and African studies (SOAS)<sup>31</sup> attached to the University of London. Even if the Israeli positions presented there generate controversy and attract opposing views, at least it doesn't categorically exclude the Israeli perspective. Lectures by Israeli politicians and other public figures, who do not profess far-left and post-Zionist agendas, are extremely rare on European campuses.

### **The pro-Arab European bias**

The European bias against Israel is widely acknowledged. Former AIPAC official Steven J. Rosen, who has a deep understanding of both US and European politics, summarized it convincingly in a recent issue of the *Middle East Quarterly*<sup>32</sup>: "There are many suppositions why Europeans tilt against Israel and toward the Arabs. For one thing, the Middle East is a place where Europeans can flaunt their foreign policy

independence from the United States without responsibility for causing catastrophic results because they assume that the United States will protect Israel from any dire consequences such may produce. For another, Europe depends more heavily on trade with the Arab world and on Arab oil exports than does the United States. For example, the Arab Gulf states are a \$300 billion import market for world products, compared to Israel's \$50 billion imports. Europe may also have a desire to appease the "strong horse" in the region (e.g., Israel has but one vote in the U.N.; the Arabs have twenty-five votes, the Muslim nations, fifty votes). Then there is the guilt among many Europeans over their discredited imperial past, leading them to falsely view Israelis as oppressing Third World peoples. Then, again, it may be the growing influence of Europe's own Muslim populations (e.g., Arabs in France, Turks in Germany, Asians in Britain) and their need to keep such segments of their domestic populations as quiescent as possible. Some analysts suggest that there may also be an element of satisfaction at being free to censure Jews in Israel, relieving European guilt over responsibility for the Holocaust. Finally, it may be that the Europeans simply do not understand that Israel is a democracy at war, living in a mortally dangerous neighborhood, which must act in self-defense in ways that may seem excessive to onlookers in a benign environment such as twenty-first-century western Europe (even though the Western democracies and the United States have used harsher means than Israel in wars far removed from their own territory)."

### **The role of the dormant anti-Semitism**

This anti-Zionist discourse didn't emerge in a vacuum but in a climate of dormant anti-Semitism and rejection of Jewish and Israeli exceptionalism. Despite its bi-millenary presence in Europe, Judaism has always been perceived, by philo-Semites and by anti-Semites alike, as a heterogeneous cultural ferment that both fosters creativity (when its dosage is moderate) and is destructive (when its presence is too high) in regard to the "authentic" Christian core of the European culture. Aware of this ambivalence, local Jews, *mutatis mutandis* – certainly in a more discrete manner in Switzerland and Hungary and in a more assertive manner in France and Britain – are careful to avoid a "too high" political profile. Tied up by a kind of unwritten conditional citizenship contract and fearing to be accused of clannishness or ethnocentric "tribalism," European Jews – unlike various other groups – have not dared initiating a political lobby to advance their interests.

**There may be an element of satisfaction at being free to censure Jews in Israel, relieving European guilt over responsibility for the Holocaust**

### **Rising interest in Jewish culture**

While anti-Jewish slurs and violence are still not uncommon for easily recognizable Jews all over eastern and western Europe, there is little risk of state anti-Semitism, and this rejection doesn't normatively appear in economic, cultural and

political spheres. Outside of the campuses in which strong anti-Israel activism deters public expressions of Jewish identity, in the European public sphere, alongside the largely negative reporting on Israel in European media, there is also a positive attitude toward Jewish culture. When it is not associated with the controversial State of Israel, Jewish descent provides to intellectuals and politicians an ethical and symbolic legitimacy to express themselves about existential and morally sensitive

**The right of Israel to exist is still accepted, but this position is becoming less and less easy to maintain**

dilemmas. Apparently, Jews and Jewish culture fascinate. But sometimes it seems that the European media and reading public are more comfortable with the threatened or vanished culture of long-dead Jews than with the thriving, living Jewish communities. *Klezmer*

music has been *en vogue* for more than a decade. Jewish and Israeli literature tops best sellers lists. Jewish topics fill the pages of nearly every European periodical. Institutions and Jewish museums are newly opened or freshly renovated everywhere. European audiences appear to be intrigued by Israeli daily life in the shadow of conflict. This fascination extends from literature to other art forms, with at least one or two Israeli films playing on screens in European capitals every week. However, whether a largely cultural and historic interest by Europeans is enough to enhance Jewish security and to guarantee European Jewry's long-term future remains to be seen.

## Historical development

Systematic intellectual opposition to Israel has not always been so palpable as it is today. During the first three decades following the birth of the State of Israel, because of sympathy with the struggle of the Jewish political renaissance, the moral image of Israel as a pioneering and progressive state, the experience of European countries in decolonization wars, a different world balance of power, a smaller Muslim presence in Europe, the lower discursive prominence of human rights ideology and a lower awareness of Palestinian suffering, European intellectual opinion was more positive with respect to Israel. Today, the right of Israel to exist as the state of the Jewish people is still accepted, but this position is becoming less and less easy to maintain. The tipping point was the Israeli victory of 1967 and the following occupation of Palestinian territories. This situation shift led to two simple but non-evidence based syllogisms: first, if Israel returns to the 1967 borders peace will be achieved in the region, and second, Israel, perceived as no longer a victim but rather as a colonialist and racist oppressor, has lost its legitimacy as a democratic entity. These two interpretations, which do not take into account the religious, civilizational and historical contexts of the Arab-Israeli conflict, are steering current European perceptions of the conflict. Largely because of post-Shoah European guilt, this paradigm shift was confined to the fringe of public media for several decades until it became main stream dogma. Since the 1980s, academic anti-Israel attitudes have ripened in three successive stages that have progressively made supporters of Israel more and more uncomfortable.

### **First Lebanon war (1981)**

In Europe, nurtured by two long-established anti-Zionist discourses – the Marxist denial of the right of the Jewish people to a sovereign state, and the assimilationist ideology that argues that Jews should dismiss all kinds of collective identity – the new intellectual left radical criticism of Israel was first articulated in French and British academies in the wake of the Six-Day War and largely adopted by European mass media during the First Lebanon War, which was perceived by good-faith European intellectuals as an unacceptable imperialist operation.

### **First Intifada (1987)**

The post-Shoah period characterized by European guilt and special treatment of Jews prevailed in the public imagination up until the first Intifada (1987-93). Media depictions of the uprising, a loop of photographs and video clips of stone-throwing Palestinian youngsters taking on IDF tanks recast the Palestinians as David versus the Israeli Goliath. Israel came to be perceived by some public intellectuals as an anachronistic and colonialist ethno-religious state in a time of post-nationalism. In an optimistic, post-Cold War political climate, the European pacifist consensual aspiration could less and less support what they perceive as an increasingly bellicose and irredentist Israel. After centuries of bloody ethno-religious and nationalistic conflicts, the basic ethos of the European Union is that strong ethno-religious and national identities should be avoided. Moreover, with peaceful coexistence the ultimate goal, according to this philosophy, each state should be ready to exchange

some of its particularism in order to build an “alliance of civilization” and avoid a threatening “clash of civilizations,” a demand which is particularly applied to Israel. In this context, *Israel's intransigence* appears as *the* obstacle to the peace process and sometimes even as *the* obstacle to achieving peaceful Euro-Mediterranean economic prosperity.

In this period western European politicians progressively understood that migrant workers, more and more, would not return to their countries of origin and authorized the immigration of millions of spouses and children, many of them of Muslim tradition. This demographic shift, associated with the traditional pro-Arab foreign policy of the EU countries, incrementally impacted European attitudes toward Jews and Israel. Playing to their communities, political parties held anti-Israel positions and aligned behind resentful and anti-Jewish Muslim rhetoric.

**Media depictions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Intifada – stone-throwing Palestinians youngsters taking on IDF soldiers – recast the Palestinians as David versus the Israeli Goliath**

### **Second Intifada (2000 - 2005)**

Starting with the Second Intifada and the 2001 Durban UN Conference against Racism, and escalating since then, an anti-Israel ideology has imposed itself as dogma. The two-state paradigm is described as a pro-Zionist retrograde position and many post-national, avant-garde intellectuals lobby

for the end of the “outdated Zionist enterprise” as they did against South Africa in the 1970s.

We may ask ourselves how this anti-Israeli bias will develop in the coming years. Will the boycott, divestment and sanctions de-legitimization movement continue toward a crescendo of critical mass as it did in South Africa? As democracy is

**Barring catastrophic conditions, anti-Jewish discrimination or state sanctioned anti-Semitism are today inconceivable in western Europe**

the foundational principle of the modern European idea, barring catastrophic conditions, anti-Jewish discrimination or state sanctioned anti-Semitism are today inconceivable in western Europe. However, should popular resentment against Israel and Jews intensify, the political and symbolic status of European Jewish communities will suffer.

## **De-legitimization of Israel on Campuses: Left-Liberal Critiques and the Liberal Orientation of Diaspora Jews**

As we have seen previously, de-legitimization attacks very often deliberately blur the distinction between de-legitimization and legitimate criticism of Israel. They also reflect emergent currents of liberal thought—indeed what makes de-legitimization so cutting and challenging a phenomenon is precisely its seeming congruence not only with liberal ideas, but with the liberal ideas which frame the world-views of so many Jews themselves.

This “left-liberal” variety of de-legitimization is generally of the “soft” sort of de-legitimization which has the following characteristics:

- Is not connected (at least not obviously or necessarily) to anti-Semitism/Judaeophobia
- Does not (at least not obviously or necessarily) argue for the violent physical destruction of Israel
- Is willing to distinguish between Israel's government and policies and its people
- Is willing at least to consider some distinction between pre- and post-1967 Israel<sup>33</sup>

Some historical background is necessary. The question of Israel's legitimacy is a new chapter in the long history of Western civilization's various attempts to understand and contend with Jewish collective identity.<sup>34</sup> The teaching of the early Christian church and in particular those of the Apostle Paul<sup>35</sup> effectively configured Jewish distinctiveness as that which stands perversely athwart the universal moral teachings of the Gospel and the universal Christian community.

The rise of Western modernity did not improve matters. On the contrary, the advent of the secular Enlightenment in religion and the nation-state in politics rendered Jewish collective identity problematic in new – and ultimately deadly – ways. In particular, many Enlightenment thinkers were profoundly suspicious of the concept of Jewishness as a peoplehood. Some attempted to legislate Jewish peoplehood out of existence, demanding the Jewishness consist exclusively of a private

religious devotion or "confession" that impinged in no way on public life. The Enlightenment problematized traditional religious belief while proclaiming a new, universal, religion of reason. The nation-state reconfigured group identities within new, and newly-hardened, geographic and cultural boundaries. Both developments made the historical Jewish amalgam of religion and peoplehood an awkward fit in the new dispensation.

The strains were well on display in perhaps the seminal event of European modernity, the French Revolution. As Arthur Hertzberg wrote in his classic study, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*, "(t)he mainstream of the thinking of the Enlightenment...was absolutist. It imagined itself as a positive force for the making of a new world, and everyone had to be remade in order to be part of the new heaven. The particular disaster of the Jew was that the men of the Enlightenment were not entirely certain that he could enter the heaven even after he was remade."<sup>36</sup> That partisans of the old aristocratic and ecclesiastical orders were uneasy with Jewish emancipation is no surprise. The striking development, Hertzberg notes, was the emergence of a new liberal intelligentsia for whom Jewish collective existence was an affront precisely to the new ethos of liberation.<sup>37</sup>

This disjunction between Jewish collective existence and the drive for universal ethics is the seedbed for those elements of contemporary de-legitimization which do not arise directly from traditional anti-Semitism, or indeed are not overtly anti-Semitic at all.<sup>38</sup>

As a result, that which makes de-legitimization so vexing in the present context is:

- a. its circulation in elites who *prima facie* are detached from traditional anti-Semitism, share the fundamental premises of Western liberal democracies and the legitimacy of Western influence and power, but see Israel as at the very least, a deeply corrosive factor in the liberal West's own internal coherence and progress. Thus while the West is seen to be moving towards greater universality – politically in institutions such as the European Union, socio-culturally in its growing pluralism and multi-ethnicity – the valorization, real or imagined, of Israel qua Jewish nation-state goes in precisely the opposite direction.
- b. its being articulated in the cadences of liberal universalism which resonate deeply – and with good reason – with so much of contemporary Western Jewry. Liberalism facilitated Jewish success in North America, and it was a quintessentially liberal institution, the United Nations, which voted the State of Israel into being.<sup>39</sup> The waning of much traditional religious belief has made liberalism – its assertion of religious freedom, and its resonance with the ethical teachings of Judaism – the regnant ethos of Western Jewry.

**“A new liberal intelligentsia has emerged for whom Jewish collective existence was an affront precisely to the new ethos of liberation”**

The identification of Western Jews with political and social liberalism is one of the distinguishing facts of modern Jewish life. Jews embraced liberalism as best they could, above all because it afforded them a "neutral space," the possibility of civic equality and economic possibility. Of course, the congruence of Jewish religion and liberal values was hardly obvious, even if today it is in many circles axiomatic to the point of cliché. That congruence was the work of generations of thinkers, initiated

**Some Jewish theologians argue for the theological illegitimacy of Zionism as a violation of Jewish teachings on ethics and social justice**

by Mendelssohn and with time taken up with special fervor on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>40</sup> Key to this reworking was the foregrounding of elements of universal ethics which do indeed exist in Jewish tradition, but were understood and contextualized rather differently over the course of much of Jewish history.

Be that as it may, Western Jewry has nearly staked its very existence on the idea of universal ethical ideals, precisely in order to loosen the tight connections between nationality, religion and citizenship which impeded Jewish emancipation and integration. The conjoining of those three elements in Jewish statehood thus implicitly challenges a key Jewish strategy for negotiating the radical changes of modernity.

Some liberal de-legitimization stances in our time are explicitly theological, or to be more precise emerge explicitly from the classic Pauline disavowal

of Jewish particularism and train that disavowal onto the Jewish state. These thinkers' rejection of Jewish sovereignty is not stated in traditionalist terms, but rather in liberal terms and /or moralistic understandings of the Christian message (which often include internal condemnation of Christian anti-Semitism).<sup>41</sup>

Thus, to take a premier example, Rosemary Ruether, who has written with great sensitivity and courage about the Church's history of anti-Semitism strongly opposes Israeli statehood, indeed sees it as the very opposite of the Jewish moral message in the world.<sup>42</sup> Theological critique of Israel's existence has also manifested itself at the organizational and denominational level, most notably in recent calls by the Presbyterian Church USA.<sup>43</sup> Some Jewish theologians, such as Marc H. Ellis, also argue for the theological illegitimacy of Zionism as a violation of deeply-held Jewish teachings on ethics and social justice.

Other stances may be characterized as theologico-philosophical, by which we mean to indicate currents of thought, some explicitly theological-confessional, others which bear the lineaments of theology's aspiration to totality and use its categories while explicitly distancing themselves from institutional "religion," and yet others which are strictly philosophical, e.g. the neo-Paulinism, expressed vividly by contemporary thinkers such as Alain Badiou, former chair of philosophy at perhaps the most prestigious intellectual institution in France, the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*. For Badiou, Jewish collective existence – especially when wedded to the power of statehood – is itself the great stumbling block to universal ethics. Indeed, Badiou challenges

the ascription "Jew" with its morally privileged aura of victimhood to the community which refers to itself as Jews, let alone to their illegitimate state.<sup>44</sup> Jean-Claude Milner (himself the son of a Jewish father) writes explicitly of the Jew, and certainly his state, as that which stands in the way of the European vision of universal union. In ostensible critique of Milner, the celebrated philosopher Slavoj Žižek writes that Jewish statehood is the realization of, astoundingly, the Nazi program, in that it finally extinguishes Judaism, *whose justification for existence lies only in its ethereality*.<sup>45</sup> Žižek well illustrates that the ostensible playfulness and irony of post-modern thought can and regularly divest it of moral seriousness and of the making of critical distinctions.

These European thinkers are of course laboring under, at times obsessed with, the Holocaust, whose horror they do not deny. To the contrary, the Holocaust is central for them as an apotheosis of evil, and of the purest victimhood, whose moral force is inverse to its political powerlessness. Thus the Jewish assertion of statehood comes to be seen as an inversion of morality, precisely because Jews are meant to be the signifiers of perfect victimhood.

Of course, these very continental thinkers, influential as they are speak in heady and regularly abstruse abstractions, well removed from the more pragmatic and plain sense cadences of Anglo-American liberalism. But there too one finds the view that Jewish statehood is at odds with the determined reasonableness of liberalism, and that Jews, of all people, should have recognized by now the dangers of attachment to the nation-state.

The best and most prominent illustration here is the work of the recently-deceased Tony Judt (who was discussed briefly earlier). Himself Jewish – indeed in his youth he was sympathetic to Zionism and volunteered on a kibbutz – Judt offered the most intelligent and crisply-argued versions of de-legitimization around. Judt's critique in some ways resembles that of the neo-Pauline critique described above, but without its quasi-theological totalizing, baroque rhetoric and unmistakable hostility to Judaism. In a much-discussed 2003 essay, he argued that:

**“The Jew, and certainly his state, stand in the way of the European vision of universal union”**

The problem with Israel, in short, is not—as is sometimes suggested—that it is a European “enclave” in the Arab world; but rather that it arrived too late. It has imported a characteristically late-nineteenth-century separatist project into a world that has moved on, a world of individual rights, open frontiers, and international law. The very idea of a “Jewish state”—a state in which Jews and the Jewish religion have exclusive privileges from which non-Jewish citizens are forever excluded—is rooted in another time and place. Israel, in short, is an anachronism.<sup>46</sup>

Israel's anachronism does not make it simply ungainly or out of step – rather it puts it athwart the deepest currents of our time, socio-cultural and, more critically, moral:

"In a world where nations and peoples increasingly intermingle and intermarry at will; where cultural and national impediments to communication have all but collapsed; where more and more of us have multiple elective identities and would feel falsely constrained if we had to answer to just one of them; in such a world Israel is truly an anachronism. And not just an anachronism but a dysfunctional one. In today's "clash of cultures" between open, pluralist democracies and belligerently intolerant, faith-driven ethno-states, Israel actually risks falling into the wrong camp".<sup>47</sup>

Judt himself advocated a bi-national state, a stance which was once the program of a small but significant group of Zionist figures and which, in theory at least, does not entail the destruction of Israeli Jewry, though in practice it well might.<sup>48</sup> His essay stimulated a whirlwind of controversy, in no small part because he pithily articulated the anti-Zionist case in the

humane liberal tones and terms of the worldview of most American Jews themselves. He also stated, in American cadences, a very European discomfort with Jewish statehood, an enterprise which seems to fly in the face of what many European elites regard as the high moral-political achievement of forging the European Union.

Liberal discomfort with Jewish statehood is finding expression among writers and artists far more

involved with Jewish culture than was Judt, such as Daniel Boyarin, Steven Spielberg and Tony Kushner who will be discussed below. In the academy we are seeing renewed interest in the works of significant Jewish thinkers who were critical of statist Zionism, which they saw as running counter to the liberal values which have best served Jews as a collective and which define the contours of the moral communities, Jewish and otherwise, with which Jews can and should identify.<sup>49</sup>

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that the fact that Jewish and Israeli thinkers are discussed here is not to meant to tar any of them with pejorative brushes of "anti-Semitism," self-hatred," or even, in some cases, of being anti-Zionist. It is however to convey that they partake of the larger trends under discussion, and do so precisely out of their own understandings of Jewish life, history and experience.

Left-liberal de-legitimization discourse takes several other forms: post-modernist/post-colonial; International law/NGOs; and cultural and expressive politics.

### Post-modernism and post-colonialism

Post-modernism casts a skeptical eye on all assertions of power and hierarchy and of strong claims of identity, and thus, as the Marxists used to say, it is no accident that among the fiercest critics of Israel in the academia are the standard bearers of post-modernism such as Judith Butler. Butler of course is not herself anti-Semitic, unapologetic about her Jewishness and its place in her world; and her substantive political positions are within the bounds of reasonable discourse itself. She is a

staunch advocate of BDS, and argues for a post-national state. These in and of themselves are not violent positions. But they do deny Israel's fundamental legitimacy as a nation-state.

Not all post-modernists need be anti-Zionists, of course. Yet post-modernism's assault on all fixities of identity and thoroughgoing suspicion of all state hierarchies easily lend themselves to anti-Zionist view.<sup>50</sup>

The flourishing in recent years of post-colonial studies as a thriving academic field has breathed new life into the argument voiced by the Third World during the Cold War that Israel is a colonial entity and thus, *ipso facto*, illegitimate.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the author, Edward Said, of the founding text of post-colonialism, *Orientalism*, clearly identified Zionism as both an outgrowth and as part of European colonialism.<sup>52</sup>

Post-colonial perspectives are well on display in the popular (by academic standards) works of Daniel Boyarin, a distinguished Talmudist whose critique of Zionism synthesizes traditional Jewish anti-Zionism with post-colonial discourse.<sup>53</sup> Thus he argues that Zionism's assertion of Jewish power both undermines what he sees as the principled passivity of Rabbinic Judaism and implicates Jews and Judaism in illegitimate hierarchies of power.

To be sure, as far as Zionists are concerned, Israel is not a colonial state: the State of Israel itself did arise from within the colonial matrix and Zionist leaders made adroit use of the colonial system which was for all intents and purposes the international system itself before WWI, and a large part of it until WWII. But Israel is not a colonialist entity. It

is home to its citizens, native and immigrant, and exists for its own sake and not as the satellite of some other entity. Within its borders all citizens have equal rights (Judea and Samaria do in some ways present a colonial situation, which is itself a strong argument for the resolution of their status, and that of their Palestinian inhabitants, as soon as practicable).<sup>54</sup>

Yet there is no denying a strong current of international – and Israeli – opinion that Israel is indeed a colonialist entity.

Thus, for instance, political geographer Oren Yiftachel has argued that Israel is an "ethnocracy," in which one, indigenous group of people is systematically deprived of rights and resources to serve the needs of one ethnic group. Baruch Kimmerling depicted Israel as the last state structured along the European colonial model of an imported European populace subjugating indigenous people.<sup>55</sup>

**Post-modernism's assault on all fixities of identity and thoroughgoing suspicion of all state hierarchies easily lend themselves to anti-Zionist view**

### **International law**

Liberal de-legitimization is also crucial to the discourse emanating from the world of international law and international bodies, in the form of UN bodies obsessively given over to criticizing Israel, or the endless stream of critical reports emanating from human rights groups of different kinds – not to mention the new "lawfare," efforts by lawyers

and jurists to mount extra-territorial prosecutions of Israeli political leaders through the exercise of expanded doctrines of universal jurisdiction.<sup>56</sup>

The distinctive feature of this category is that it captures groups operating within the seemingly neutral, apolitical, highly abstract and rationalized frameworks of international law – which rings its own changes on globalization's ostensible effacing of national sovereignties. The story of the global human rights bears within it deep currents which seek somehow to bypass the messy business of politics – and this illusion makes those institutions malleable tools in the hands of various political actors.<sup>57</sup>

### Cultural & expressive politics

A final category of liberal de-legitimization is the voicing of sentiments by actors and artists who seem motivated more by cultural expression than by an articulated political ideology or agenda. This would include artists such as Elvis Costello and Annie Lennox, who have boycotted Israel and, in the case of Lennox, issued inflammatory statements (which she has since modified).<sup>58</sup>

One can find some of the currents discussed here registered in the works of some major artists who are themselves Jewish, have seriously explored

Jewish themes in their work and are fundamentally supportive of Israel's right to exist. Thus, Steven Spielberg's *Munich* has his Mossad protagonist eventually choosing Diaspora existence in Jewish Brooklyn over the relentless life of violence that his Israeli identity forces on him.<sup>59</sup> The screenplay was written by a major American playwright, Tony Kushner, who has powerfully explored Jewish experience in his other works, and who is part of the artistic trend seeking to recapture the energies of modern Yiddishism as a form of Jewish identity that will bypass both Israel and the synagogue.

### The meaning of liberal de-legitimization

The significance of all the above forms of de-legitimization is that they proceed in whole or in part in terms which resonate deeply with contemporary Jewry, and which do indeed reflect values emerging out of modern Jewish historical experience – a critical moral stance towards untrammelled state power, sensitivity to the rights of minorities, a deep discomfort with essentializing definitions of belonging. Indeed, liberal de-legitimization may be said to arise precisely from several elements of modern Jewish life and thought which the Zionist revolution sought to overcome – the valorization of statelessness and powerlessness as a guarantor of virtue, and of Jewish disembodiment and geographic dispersion as crucial elements of Jewish spirituality.

## Putting the Campus in Context: De-legitimization, Globalization and Global Civil Society

One of the factors that enhance the potential for a connection between contemporary left-liberal

discourse and critique and the de-legitimization of Israel is the link between much of contemporary liberalism and certain globalizing discourses. We have seen such links between liberalism, globalization and the de-legitimization of Israel writing of Tony Judt and in the de-legitimizing appeal to international law.

"Globalization" in this context refers to an orientation towards global agendas and systems. These can be pursued through explicitly global institutions and processes such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), global financial markets, and the war crimes tribunals. In addition to this, and perhaps even more prevalent, are national and sub-national organizations and agencies which are oriented towards global agendas and systems such as environmental and human rights organizations. These interact with each other in transnational and supranational networks but not necessarily through the formal inter-state system. While the scale of action and of practice in these examples is national or even local, the "organizing logic" governing them is global; they are oriented towards a global system or agenda.<sup>60</sup>

A primary example of such an orientation, as was intimated, is the contemporary arena of human rights. The conceptualization and practice of human rights has shifted in the contemporary globalized era. In the modern period characterized by the democratic and industrial revolutions, that is, from around 1775 to around 1980 political thinkers and actors conceived of human rights as ordering the relationship between **citizens** and **states**.

But in the contemporary era, political, legal and civil society actors and activists orient the discourse and practice of human rights towards a global human rights order. Rights and rights-bearing individuals are, as it were, abstracted from their political membership and made the objects of discourse, action and policy in a universalistic and absolute frame. Around this "organizing logic" an entire institutional and organizational machinery has sprung up: international human rights courts and tribunals (the European Court of Human Rights, the ICC), NGOs and networks of human rights NGOs, universal jurisdiction and the application of international human rights law in national courts and settings. Thus while the notion of human rights is not new, the past 30 years have witnessed an entirely new discourse and set of practices regarding it.

**In the contemporary era, activists orient the discourse and practice of human rights towards a global human rights order**

This prevalent orientation towards global agendas has brought with it changes in the world order: the first of these is that the new international order is no longer composed solely of states. On various levels and scales many non-state actors are active on the world scene. As we have indicated, these include transnational and supranational organizations such as the EU and the WTO but they also include agencies that are much smaller and less powerful than states such as NGOs and relatively autonomous media organizations (e.g.

International CNN or Al Jazeera) and even terrorist groups. As a result nation states no longer dictate the rules of the international playground nor control its agenda.

To a certain extent this process has been accompanied by a certain decline in the idea of the nation-state and the rise of the idea of the post-national order. This was seen first and foremost in Europe after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. European publicists, politicians and thinkers

**Transnational activism creates a new globalized "civil society" which contains citizen practices that go beyond the nation**

advanced the idea that the nation-state was passé and that it would be replaced by "Europe." The introduction of a common currency, the Euro, strengthened this notion.<sup>61)</sup> Secondly, new ideas of citizenship have emerged. Citizenship has become de-nationalized. Today, theorists, activists and politicians speak about trans national and post national citizenship. "European" citizenship, or citizenship in the European Union is a leading example of postnational citizenship. Equally important is "transnational citizenship." One leading form of transnational citizenship is connected to transnational activism. This latter concept refers to "new transnational forms of political organization emerging in a context of rapid globalization and proliferation of cross border activities of all sorts of "actors," notably immigrants, NGOs, first nation people, human rights, the environment, arms control, women's rights, labor rights and

rights of national minorities..." Paul Wapner sees these activist networks "as a slice of associational life which exists above the individual and below the state, but also across national boundaries."<sup>62</sup> Transnational activism creates a new globalized "civil society" which contains citizen practices that go beyond the nation. Accompanying the growth of a global civil society is a global sense of solidarity and identification in connection with the various activist causes.

This new globalized configuration of ideas, discourses and practices has important implications for the de-legitimization of Israel. The rights (individual and group) of the Palestinians both in the PA and the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel are now the concern of a global human rights regime and a world order universalistically concerned with human rights. They are no longer simply the object of the discourse and practice of the Israeli state and of groups working within an Israeli national frame, or even the concern of states and entities in the Middle East and of those who have strategic interests in the area. Instead, Israel and Israeli policies are the "business" of observers around the world. Global "audiences" see themselves as legitimate stakeholders, and are receptive to hearing about the issue of Palestinian rights. This is first and foremost the new "global civil society." This consists first of global human and minority rights activists and organizations and secondly, of the new global machinery – such as the international human rights courts - which is concerned with enforcing the global human rights regime.

## Conclusion: Classical and Globalized Liberalism

Liberalism today is somewhat different than "classical" modern liberalism. Classical modern liberalism was concerned with the relations of the citizen to the state. Israel as a democratic nation-state with a basic human rights regime was considered well ensconced within the old liberal paradigm. The new "global" liberalism is concerned with human rights, women's rights and environmental protection as part of a global agenda and order. In the new global liberal conception the global agendas of women's rights, human rights and environmental protection tend to trump the concerns of mere nation-states. Furthermore, states that are too particularistic tend to intrinsically arouse suspicion. Thus, the eniornment of contemporary "globalized" liberalism tends to be inherently less comfortable for Israel. New configurations of Jewish identity among young Jews are somewhat congruent with these orientations.

## Part II - Jewish identity, Attachment to Israel and De-legitimization Among Young Jews

### Young US Jews' feelings toward Israel and Jewish peoplehood

Younger Jewish adults are no more monolithic than their elders, in regard to their relationship to Israel and other matters. Most studies indicate that the population of young Jews represents the entire continuum, with passionate and knowledgeable supporters of Israel at one end of the spectrum, and virulent de-legitimizers of Israel's existence in

a tiny group at the opposite end of the spectrum. Among the majority, support for Israel ranges from activist to passive support. A substantial minority is probably more apathetic than for or against anything Jewish, including Israel. **Furthermore, Israel attachment is affected by intermarriage, life cycle trajectories, travel to Israel, denomination, gender, and the Jewishness of one's social networks. Nevertheless, despite this broad spectrum, there are characteristics that typify the younger generation, and distinguish them from older generations of American Jews.**

Discomfort with an understanding of Jewishness as bounded by ethnic peoplehood has been thoroughly internalized by many younger American Jews, who frequently embrace the cultural "nucleus," the particulars of Jewish culture, but reject "us and them" constructions of ethnicity. Research interviews showed that, in a marked change from the past, Jews in their twenties report a strong attachment to Jewish ethnicity, but define **Jewish music, food, books, comedy and cultural performance, family styles and religious rituals as the primary expressions of their ethnicity.** They are confused when they read assertions about ethnic boundaries, because those concepts do not match the reality of their relationship to their Jewish ethnicity. Similarly,

**global "audiences" see themselves as legitimate stakeholders, and are receptive to hearing about the issue of Palestinian rights**

many are quite attached to Israeli music, food, and other cultural expressions, but rebel against the idea that Israel is vulnerable, or that they should defend Israel from existential threats. Often, they do not consider themselves conventional Zionists, although they continue to be interested in, to visit, and to care about events in and around Israel.

One example of these attitudes is articulated by Rabbi Sarah Chandler, a ROI leadership program veteran who explains, "My Israel activism is not

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primarily coming from a place of Zionism, it is coming from a place of caring about modern, liberal Jews' ability to stay connected to Jewish life." Chandler urges the integration of moral and Judaic values into daily behavior—"quotidian Judaism"—to give a wide spectrum of young Jewish Americans the cultural literacy to imbue their

social justice interest with Judaic knowledge. As sociologist Shaul Kelner points out in his analysis *Tours That Bind*, Israel visits such as Birthright Israel are valued by their engineers and implementers not only (or perhaps even primarily) "for fostering loyalties to the homeland," but rather "for expanding the 'cultural toolkits' that diaspora ethnics have at their disposal."<sup>63</sup> However, despite the intentions of its professionals, Birthright Israel and other trips have a measurable positive effect on Israel attachment as well as Jewish identification.

## Israel attachment among younger Jews

Social scientists have long noticed life-cycle fluctuations in Jewish engagement, usually rising from less engaged and more ambivalent during the young adult years, to more engaged and less ambivalent as marriage and parenthood transform Jewish lives, and Israel engagement may well be part of this familiar syndrome.<sup>64</sup> Young Jews today in the United States and some other Diaspora communities tend to postpone life decisions, such as career choice, life partner, and parenthood. Organized Jewish leadership including Israel advocacy in prior generations came from men and women who were firmly embarked on a life direction, with spouses, children and life's work.

As these and other studies make clear, although there are pronounced differences by age, in every segment of the American Jewish community the majority of younger Jews describe themselves as "attached to Israel" **if** (1) they have two Jewish parents, and (2) they have traveled to Israel at least once. The difference between the Israel attachments of in-married adults and of the children of in-married parents versus intermarried adults and the children of intermarried parents has often been blurred in highly publicized articles announcing "far lower levels of attachment to Israel among younger Jews." Thus, Cohen and Kelman's data show that "among the intermarried, those with low attachment to Israel are more than double the number with high attachment. Among the in-married and non-married, the number with high attachment to Israel surpasses the number with low attachment."<sup>65</sup> Analyzing a summer 2010 survey administered by Knowledge

Networks, Brandeis CMJS researchers found: "Younger respondents were no less likely than older respondents to regard caring about Israel as important to their Jewish identities." When they held all other variables constant, "caring about Israel" was positively affected by travel to Israel and by "religious observance" and negatively affected by "parental intermarriage," but age was not statistically significant.<sup>66</sup>

Travel to Israel is also an important factor. According to Cohen and Kelman:

Among those who have never been to Israel, the number with a high level of attachment is less than half the number with a low level of attachment (19 percent vs. 42 percent). Among those with only one trip, the relationship is reversed: those with high levels of attachment are double the number of those with a low degree of attachment to Israel (34 percent vs. 17 percent). Those who have been to Israel two or more times are even more firmly attached to Israel, with 52 percent scoring high and under 10 percent at the low end of attachment. Finally, among those who have lived in Israel, 68 percent score high on attachment, and just 6 percent score low.<sup>67</sup>

Denomination is also connected to American Jewish identification.<sup>68</sup> This is especially true with regard to connections to Israel. In the 2007 American Jewish Committee Public Opinion Poll (Synovate, Inc.), when Jews were asked "How close do you feel to Israel?"—6 out of 10 Orthodox respondents answered that they feel "Very close" to Israel, as did 4 out of 10 Conservative Jews and 2 out of 10 Reform Jews, (64 %/ 39 % /22 %). Looking

at the other end of the spectrum of feelings about Israel, 16 % of Conservative Jews responded they feel "Fairly distant" or "Very distant" from Israel, as did 30 % of Reform Jews but only 5 % of Orthodox Jews. Thus, Orthodox Jews today are much more likely than non-Orthodox Jews to feel that what goes on in Israel has immediate salience to their lives—one could say they "take it personally."

Gender, as well, within the American Jewish community, outside of the Orthodox community, girls and women are dramatically more engaged and attached to things Jewish than boys and men.<sup>69</sup> (NJPS 2000-01).

These results show that in areas of non-religious, ethnic, peoplehood—or tribal identification, there are large denominational gaps as well as among measures of religious observance. Practitioners of more traditional wings of Judaism not only make a greater effort to live near other Jews, and to provide their children with Jewish

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education and Jewish friends, but also feel more connected to Israel and are more likely to visit Israel. These connections to Israel, along with Jewish social networks—how many Jewish friends one and one's children have, for example, are an important measure of Jewish identification. How many Jewish friends one has correlates closely with how much one identifies as a member of the Jewish people. To put it very simply, for younger American Jews,

statistical attachment to Israel matches whether or not they have visited Israel and how many Jewish friends they have currently. Feeling part of the Jewish people at home and feeling part of the Jewish people overseas are closely connected. Many observers have noted, as well, that apathy toward Israel, perhaps a natural component of assimilation, may be far more widespread among weakly identified young American Jews than defined anti-Israel sentiment. Not surprisingly, weak Jewish connections in general also correlate to few or no Jewish friends and no visits to Israel.

### **The Jewish fight for social justice and the quarrel with Israeli policies**

**Apathy towards Israel may be far more widespread among weakly identified young American Jews than defined anti-Israel sentiment**

In decades past, trips to Israel almost automatically seemed to produce positive and frequently unambivalent attachments to Israel. Among today's young people, repeated trips to Israel, however, are related to attachments but also to knowledge of and critical attitudes toward a broad range of Israeli policies. For example, one young rabbi described at length problems in Israeli life, such as "trafficking sex workers, foreign workers who are oppressed, Bedouins that don't have water." In another example, musician Alicia Jo Rabins expressed ambivalent feelings toward Israel that are characteristic of younger Jews who have spent

substantial time in Israel, who relate to Jewish culture, and who are critical of Israeli policies. While she is "very grateful for Jerusalem being the place where I studied Torah - it's really moving and incredible," she feels "sad and worried" when she thinks about Israel's behavior and positions in the world. "I feel ashamed about what's being done in the name of Jews," she says, "when you see people doing things in the name of Judaism that you don't really believe in, it's very hard as a Jew." Like many younger American Jews, Rabins is the child of "baby boomers" and is a "second-generation leftist-liberal" in regard to attitudes toward Israel. Although she has moved far closer to Jewish connections than her parents in terms of text study, rituals, worship, spiritual and cultural expression, her political attitudes are a direct transmission from her baby-boomer parents. As Rabins says, "politically, the dominant kind of progressive, leftist American position on Palestine and Israel and stuff is what we grew up with. That was the assumption, as opposed to the generation before my parents, growing up with a kind of allegiance to Israel being the assumption."

Many young American Jews have very high standards for moral national behavior. They expect the countries they feel attached to-like the United States and Israel-to live up to those moral standards. Thus, their critical attitudes toward Israel are often matched by critical attitudes toward the United States. Their criticism of Israel reflects not so much a lack of interest in Israel as a redefinition of their relationship and involvement with Israel. Young American Jewish leaders and cultural figures ubiquitously declare themselves to

be dedicated to global and local social justice in vigorous efforts that transcend ethnic, geographic and socioeconomic boundaries. For many, the most worthwhile Jewish characteristic is the pursuit of social justice. Young leaders such as Rabbi Dara Frimmer depicts fighting for justice as the only non-negotiable, quintessential, core Jewish activity. Here is how she characterizes the attitudes of her age cohort (without subscribing to these beliefs herself): “Don’t keep kosher, that’s fine, don’t keep Shabbat, that’s fine, marry a non-Jew—whatever. But understand that it will take away your Jewish identity if you don’t fight for justice.”

Young people with backgrounds in all wings of Judaism as well as those from secular or unaffiliated families often speak about social justice in language virtually identical to classical Reform Jewish conceptions of the universalistic mission of Judaism to be an *ohr lagoyim* (a light unto the nations). Several talked about previous Jewish work on behalf of social justice, such as Jewish and rabbinic activism on behalf of the Civil Rights movement “Jews were on the right (ethical) side of history then. Jews were on the right side of history in the gay rights movement. We should try more often to be on the right side of history.” Interestingly, these beliefs are articulated not only by those working in social justice enterprises, but by artists, intellectuals, and various types of Jewish communal professionals. The passion for social justice crosses denominational lines and includes those that identify as Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, “Post-Denominational,” or secular Jews. This concern for justice informs the identification on the part of many young Jews with

liberal values which we have indicated above.

For many young American Jewish leaders, social justice concerns become especially poignant in critical examinations of Israel’s policies. This is especially true for a constellation of individuals and institutions that one leader called “the New Israel Fund, J-Street, Pro-Peace, Pro-Israel, Pro-Palestinian, Progressive, Post-Zionist elite.” Some accuse Zionist organizations and Jewish communal institutions of being self-serving and self-aggrandizing, committed to the status quo which serves them well but does not necessarily serve the needs of the American Jewish community or international goals of social justice.

**Rabbi Dara Frimmer: “Don’t keep kosher, marry a non-Jew, that’s fine – but it will take away your Jewish identity if you don’t fight for justice”**

### **Complicated feelings and connections to Jews, Israel and Zionism**

Young Jews want to be able to move fluidly between the Jewish and non-Jewish world, and reject the “particularism of, like - six million died, we need to protect ourselves; we need to get to Israel; we have to stick by our own.” Many explain that generally the world to them “doesn’t seem that threatening,” so they don’t understand why Jews are “so closed-off.” Rabbi Sharon Brous, whose *Ikarim* project has been acclaimed and influential, says her peers “are very resentful of a Jewish life and a Jewish experience that is insular, that’s only worried about Israel or that’s only worried about the Jewish community or

Jews in need." Young adults are looking for "some more broad articulation of what it means to be a Jew and a human being in the world," explains Brous, so that young Jews understand what it means to engage "not only the Jewish community, and not only the Jews in Israel, but far beyond the Jewish community as well."

Young leaders reject dichotomous us/them thinking and Jewish tribal allegiances, and many young Jews spoke about "not wanting to be restricted to the

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tribe, and seeing the tribe as opposed to identifying with other groups, serving other groups, or being in community with other groups." This push-back against Jewish particularism and tribalism also translates to a more nuanced and complicated relationship with Israel. An outgrowth of this new and visceral relationship is their

dedicating themselves to new organizations which promote measured and critical engagement with the Jewish state. Rabbi Melissa Weintraub, for example, founded Encounter, an educational organization dedicated to exposing Jewish Diaspora leaders to the realities of Palestinian life. She explained that the mission of her work is "to cultivate an awareness in the Jewish community of Palestinian narratives and realities in order to foster more complex and constructive engagement with the situation as a whole." Weintraub envisions building "a community founded on listening, learning and loving."

The tendency of connecting to Israel through cultural materials, rather than through political solidarity, is characteristic of some elite "post-denominational" worship environments whose congregations have educationally and occupationally high status, are comparatively well educated Jewishly, and have almost universally traveled to Israel multiple times. "I see a lot of engagement with Israeli music, culture, film, and things like that," says Washington Square founder Yehuda Kurtzer, himself a Sabbath-observant product of a home with strong diplomatic interests, and highly identified with Israel. However, deciding the group's official attitude toward Israel became a painfully complicated and controversial issue, splitting the group into two highly polarized, oppositional factions. As a result, "Yom Ha'atzmaut is not really on our liturgical calendar," Kurtzer explains:

"Engagement with Israel is one of these issues that's very thorny for this generation of Jews...we have, increasingly, ambivalence about the holiday Yom Ha'atzmaut and what it says about the State of Israel theologically and what the costs are of that theology. The language of *reishit tzmikhat geulateinu* (the beginning of the flowering of our redemption) has produced a political culture in Israel that we're very uncomfortable with - the culture of messianism, the culture of ultra-nationalist Zionism. It's affiliated with that language, and with that kind of mythic structure, so it's hard to say those prayers because of the political identification that it brings with it..."

Disillusionment with Zionism and with Israel as the "homeland" of American Jews is often

accompanied by a symbiotic fascination with and attachment to Diaspora Jewishness. Young American Jewish leaders and cultural creators and brokers are clearly fascinated with the Jewish Diaspora experience. This fascination expresses itself in a revival of interest in Yiddish language, literature, and culture—as opposed to Hebrew.

### **Cultural expressions delineate critical/ attachment phenomenon**

Cultural expressions provide very useful illustrations of the ideological disillusionment of some young Jews with the moral flaws of the Jewish State. For example, a graphic essay/ cartoon by novelist Eli Valley in a recent issue of the influential New York periodical, *The Forward*, portrays a Jewish "Sociologist for Hire," named "Bucky Shvitz" (May 26, 2010). In Valley's graphic essay, Shvitz discovers that young American Jews are losing their Jewish identity because they are so disillusioned with racism, sexism, corruption, and other moral and sociopolitical problems in Israel. However, Shvitz is warned by the established Jewish community that if he wishes to earn money he must bury these findings, and falsely proclaim instead that Jewish identity is linked to Israel attachments. Among the many lively blog responses to Valley's piece, one expounded: "Mr. Valley has succeeded at just the thing that many American Jewish organizations want us to think is impossible: being Jews whose identity is not solely based on Israel. After all there is so much more to being Jewish than just Israel. There are other languages, cultures, food ways, and political points of view...."<sup>70</sup>

Young American de-emphasis on Jewish peoplehood, which provides fertile ground for

the de-legitimization of Israel, is also explored in Michael Chabon's acclaimed novel, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*. Chabon asks whether nationalistic historical Jewish understandings are fundamentally unworkable and dangerous. To Chabon and others like him, there is no promised land that will save the Jews, and religion will not save the Jews. Indeed, having Jewish space and governmental power separate from the non-Jewish world serves to transform religious power into a stinking morass of Jewish corruption. Genuine Jewish values can only triumph if individuals are willing to confront the evil of fellow Jews and take a chance on personal integrity, their dearest held truths, and those they love.

**Young American de-emphasis on Jewish peoplehood provides fertile ground for the de-legitimization of Israel**

Michael Chabon serves as co-chair of Americans for Peace Now, along with his wife, novelist Ayelet Waldman. The two have articulated rejections of conventional "pro-Israeli" policy, such as those in the November 2008 Peace Now Newsletter declaring: "As Jews and Jewish novelists, we devote our lives to envisioning and imagining the world as we have inherited it and as we wish it might be. But all of that history and all those imaginings are endangered, *now*, by those who are committed to ensuring future bloodshed, violence and fear." Some readers felt that the couple's political and moral critiques of Israel permeated *The Yiddish Policeman's Union*—and thus reached and influenced a different, and perhaps broader,

audience than those who read Jewish newspapers and Jewish organizational literature.

### Summary of the new mode of "Critical Attachment"

For many younger American Jews the concept of ethnic peoplehood, the world divided into "us" and "them," is not salient. Younger Jewish leaders are interested in Judaism as a way of providing meaningfulness in life, of giving them access to

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friendship circles and a sense of community, and in Jewish cultural expressions such as music, literature and film. They respond to Jewish culture and Jewish activities, but not to the idea that there is a difference between Jews and non-Jews. They are thus responsive to Jewish educational activities, but unresponsive to activities to "protect" Jews since they don't feel vulnerable or different.

As a group, younger Jews who exhibit the new modalities of Jewish identity and critical attachment to Israel can be described as **Post-tribal, post-nationalist, post-Zionist**: Younger Jews sit comfortably in their American Jewish skins, partially because Jewish cultural references have become part of the American context. Some are critical of both Jewish tribalism and American nationalism. Many associate primarily with other

young Americans who see the world through post-nationalist, global eyes. Many are sensitive to moral weaknesses and political mistakes associated with the American government, and express sadness that their country is so involved in military campaigns.

Not only are they post-nationalist in regard to America, some are also post-tribal in their Jewish lives, and post-Zionist. They are anxious for Judaism to be a force for good in the world as well. Many of them agonize about the perils of Israeli military and political power. Some are far more worried about Israeli militarism than about Jewish survivability. Among most of the young Jewish leaders we interviewed, ideals of tolerance and inclusivity were compelling and seem to have become the new dogma. Where their parents or grandparents may have sought out Jewish environments that built social capital by enabling them to "bond" with likeminded individuals, to borrow Putnam's useful distinction, today's young American Jewish leaders privilege "bridging" forms of social capital instead.<sup>71</sup> They dislike intensely name-calling such as "self-hating Jew," which they view as an attempt to manipulate and silence critical thinking. Mention of the Holocaust is not a "magic bullet" for them—quite the contrary—especially when it appears to them that the Shoah is being exploited for political reasons.

### The Distancing Hypothesis controversy and Peter Beinart's article

Very recently (and in some connection with Peter Beinart's article mentioned above) a controversy has emerged among social scientists investigating

American Jews regarding the “distancing hypothesis”. Some sociologists claim that there is a long-term trend among young American Jews of distancing from Israel. The proponents of this claim argue that, over time, young American Jews have become less attached to Israel; that Israel is less central to them and their sense of being Jewish and that there is less support for Israel than there once was.<sup>72</sup> Other social scientists dispute this claim and argue that young American Jews have always shown less support than older Jews and that this is largely tied to life cycle. Young Jews start to become involved in the Jewish community and in support and attachment to Israel after they settle down into marriage, career and children.<sup>73</sup> Despite the fact that this question has been the focus of a recent issue of *Contemporary Jewry*<sup>74</sup> with over two dozen contributors, it is perceived by many as being unresolved. A careful analysis of the data, however, reveals that advocates of both schools are working from the same data, merely emphasizing different segments of the population. The data show that many young Jews - unlike many of their elders - feel attached to Israel but critical of Israeli policies at the same time, and they bitterly resent what they perceive as attempts to silence them or ignore their concerns.

What we can say with some certainty is that the structural factors affecting distancing seem to be on the rise. As we have seen, both intermarried partners and the children of intermarriage are on the whole less attached to Israel and intermarriage is on the rise as a long term trend. Similarly, as time goes on, young American Jews are settling down into marriage, career and children, which for many

brings with it Israel attachment, later and later in their lives.

As regards the Beinart thesis, that it is Israel’s policies towards the Palestinians and the lack of movement towards a peace agreement with them and the establishment of a Palestinian state, that brings in its wake young Jews’ alienation from Israel, researchers from both camps agree that what distancing does occur is not primarily precipitated by politics. Nevertheless, two things must be noted in this regard: The first is that irregardless of whether there is a quantitative change in the attachment to Israel on the part of young American Jews, the discourse regarding Israel and Zionism has changed among young people.

**Many young Jews – unlike their elders – feel attached to Israel but critical of Israeli policies at the same time**

As we have illustrated throughout this paper, it is more and more acceptable to be critical (even severely critical) of Israel and to imagine Jewish life, being and expression in such a way that Israel and Zionism are deemed as detrimental or irrelevant to it. For limited segments of the younger Jewish population, it may be increasingly acceptable to view Israel and Zionism as being a negative or irrelevant factor in regard to what is important and valuable in Jewish life; for an important segment, including most of the young leadership, **Israel remains a central but not the only central pillar of their Jewish lives.** Fewer young Jews are willing to identify Israel as occupying the most core place in their Jewish

landscape. These attitudes find ample expression in journalism, art, literature and blogging.

While Beinart has been severely criticized as providing no basis for his claim and on the contrary, his claim seems to have been refuted by social scientific research, his article seems to have struck a nerve. Beinart touched upon the fact that at least in the realm of discourse there is much more severe criticism, Diasporism and post-Zionism than many Jewish leaders and commentators are comfortable with.

### Passive, and ambivalent young Jews

**Beinart touched upon the fact that at least in the realm of discourse there is much more criticism, Diasporism and post-Zionism than Jewish leaders are comfortable with**

The tendency of most young American Jews to be either passively supportive of Israel, non-involved or ambivalent results in the fact that in the majority of cases those who attempt to de-legitimize Israel are far more energetic than the majority of young American Jews who care about Israel, but are not passionate activists. One example of Jewish passivity in the face of Israel bashing is reported by Republican

political consultant and public opinion pollster Frank Luntz, in a gathering of 35 MIT and Harvard students, 20 non-Jews and 15 Jews, to discuss the Palestinian-Israeli conflict during the summer of 2010. The incident, in which Jewish students sat silent while non-Jews referred to "the war crimes of

Israel," asserting that "the Jewish lobby" means that "the Jews have a lot more power and influence," was discussed by Evelyn Gordon in Commentary magazine's blog quoting Luntz's own words<sup>75</sup>:

"And guess what? Did the Jewish kids at the best schools in America, did they stand up for themselves; Did they challenge the assertions? They didn't say sh\*t. And in that group was the leader of the Israeli caucus at Harvard. It took him 49 minutes of this before he responded to anything. [Later] it all dawned on them: If they won't say it to their classmates, whom they know, who will they stand up for Israel to? ... And they're all looking at each other with horrible embarrassment and guilt like you wouldn't believe."

### The New Zionists

Any picture of the relationship of younger American Jews to Israel would be misleading and incomplete without including a group who might be termed "the new Zionists." As individuals, these talented, dynamic young people are committed to Israel and to Israel's defense with a deep passion.

The new Zionists include artists like acclaimed young novelist Dara Horn, who dramatizes many different kinds of Jews in her prolific novels. Horn, who comes from a middle-of-the-road Conservative background and still considers herself part of that demographic, incorporates historical settings and events into novels that educate readers about the particularism, marginality and vulnerability of the Jewish experience. She believes the insouciance of young American Jews results from a mirage about their incorporation into non-specific middle class white America, but that Jews are always on the

edge, whether they perceive it or not. Horn sees awareness of this vulnerability, and an alertness to the importance of cherishing Jewish traditions and Jewish lives, as the only - and only a partial - protection against being blindsided by fate.

The new Zionists include young Orthodox leaders like recent Brandeis graduate Avi Bass, who for his senior honors thesis completed a study of factors encouraging emigration to Israel. Bass had the original idea to create an organization called "Impact Aliyah," and worked with two friends to make it a reality. He has now emigrated and works to make *aliyah* transitions easier for new North American *olim*. And one could include idealists like Rabbi Seth Farber, a teacher and activist on behalf of innovative ideas of open Orthodoxy, who embodies what he calls the "love-hate" relationship of some contemporary Zionists. He says, "I love the idea of Israel, having lived here for 14 years, but I'm very frustrated by the difficult religious culture and ethos of this country".

The new Zionists have an organizational dimension as well. Organizations like The David Project, the Hillel Institute, and StandWithUs, an international organization based in Los Angeles, all work to train university students to reframe discussions about the Middle East and to articulate facts about Israel - and to defend themselves for defending Israel. As Roz Rothstein, co-founder of StandWithUs, puts it, "Israel is the target, but Jewish students who stand up for Israel also become the target."<sup>76</sup> It is perhaps no wonder that only the most committed students are willing to repeatedly allow themselves to be targeted in this way.

## Implications of De-legitimization for Jewish identification and engagement in Europe

The Jews of Europe are sometimes held accountable for controversial Israeli actions<sup>77</sup>, and if this intensifies, many Jews will avoid the issue of Israel in public discourse, hold neutral or critical attitudes toward Israel and eventually decrease their Jewish profile in general. With relatively high social, professional and economic individual status, most European Jews will, in all likelihood, remain in Europe. Should Israel be branded as a *pariah-state*, most Jews will probably lower their *Jewish profile* while a minority may feel more committed. We have already observed the emergence of such polarization, and this process seems to be accelerating.

**"Israel is the target, but Jewish students who stand up for Israel also become the target"**

All sociological and cultural factors that erode identification of American young Jews with Israel, as described in the previous section about US campuses, also exist in Europe. As in America, today's young European Jews are more independent minded than their parents with respect to identity and communal belonging. Both communal-behavioral patterns and support to Israel cannot anymore **be taken for granted**.

The centrality of Israel to their lives is one of the major differences between European young Jews and their American counterparts. Israel's political

actions affect European Jews wherever they live and, as the most vibrant cultural and Jewish life center, it is positioned as the very focal point of their identity. Even those who decide to turn away from their Jewishness have to position themselves, eventually in a negative manner, toward Israel. Wherever they live in Europe, and even if they have lived there for thousand years, they cannot avoid being identified as associated with Israel successes and failures. The Young Jews of Russia and Ukraine

**The centrality of Israel to their lives is one of the major differences between European young Jews and their American counterparts**

have friends and family in Israel and all their Jewish identity is nurtured by Israel emissaries and materials. In the UK, almost all affiliated Jews have visited Israel, most have family there and 20% have lived there at some point. 97% claim Israel is central to their daily life. In France, where 70% have first-degree family in Israel,

70% have visited the country in the last ten years, and identification with Israel and commitment to its survival is very strong. Sociologists mention that the main controversial issue in intermarriage couples appears to be around Israel, and the non-Jewish partners describe their partners' attitude to Israel and the need to defend its survival as visceral.

Europe's geographical proximity to Israel is an additional factor accounting for differences between young American Jews and their European counterparts. For many young Europeans, Tel-

Aviv is a huge open air JCC, and in the absence of space for a vibrant secular cultural life in Europe, spending holidays and even university shorter breaks in Israel has become their way to give expression to the Jewish dimension of their hyphenated identity while living a Jewish-free life during the year on campus. Travelling to Israel has become both a social strategy and a religious one. Some, uncomfortable with what they perceive as an artificial, synagogue-oriented and duty-oriented Jewish life in their local communities, find more suitable opportunities for Jewish engagement in Israel. Should Israel adopt an open-sky policy, leading to a sharp decrease in the price of air travel, this phenomenon may accelerate.

Strong connectivity and ethnic identity do not immunize against assimilation. In an age of individualism, multiple identities and refusal of totalizing identity, endogamy has lost its mandatory normative requirement, and out-marriage and disaffection from communal life are very common. In this on-line age, even while as many as 50-70% of British and French Jews have personally experienced Israel, the State of Israel has lost its imaginary aura of a holy and infallible entity. While those more disaffected distance themselves from Israel because of political disagreement, even some of the most engaged, core community Jews have also become more critical of Israeli political and social behaviors because of their emotional closeness. Even those who accept Israel as the core state of the Jewish people have a less forgiving attitude; they are less and less able to turn a blind eye to what they perceive as Israel's unjust, unfair, or immoral behaviors. Many are more critical of

Israeli internal and foreign policies because the Internet, not to mention the 24/7 news media, has made them more familiar with them. As global delegitimization of Israel and Judaism become more and more interwoven, the conventional difference between rear and frontlines of battle loses its relevance, and Diaspora Jewish students become conscripted battlefield soldiers and so feel a right to criticize. Despite this, the critical issue is more a matter of young Jewish adult personal priorities than simply a matter of distancing from Jewishness and support of Israel: **In Europe, the majority of young Jews – who, as mentioned earlier, have experienced daily life in Israel – fundamentally care about Israel and are disgusted by anti-Israeli media bias, anti-Zionist lies, moral double standards and distorted facts about Israel.** Most of them "do not want to be too involved" and do not come to college to confront others around "controversial issues". Moreover, those who attempt to de-legitimize Israel are far more energetic than the majority of Western young Jews who care about Israel but are not passionate activists. We may expect that in case their voice is not heard and we do not provide them with moral justification, a large number of them will emotionally disengage and become more apathetic.

In a context that prizes personal choice among multiple *hyphenated* identities, more than a matter of birth, Jewishness increasingly becomes a matter of choice. Identification with Israel, support of Israeli foreign policy, endogamy, marrying Jewishly, participating in communal events, are no longer self-evident and mandatory in defining oneself as a *serious Jew*.

In the eyes of committed Jews, the relationship with Israel is complex: while Israel is indeed the most vibrant community and a primordial pole of reference for some, for others it has lost its ethical authority and identifying with Israeli foreign policy becomes increasingly difficult. It is especially true for European ultra-Orthodox Jews. On one side, they perceive their Jewishness as fully defined without a need to refer to the Israeli political entity, but, on the other side, they cannot avoid being identified by the non-Jews as tightly connected to Israel.

### **Trends Among Jewish Youth and Global Changes in Values and Attitudes**

These trends among young Jews seem to reflect general trends regarding cultural change and values in the contemporary world. They are probably related to the unprecedented economic and physical security that has been the lot of the developed world since World War II and by the rise of the Information Age since around 1980<sup>78</sup>.

**For some European Jews, Israel has lost its ethical authority and identifying with Israeli policies becomes increasingly difficult**

One such change has been the emergence of what Inglehart and his collaborators have termed "post-materialism". In a series of publications, Inglehart has documented a broad value shift characteristic of "post-industrial" society i.e. societies whose economies are largely dominated by services and information technology.<sup>79</sup> Inglehart has

summarized this shift as one from "survival" to "self-expression". Among other characteristics, in the "survival" pattern of cultural values there is a great emphasis upon attaining physical and economic security, low levels of interpersonal trust, intolerance of outgroups and foreigners and stress upon group boundaries ("us and them"). In contrast, individuals and groups in the "self-expression" pattern emphasize self-expression and quality of life as opposed to mere survival. They also report much higher levels of interpersonal trust and tolerance towards outgroups and foreigners.

**Young American Jews, in contrast to most contemporary leaders, tend to view survival and its associated orientations such as strong group boundaries in negative light**

historical experiences of a similar nature – World War II, the Cold War and the Depression. Thus, for the generation of Jewish leaders, survival is very important. It also has served them, as it has served generations of Jewish leaders, as an instrument for Jewish mobilization (including of course, financial

Most contemporary Jewish leaders exhibit a cultural orientation of "survival". Having grown up during or right after the Holocaust, leaders of major Jewish organizations who are in their sixties and seventies have experienced the struggle for the establishment and consolidation of the State of Israel as their formative experiences. These Jewish struggles for basic survival and security probably resonate with more general

mobilization).<sup>80</sup> In accordance with the "survival" pattern of cultural orientations, clear definitions of group boundaries and clear definitions of outgroups and enemies is also very important.

In contrast to this, today's young Jews have been brought up after the 1970's, at a time when not only America but especially the American Jewish community has enjoyed unprecedented security, prosperity and integration into American life. Similarly, they grew up at a time when Israel's existence was not only assured, but when Israel had expanded into new, controversial territories. These young Jews are not only not oriented towards survival, as we have seen, they tend to view survival and its associated orientations such as strong group boundaries in negative light. The emphasis upon Israel's survival does not serve for them as a basis for mobilization; on the contrary, it marks Israel as a "problem" which they would rather stay away from. As has been pointed out, they see "peace" and not survival as a most important value. In accordance with the self-expression pattern, they endorse tolerance, diversity and pluralism as well as "peace". Their attachment to Jewish and Israeli culture (food, music, literature) is also part of their orientation towards self expression.

Another, related cultural change that has occurred is that modernity has become more "liquid" (To borrow a term of Zygmunt Bauman's).<sup>81</sup> In the period before the last quarter of the twentieth century, everyday institutions and expectations were more "solid". Middle class people in Europe and America, for example, expected to get married, to bear and rear children. Today, many more people "start from scratch" in deciding what they

as individuals want for their own lives<sup>82</sup> They must decide what a relationship is and what it includes, do they want a relationship, with a person of which sex etc.<sup>83</sup> In other words, individuals must decide about a plethora of things that not so long ago were decided for them - and that people like them accepted as the fixed order of the world. In a similar vein Robert Wuthnow comments that young American adults have "opportunities to make choices that are unprecedented," and they are especially likely to engage in *seeking* and *tinkering* behaviors. His description uncannily reflects many of the spiritual narratives of our informants:

"Many have been reared by parents who encouraged them to think for themselves and to make such choices....Seeking is also conditioned by living in a society that often does not supply a single best answer to our questions or needs. This is why seeking results in tinkering. It becomes not only possible but also necessary to cobble together one's faith from the options at hand".<sup>84</sup>

Young American Jews similarly exhibit radical individualism when it comes to Israel. They do not assume that mere belonging to the Jewish people necessarily dictates the attitude that they will take towards the State of Israel in general or any of the specific controversies that the State of Israel is embroiled in. Just as they decide individually central things about their lives (sexual orientation, marriage, religious lifestyle etc.), young Jews want to make up their own minds about Israel, the Palestinians, the Peace process etc. They want to be presented with balanced information and balanced pictures and to decide for themselves.

## De-Legitimization and the Crisis of Jewish Particularity

Another factor which has influenced the relationship of young American Jews to Israel is that the de-legitimization of Israel raises again the historic issue of the legitimacy and place of Jewish particularity. De-legitimization raises once again central problematics in the relationship of Judaism and Christianity and in the place of the Jew in the modern world.

The problem of Jewish particularity, and its corollaries, Jewish "carnality" and "materiality", has confronted the Jew in his relations with Christianity in the pre-Modern period; it has confronted him in his attempts to enter the modern nation-state and modern society. It also confronts him now in regard to the state of Israel. Just as Jewish particularity was a problem in regard to the attempts of the individual Jew to become a modern citizen in Europe and to become integrated into modern European society<sup>85</sup>, so its Jewish particularity has become a problem for the State of Israel in its attempt to fit into the contemporary, universal globalized world order.

The crisis of the Jew in the European nation-state and in European modernity in general was experienced both by the European states and the gentile population (especially the intelligentsia) *and by the Jews*. As in the past, the contemporary crisis

**“Young American adults have opportunities to make choices that are unprecedented”**

of Jewish particularity seems to have reawakened perennial Jewish debates concerning the legitimacy, meaning and justification for Jewish particularity as it expresses itself in the Jewish national state of Israel and in Jewish minority existence in the Diaspora.

**The policy challenge facing the Jewish people today is how to prevent the renewal of this debate from turning into a source of internal weakness and subversion of Jewish well being and how to turn into a source of Jewish creativity and thriving.**

**In the eyes of Christianity, Judaism is an inferior version of the same religion, due to its "carnality"**

The crisis of Jewish particularity in the West is tied in the deepest sense specifically to the nature of Judaism and its relation to Christianity in the eyes of Christians.

In the eyes of Christianity, Judaism is not simply another religion which one can tolerate or not. Judaism is an **inferior version of the same religion**. Its inferiority lies precisely in its "carnality", that is the fact that it expresses its truths through performing bodily, material *mitzvoth* (i.e. laying *tefillin*) and especially through the fact that it is carried by a particular ethnic descent group and does not include (in principle) all of humanity. This attitude is manifest in all the layers of the Christian Bible. Jewish particularism and "stubbornness" is especially offensive. It is not merely that Judaism is "wrong", rather it offers an inferior, lower, even caricatured version of the

truth of God. Moreover, Jews do not have to say anything to give offense. Their very particular, "carnal" **being** is an offense, because it embodies their low, carnal understanding of the truth.<sup>86</sup>

These themes continued into the Enlightenment. Even though the Enlightenment, especially in its French (or more broadly, Catholic) version, was very anti-Church, it was not at all pro-Jewish. Voltaire himself, though he called to "erase" or uproot the infamy of Christianity, strongly held anti-Semitic stereotypes concerning Jews and Judaism.<sup>87</sup> In German speaking lands (as well as in Britain and Scandinavia, Protestant countries), there was much more of a tendency to identify Enlightenment with Christianity, or at least with a reasonable, enlightened Christianity.

All this impinged upon the standing of the Jews and the attitude towards them. Enlightenment theologians viewed Judaism as "particularist, provincial, local and preliminary", while Christianity is "abstract, general and universal."<sup>88</sup> In fact, Jewish particularity under Enlightenment conditions is even more offensive than under traditional conditions. Enlightenment criticism of Christianity removed most of the particular and ceremonial features of Christianity (Latin, Eucharist etc.) that could serve as a barrier to Jewish identification with the Christian religion. All that remained was pure ethical rationalism.

Such a negative attitude towards Judaism and Jews transcended theological discourse per se and became a feature of general European Enlightenment discourse and culture. While the Jew may have enjoyed formal Emancipation in

Europe, he could never fully become a member of European society. That is "Jews as Jews" could never be admitted "to the ranks of humanity."<sup>89</sup>

In a celebrated essay, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition" and in other writings, Hannah Arendt outlines the Jew's responses to his post-Emancipatory non-acceptance – the Parvenu and the "Conscious Pariah". For Arendt, Pariah status is thrust upon the Jew. The Jew has no choice. What matters is how he meets this fate, whether with parvenu ignominy or builds upon his outcast status a critical vision of emancipation. Arendt holds that the Jewish Pariah vision is a genuine contribution to the general spiritual life of the Western world, and implicitly a justification of Jewish pariah status (from the point of view of the Jew. The gentile has no ethical right to impose it). Thus, from Mendelssohn through Heine, Kafka and Hannah Arendt, from the historic Reform movement to contemporary Reconstructionist rabbis, the Jews have crystallized a "solution" to the crisis of Jewish particularity. Jewish particularity can be permitted if it promotes, through criticism and action, increased social justice for the downtrodden, the oppressed and the outcast. Jewish particularity is uniquely suited for this role because of the Jews' own position as Pariah and outcast. This solution to Jewish particularity is an important contributing factor to the support that Jews in the modern era have traditionally lent to liberal and leftist causes.

The State of Israel seems to have revived this problematic. The State of Israel again represents a crisis of Jewish particularity. Israel's particular Jewish character could be tolerated as long as Israel was seen as advancing the cause of social justice and

"was on the right side of history". As long as the Jews of Israel were seen as the remnant of a persecuted and decimated people trying to carve out a place in the world in the face of corrupt Arab sheikhs and oil companies, Israeli-Jewish particularity was tolerated and occasionally encouraged. The fact that Israeli elites were socialist and that Israel was associated with the egalitarian kibbutz also helped. During the nineteen fifties and sixties, "progressive" intellectuals supported Israel in its fight against annihilation.

In the past forty years this claim has become increasingly difficult to sustain. Israel has become a regional super-power and since 1967, whether willingly or not, subjugates a population of around 3 million Palestinians. The discourse of de-legitimization capitalizes upon this. The discourse of de-legitimization centers around the two concepts of Israeli-Jewish particularity and Israeli oppression of Palestinians. At its height, the discourse of de-legitimization claims that Jewish-Israeli particularity itself (in its essence, without having to do anything) is oppressive and immoral. So, we are back on familiar ground, the world is trying to construct a universal global order based upon human rights, only Jewish Israel presents an obstacle to that world order. And Jewish Israel has no excuses for its particularistic existence. It clearly does not advance universal social justice, quite the opposite – it is an oppressive immoral force.

It should be stressed that the substructure of de-legitimization is the substructure of Jewish-Gentile relations. In the era of Enlightenment, only Jewish particularity presented a challenge to ethical universalism. French, Polish, Italian,

German particularity does not because the French, Germans etc. are all Christians and hence belong to a universal civilization. Only Jewish particularity is considered a threat to ethical universalism because it represents an inferior particularist-carnal understanding of the message (*kerygma*) of God. Similarly, only Jewish-Israeli particularity represents a threat to globalized ethical universalism because the Jews represent an inferior particularist-carnal ethical order. Thus the violations of other national

**At its height, the discourse of de-legitimization claims that Jewish particularity itself, in its essence, is oppressive and immoral**

states of human rights and justice are not treated with the same severity that Israel's violations are. At bottom, the other states, being Gentile, are deemed to belong in principle to the new universalist, globalized order. Their violations are local violations. They are not deemed to be a religious-civilizational

threat to that order. Israel's actions are considered much differently – they are considered a direct religious-civilizational challenge and hence treated accordingly.

Thus, de-legitimization revives a classic Jewish-Gentile problematic and even though it is directed to Israel, its reverberations reach and affect Jews everywhere. There is a natural slippage from the de-legitimization of Israel to the de-legitimization of Jews, Judaism and their particularistic existence. Thus de-legitimization has to be understood not only as a threat to Israel but to particular Jewish

existence everywhere. If the state of Israel does not advance the cause of justice but, on the contrary, is an oppressive and unjust regime, then perhaps Jewish particularity everywhere is illegitimate.

One prominent response to this is to return and to stress the approach elaborated by Hannah Arendt – that true Jewish existence does not adhere in a Jewish nation-state with its orientation towards power but rather in minority-Diaspora existence which champions the oppressed and the downtrodden. Or, at the very least, young Jews are interested in reopening the question of the preferred form of Jewish existence – is it necessarily a nation-state with its power orientations and ethical dilemmas or can Jewish existence and civilization be best realized in the Diaspora? This explains "the new Diasporism" and the popularity of the writing of such authors as Michael Chabon and Ayelet Waldman.

In sum, it is not altogether clear whether there is a "distancing from Israel" on the part of young Jews. What does seem to have happened is change in the discourse. Young Jews are starting to open up debates and questions which have not been heard since the 1930's, and which challenge the centrality of Jewish nationalism to Jewish existence. Certainly, Diasporism has existed in America since the 1960's. The concept that America is Babylon - as opposed to Jerusalem - a center of great cultural creativity and fertility surpassing in certain ways the Land of Israel – had been advanced by Gerson Cohen and Richard Cohen over 40 years ago. Yet, the old Diasporism never questioned or challenged the basic Zionist premises – that the state of Israel is a vital center for the Jewish people.

The new Diasporism that is now emerging does precisely that. In some of its articulations - but to be sure not all - it can suggest, sometimes ever so haltingly and faintly, that the State of Israel is bad for the Jewish people and betrays Judaism. This, to us, seems to be a fascinating new development and the challenge for us is to turn this debate into a resource instead of a threat.

## Endnotes

1 See, for example, Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman, *Beyond Distancing: Young Adult American Jews and Their Alienation from Israel* (with the assistance of Lauren Blitzer at Florence G. Heller-JCCA Research Center; New York: The Jewish Identity Project of Reboot, Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, 2007).

2 Anti-Defamation League, "Anti-Israel Activity on Campus: 2009 in Review," Feb. 2010, ([http://www.adl.org/main\\_Anti\\_Israel/campus\\_2009\\_anti\\_israel.htm?](http://www.adl.org/main_Anti_Israel/campus_2009_anti_israel.htm?)).

3 Peter Beinart, "The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment," in the *New York Review of Books* (May, 2010).

4 As we discuss in greater detail later in the paper, responses to the charge of distancing include Theodore Sasson, Benjamin Phillips, Charles Kadushin, and Leonard Saxe, *Still Connected: American Jewish Attitudes about Israel* (Waltham, MA.: Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2010; and an entire issue of *Contemporary Jewry* 30, No. 2-3 (October 2010) devoted to the Beinart article and the debate between the research teams of Cohen and Saxe, including articles by more than two dozen social scientists and observers.

5 The Ministry of Strategic Affairs has established a special desk devoted to it (headed by Brig. Gen. Yossi Kuperwasser) as has the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Reut Institute has issued a number of reports on the subject and the **JPI** has recently initiated a major comprehensive project, headed by Brig. Gen. Michael Herzog on the de-legitimization of Israel and its ramifications.

6 I am grateful to Ilan Troen, Theodore Sasson, Steven Bayme, and Steven M. Cohen for their input into this and other sections of this essay, and for their thorough review and critiques.

7 Richard Wolin, reviewing Pascal Bruckner, *The Tyranny*

*of Guilt: An Essay on Western Masochism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), in *The New Republic* 21, N. 4 (August 12, 2010), 31-36, p. 34.

8 *Building a Political Firewall Against Israel's Delegitimation: Conceptual Framework* (The Reut Institute: Submitted to the 10th Herzliya Conference, March 2010.

9 Anti-Defamation League, "Anti-Israel Activity on Campus," *op. cit.*

10 Anti-Defamation League, "Anti-Israel Activity on Campus," *op. cit.*

11 Anti-Defamation League, "Anti-Israel Activity on Campus," *op. cit.*

12 Manfred Gerstenfeld, *The Academic Boycott Against Israel* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs), p. 27.

13 Farah Stockman, "Support builds for boycotts against Israel, activists say," *Boston Globe*, August 22, 2010, A22.

14 Gerstenfeld, "Academic Boycott Against Israel," *op.cit.*, p. 18.

15 Sue Fishkoff, "Hillel students and professionals gear up to face anti-Israel campus activism," *JTA (Jewish Telegraphic Agency)*, August 16, 2010 (<http://www.jta.org/news/article.>)

16 Fishkoff, "Hillel Students."

17 Ami Eden, "Brandeis president in the eye of the storm," *JTA*, February 18, 2009. (<http://blogs.jta.org/telegraph/article/2009/02/18/1003082/boston-globe-brandeis-president-in-the-eye-of-the-storm>)

18 Frank Barat, "On the Future of Israel and Palestine: Interview with Ilan Pappé and Noam Chomsky," in *Counterpunch*, June 6, 2008 (<http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/20080606.htm>).

19 Sara Roy, "Second Annual Holocaust Remembrance Lecture, Baylor University, April 8,

2002; cited by Gerstenfeld, *Jews Against Israel, op. cit.*, p. 8. A few years later Roy stated: "Israel's occupation of the Palestinians is not the moral equivalent of the Nazi genocide of the Jews. It does not have to be. The fact that it is not in no way tempers the brutality of the repression, which has become frighteningly normal. Occupation is about the domination and dispossession of one people by another. It is about the destruction of their property and the destruction of their soul. At its core, occupation aims to deny Palestinians their humanity by denying them the right to determine their existence, to live normal lives in their own homes. And just as there is no moral equivalence or symmetry between the Holocaust and the occupation, so there is no moral equivalence or symmetry between the occupier and the occupied, no matter how much we as Jews regard ourselves as victims".<sup>[14]</sup> "The Impossible Union of Arab and Jew: Reflections on Dissent, Remembrance and Redemption". *Edward Said Memorial Lecture*. University of Adelaide. <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/esml/transcripts/2008/ESML-BY-Sara-ROY-2008.pdf>. Retrieved 2009-10-17.

20 Barat, *op.cit.*

21 Ilan Troen, private communication, September 19, 2010.

22 Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (London and New York: Oneworld Press, 2006).

23 Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London: Verso, 2009).

24 Oren Yiftachel, who wrote *Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: PennPress, 2006).

25 Steven Bayme, "The Intellectual Assault on Israel and Pro-Israel Advocacy: How the American Jewish Community Should React," in Manfred Gerstenfeld and Steven Bayme, eds., *American Jewry's Comfort Level, Present and Future* (Jerusalem and New York: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and American Jewish

Committee, 2010), pp. 257-263, p. 258/

26 Tony Judt, "Israel, the Alternative," in *The New York Review of Books* 60, no. 16 (October 23, 2003).

27 Galchinsky.

28 Galchinsky, pp. 138-152.

29 Galchinsky, p. 159.

30 Besides the 1995 and 2010 JPR Israel survey on British Jews and the 1995 and 2002 FSJU Survey on French Jews, longitudinal systematic measurements of Jewish attachment to Judaism and Israel have not been pursued in Europe. See Erick H. Cohen (2007) and JPR Israel Survey (2010).....

31 SOAS, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. See the Gavin Gross article "anti-Israeli Activity at the SOAS, How Jewish Students Started to Fight Back". [www.jcpa.org/JCPA/](http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/)

32 Middle East Quarterly, fall 2010, "The Arab Lobby: The European Component" by Steven J. Rosen, p. 22. Available online at <http://www.meforum.org/meq/pdfs/2774.pdf>

33 There is, to be sure, 'hard' de-legitimation on the Left in the farther reaches of the anti-globalization movement, ISM, etc. yet those seem to draw on, or push to extremes, the 'soft' versions.

34 For an accessible survey from antiquity to the present, see Adam Garfinkle, *Jewcentricity* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2009). The whimsical title and cheeky writing-style notwithstanding, Garfinkle is a serious and accomplished policy intellectual.

35 See for example Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"

36 Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 312.

37 It is worth noting that the American Revolution yielded a different republican model, characterized by an ethos of liberal individualism and multiple civil and associational networks, mediating group and individual relationships to the state. The late Seymour Martin Lipset, suggested that this was due in no small part to the absence of an established church; having emerged from a multiplicity of Protestant sects, the American nation-state was *au fond* characterized by internal confessional diversity, or in other words, the homogeneity and hegemony of the earlier Church was not simply transposed onto the new universal state. See Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

38 It is instructive in this regard to note the recent massive study of a wide range of current forms of anti-Semitism, by the distinguished historian Robert S. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, (New York: Random House, 2010), whose text alone runs to nearly 1000 pages. The picture he paints is dark and alarming. He also sees elements of Jewish self-hatred, everywhere. Yet, his study is thinly-conceptualized and seems to use the rubric of anti-Semitism for everything. He does note, at p. 782, that: "Anti-Semitism, than as now, is an important barometer of the cultural crisis in Europe and the Middle East, including problems of globalization, modernization, ethnic nationalism, religious fundamentalism, and racist prejudice in general." Yet this very observation indicates that labeling any and all phenomena "anti-Semitism" can obscure as much, or even more, than it clarifies.

39 It should be clear that the word "liberal" is being used here in terms of its "classic" meaning as an ethos that promotes individual freedom and equality under the law.

40 For a particularly fascinating study of how Jewish thinkers reworked traditional Jewish life into the key of 20<sup>th</sup> century American liberalism, see Lila Corwin Berman, *Speaking of Jews: Rabbis, Intellectuals and*

*the Making of an American Public Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

41 Of course the Catholic Church has plotted a complex and delicate course in its relations with the State of Israel. Since the signing of the Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and Israel in 1993, relations have been on a more or less steady footing and outright theological demurral from Israel's existence is seldom heard in the official Catholic hierarchy, though sensitive issues remain. See Toni Johnson, "Vatican-Israel Relations," *Council on Foreign Relations Background Paper* (May 12, 2009): [http://www.cfr.org/publication/19344/vaticanisrael\\_relations.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/19344/vaticanisrael_relations.html)

42 Ruether's 1974 *Faith and Fratricide* was a truly path-breaking work in Christian self-reckoning in the wake of the Holocaust. For her stinging critique of Zionism, see her *The Wrath of Jonah The Crisis of Religious-Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (co-authored with Herman Ruether) (Minneapolis; Fortress Pres, 2002).

43 See Dexter Van Zile, "The Presbyterian Church's Attack on Israel," *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, June 1, 2010, <http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&TMID=111&LNGID=1&FID=381&PID=0&IID=3876>

44 See Badiou's (in)famous 2005 essay, "The Uses of the Word 'Jew'," available in translation at <http://www.lacan.com/badword.htm>

45 See Slavo Zizek, "Christians, Jews and Other Criminals," available at <http://www.lacan.com/milner.htm>. For a searing critique of Zizek's own lapidary anti-Semitism, see Adam Kirsch, "The Deadly Jester," *The New Republic*, December 2, 2008, available at <http://www.tnr.com/article/books/the-deadly-jester>, and, Idem., "Zizek Strikes Again," *The New Republic*, July 26, 2010, available at <http://www.tnr.com/article/books-and-arts/76531/slavoj-zizek-philosophy-gandhi>

46 Tony Judt, "Israel; The Alternative," *New York Review of Books*, October 23, 2003, available at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2003/oct/23/israel-the-alternative/>

47 Ibid.

48 This point was the heart of one of the most powerful critiques of Judt's position, by the celebrated liberal intellectual Leon Wieseltier, "Israel, Palestine and the Return of the Binational Fantasy: What is Not to be Done," *The New Republic*, October 27, 2003, available at <http://www.mafhoum.com/press6/165P51.htm>

49 See generally, Yehudah Mirsky, "The Cosmopolitans," *Jewish Ideas Daily*, November 26, 2010, available at <http://www.jewishideasdaily.com/content/module/2010/11/26/main-feature/1/the-cosmopolitans>

50 In Israeli academia post-modernism and post-Zionism are closely linked. Post-modernism contributes to post-Zionism by "deconstructing" "hegemonic narratives" and placing all narratives on an equal footing.

51 At the same time, post-Colonial studies has positive contributions to make to Jewish historical self-understanding, see Aamir R. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

52 Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).

53 See his *Unheroic Conduct* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). It should be noted that Boyarin is a classically-trained and distinguished, if often provocative, Talmudist and taught for some years at Ben-Gurion University.

54 The cruder forms of anti-Colonialism simply see Israel as an extension of the discredited Colonial order and its contemporary incarnations in American imperialism and globalized capitalism. Venezuela's Hugo Chavez is explicit on this linkage; the celebrated intellectual Noam Chomsky frames his critiques of Israel in terms

of his thoroughgoing opposition to what he sees as an equally thoroughgoing US imperialism, with which Israeli policies willingly dovetail. Chomsky himself does recognize Israel's right to exist; it is the unremitting, withering and all-encompassing tone of his criticisms which make him part of our discussion.

55 An extremely critical but comprehensive and thoughtful survey of critiques of Israel and Zionism from within Israel's intellectual elite is the recent study by Assaf Sagiv, "The Sad State of Israeli Radicalism," *Azure* Spring 2010, pp. 58-95, available online at <http://www.azure.co.il/download/magazine/az40%20Sagiv.pdf>

56 See the lengthy report of Anne Herzberg, NGO 'Lawfare': *Exploitation of Courts in the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Jerusalem: NGO-Monitor, 2008).

57 See Yehudah Mirsky, Human Rights, Democracy and the Inescapability of Politics, or, Human Dignity Thick and Thin, *Israel Law Review*, (2005:1-2) pp. 358-377

58 See Martin Bright, "Annie Lennox: I was Wrong about Israel," *The Jewish Chronicle*, March 4, 2010, available at <http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/29080/annie-lennox-i-was-wrong-about-israel>. Lennox still, though, refuses to visit Israel, see <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3967318,00.html>

59 For a thoughtful critique of Spielberg's film from a left perspective, see Morris Dickstein, "The Politics of the Thriller," *Dissent* Spring 2006, available online at <http://dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=432>

60 Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton U. Press 2006).

61 It should be noted that in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008 and especially the sovereign debt crisis in Europe of 2010, politicians and European populations started to favor once again, nationalist orientations. This has been reflected both in terms of policy and in terms of national pride and awareness. Nevertheless this new nationalism itself may contain more civic,

inclusive elements than the traditional European ethnic-nationalism. See "German Identity Long Dormant Reasserts Itself", [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/11/world/europe/11germany.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/11/world/europe/11germany.html?_r=1)

62 Paul Wapner, *Environment Activism and World Civic Politics*. (Albany NY: SUNY 1996)

63 Shaul Kelner, *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2010), 16.

64 Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman, with Lauren Blitzer, *Beyond Distancing: Young American Jews and their Alienation from Israel* (The Jewish Identity Project of Reboot, 2007), p. 19.

65 Cohen and Kelman, 14.

66 Sasson, Phillips, Kadushin, and Saxe, *Still Connected*, *op. cit.*

67 Cohen and Kellman, 17.

68 Sylvia Barack Fishman and Daniel Parmer, *Matrilineal Ascent/ Patrilineal Descent: The Gender Imbalance in American Jewish Life* (2008: Hadassah-Brandeis Institute and the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University).

69 Fishman and Parmer.

70 <http://www.forward.com/articles/128329/>

71 Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*(New York: Simon and Shuster, 2000)

72 Cohen and Kelman

73 Sasson, Kadushin, Saxe

74 *Contemporary Jewry*, Vol. 30, No. 2-3, October 2010.

75 Evelyn Gordon, "Frank Lutz on Why American Jewish Students Won't Defend Israel," *Commentary* magazine online (*Contentions*), <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/blogs/index.php/evelyn-gordon/330061>.

76 Fishkoff, "Hillel Students and professions, *op. cit.*..

77 2010 JPR Israel survey

78 Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Three Volumes) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

79 Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1990), *Modernization and Post-Modernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press 1997). Inglehart based his conclusions on three waves of cross-societal survey research involving (as regards this issue) 22 variables. The survey research was extensive, involving up to 123 countries.

80 Many older Jews still remember the mobilizing slogan "משלגט יידן- גיטס געלט!" (They are beating [persecuting] Jews – Give Money!!)

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83 Kevin Smith dir., *Chasing Amy*, a film (1997).

84 Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers*, (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2007)114.

85 Hannah Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah*, New York: Grove, 1974), Idem. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (rev.ed. New York: Schocken 2004),, Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, Aamir Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Post-Colonial Culture*. (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2007).

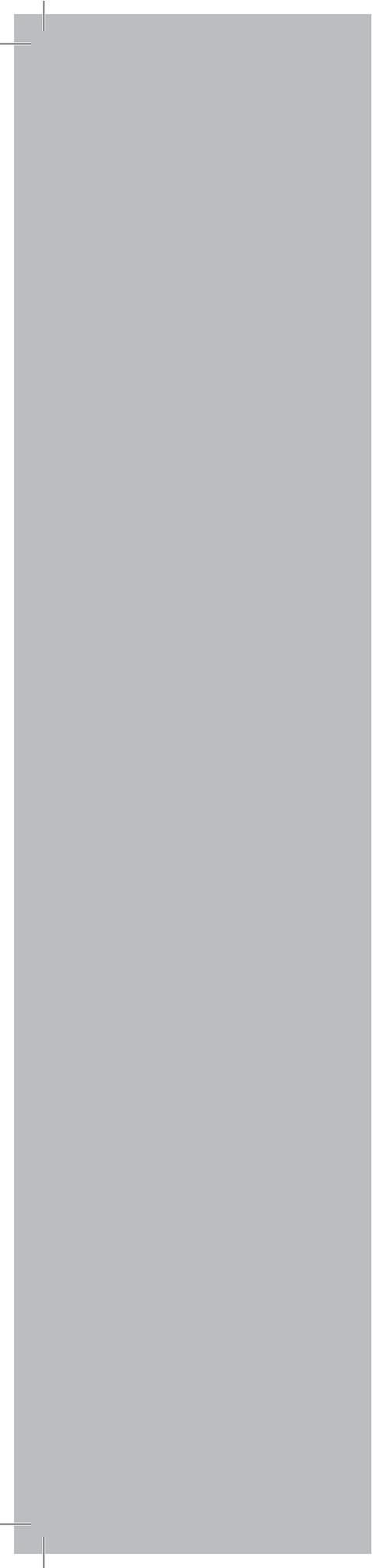
86 See Daniel Boyarin, **Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in the Talmud**, Los Angeles and Berkely: University of California Press, 1992. Boyarin describes how Talmudic Judaism inscribed itself as "carnal" and defined itself over and against Christianity.

87 Arthur Herzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*, Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, ( . Cambridge, Ma. Harvard U. Press, 1980)

88 Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism*,( Leiden: Brill, 2009). P.44.

89 Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition", in *The Jew as Pariah* p. 68.





## **PART 4**

# **Developments to Watch**



### Religious Issues and Israel-Diaspora Relations

The past year has been characterized by intensive preoccupation with the issue of "distancing", which will continue to accompany those involved in the Israel-Diaspora relationship in the upcoming years. Many of those adhering to the "distancing" theory believe that political gaps make a real contribution to the feeling of young American Jews that Israel cannot constitute for them a "core state". However, the "political" explanation is not the only one possible. Parallel to it and to a large extent complementing and strengthening it is the "religious" explanation, meaning the feeling of young Jews that the way in which the relations between religion and state in Israel are managed, contradict their fundamental values and make it difficult for them to identify with Israel. The gaps between Israeli and American Jews in this matter are hardly new, and throughout the years have surfaced and at times brought about "crises" in Israel-Diaspora relations.

In brief, one may say that the majority of American Jews are faithful to the idea of separation of "church and state" as it is practiced in the United

States. In Israel, on the other hand, the religious establishment is part of the institutions of the state. This gap between the American approach and the Israeli one is, in and of itself, productive of tensions and a feeling of alienation of Jewish Americans from Israel. However this gap is exacerbated when Israel, in the eyes of young Jewish Americans, is a country whose religious life is ruled by the "Orthodox" establishment, which suppresses the other religious streams, namely the Reform and Conservative – at a time in which the majority of young Jewish Americans identify more with the Conservative and Reform denominations.

As mentioned above none of this is new, but in the past year a renewed tension between Israel and American Jewry concerning the "religious" issue became noticeable, and this may have contributed to "distancing" tendencies, if there are any, and in any case it did not benefit the relations between the two communities. On this background one can mention many examples of incidences that have received varying degrees of exposure in American Jewish communities such as: the segregation of men and women in buses in Jerusalem; the rabbis' letter opposing rental of apartments to Arabs; a

ruling against a woman being a member of the local Council of a religious community in Samaria; various antagonistic statements made by important rabbis against the progressive denominations, sometimes in scathing terms, and so on and so forth.

The renewal of tensions between Israel and the Diaspora in recent years has several reasons:

### **In Israel:**

- The rise in the demographic strength of the ultra-Orthodox and their attempts to translate this power into religious legislation.
- Religious radicalization of rabbinical factors, both ultra-Orthodox and national-religious.
- A relative calm in security tensions alongside a relative stagnation in the political process which contributed to the reappearance of essentially civil matters on the agenda.
- A certain strengthening of the progressive movements in Israel and their attempts to gather even more strength – which brought about a counter-reaction on the part of the Orthodox establishment.

### **In the Diaspora:**

A change in the attitude towards Israel and broadening acceptance of a more "critical" discourse.

A growing trend of philanthropists directing their money towards specific targets, including strengthening progressive elements in Israel (political as well as religious).

A rise in the number of visits of young Jewish

Americans to Israel, which expose them personally to the manner in which religious issues are handled in Israel.

Two prominent issues were at the center of the relationship this year between Israel and American Jewry concerning the issue of the state-religion relationship. The first was an attempt to change the Israeli conversion law ("the Rotem Bill"), and the second is the ongoing clash related to the desire of a group called "the Women of the Wall" to conduct religious ceremonies for women at the Western Wall. These two issues received much attention from the central American Jewish establishment, from the communities, rabbis, and activists from all over the United States. Nearly in all cases the attention was of a negative nature, including severe criticism of Israel.

**The Rotem Bill** touched upon an essential issue that causes a crisis in Israel-Diaspora relations each time it is raised. We refer to the attempt made by MK David Rotem from the Yisrael Beiteinu party to solve an internal Israeli problem of the treatment of converted Jews, especially from among Commonwealth of Independent States (the former Soviet Union) immigrants, due to the refusal of rabbis in various places to accept their conversions. MK Rotem tried to change the law so that the system would become more accommodating towards those going through conversion. As part of the package deal (that included other elements) concocted by Rotem and the ultra-Orthodox MKs the law was worded in such a manner that the authority and responsibility for all matters of conversion were placed in the hands of the Chief Rabbinate. It was this item in the law that raised the most objections, due to its opponents' fear that

it had the potential to dramatically alter the status quo. Furthermore, every attempt to change the conversion laws also means a change in the Israeli approach to the larger question of "who is a Jew" and therefore is also perceived as having a direct impact on Diaspora Jewry (Although in this case it was unclear whether there would be any practical implications for the Jewish Diaspora).

**The Women of the Wall's** struggle also concerns a Jewish symbol "shared" by Israel and the Jewish Diaspora – the *Kotel* (Wailing Wall) plaza. This struggle has been going on for many years and it is founded in the demand of a group of women to conduct a women's prayer service in the Kotel plaza, while wrapped in talitot (prayer shawls) and reading from the Torah. This demand and the ban imposed by the authorities on their desired form of prayer have already reached the High Court of Justice several times, and finally a compromise was reached. In the past year a new height was reached in the continuing struggle as the police detained for questioning several of the group's leaders after they had participated in a prayer that was ostensibly contrary to the verdict of the Court. The detention was met with sharp reactions in many Jewish communities in the United States. It is worth mentioning in this context that in the past few years the rules governing behavior at the *Kotel* have been seen to become even stricter, for instance, in the establishment of separate entrances for men and women, and this too has contributed to the growing feeling among American Jews that Israel is "radicalizing" in terms of religion and is on the path "leading to fundamentalism".

The two crises have received the attention of American Jewry, although not equally. The immediate crisis – the Rotem Law – was met with a sharp reaction on the part of the leaders of American Jewry, primarily because there was a clear deadline in this case. The threat of an uncontrollable crisis actually caused a suspension of the legislation and perhaps even its cancellation. The Women of the Wall's crisis is yet to be resolved, and it continues to erode Israel's image among certain audiences of American Jews.

The ongoing process of bolstering the rabbinical-Orthodox establishment in Israel in the face of growing criticism in the Diaspora will necessarily lead to the erosion of Israel's image as the country of "all the Jews", to the erosion of its image as a liberal and pluralist country, and to a growing feeling of alienation on the part of those that do not identify with Judaism in its Orthodox form (meaning – most of the Jewish people). Therefore both Israel and the leadership of the Jewish Diaspora have a clear interest in defusing the tensions and reach compromises that will neutralize their potential damage. In outlining such solutions it would be appropriate to consider several issues:

**American Jews feel that Israel is "radicalizing" in terms of religion and is on the path "leading to fundamentalism"**

- On issues clearly concerning the "Jewishness" of Israel and its Jewish symbols, formal and informal consultations should be considered before taking steps that may change the status quo.

- In the specific context of the Kotel plaza it would be proper for Israel to reconsider the existing arrangement and attempt to strive for a new situation that would enable Jews from the Diaspora to conduct prayers and ceremonies according to their custom.
- The relations between the religious denominations in the United States are much better than in Israel. In this matter Israel must try and learn from the American community and try to improve the relations wherever possible.
- Even before discussing legislative action to improve the status of the progressive denominations – moves that are politically complicated – a feeling that the leaders of the country respect and appreciate the progressive denominations will contribute greatly to an improved atmosphere.
- It is recommended that the leadership of the Jewish Diaspora channel the feeling of frustration among progressive Jewish young adults in a way that will lead them to action and not to indifference.
- In our estimation, if compromises and arrangements in the spirit proposed here will not be promoted, it can be assumed that the erosion of Israel's status among American Jewry on religious issues will continue and even worsen.

## The Jewish Free School Case in London and the Hebrew Charter Schools in the US

While both the global economic crisis and Jewish identity in the Diaspora (in connection with de-legitimization of Israel on North American campuses) are examined in other parts of this year's annual assessment, two developments which resonate with these themes in Jewish education at the primary and secondary levels are worth noting and watching. One concerns JFS—formerly Jews' Free School, established in 1732--the oldest and most venerable Jewish school in the United Kingdom, and the other, the Hebrew Language Academy (HLA), a charter school in Brooklyn which opened in September 2009. Both navigate the borderlands between religious and state authorities, and between particularistic and pluralistic inclinations within Judaism. Both schools are free of charge, a fact that, in these trying economic times, has profound financial ramifications for some Jewish families.

In December 2009, JFS lost a legal challenge to its admissions policy in a narrowly split decision (5-4) rendered by Britain's Supreme Court. The suit was brought against JFS on behalf of "M," 12 years old at the time, who was declined a place among the school's approximately 1,700 students based on the refusal of the Office of the Chief Rabbi (OCR), Dr. Jonathan Sacks, to recognize the non-Orthodox conversion of his Italian, Roman Catholic-born mother, and by extension M's own status as a Jew. M's father, who is divorced from his mother, is

both a Briton and a Jew by birth, and belongs to a Masorti synagogue he regularly attends with his son. Attorneys representing M argued that JFS had determined his ineligibility for admissions on the basis of ethnicity, in violation of Britain's 1976 Race Relations Act, because it had based its decision on his mother's ethnic origins.

Although M lost the first legal round in a lower court, which found JFS's admission policy to be "entirely legitimate," he prevailed on appeal, a ruling sustained by the Supreme Court justices. The Court of Appeal in its verdict stated: "the requirement that if a pupil is to qualify for admission his mother must be Jewish, whether by descent or conversion, is a test of ethnicity which contravenes the Race Relations Act... Such a practice is even more unacceptable in the case of a comprehensive school funded by the taxpayer."

**"the requirement that if a pupil is to qualify for admission his mother must be Jewish is a test of ethnicity... such a practice is even more unacceptable in the case of a school funded by the taxpayer"**

The Appeal Court's ruling called for JFS to adopt an admissions standard based on "outward manifestations of religious practise," a test that would include, among other factors, synagogue attendance. JFS was instructed to implement such a calculus for the 2010-11 school year and complied with the order. Supreme Court jurist Lord Brown,

who is Jewish, remarked in his dissenting opinion that such a test amounted to a “non-Jewish definition of who is Jewish.”

For some, including Rabbi Sacks, the decision is an intrusion and indicates at least a modicum of state directed and enforced, intra-Judaic policy, court ordered pluralism in this case. For others, like the chief executive of Britain’s Liberal Judaism, Rabbi Danny Rich, the ruling was welcome because it

**The basic model for Hebrew charter schools includes a segregation of Jewish and Israeli culture, which is allowed, from religious and biblical studies which are not**

addresses the objection of non-Orthodox streams to “standard-setting by just one section of the community to the detriment of the rest.”

One cannot help but hear the harmonies this case strikes with the broader ongoing “conversion crisis,” inside Israel and between Israeli rabbinic authorities and Diaspora rabbis, which has at its heart the daunting

identificational questions of who is a Jew and who has the authority to make such determinations.

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In the United States, where there is a constitutionally erected separation barrier between church and state, Hebrew language charter schools, and a full-fledged, well-funded movement championing them, began to sprout up in 2007. At this writing, four charter elementary schools are in operation: two Ben Gamla Schools in southern Florida – Ben Gamla will open

the first Hebrew language high school in September 2011 – the Hebrew Language Academy in Brooklyn, and the Hatikvah International Academy in East Brunswick, New Jersey. A new charter, Shalom Academy, serving the communities of Englewood and Teaneck is set to open next fall. Several more, throughout the country, are in the process of applying for charter status. In addition Jewish day schools are also planning to transform themselves into charter schools.

Broadly speaking, charter schools are self-selecting – students and families choose to enroll for a specific reason -- niche schools, hybrids of public and private education that introduce, according to their advocates, an element of school choice and innovation into state-funded primary and secondary education systems. 40 states plus the District of Columbia currently have statutory provisions to accommodate charters within their public school systems. That isn’t to say that the process of applying for charter status is an easy one, and, more often than not, state school licensing authorities reject charter applications the first time around.

The basic model for Hebrew charter schools includes dual-language instruction integrated into all subjects, and a careful segregation of Jewish and Israeli culture, which is allowed, from religious and biblical studies, which are not. Supplemental, privately funded Jewish religious education programs are readily available to Jewish students either on or off site after school hours.

It is interesting to note that in much of the media coverage of Hebrew charters comparisons are drawn with the Kahlil Gibran International

Academy of Brooklyn, founded in 2007 as the first English-Arabic charter school to offer a curriculum of Arabic language and culture. Just as some critics of the Kahlil Gibran International Academy have expressed the concern that, in violation of the church-state divide, Islamic religious study could find its way into the school's curriculum, some critics of Hebrew charter schools, including the ACLU, make a similar claim: that it will not be possible to keep Jewish religious study from intruding on the secular school day.

Although the first Hebrew language charter school to open was Hollywood, Florida's Ben Gamla Charter School in 2007, the establishment of the Hebrew Language Academy (HLA) in the Midwood neighborhood of Brooklyn in 2009 was the first in New York and is the flagship school of a Hebrew language charter movement supported by the formidable clout and capital of Taglit (Birthright) philanthropist, Michael Steinhardt. HLA, which currently serves approximately 150 racially diverse students (55% are white), will increase its capacity yearly until it reaches its goal of the full spectrum of grades from kindergarten through 12th grade. Formerly an official in the New York City Department of Education's charter school, Aaron Listhaus was recently hired as the executive director of the Hebrew Charter School Center and in a March 2011 interview in Tablet Magazine said, "Our goal is to really uncouple Hebrew from Judaism. Contemporary Israeli society is the result of 120 years of secularization and modernization of the Hebrew language. So, there is a whole culture out there in which Hebrew does not necessarily mean religion."

The difficulty of balancing on the tightrope between religion and state is just one issue in a complex set of problematics animating the Hebrew charter school discourse. Diane Ravitch, a professor at the New York University School of Education and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, in a New York Daily News op-ed from early in 2009, takes the view that Hebrew charter schools are anathema to the American liberal multi-cultural enterprise: "It is the job of family, the community and religious institutions to teach children about their heritage. The job of public schools is to teach children a common civic culture and a shared commitment to democracy...In a city with hundreds of different ethnic and cultural groups, we should not be encouraging the creation of schools that are specific to a single non-American culture. That way lies separation, segregation and the fraying bonds that hold us together as Americans."

**Contemporary Israeli society is the result of 120 years of secularization and modernization of the Hebrew language, so there's a whole culture in which Hebrew does not necessarily mean religion**

One of the thorniest areas in the Hebrew charter school discourse concerns the impact Hebrew charters may have on already financially strapped Jewish day schools. The anxiety Hebrew charters cause in the day school community has added fresh energy to the call for school vouchers among some Jewish educators. At the same time, with

day school tuition at around \$20,000 per child per year, and the country still in the grip of a persistent financial crisis, others say that charter schools have the potential to save and revitalize Jewish education in the US. And, as mentioned above, it is a safe bet that more and more day schools will seek to convert to charters.

Rabbi Paul Plotkin, spiritual leader of the Conservative Temple Beth Am in Margate, Florida, recently wrote that Hebrew charters might offer the Conservative movement the opportunity of a badly needed infusion of revenue and cultural relevance:

"As wonderful as our Solomon Schechter schools have been, they still only attract a small percentage of Conservative students. While cost is not the only reason, it certainly has been a major contributing factor.

But a "near" Jewish day school education might be available for a few thousand dollars a year [the estimated price of afterschool Jewish study programs]. And the delivery of this education could reinvigorate older Conservative synagogues, creating a significant new revenue stream and putting many new children on campus. The plan also could provide employment opportunities for Conservative rabbis, teachers, and youth workers, as well as the resources to pay them".

## New Findings Concerning the Genome<sup>1</sup> Structure of the Jewish People

Scientists have carried out more frequent and extensive genetic research on Jews than on most other religious or ethnic groups in the world. The main reason for this is medical, as some Jews are in a much greater risk of developing certain genetic or genetically influenced diseases than the majorities in the countries where they are living. This research has also elucidated questions of Jewish history.

As early as the 1990s, two publications in the highly respected scientific journal *Nature* disclosed genetic confirmation that the Biblical story of the Jewish priests (*kohanim*) descending from one male ancestor (Aaron) was essentially correct. It was possible to measure that this person lived between 3,250 and 2,100 years ago. A majority of currently living *kohanim* share a common genetic signature which can be found only in 10-15% of other male Jews.<sup>2</sup> This research result was followed by a number of publications on historically interesting, country-specific or other specialized issues of Jewish genetics.<sup>3</sup> Finally in 2010 *Nature*<sup>4</sup> and the *American Journal of Human Genetics*<sup>5</sup> published the two so far most comprehensive genetics studies on the origin and migrations of the Jewish people. Two different teams consisting of 32 well-known academic researchers from 8 countries investigated Jewish Diasporas and compared their genome structures to those of non-Jewish groups. Although the two research teams choose different samples of Jews and non-Jews, their main results were identical. “Most Jewish samples

form a remarkably tight subcluster...and trace the origin of most Jewish Diaspora communities to the Levant”, wrote *Nature*.

The second article speaks of the “distinct genetics” and “shared Middle Eastern ancestry” of most Jews. Ashkenazi, Moroccan, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Syrian, Iraqi, Iranian and other Jews comprising more than 90% of the Jewish people today “represent genome similarities that are typically seen between distant cousins”, wrote a scientific reviewer of these findings.<sup>6</sup> These communities have more genetic links with each other than with the population of their respective host countries.

Even when genetic proximity between Jews and non-Jews is discovered, for example between Ashkenazi Jews and South Europeans, which is due to the conversions to Judaism in the late Roman Empire, common ancestry outweighs more recent admixture. More importantly, both studies “are concordant in revealing close relationship between most contemporary Jews and non-Jewish populations from the Levant”<sup>7</sup>, including Druze, Cypriots, Syrians and Palestinians. The studies found almost no admixture from the regions where the Khazar tribes, said to have converted to Judaism in the 8th century once lived. Others have postulated that modern Jews are not linked to the ancient Jews of Israel, but are offspring of converts, in Europe particularly of those famous Khazars. The new scientific findings unmask these assertions as baseless.

**“most Jewish samples form a remarkably tight subcluster... and trace the origin of most Jewish Diaspora communities to the Levant”**

Members of the public, intellectuals and a few religious and political figures reacted emotionally, some with hostility, others with enthusiasm. Many misunderstood or misused them for their own political and ideological ends. As research in genetics and genomics continues, new concerns and also misunderstandings are likely to emerge. These call for a moral compass and a better public understanding of science in general and of the pertinent scientific facts in this case.

**Genes do not determine whether a person is a Jew – determinant is family, upbringing, history or choice**

The two studies found important traces of ancient Jewish history – of common geographic origin, past migrations and conversions into Judaism – in the current genome structure of the Jewish people. They make no other claims. They do not claim that there is a “Jewish gene”, a frequent and dangerous misunderstanding, or that Jews are genetically different from everybody else. Jews may be unique, but not through their genetic structure, which has much in common with that of others, particularly of people in the Near East. Genes do not determine whether a person is a Jew, determinant is family (in Orthodox Jewish tradition the mother), upbringing, history or choice.

The key question is whether there is a scientific explanation for Jewish sense of group, for the “magic consensus” that Oswald Spengler attributed to the Jews. The discovery of genetic

similarities between many Jews, explainable by a common Near Eastern origin raises the question in a new way. Can awareness among Jews that they are “distant cousins”, this time based not on religious tradition but on science, create or reinforce their group solidarity? In general, awareness of common genetic origins or traits may encourage, but can never guarantee common thought or action and does not always generate “altruism” and group solidarity, to use again the terminology of evolutionary psychology.

For the Jews, the answer will be mixed and ambiguous. Some of them will be indifferent because they regard genes and genomes as irrelevant to the problems that the Jewish people and Israel have to face today. Also, they may see it as an issue of only historic interest. In fact, if the numbers of conversions to Judaism increase, then the current genetic markers of common ancestry will be more and more diluted. Other Jews will continue to reject the findings because they do not understand them or for more substantial reasons. They fear that anti-Semites and racists would argue, as in the past, that genetics and genome analysis will make it possible to identify and discriminate against Jews, or they might see a danger that some Jews will propose genetics as a tool to differentiate between Jews.

But for a third group, scientific proof of shared ancestry might encourage more group solidarity and common action as a reaction to growing external hostility. Non-Jews and in a few cases, also Jews who dispute the historic reality and origin of the Jewish people often also question the legitimacy of the State of Israel. The new

genetic discoveries could provide a convincing argument to support the historic narrative of the Jewish people. Ignorance about the Jews and their history among a larger global public and the elites can have political impacts which must not be underestimated.

The social sciences have long been reticent to consider genetic explanations of social behavior, and historians have not regarded genetics as one of their research tools. Sociology looks back to a long and bitter “nature versus nurture” debate and generally has desired to see genetics strictly limited to medical research and therapeutic applications. But this view is undergoing a change. The *American Journal of Sociology* published a supplement on genetics and social structure which asks sociologists and historians to think about the accumulating genetic discoveries as a new “archive” to dig in and think about.<sup>8</sup> A commentator greeted this supplement as timely: “If sociologists ignore genes, will other academics – and the wider world – ignore sociology?”<sup>9</sup>

Historiography and the social sciences must be open to new findings from evolutionary science, genetics, epigenetics and genome research. It is also important to contemplate the enormous philosophical and ethical problems that will arise from some of these discoveries and their possible implications for religion, criminal law, health care, warfare and other issues. In this regard one must reflect upon the advances of behavioral geneticists who are researching the genetic (or epigenetic) roots of certain types of behavior, which inevitably will raise ethical and legal questions.<sup>10</sup> Judaism can respond to these questions, like other religions

and value systems, and may have some interesting views to put forward, for example with regard to personal versus group responsibility.

**The new genetic discoveries could provide a convincing argument to support the historic narrative of the Jewish people**

## Endnotes

1. The genome is the entirety of an organism's hereditary information. In most organisms, including mammals, it is encoded in DNA. The genome includes both the genes and the non-coding sequences of the DNA (non-coding for proteins). The human genome consists of approx. 23 000 protein-coding genes and many non-coding ones. In 2003 the United States-based Human Genome Project published a complete map of the human genome. Its aim is to understand the genetic make-up of the human species. This has become an indispensable tool of medical research.
2. Michael F. Hammer, Karl Skorecki, Sara Selig et al., "Y-Chromosomes of Jewish Priests", *Nature*, Vol. 385, 2.January1997; Mark G.Thomas, Karl Skorecki, Haim Ben-Ami et al., "Origins of Old Testament priests", *Nature*, Vol. 394, 9.July 1998
3. Among others Doron M. Behar, Ene Metspalu et al., "Counting the Founders: The Matrilineal Genetic Ancestry of the Jewish Diaspora", *PLoS ONE*, April 2008, Vol. 3, Issue 4, e2062; Susan M. Adams, Elena Bosch et al., "The Genetic Legacy of Religious Diversity and Intolerance: Paternal Lineages of Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula", *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, 4.12. 2008, Vol. 83, Issue 6, pp.725ff. A summary of these scientific findings in Diana Muir Appelbaum and Paul S. Appelbaum, "Genetics and the Jewish Identity", *The Jerusalem Post*, Internet Edition, 11. Febr. 2008.
4. Doron M.Behar, Bayazit Yunusbayev et al., "The genome-wide structure of the Jewish people", *Nature*, Letters doi:10.1038/nature09103, 1-5, online 9 June 2010.
5. Gil Atzmon, Li Hao et al., "Abraham's Children in the Genome Era: Major Jewish Diaspora Populations Comprise Distinct Genetic Clusters with Shared Middle Eastern Ancestry", *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, 86, 850-859, 11 June 2010.
6. Tina Hesman Saey, "Genome maps trace Jewish origins-Roots of far-flung populations reach back to the Levant", *Science News*, July 3, 2010, p.13.
7. *Nature*, op.cit., p.4.
8. "Exploring Genetics and Social Structure", *American Journal of Sociology AJS*, Vol. 114 Number S1 (2008), Introduction pp. vii ff.
9. Christopher Shea, "The Nature-Nurture Debate, Redux: Genetic research finally makes its way into the thinking of sociologists", *The Chronicle of Higher Education – The Chronicle Review*, Issue of 9.1. 2009.
10. There is a growing literature on this question. See e.g. Genetic Testing – Policy Issues for the New Millenium, OECD, Paris, 2000; David Glick and Hermona Soreq, "Ethics, Public Policy and Behavioral Genetics", in *IMAJ*, Vol.5, Febr. 2003, pp. 83-86.

## **JPPI Main Publications**

**Uncharted Waters**, a chapter from the forthcoming book, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Forces, Their Impact on the Jewish People, Israel and the US*; a special edition prepared for the 2011 Israeli Presidential Conference; Sturat E. Eizenstat, with a foreword by Martin Gilbert.

**Jewish Demographic Policies, Population Trends and Options in Israel and in the Diaspora**, Sergio DellaPergola, 2011.

**Mega-Trends and their Impact on the Jewish People**, Prepared for JPPI's 2010 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People, Stuart Eizenstat, 2010.

**Toward 2030: Strategies for the Jewish Future**, Background Documents for the 2010 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People, JPPI Staff, 2010.

**2030: Alternative Futures for the Jewish People**, Avi Gil and Einat Wilf, 2010.

**Annual Assessment 2009, Executive Report No. 6**, with special in-depth chapters: The Economic Crisis and its Impact on the Jewish People, Changes of Administration in the U.S. and Israel and Global Geo-Strategic Trends and their Possible Implications for the Jewish People, JPPPI Staff and Contributors, 2009.

**The Triangular Relationship of Jerusalem, Washington and North American Jewry**, Background Documents for the 2009 Glen Cove Conference, JPPPI Staff, 2009.

**Muslim Anti-Semitism: The Challenge and Possible Responses**, Prof. Emmanuel Sivan, 2009.

**Annual Assessment 2008, Executive Report No. 5**, with a special section on Women in Jewish Society, JPPPI Staff and Contributors, 2008.

**Background Policy Documents for the Inaugural President's Conference: Facing Tomorrow**, JPPPI Staff and Contributors, 2008.

**Annual Assessment 2007, Executive Report No. 4**, Societal Aspects, JPPPI Staff and Contributors, 2007.

**A Strategic Plan for the Strengthening of Jerusalem**, JPPPI Staff, 2007.

**Background Policy Documents for the 2007 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People**, JPPPI Staff, 2007.

**Annual Assessment 2006, Executive Report No. 3**, Major Shifts – Threats and Opportunities, JPPPI Staff and Contributors, 2006.

**A Road Map for the Jewish People for 2025**, Published in the context of the Alternative Futures for the Jewish People 2025 project, Prepared for the 2006 Herzliya Conference, JPPPI Staff, 2006.

**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.

**Annual Assessment 2005, Executive Report No.2,** Facing a Rapidly Changing World, JPPPI Staff and Contributors, 2005.

**The Jewish People Between Thriving And Decline,** JPPPI Staff and Contributors, 2005. To succeed, large resources, judicious coping with critical decisions and careful crafting of long-term grand-policies are needed. The full volume contains analyses of the major communities around the world and in-depth assessments of significant topics.

**Global Jewish People Forum,** Position Paper, JPPPI Staff, 2005.

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

**Soft Power – A National Asset,** Prepared for the 2005 Herzliya Conference, Sharon Pardo, 2005.

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

**Annual Assessment 2004, Executive Report No. 1,** Between Thriving and Decline, JPPPI Staff and Contributors, 2004.

**China and the Jewish People: Old Civilizations in a New Era,** Strategy Paper, Shalom Salomon Wald, 2004. This is the first strategic document in the series: Improving the Standing of the Jewish People in Emerging Superpowers Without a Biblical Tradition.

**Confronting Antisemitism – A Strategic Perspective,** Strategy Paper; Yehezkel Dror, 2004.

The increasing ability of fewer to easily kill more and more makes new antisemitism into a lethal danger that requires comprehensive, multi-dimensional and long-term counter-strategies.

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

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

**New Anti-Jewishness,** Alert Paper No. 1, Irwin Cotler, 2002.

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