

# THE DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS OF DIASPORA JEWRY

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## 1. *Topics discussed*

In previous meetings of our Study Circle (in 1978-1979), we discussed assimilation from various points of view: ideological, political, literary, historical and geographical; we considered different definitions of assimilation and studied many aspects and forms of this phenomenon. However, the interest of our group in this field is not purely academic. The main reason for our study lies in the preoccupation lest certain assimilatory processes may endanger the future survival of Diaspora Jewry. I shall, therefore, discuss here the "demographic crisis" of the Jewish Diaspora population, and I shall try to identify among other factors, three aspects which are directly or indirectly connected with assimilatory processes: the estrangement of the Jews from traditional nuptial and fertility habits; mixed marriages; numerical losses to Jewish population due to formal or informal withdrawal from Judaism.<sup>1</sup>

The demographic crisis is becoming at present more acute and evident,

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i. I refer to the process indicated by the Hebrew term of *temi'ah*. This can be understood as end of personal attachment to the Jewish group. B. Akzin proposes to call this process "submergence" (see, *Assimilation in the Post-Emancipation Period*, Background paper No. 1, prepared for this seminar, p. 8. The complete Hebrew text has been published in the publications of the Study Circle on Diaspora Jewry, Tenth Series, 1979). From the operational viewpoint of demographic statistics this means detachment from "Jewish population" or "withdrawal", as defined by U.O. Schmelz (*Jewish Population Studies, 1961-1968*, Jerusalem, The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University, 1970, p. 27). Such detachment may occur through a formal act having in some countries also a legal value (such as religious conversion, a selection of another nationality - where "Jews" are considered as a national group, cancellation of membership in Jewish community, etc.), or

but it has its roots in long-range developments. In order to clarify its factors, meaning and future implications, I shall try to outline here the numerical evolution of the Jewish world population in the 19th and 20th centuries. In explaining the demographic evolution of Diaspora Jewry, I shall attempt to distinguish between trends which are common to all developed populations and trends which seem to be specific to the Jewish populations. At the end, I shall give some hints of the momentous problem whether a demographic crisis, similar to that found in the Diaspora Jewry can be expected to affect also the Jewish population in Israel.

Due to the very large scope of the problems involved, I shall not enter into important cognate fields such as: a) statistical analysis of the various aspects of assimilation - understood in the broader meaning of acculturation of Jews to their Diaspora environments; b) statistical analysis of changes of Jewish identity over times and space. Accordingly, in studying the numerical evolution of world Jewry in various regions and periods, I shall not try to evaluate the changes which occurred in Jewish characteristics, contents, definition or degree of attachment of persons included in the "Jewish population".

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through informal severance of any connection with Jewish culture, tradition and life. This severance may sometimes occur through a conscious or unconscious prolonged process of alienation.

2. *Sources of statistical data on the demography of Diaspora Jews.*

During the last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, the majority of Jews lived in countries where censuses, vital statistics and other sets of official statistics included data classified by religion. It was, therefore, comparatively easy to obtain statistical information on the size of the Jewish population, its structure, vital and migratory events, its geographic distribution, etc. In that period a considerable interest developed in scientific research on Jewish demography, both at local and world level, and even a special office was established for this purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Later, the situation changed for the worse, as a consequence of mass emigration of Jews from Eastern Europe and of the Holocaust. The centres of Jewish demographic research disappeared, and the great majority of Diaspora Jewry found itself in countries in which official statistics did not supply data on the Jews.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The *Bureau für Statistik der Juden* (in Berlin), which published, among others, the *Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden*.
  2. Among the population censuses taken between 1965 and 1978, about 30 included data specified by religion. However, only 3 of the countries which have taken these censuses have Jewish communities of considerable size: Canada, Iran and Turkey. In the censuses of the USSR and a few countries of Eastern Europe, the Jews are distinguished as a national group.

Under these circumstances, the prospects of statistical studies on world Jewish population after World War Two appeared to be grim indeed.

However, a considerable improvement has occurred in the sixties and seventies, due both to world-wide action promoted by the Division for Jewish Demography and Statistics of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and to the initiative of Jewish institutions in various Jewish communities. Activities were carried out along various ways, such as the following:

- a) Nationwide sample enquiries were conducted with regard to the Jewish populations of countries such as the U.S.A., France, Italy, South Africa, Yugoslavia, etc. Questions were asked on Jewish attitudes and behaviour and on demographic, sociological and economic topics. These surveys, which have covered over 60% of Jewish Diaspora populations, have become an important source of information for Jewish demographic and sociological research. Their utility may increase in the future with the development of systematic comparisons of the results obtained in various countries, and if similar surveys will be carried out in other countries and repeated from time to time.
- b) In some countries, of which Great Britain is the most important, vital statistics for the Jewish population were obtained on the basis of vital records registered by Jewish institutions.
- c) Detailed census information, or vital statistics on the Jews were obtained from statistical offices in some countries, where material of this type has been collected in recent times.

d) Very extensive central world-wide data files and bibliographical archives, including information on Jewish demography since 1920, and in some cases since the middle of the 19th century, have been established in Jerusalem.

e) Activities have been developed along various lines in order to ensure cooperation between persons concerned with Jewish demography in different countries of the world.

3. *Changes in the size of World Jewry during the 19th and 20th centuries.*

Table 1 (col. 2) shows an estimate of the Jewish Diaspora population for 1975, recently prepared by U.O. Schmelz<sup>1</sup> on the basis of the source described in section 2. This estimate is compared with the current estimate for the same year published in the *American Jewish Year Book* (col. 3 of Table 1).

It is seen from Table 1 that the Jewish Diaspora population counts today only about 10 millions. This number is much lower than that given by the *American Jewish Year Book* for the following reasons: the population estimates given currently by the *AJYB* for each Diaspora country and for the larger Jewish urban communities are not always based on reliable

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i. This table is taken from an article by U.O. Schmelz, *Jewish Survival: the demographic issues*, scheduled to appear in the *American Jewish Year Book*.

Table 1 World Jewish Population Estimates (1975)

In Thousands			
Region Country	Estimates by Schmelz	Estimates by the American Jewish Year Book (rounded)	Difference (2) - (3)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
DIASPORA			
America, total	6,417	6,772	- 355
U.S.A. <sup>a</sup>	5,600	5,840 (1972: 6,115) <sup>e</sup>	- 240 (-515) <sup>e</sup>
Canada	295	305	- 10
Argentina	265	300 (1972: 500) <sup>e</sup>	- 35 (-235) <sup>e</sup>
Brazil	110	165	- 55
Other countries	147	162	- 15
Europe <sup>b</sup> , total	1,316	1,374	- 58
France	535	550 (1976: 650) <sup>e</sup>	- 15 (-115) <sup>e</sup>
United Kingdom	400	410	- 10
Other countries	381	414	- 33
U.S.S.R. <sup>c</sup>	1,950	2,680	- 730
Asia <sup>d</sup>	88	105	- 17
Africa, total	177	184	- 7
South.Africa, Rhodesia	120	123	- 3
Other countries	57	61	- 4
Oceania	72	77	- 5
DIASPORA, TOTAL	10,020	11,192	-1,172(1,747) <sup>e</sup>
ISRAEL	2,959	2,953	+ 6
WORLD	12,979	14,145	-1,166(1,741) <sup>e</sup>

- a) The *AJYB* estimate for 1975 includes non-Jewish household members of Jews; Schmelz's estimate excludes them.
- b) Excluding U.S.S.R., including European territories of Turkey.
- c) Based on census results which may underrepresent the Jewish population of USSR (the *AJYB* estimate is based on the 1959 census, Schmelz's estimate is based on the 1959 and 1970 censuses).
- d) Excluding U.S.S.R., including Asian territories of Turkey.
- e) Estimates given in volumes of the *American Jewish Year Book*, prior to 1975.

sources. In some cases, the *AJYB* repeats from one year to another the same outdated estimate; sometimes it adds to the basic estimate an evaluated growth, calculated on the uncontrolled hypothesis that the Jewish population is increasing at the same rate as the surrounding general population.<sup>1</sup> In contrast with that, there are good reasons (as we shall see later) to assume that the population of most Diaspora countries is today decreasing. This explains why the more accurate<sup>2</sup> estimates prepared by Schmelz are much lower than those of the *American Jewish Year Book*, both for each country or region separately and for the entire Diaspora. For the entire Diaspora the estimate by Schmelz is lower by about 1,200,000 than that of the *AJYB* for 1975, and by about 1,750,000 than the estimates which appeared in the previous issues.

In order to see in proper historical perspective the current decrease of the Jewish Diaspora population, it is desirable to compare it to the population trends which prevailed in the past. Tables 2-4 provide the relevant information. The main conclusions which can be drawn from these tables are as follows:

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1. These remarks are not to be considered as a criticism of the fact that the *AJYB* tries to obtain current estimates of the Jewish world population. This activity has been and still is very important. However, the methods followed need revision (see article by U.O. Schmelz quoted above and a previous article published by the same author in the 1969 issue of the *AJYB*).
  2. The estimates by U. O. Schmelz can be considered as more accurate than those of the *AJYB*. However, they too are evaluations with a not inconsiderable - though unavoidable - margin of uncertainty.

- 1) Jewish world population at the beginning of the 19th century was comparatively small (about 2½ millions only), and it was presumably smaller than in certain periods of the ancient era.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) During the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the Jewish population had a higher rate of growth than that of the population of the world, and even than that of the more developed nations.
- 3) The rate of growth of the Jewish population was already slowing down a few decades before the Holocaust.
- 4) After the Holocaust, there was no long-range demographic recovery and today the Jewish Diaspora population is decreasing.

Table 2. Rough estimates of the Jewish population (in millions)<sup>2</sup>

	1800	1900	1939	1948	1975
Diaspora	2.5	10.7	16.3	10.7	10.0
Israel	...	....	0.4	0.6	3.0
Total	2.5	10.7	16.7	11.3	13.0

1. With regard to the Jewish population in the ancient era, and for sources of information for that era and later periods, see R. Bachi, *Population Trends of World Jewry*, Jerusalem, The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University, 1976, pp. 25-26, 61-63; R. Bachi, *The Jewish Population of Israel*, Jerusalem, The Institute of Contemporary Jewry and the Demographic Centre of the Prime Minister's Office, 1977, pp. 1-20, 353-361, 371-372.
2. For sources of these estimates, see R. Bachi, *Population Trends*, etc, op. cit., pp. 26-27.



Table 3. Yearly rates of growth per 1000 of Diaspora population

1880-1900 (a)	1900-1930 (a)	Around 1930 (b)	Around 1955 (c)	Around 1975
+17	+13	+7	+4	negative

a) According to rough estimates for Diaspora population of 7,676,000 in 1880, 10,650,000 in 1900, and 15,732,000 in 1930.

b) Yearly rate of natural increase per 1000, according to L. Hersch, Jewish population trends in Europe, in *The Jewish People, Past and Present*, New York, Jewish Encyclopaedia Handbooks, vol. 2, pp. 22-23.

c) Yearly rate of natural increase per 1000, according to H.S. Halevi, *The influence of World War II on the demographic characteristics of the Jewish people*, Jerusalem, The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University, 1963.

Table 4. Estimates of yearly rate of natural increase per 1000 of world Population.<sup>1</sup>

	1850- 1900	1900- 1930	1930- 1940	1950- 1960	1970- 1980
More Developed countries	10	9	8	13	8
Less Developed countries	5	7	10	18	19

1. U.N. estimates.

Table 5. Migratory balance between the Diaspora and the Land of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

	1919- 14.5.1948	15.5.1948- 1964	1965- 1978	Total	1919 14.5.1948	15.5.1948- 1964	1965- 1978
Immigration to Israel	482,857	1,209,273	428,179	2,120,309	16,440	72,673	30,584
Migratory balance between Diaspora and Israel	426,500	1,063,400	281,800	1,771,700	14,522	63,906	20,129

i. For sources of these data and of methods of estimating emigration see: R. Bachi, *The population of Israel*, op. cit., pp. 78-81, 118-121; 136-140, 385-391, 409-410.

Table 6. Rates of immigration and emigration.<sup>1</sup>

Period	Average Yearly Rate of immigration to Israel per 1000 of		Average yearly Rate of emigration per 1000 of
	Jewish Population of Israel	Jewish Diaspora Population	Jewish Population of Israel
1919-14.5.1948	76.9	1.16	(15.89)
15.5.1948-1951	182.2	16.57	6.93
1952-1954	12.3	1.54	7.43
1955-1957	33.4	4.60	5.70
1958-1960	13.7	2.04	5.37
1961-1964	27.5	4.41	4.90
1965-1968	8.7	1.51	3.81
1969-1973	17.2	3.25	1.61
1974-1975	9.0	1.83	5.56
1976-1978	7.3	2.24	4.11 (a)

a) 1976-1977

1. For sources of these data and of methods to estimate emigration, see, R. Bachi: *Population of Israel*, op. cit., pp. 78-81, 118-121, 136-140, 385-391, 409-410.

The current decrease of the Jewish Diaspora population is due to three factors: the negative migratory balance with Israel; the excess of deaths over births; the losses due to assimilation. Each of these factors will be examined separately below.

#### 4. *Migratory balance between the Diaspora and Israel*

Tables 5 and 6 give some information on the migratory balance between Diaspora and Israel.

It appears that during the period, 1919-1978 the Land of Israel attracted some 2,120,000 Jewish immigrants from the Diaspora. As in the same period there was also emigration from Israel, the "net loss" of the Diaspora population or "net gain" of the population of Israel was about 1,772,000.<sup>1</sup> However, some 60% of this movement occurred during the period 1948-1964. Since 1965 the flow of Jewish immigration to Israel has been rather small, having a limited influence only both on the size of the population at the origin (in the Diaspora) and at the destination (in Israel).<sup>2</sup>

If we wish, therefore, to determine the factors of the present decline of Diaspora population and of the substantial change in the

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1. The difference between the two figures quoted here derives also from other causes connected with the methods of calculations (see sources to Tables 5 and 6).
  2. The size of immigration from the Diaspora to Israel is due to a complex set of factors. Despite this, it appears that the low level of immigration during the past 15 years can be explained as follows (see R. Bachi, *The Population of Israel*, op. cit., pp. 81-86, 140-142). The big majority of immigrants during the Mandatory period

demographic trends of the Diaspora between the end of the 19th century and the present, we should investigate the other two factors mentioned above, viz. the natural movements and assimilation.

5. *Modern evolution of mortality and fertility of the more developed world populations.*

In order to interpret the changes found in the mortality and fertility of the Jews in modern times, it is desirable to see them in the framework of the demographic evolution of the more developed world populations (in Europe, North America, etc.). We shall outline this framework in a very sketchy way.

Among these populations, in the period which preceded modern evolution ("first stage"), mortality was generally rather high, and from time to time it reached catastrophic levels, due to epidemics, wars, famines, droughts, etc. Fertility too was rather high and especially so in more

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and the earlier period of Israel independence originated from a certain number of countries in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, the Balkans, etc., where the propensity of the Jews to emigrate to the Land of Israel (measured by rates of emigration per 1000 local Jewish population) was comparatively very high. However, the Jewish population of those countries was reduced almost to nil by the Holocaust and by emigration itself. The overwhelming majority of the Jewish Diaspora population is found today: a) in Western countries, in which the Jewish population had comparatively little propensity to emigrate to the Land of Israel both during the Mandatory period and, generally speaking, also during the period of Israeli independence; b) in the USSR, wherefrom some emigration of Jews was permitted only during the last decade. This has determined some increase in the volume of immigration to Israel in the late sixties and early seventies. However, in recent years a rather substantial proportion of emigrants from the USSR went to countries other than Israel.

traditional environments. In 'normal' times this determined some positive natural increases. However in catastrophic periods, deaths often exceeded births. On the whole, the population tended to increase slowly and irregularly.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the mortality declined, particularly that of children, young people and mothers, and the mortality caused by epidemics and other catastrophic events. This was largely due to combined effects of improvements in environmental conditions, levels of life, social and educational progress, development of both preventive and curative medical services, scientific discoveries in the fields of medicine and hygiene, etc.

During a "second stage" in which mortality declined, whilst fertility was still comparatively high, the excess of births over deaths became steady and growing, and the population increased at a high rate.

During a "third stage", the tendency to control births expanded more and more, due to many factors such as: prevailing of more rationalistic and secular attitudes and weakening of traditional values in the field of reproduction; increased proportion of women working outside home or family farm; increased costs of child raising; decreased child mortality; development of modern methods for prevention of births, which have created conditions allowing families to have the number of children desired born at a planned spacing.

Under these circumstances the level of fertility is much lower than in the previous stages. However, it is not steady and it is subject to considerable short-term variations. For instance, in the thirties of the present century, in certain European countries the fertility reached a very low level, followed by a prolonged "baby boom"; in the last 10-15 years in many European and North American countries there was again a very sharp decline in fertility.

## 6. *Demographic characteristics of the Jews before emancipation*

### A. *Marriage and fertility before emancipation*

Does the "demographic transition" described in section 5 explain the modern demographic evolution of the Jewish population in the Diaspora? The answer to this question is rather complex.

Basically, we can say that almost all Diaspora populations passed, as other developed populations, through the three stages described above (respectively: high fertility and mortality; decreasing mortality and consequent strong natural increase; low fertility level). However, modern demographic evolution of the Jewish populations contained also the following peculiar traits: in the first stage, most of the Jews had still maintained traditional Jewish demographic habits (see below); the timing of transition, which started first in Western and Central Europe, then in Eastern Europe, and later in Moslem countries is to some extent similar and related to the timing of assimilation processes; the generality of present excess of deaths over births throughout different

Diaspora communities. Also the Holocaust has had an enormous influence on the modern demographic conditions of the Jews.

In our discussion of peculiar Jewish traits in the demographic transition of Jewish populations, let us start by considering the conditions prevailing in the first "pre-modern" stage. To do so, we shall discuss mainly the demographic characteristics of the largest Jewish group, that of Eastern Europe, immediately before the emancipation and assimilation movements.

For at least a part of Eastern European Jewish population, data are available from various official and Jewish sources, on nuptiality, age at marriage, fertility, rates of births, deaths and natural increase. Also important results are available from an enquiry recently carried out by the University of Princeton on the demographic conditions of various ethnic groups, including the Jews in Russia, starting with the Tsarist census of 1897. The interpretation of this wide and heterogeneous material is not easy, due to methodological considerations, to incompleteness of birth registration among the Jews, and to the facts that in 1897 a section of the Jews in Russia was already well advanced in the processes of modernization and secularization.

Despite this, it seems justified to summarize the demographic conditions of Eastern European Jews in the "pre-modern" stage as follows: About one hundred years ago, the great majority of this population still had demographic characteristics which can be related to the Jewish religion and tradition: the tendency to marry was very



high; the proportion of women remaining single at the end of the fertile period was very low; the majority of Jewish girls were married young, and sometimes at a very early age; the marriage age of Jewish bridegrooms was generally low; many marriages were arranged by the families, and were not love marriages; widespread recourse to matchmakers and community assistance in fostering marriages helped to find mates for persons of marriageable age even when they lived in small Jewish groups scattered in isolated townlets or villages; in case of widowhood or divorce, remarriage was frequent; marriages were strictly endogamic within the Jewish fold; births out-of-wedlock had presumably low frequency; generally there was little tendency to limit natural fertility in married life; Jewish women were frequently exposed to pregnancy up to the close of the menopause age.

Under those circumstances, there are good grounds to evaluate the average number of children born to a Jewish woman in Eastern Europe at about seven.<sup>1</sup> There is statistical evidence that demographic characteristics tended to be rather similar for the Jews in the different parts

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1. Various sources were utilised for this evaluation. Among them: B. Bloch, *Natural Movements among the Jews in Russia towards the end of the 19th century* (paper read at the *Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem, 1977). *Papers in Jewish Demography*, 1977 (in preparation); R.A. Lewis, B.H. Roland, R.S. Clem, *Nationality and Population Change in Russia and the USSR*, New York, and London, Praeger, 1976; A.J. Coale, B. Anderson, E. Härm, *Human Fertility in Russia since the 19th Century*, Office of Population Research, Princeton University, 1979.

of the Tsarist empire, while they had considerable regional variability for populations belonging to other ethnic groups.

Some of the demographic characteristics quoted above were still found among the Russian Jews enumerated in the 1910 USA census.<sup>1</sup>

It is likely that similar demographic characteristics were found in the second largest Jewish population group living in the Ottoman Empire and neighbouring countries. A partial statistical demonstration of this hypothesis was given by the Israeli census of 1961, which makes it possible to reconstruct the demographic characteristics of immigrants from Asia and Africa in their communities of origin. For instance the census has shown that until rather recent times in the more conservative communities of Asia and Africa the proportion of women married at the age of 17 or below was large, and that the average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime was about seven.

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1. In a sample of the 1910 census, data were given for women born in Russia who had not Polish as mother tongue. As it is likely that the majority of these people were Jewish there is a considerable interest in the following data:

Age of the women at the census	Year of birth	Percentage single	Average number of children ever born to a woman ever married	Percentage of women ever married who had		
				0	7-9 children	10 or more
40-44	1866-1870	0.94	6.19	3.2	31.6	13.6
45-54	1856-1865	0.60	6.97	3.1	32.8	23.0
55-64	1846-1855	1.00	7.50	2.3	32.6	29.0
65-74	1836-1845	0.79	7.46	3.2	31.5	29.7

See: *Differential Fertility 1940 and 1910. Women by Number of Children ever born.* 16th Census of the US, 1940. Washington US Bureau of the Census, 1945.

Some recent studies indicate that presumably some (but not all) of the typical Jewish demographic characteristics may have existed also in some communities in Western and Central Europe, and overseas, in much earlier periods (in the 17th and 18th century and in some areas at the beginning of the 19th century).

We can conclude that before the "modern"<sup>1</sup> demographic transition prior to emancipation and mass assimilation, the majority of the Jews had peculiar demographic characteristics, including tendency to general, young and endogamous marriage and high fertility. These characteristics are in harmony with the traditional Jewish attitude which considers procreation as a *mitzvah*, children as a blessing and marriage and family as cornerstones of social life. Possibly, these attitudes may also be seen as an instinctive expression of the will to survive and to ensure the maintenance of Jewish faith by the often persecuted Jewish populations.

Jewish demographic characteristics should have favoured natural growth. We may, therefore, ask ourselves: if the Jews had similar characteristics prior to the 19th century, why did the Jewish population not grow strongly also in the preceding century, and why was this population comparatively so small - about 2.5 millions - around 1800.

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1. This term is to be interpreted in a different way for different Diaspora communities: the "modern" evolution may have started over 200 years ago in certain Western and Central European environments, some 100 years ago in Eastern European communities and less than 50 years ago in some Asia-African communities.

B. *Mortality and assimilation before emancipation.*

It is not my intention to discuss here the difficult question posed above. I shall limit myself to indicate that possible explanations may be due to (a) relatively high mortality of the Jews, and (b) considerable losses due to conversions.

- a) Possibly, Jewish mortality was strengthened by the difficult conditions of the Jews in pre-modern periods, by their relatively higher concentration in towns, persecutions and forced migrations.<sup>1</sup>
- b) In the pre-emancipation period the differences between Jews and non-Jews were generally clear-cut, also legally. Therefore, we may suppose that cases of informal withdrawal from Judaism were less frequent than today. However, in certain periods, forced mass conversions occurred and pressure on the Jews to turn Christians or Moslems was exerted through promise of material or political advantages and pressure based on hostile laws and customs.

7. *Jewish "population explosion" in the 19th century and the beginning of 20th century.*

In the 19th century, mortality started to decrease among many European populations (see section 5). The decrease was earlier and

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1. In the extensive literature on the mortality of the Jews, some information is found on its level before the emancipation period; however, no clear general answer can be given regarding the differentials between the mortality of the Jews and non-Jews. (See: R. Bachi, *Aims and Ways of comparative research in the demography of the Jews. Papers in Jewish Demography 1973*, Jerusalem, The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University, 1977, pp. 5-45.)

stronger among the Jews. In consequence the mortality of the Jews became generally lower than that of their neighbours and reached a low level at a rather early stage. To give an example of the strength of this phenomenon, Table 7 shows a comparison between infant mortality of Jews and surrounding total populations in many places and periods between 1819 and 1967. It is seen that in 93% of the observations, the Jews had considerably lower infant mortality; in half of the cases the advantage of the Jews was enormous, their level of infant mortality being lower by 45% to 80%.

At the beginning of this process, the mortality was decreasing when the Jews still had frequent, endogamous and young marriages and high fertility. This brought to high birth rates, low mortality rates and rather strong natural increase. It explains the rapid increase of the Jewish population at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, as indicated in Section 3. The increase brought the Jewish world population before the Holocaust to a record level of almost 17 million.

However, after an increasing proportion of the Jewish population had abandoned the traditional Jewish demographic customs, the "population explosion" did not continue. The process of adoption other marriage and fertility customs occurred in various periods among the different Jewish population groups, as explained in the following section.

Table 7. Per cent difference between infant mortality rates among the Jewish and general populations in selected areas and periods (1819-1967).

Years	Per cent difference between mortalities of Jews and General Populations					
	Total	-65/-80	-45/-60	-25/-40	-20/-5	0/+15
Total	184	28	65	61	18	12
1819-1849	6	-	-	6	-	-
1850-1875	13	-	2	9	-	2
1875-1899	20	1	7	7	2	3
1900-1919	35	4	14	7	6	4
1920-1945	85	17	36	25	5	2
1946-1967	26	6	6	7	5	1
By geographic areas:						
Western and Central Europe						
116	14	41	45	10	6	
Eastern Europe						
44	8	13	10	5	4	
America, Oceania						
20	4	10	5	1	-	
Asia, North America <sub>4</sub>						
	2	1	1	-	-	

Source: U.O. Schmelz, *Infant and Early Childhood Mortality among Jews of the Diaspora*, *op. cit.*

The figures in the table indicate the number of areas and time periods for which rates are available.

## 8. *Beginnings of the demographic crisis of the Jewish Diaspora*

### A. *Central and Western Europe.*

For certain branches of the Jewish population of Central and Western Europe, it is known that traditional Jewish demographic customs had disappeared before the 19th century.<sup>1</sup>

Let us take as an example a Diaspora population for which we have statistical data for a very long period: Italy. Among Italian Jews (outside the ghetto of Rome) marriage and birth rates had already a rather moderate level in the 18th century and part of the 19th century. However, they were sufficient to ensure some measure of positive natural increase. The situation changed completely over the past hundred years. With the rapid assimilation of Italian Jews to the general urban middle class, there emerged the tendency to delay marriages; mixed marriages spread (see Table 8); fertility declined, and the birth rate dropped considerably below the death rate.

A similar development occurred in the great majority of Central and Western European countries. Already before the Holocaust the Jewish populations of these countries had generally very small, or even a negative natural increase.

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1. The question of whether these customs ever prevailed there, is still open due to lack of data on previous centuries. Evidence found in some places cannot be generalised. In some countries, the number of Jewish marriages was kept low by restrictive laws, intended to check the increase of the Jewish population.

Table 8. Percentages of mixed marriages

Italy			Germany			Canada		
Period	Percentage of Jewish		Period	Percentage of Jewish		Period	Percentage of Jewish	
	bride- grooms	brides		bride- grooms	brides		bride- grooms	brides
	outmarrying			outmarrying			outmarrying	
<u>Trieste</u>								
1869-70	1.9		1875-84	5.0(a)		1921-30	4.4	1.9
1871-80	6.0		1901-10	10.2	8.3	1931-40	3.8	2.1
1881-90	12.9		1911-20	20.5	13.6	1941-50	6.6	2.7
1891-1900	20.8		1921-30	24.3	16.5	1951-60	9.2	4.3
1901-10	23.8		1931-35	24.1	13.4	1961-70	13.0	8.0
1911-20	31.1		1936-40	1.7	2.2	1971-75	18.0	13.0
1921-27	42.0		1951-60	71.3	30.3			
			1961-70	72.5	44			
			1971-75	69	57			
<u>Whole Italy</u>								
1930-37	33.2	29.9						
1938	46.0	44.5						
1939-40	1.1	0.4						
<u>Milan</u>								
1940-51	45.3	23.8						
1952-60	47.0	32.8						
1961-72	47.8	30.2						

a) Mixed couples per 100 weddings concerning Jews.

Main source of the data: S. Della Pergola, *Jewish and Mixed Marriages in Milan 1901-1958*. Jerusalem, The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University, 1972.



Also conversions had some effects on the demographic conditions of the Jews of Central and Western Europe. From the statistics of some of those countries where religious conversions were registered, the following conclusions may be drawn:<sup>1</sup>

- 1) The balance of conversions was negative for the Jewish religion;
- 2) This determined demographic losses to the Jewish populations in countries of Central and Western Europe in the 19th and 20th century. However, in normal periods, the yearly losses were possibly only of the order of magnitude of a few persons per 1000 of the Jewish population;
- 3) A considerable part of the conversions was linked to marriages with non-Jews. Conversions before marriage were mainly due: to the prohibition of mixed marriages which still existed in certain countries; to the strong influence of Christian religions, etc. (As examples of increasing frequency of mixed marriages in Western and Central Europe, see the data for Germany and Italy given in Table 8).
- 4) The number of religious conversions increased in periods of persecution and in periods in which anti-Semitism was more acutely felt; the demographic losses to the Jewish population were then strong, as it occurred, for instance, in Hungary after the fall of the Bela Kun government (1919), and in other European countries at the beginning of Nazi and Fascist persecutions. At that time many Jews

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1. See, for instance, A. Ruppin, *Soziologie der Juden*, Berlin, Jüdischer Verlag, 1930.

still had the illusion of being able to escape persecution through conversion.

- 5) Considerable effort made by various Christian missions for the conversion of Jews probably had a relatively limited consequence.

#### B. *Eastern Europe*

Developments in Eastern Europe were partly similar, partly different from those mentioned (under A) for Central and Western Europe.

The first typical Jewish demographic trait which disappeared was the tendency to marry young. For instance, whilst in 1867-1872 still 60% of Jewish brides in the Russian empire were married at 20 or below 20, in 1901-06 only 24% married at these ages. Thirty years later, in Poland, Jewish marriages were much more belated than those of the general population, and only 3-4% of Jewish brides married before the age of 20. There is also statistical evidence of increasing proportions of Jewish women who did not marry at all. However, these proportions did not reach in Eastern Europe the high percentages found in the Jewish populations of Central Europe.

Among the Jewish population of Eastern Europe, the tendency to marry only within the Jewish fold remained very strong during the first decades of this century. Only after the communist revolution mixed marriages started to appear in the USSR in considerable proportions.

The fertility of the Jews decreased also in Eastern Europe; it did descend to very low levels in countries such as Poland only in the critical years of the thirties. However, Jewish birth rates still exceeded the death rates.<sup>1</sup>

C. *Consequences of the Holocaust.*

In the period of Nazi conquests, in many countries of Europe Jews and non-Jews were prevented from intermarriages. However, in that period Jewish nuptiality and also Jewish fertility was very limited. The Holocaust was responsible not only for the loss of about two thirds of European Jewry and one third of world Jewry. Communities which survived were generally small and it is likely that this favoured the increase of mixed marriages.

D. *America*

As we saw in Section 5, the demographic behavior of the Jews of Eastern Europe, who emigrated to the USA was still influenced in the first decades after mass immigration by traditional Jewish customs. In particular, marriages were almost only endogamous. Later, however, with the assimilation of the Jews to the American society, their fertility

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1. See the work by Halevi, quoted above, pp. 46-57.

decreased strongly, and it was already very low in the thirties.<sup>1</sup> The increase of the Jewish fertility in the period of the "baby boom" was strong but transitory. After that, fertility declined again.

Later, when larger proportions of people of the second and third generation in the USA reached marriageable age, mixed marriages rose at a pace which reminds that of mixed marriages in Central Europe in the first generations after the emancipation and mass assimilation.

#### E. *Asia and Africa*

Demographic transition started even later among the Jews of Asia and Africa. However, its effects were already strongly felt (prior to the mass emigration to Israel, France and other countries) in the communities of Asia and Africa in which the impact of European culture on the Jewish middle class was more powerful.

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1. With regard to the demographic transition of the Jews who emigrated from Eastern Europe to the USA, it may be of interest to compare the following data to those quoted in Section 5 for previous generations of immigrants. The data given below refer to women with Yiddish mother tongue who were born in Poland or Russia and were included in the USA census of 1940:

Age of the women at the census	Years of birth	Percent-age single	Average number of children ever born to a woman ever married	Percentage of women ever married who had		
				0	7-9 children	10 or more children
45-54	1886-95	2.52	2.94	6.4	2.8	0.3
55-64	1876-85	0.94	3.78	6.0	10.4	1.0
65-74	1866-75	0.53	4.87	2.9	17.5	5.8

See: *Differential Fertility, 1940 and 1910, op. cit.*

About the strong decline of Jewish fertility in the period 1925-1935

9. *The present demographic crisis of the Diaspora.*

We shall discuss below separately the main aspects of the present demographic crisis of Diaspora Jewry.

A. *Mixed marriages.*

It is impossible to summarise here the extensive and complex literature which grew recently on this topic. I shall limit myself to mention here some conclusions obtained by extensive statistical research on mixed marriages carried out by S. Della Pergola<sup>1</sup> from which also Table 9 has been taken.

Mixed marriages constitute today a feature of major importance in all Diaspora communities. However, their frequency differs between the different regions and it is affected by the timing of emancipation, assimilation and demographic transition discussed in previous sections.

The highest frequency is found in Central and Western Europe, where assimilation started earlier. In some of the countries of these regions, such as the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, etc, half and sometimes much more than half of the Jews outmarry (see also Table 8). It can be

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and the difference between fertility of Russian born and American born Jews, see, A.J. Jaffe, Religious differential in net reproduction rate, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, June 1939.

1. S. Della Pergola, Demographic Perspectives of Mixed Marriages, *Encyclopaedia Judaica Year Book, 1975-76*, Jerusalem, Keter, pp. 198-210.

Table 9. Rough estimates of percentages of mixed marriage frequencies among Diaspora Jewish populations (1970-1975).

Area <sup>1</sup>	Mixed marriages		
	Mixed couples per 100 weddings involving Jews	Percent of Jews marrying a non-Jewish partner among all marrying Jews	Percent of Diaspora Population <sup>2</sup>
TOTAL DIASPORA			100.0
<i>Germany, Austria, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Denmark</i>	Over 60	over 43	1.0
<i>Rest of Western Europe<sup>3</sup> (excluding France, United Kingdom), U.S.S.R., rest of Eastern Europe</i>	45-60	29-43	23.3
<i>USA, France, Argentina, Brazil, rest of America (excluding Canada), Oceania (excluding Australia)</i>	30-45	18-29	65.4
<i>United Kingdom, Canada, Australia</i>	15-30	8-18	7.4
<i>South Africa, Iran, rest of Asia and Africa</i>	under 15	under 8	2.9

1. Countries about which a good statistical documentation exists are in italics.

2. According to latest censuses, research reports or estimates.

3. As an aggregate, includes communities with different demographic characteristics.

Source: S. Della Pergola, Demographic Perspectives, etc., *op. cit.*

assumed then in the USSR and other Eastern European countries the frequency of mixed marriages is somewhat lower.

Presumably the proportion of Jews who outmarry in the USA and in Latin American countries may be 20%-30%, and in some cases it may even exceed 30%.<sup>1</sup>

The proportion of outmarriages is larger among Jewish men than among Jewish women. Generally, this proportion increases with age at marriage and it is higher in remarriages than in first marriages. It is higher in places in which the number of the Jews, and especially the proportion of Jews in the population is small. It increases with increasing level of education. The probability of outmarry appears to be larger for children of mixed marriages, even if they were raised as Jews.

From some of the findings indicated above, we may infer that the mixed marriages can be expected to continue to grow in the future, if

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1. No current data for mixed marriages are available for the USA Jewry. However, the following percentages were obtained on the basis of the sample survey of Jewish population carried out in 1970-71:

1. Percentage of outmarried Jews among those who were born outside the USA: 3%; among those who were born in the States: if both parents were born abroad: 5%; if one of the two parents was born abroad: 8%; if both parents were born in the USA: 11%. See D. Lazerwitz, current Jewish Intermarriage in the USA. (Paper read at the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 1977). In: *Papers in Jewish Demography 1977* (in preparation).
2. Percentage of Jews who outmarried among those who married in each period:  
1900-20: 2.0; 1921-30: 3.2; 1931-40: 3.0; 1941-50: 6.7; 1951-55: 6.4; 1955-60: 5.9; 1961-65: 17.4; 1966-72: 31.7.

See, F. Massarik, *National Jewish Population Study: Intermarriage*. New York, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

education levels will further increase, if the dispersion of the Jews will become larger, and if the numerical size of the communities will diminish. Moreover, opinion surveys which were conducted in various places suggest a similar trend; according to their findings prejudice against mixed marriage is on the decrease.

The demographic consequences of mixed marriages are complex and differ from place to place and from time to time. Conversions undertaken in order to marry non-Jews were presumably more frequent in the past in the more conservative European countries than they are at present. Some surveys conducted in the USA show considerable proportions of conversions to Judaism of Christian wives marrying Jews. Occasionally it is even suggested that this phenomenon brings demographic gains to the Jewish people. However, it is not clear whether sample surveys from which this type of data are obtained, do actually include a representative coverage of mixed marriages in which the Jewish partner converted to Christianity.

In regard to the children of mixed marriages, statistics which were collected in Central European countries in the first decades of the 20th century indicated that their majority were raised as Christians. Possibly with the prevalence of more secular outlooks, the tendency in those countries to baptize children of mixed marriages may be less pronounced today than in the past. However, it may be estimated that with the possible exception of the USA, the proportion of children of



mixed marriages raised as Jews is generally less than 50%. For the USSR, M. Altshuler<sup>1</sup> has found that the proportion of children of mixed marriages who opt for Jewish nationality when reaching the age of 16 varies in the different regions between 7% and 28%. Surveys conducted in the USA indicate that here the proportion of children of mixed marriages raised as Jewish is rather considerable.

#### B. *Low fertility*

As indicated above, the Jewish communities lost in the course of time their traditional high fertility. Only small residuals of this characteristic can be found in small very orthodox groups. The great majority of Diaspora Jews, including the USSR Jews, is found at present in the world regions, urban concentrations and social classes, in which fertility is lower. However, the Jews use contraceptive methods more extensively than the surrounding populations, and reduce their fertility to lower levels.

Recent studies carried out by U.O. Schmelz, S. Della Pergola and others show that for all the Jewish communities which have been studied:

- a) the fertility of the Jews is lower than that of the general population;
- b) Jewish fertility has again decreased in the 'sixties and 'seventies;

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1. M. Altshuler, *The Jews of USSR: a sociological and demographic analysis*, Jerusalem (in print; in Hebrew).

c) the average number of children per Jewish woman is comparatively small; in almost all communities it does not reach the level, slightly higher than 2, which is necessary in order to ensure population replacement from one generation to another.<sup>1</sup> Table 10 shows some examples. It is seen that Jewish fertility in Western and Central Europe is very low. For the Jews of the USSR no data on their fertility are available. However, according to the material collected by M. Altshuler<sup>2</sup>, indirect evidence indicates its low level. Apparently, the Jews in Latin America have not been influenced by the high fertility found among the general population in parts of this region. Possibly the Jews of the USA and Canada were still a decade or so ago somewhat above the replacement level.<sup>3</sup> However, today they are presumably below this level.<sup>4</sup> Only South African Jews appear to have a level of fertility more or less sufficient for replacement.

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1. In a simplistic way, we can consider that, on average, two children in each generation might be sufficient to replace two parents in the first generation, if all children born were to reach adult age. As this assumption is not realistic, more than two children are necessary for replacement. The number actually needed depends largely on the mortality level. In modern societies, where the mortality is low, the average needed does not exceed 2 to a considerable extent.
  2. op. cit.
  3. S. Goldstein, *American Jewry 1970: a demographic profile*. *American Jewish Year Book*, 1971.
  4. With regard to the fertility of American Jews in recent years, see among others, C. Goldscheider, *Demography and Jewish American Survival*. In M. Himmelfarb and U. Baras (eds.) *Zero Population Growth. For whom?* Greenwood Press, 1978, pp. 119-147.

C. *Population ageing and excess of deaths over births.*

In many countries, the progressive reduction of Jewish fertility started a long time ago. This has generated another phenomenon which is common to many other developed populations, and is particularly pronounced among the Jews: the ageing of the population. As shown in Table 11, the percentage of children is much lower among the Jews than among the majority of world populations, whilst their percentage of old people is much higher. At present the mortality is largely due to old-age people, and as they constitute today a high proportion of the Jewish population, the crude death rate of the Jews is high. In consequence of their low fertility, their birth rate is low. Low birth rate and high death rate bring to a negative rate of natural increase. This set-up has been found in practically all the Diaspora communities for which data are available (Table 12) and can be considered as typical for all Diaspora Jewry.

D. *Assimilation*<sup>1</sup>

Additional losses are due to assimilation. On the one hand, in recent decades, formal religious conversions apart from those connected with mixed marriages, are probably less frequent than in former times.

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Table 10. Fertility Measures<sup>a</sup> of Jews and General Population, by country and period.

Country	Period	Fertility Ratio (‰/100)		% Difference	Total Fertility Rate		% change <sup>b</sup>	
		Jews	Gen.Pop.		Jews	Gen.Pop.	Jewish births	Jewish fertility ratio
U.S.A.	1967-71	228	392 <sup>c</sup>	-32	1.4	2.4 <sup>c</sup>	-30	-41
Canada	1957-61	421	606	-30	2.6	3.7	-14	4
	1967-71	292	390	-25	1.8	2.3	-14	-30
Sao Paulo (Brazil)	1965-69	220			1.3		-38	-42
Argentina	1956-60	247	471	-48	1.5	2.8	-24	-22
South Africa	1966-70	387	476 <sup>c</sup>	-19	2.4	3.1 <sup>c,d</sup>	-1	-14
Australia	1957-61	353	528	-33	2.2	3.4	-16	8
	1967-71	296	460	-36	1.8	2.9	1	-20
Greater Paris	1972-76 <sup>e</sup>	177	344	-36	1.3	2.0	-38	-44
Brussels (Belgium)	1957-61	238			1.4		-31	-27
Netherlands	1962-66	302	406 <sup>f</sup>	-26	1.8	2.9	8	4
Switzerland	1956-60	315	383	-18	1.9	2.3	-10	-3
	1966-70	305	364	-16	1.8	2.3	-5	-16

Italy	1961-65	303	398	-24	1.8	2.4	3	20
	1966-70	249	396	-37	1.5	2.4	-24	-37
Israel (Jews)	1971-75	529			3.2		18	- 4
European origin	1975	492			2.8		30	8
Asia-African origin	1975	560			3.6		10	-12

a) This table is taken from U.O. Schmeltz, *Jewish Survival: the demographic crisis*, op. cit.

The measures for Jews relate to "effectively Jewish" fertility and births.

- b) Percent change in interval between the two latest 5-year periods.  
c) Whites.  
d) 1970 only.  
e) Average for the 5-year interval(s) preceding the years indicated.  
f) 1967.

Table 11. Age distribution

	0-14	15-65	65+	Total
All Diaspora	19.0	68.0	13.0	100
All the world population	36.4	58.1	5.5	100
More developed countries	26.7	63.7	9.6	100
Jews of USSR (rough estimate 1970)	11.2	69.0	19.8	100
Jews of West Germany (1961)	14.3	65.5	20.2	100
Jews of Israel (1977)	30.3	60.5	9.2	100

Sources: See R. Bachi, *Population Trends of World Jewry*, op. cit. pp. 55-59.



This is due to a more secular character of the countries where most of the Jews live, and to presumably lesser impact of inferiority complex of the Jews. However, on the other side, demographic losses are due to informal withdrawals of the various types already indicated. Due to the fact that those withdrawals are informal, no current statistics on them is available and it is difficult to estimate directly their actual frequency.

E. *Prospects for the future.*

What can we expect in the future? No demographer can pretend to foresee with certainty future trends of Jewish Diaspora populations, because they may be connected with many uncertain political and social developments. However, within the limits in which we can suppose that long term trends now prevailing in the Diaspora will continue to operate in the future, it seems justified to accept the following conclusions:

- 1) The percentage of mixed marriages will remain high in Europe and will increase in America.
- 2) Jewish fertility will presumably be influenced even more than in the past by conditions prevailing in the societies in which the Jews live. I have already indicated above (section 5) that in modern times, even when the tendency to control births is very widespread, fertility has become very variable. The opinions of

Table 12. Rates of Births, Deaths and Natural Increase Among Jews and General Population, by Country and Period, per 1000 population.

Country	Period	Birth rate		Death Rate		Rate of natural Increase/decrease	
		Jews <sup>a</sup>	Gen.Pop.	Jews	Gen. Pop.	Jews <sup>a</sup>	Gen.Pop.
U.S.A.	1967-71	10	17 <sup>b</sup>	10	9.5 <sup>b</sup>	0	7.5 <sup>b</sup>
Canada	1957-61	17	27	7	8	10	19
	1967-71	12	17	10	7	2	10
Sao Paulo (Brazil)	1965-69	10		7		3	
Argentina	1956-60	11	24	10	9	1	15
South Africa	1966-70	16	23 <sup>b</sup>	9	9 <sup>b</sup>	7	14 <sup>b</sup>
Australia	1957-61	14	23	9	9	5	14
	1967-71	11	20	11	9	0	11
Greater Paris	1972-76 <sup>c</sup>	9	15	9	9	0	6
Brussels (Belgium)	1957-61	8		10		-2	
Netherlands	1962-66	11	19	13	8	-2	11
Germany	1961-65	3	18	21	11	-18	7
(Fed.Rep.)	1971-75	3	11	19	12	-16	-1

Switzerland	1959-62	11	18	16	10	- 5	8
	1969-72	12	15	16	9	- 4	6
Italy	1961-65	11	19	16	10	- 5	9
	1966-70	11	17	15	10	- 4	7
Russian Europe in Soviet Union	1959-70	6	18	15	8	- 9	10
Israel (Jews)	1971-75	24		7		17	
European origin	1975	21		10		11	
Asian-African origin	1975	29		5		24	

a) "Effectively Jewish" rates; see text.

b) Whites.

c) Averages for the 5-year interval preceding the years indicated.

Source: same as for Table 10.

the demographers on its future course in developed countries are divided.

Whilst everybody agrees that there are no prospects for any widespread return to traditional high fertility, there are some demographers who consider that the very strong decrease in the last 10-15 years or so in Europe and North America, is only a transient one. They forecast a return to a somewhat higher fertility. Other demographers connect the recent drastic decrease of fertility with the weakening of the family institution taking place in western society. This, in turn, is related to the great emphasis being put on the right of the individual to pursue his "personal fulfillment". Additional indications of this trend are: great permissiveness of sexual life outside marriage; increasing proportions of young couples living together in a more or less provisional way. without the ceremony of marriage; increasing proportions of out-of-wedlock births; rapidly increasing proportions of marriages ending in divorce. All these bring also to a change in the environment in which many children are raised; for instance it has been found that almost on third of children in USA do not live together with both their parents.<sup>1</sup> There are signs indicating that some

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1. P.C. Glick and A.J. Norton, Marrying, divorcing and living together in the US today, *Population Bulletin* (Population Reference Bureau), Vol. 32, No. 5, October 1977.

of the customs mentioned above are also penetrating into the Jewish society.<sup>1</sup> Certain Jewish groups and institutions in the USA have recently shown some concern on the possible inability of the Jewish family to fulfill, as in the past, the task of ensuring Jewish survival.<sup>2</sup> Similarly the problems of possible future decline of the numerical size of Jewish population of the USA and its consequences has been given some publicity.<sup>3</sup>

However, it is doubtful whether awareness of such developments is penetrating deeply and whether it may also determine an appreciable change in individual behaviour.

There is no doubt that changes in family life, low fertility and population ageing can exert a strong influence on the demographic future of the American Jewry and indeed on the future of the entire Diaspora. If present trends will not change, they can determine within a few decades a drastic decline in the size of the Diaspora Jewry.

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1. See, among others, C. Goldscheider, *Demography and American Jewish Survival*, *op. cit.*; E. Rosenthal, *Intermarriage among Jewry: a function of acculturation, community organization and population structure*. In B. Martin, ed., *Movement and Issues in American Judaism*. Westport, Greenwood 1978.
  2. See for instance: *Consultations on the Jewish Family; its role in Jewish identity and continuity*. New York, The American Jewish Committee, 1977; *Sustaining the Jewish Family*, The American Jewish Committee, 1979.
  3. See for instance, papers published in *Midstream*, October 1977 and November 1978.

Demographic trends deserve, therefore, a much greater attention than hitherto. If Jewish leadership - religious, political, and cultural - wishes to change, in any extent, the current state of affairs, the first steps to be undertaken must include a continuous follow-up of the demographic developments and the understanding of their deep and complex roots.

10. *Demographic trends in Israel.*

At the end of this demographic survey, I shall try to answer the question of whether the demographic crisis which menaces the future survival of the Diaspora, may affect also the Jewish population of Israel. I shall do this very briefly by examining the main aspects of the demography of Israel.

A. *Migratory balance between Israel and the Diaspora.*

Clearly, this balance works in Israel in the opposite direction to that considered for the Diaspora in Section 4. Despite the losses caused by emigration from Israel, this balance is generally favourable for the Jewish population of Israel. However, since 1965 the immigration has exerted only a very limited influence on the increase of the population.

B. *Marriage.*

In the Diaspora the nuptial characteristics of the Jews are at

present opposite to the characteristics which were traditional to the majority of the Jews in pre-modern times: instead of general, endogamous and very young marriages, we find weak tendency to marriage and many outmarriages.

The change in marriage habits in Israel has been more limited. On the one hand, it is true that here also traditional very young marriages have practically disappeared. However, on the other hand, the tendency to marry is still strong and the majority of Jewish girls marry between 18 and 24.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast with the Diaspora, mixed marriages are a purely marginal feature in the demography of Israel. Despite incompleteness of available data, it can be estimated that during the period 1951-1975 mixed marriages between the different religious groups of the population of Israel had an order of magnitude of some 2 per 1000. Also religious conversions have only a very small influence on the size of the Jewish population of Israel.

### C. *Fertility.*

Birth control, both through use of contraceptive methods and of abortions, has spread largely also among Israeli Jews. Its spread

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1. On nuptiality, fertility and mortality in Israel, see R. Bachi, *The population of Israel*, op. cit.

occurred earlier among the Jews of European and later among the Jews of Asian African origin.

The fertility of women who were born in Asia and Africa is much lower in Israel than that which was typical in the past in Jewish communities of these origins. Also the fertility of women of Asian-African origin who were born in Israel is much lower than the fertility of women who immigrated to Israel from Asia and Africa.

Among the women of European origin opposite trends are found: the fertility is higher in Israel than abroad and it is larger among the second generation of European origin in Israel than among immigrants from Europe.

As a consequence of the trends mentioned above, the differentials in fertility between the different Jewish population groups are much more limited at present than they were 25 years ago (see Table 13).

Fertility of the Jews in Israel is higher than fertility of Diaspora Jews and of populations of more developed countries. However, it is much lower than that found among the Moslems of Israel, despite the considerable decrease in Moslem fertility over the last decade.

#### *D. Age structure; birth - and death - rates; natural increase.*

The age structure of the Jewish population of Israel shows, as does the age structure of the Diaspora, an increase in the percentages of old people. However, this percentage is much smaller, whilst the proportion of children is much higher (see Table 11). Consequently and because of the higher fertility rate in Israel and absence of



losses due to mixed marriages and assimilation, the Jewish population of Israel, unlike that of the Diaspora, has a positive demographic balance.

E. *Changes in recent years.*

In recent years, changes in the family life have appeared in Israel which seem to be similar to those which appeared, although in much stronger measure, in Western countries and which have been commented upon above (Section 9E), such as: decrease in the tendency to marry, some rise of marriage age, increase in the number of couples living together without marriage ceremony, increase in proportion of births out-of-wedlock, increase in divorce rates.<sup>1</sup> It is too early to infer whether the decrease in fertility registered among Jews in 1976-1978 is connected with the trends mentioned above, and whether we ought to expect a further decrease of fertility. However, such a possibility cannot be ruled out.

F. *General conclusions.*

Despite the efforts which are made in Israel to encourage and to absorb immigration, to prevent emigration, and to favour emigrants' return, the probability appears to be small that the migratory balance

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1. On some of these trends see a paper in preparation by U.O. Schmelz on *New developments in the natural movements of the Jewish population of Israel*, Jerusalem, The Central Bureau of Statistics.

Table 13. Fertility in Israel

(Average number of children born to a woman during her reproductive lifetime)<sup>1</sup>

Period	Jewish women born in			Total	Moslem women	Christian women
	Europe America	Asia Africa	Israel			
1950-53	3.10	6.09	3.52	3.94		
1965-67	2.52	4.41	2.78	3.35	9.40	4.37
1968-71	2.84	4.18	3.03	3.40	8.90	3.80
1976-77	2.89	3.54	3.00	3.10	7.51	3.23

1. This average is calculated on the basis of specific fertility rates at each age in the period considered.

will give in the future a very important contribution to the growth of the Jewish population of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

In the long run, the dominating factor of increase of the Jewish population of Israel is the balance between births and deaths. This balance is today significantly positive. Actually the Jews of Israel are the only important branch of World Jewry which is not in demographic regression.<sup>2</sup>

However, there is also a possibility that the fertility of the Jews of Israel may decline, below the level it had in the late sixties and early seventies. Should this occur, the rate of growth of the Jewish population of Israel may decline even more than projected by recent calculations of the Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel.<sup>3</sup> Such a development might have important implications from the national,

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1. This conclusion is based on the analysis of questions mentioned in Section 4 and on the results of research by Y. Florsheim and others on the size and structure of the Jewish population of the USSR and on the influence exerted upon it by emigration. However, we must take into account the possibility that unforeseeable political and other factors may increase the future flow of immigration. Moreover, policies tending to encouragement of immigration and discouragement of emigration may be considered important from various viewpoints, even if their contribution to the increase of the population is comparatively modest.
  2. I cannot, therefore, accept the opinion expressed in the recent book by D. Friedlander and C. Goldscheider *The population of Israel* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1979, p. 193) that "the fertility of Jews in Israel has but a marginal effect on the population growth rates of World Jewry". This opinion is based on the assumption that the Jewish world population will increase from 14 millions in 1970 to 17.5 millions in 1990, and to 21.8 millions in 2010. This assumption is completely contradicted by current demographic trends of Diaspora Jewry.
  3. *Projection of Population and Household in Israel up to 1995*. Jerusalem, Central Bureau of Statistics Special Series No. 568, 1978. According

security and economic points of view. It is important to monitor these trends and also to investigate possible ways of a demographic policy which may limit undesirable consequences of future developments.<sup>1</sup>

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to this publication, the annual rate of natural increase per 1000 will gradually decrease from 16.5 in 1976-80 to 12.9 in 1991-95 in the Jewish population and from 38.4 to 32.1 in the non-Jewish population.

1. We cannot here deal with the complex problem of possible ways of a demographic policy in Israel. The literature on pro-natalist policy has grown considerably in recent years, with the acceptance of such policy by a considerable number of European countries. For Israel, see *Report of the Commission for Natality Problems*, submitted to the Prime Minister, Jerusalem, Prime Minister's Office, 1966; various publications by the Demographic Center of the Government (at present in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare); the book by D. Friedlander and C. Goldscheider, quoted above.

## DISCUSSION

*Calvin Goldscheider*

In analyzing the "demographic crisis" of Diaspora Jewry, several points should be stressed. The first point relates to low Jewish fertility. In order to understand this phenomenon we need to separate clearly changes in marital fertility from changes in total fertility. In the United States, as well as in other Western countries, dramatic changes have occurred in the proportion marrying and age at marriage. If one can move from the general to the specific, I suspect that one set of factors influencing recent low Jewish fertility levels in the United States is the change in marriage patterns and the tempo of family formation rather than the ultimate family size of married Jewish couples. Many young persons are deciding either to delay marriage or to postpone marriage. These decisions have an impact on both period fertility rates as well as on the reproductive levels of the American Jewish population as a whole (in contrast to the reproductive levels of married Jewish couples). Those who marry tend in large part to have two children, a pattern that has characterized American Jewish marriage cohorts since the 1920's. The major change in the last decade has been that there are fewer married Jewish women in the population.

Hence, while cohort fertility within marriage has remained low but relatively stable, the fertility of the American Jewish population (in-

cluding the married and non-married) has declined. And period fertility fluctuations - reflecting changes in marriage rates and the tempo of family formation - have been greater than average completed family size.

Much more research is needed to study these marriage and family size patterns before concluding that fertility patterns (at least of American Jewry) are at "crisis levels".

A second point relates to Professor Bachi's comparative-historical approach. It seems to me that if there is a demographic crisis in the Diaspora, it is not the same crisis for all Jewish communities. More particularly, it does not characterize all the various segments of the Jewish population. Smaller Jewish communities are most affected by demographic issues as are communities where Jewish population size is small, where Jewish density is low, and where Jewish residential integration is high. Part of the problem relates to the issue of the availability of young Jewish men and women. The problem of "marriage markets" or the "availability" of potential and eligible Jewish marriage partners is particularly critical for a small ethnic group that stresses (at least normatively) endogamous marriages. The "marriage market" problem results either in non-marriage, delayed marriage, or migration to places where the market is better. Often it results in marriages outside the Jewish group. Indeed, one reason, often overlooked, for the changing levels of intermarriage is not that Jews desire assimilation and hence marry out but rather that Jewish values stressing family and

marriage may result in outmarriages when the Jewish marriage market is problematic. The major point, however, is that these issues of intermarriage (and related demographic issues) are not uniform between or within Jewish communities.

An additional area of difficulty rests with Professor Bachi's theme that the number of Jews from Western countries who immigrate to Israel is too small. Without disputing that fact or the ideological commitment behind it, we need also to ask whether the selectivity of immigration does not generate additional serendipitous problems. For example, we know from research that immigrants to Israel from the United States are more likely to be Jewishly committed in a variety of ways when compared to the general Jewish American population. Does this immigration selectivity exacerbate the problem of Jewish continuity in America? Or in the Soviet Union? Does not the encouragement of more Aliya risk the further decline in quality of Jewish life in the Diaspora? Even if we are dealing with but several thousand olim every year, the selectivity factor may have a significant impact on both the quality and quantity of remaining Diaspora Jewry. While in many ways Aliya may strengthen the ties between Israel and the Diaspora, we need to be more aware of the potential negative consequences such selective Aliya may have over time.

The complement of this selectivity effect of Aliya is the selectivity and impact of the Israelis who have emigrated to Diaspora countries. The relationship of Yordim to the American Jewish community and to the

Israeli community needs more scientific study than heretofore has been given. The question of the emergence of a new ethnic group in America (the Israeli) alienated both from Israel and American Jews needs to be monitored systematically.

Finally, we need to be somewhat more cautious in interpreting inter-marriage levels. This is because of the poor data quality, particularly for the largest Jewish community in the world (the United States), but also because intermarriage cannot always be viewed as a demographic loss to the Jewish community. Just as aliya from America may have negative as well as positive dimensions in terms of Jewish continuity, so intermarriage may have positive as well as negative implications. Although there remains an enormous amount of speculation on the issue, my own analysis suggests that the quantitative impact of Jewish intermarriage is much less significant in the United States than what has often been portrayed in both popular and "scientific" publications. This is not to say that the level is not relatively high for a minority group reproducing at replacement levels. Rather that the selectivity of intermarriage, the lack of total loss of the Jewish spouse to the Jewish community, the joining of substantial proportions of non-Jewish spouses to the Jewish community, and the Jewish identification of children of mixed marriages point in the direction of much less total loss than a simple intermarriage rate conveys.

In sum, while not denying that there exists a number of demogra-



phic issues among Diaspora Jews, and that there are serious questions of Jewish demographic survival in some places and for some communities, on the whole, I would argue, that Diaspora Jewry will survive demographically - all other things being equal - for several generations at least. We need to direct our attention at the more difficult issues of population quality and particularly at the interaction between population processes and the quality of Jewish life. For those segments who have basic Jewish commitments, the issue of demographic continuity is hardly a problem. It is for those that stand at the least committed end of the Jewish commitment continuum where both quantitative and qualitative concerns merge and raise questions about selective Jewish continuity in the Diaspora.

*U.O. Schmelz*

There is resemblance in basic demographic trends between the Jewish Diaspora populations in the developed regions of the world, but differences exist in the present levels of their demographic parameters. These differences may be partly due to time-lags between the Diaspora regions in a largely analogous evolution.

The fertility of the Jewish women is by now insufficient for demographic replacement in probably all the developed regions of the world. This low fertility of the Jewish women is only partly explainable by changes in marriage mores (such as reduced propensity to marry). Also the fertility of the married Jewish women is very low.

In our time, out-marriage by Jews does not usually lead to the religious conversion of one of the spouses. Therefore the contention, voiced specifically in the United States, of a numerical gain to the Jewish group owing to conversions of non-Jewish spouses or their self-identification as "Jews" is not only based on partial and disputable evidence but of secondary relevance. The demographically decisive aspect is whether the offspring of the mixed couples belong to the Jewish group or not. The U.S. National Jewish Population Study of 1970-71 indicated 22.5 percent non-Jews among the 0-4 years old children in the surveyed population. This agrees with the impressions accumulating from other countries that under existing conditions the main demographic effect of out-marriage is the loss to the Jewish group of a considerable proportion of the respective children. Only "effectively Jewish births" and not all the births with at least one Jewish parent figure on the positive side of the demographic balance sheet of Diaspora Jewry.

Israel's Jews do not sustain assimilatory losses. Moreover, all their major sections, including the Jews of European origin, and the Israel-born, have recently displayed a fertility in excess not only of the Diaspora Jews but also of the general population of the developed countries.

Though *aliya* weakens numerically the Diaspora, its positive features in global Jewish perspective are not limited to the strengthening of the sovereign Jewish state. The Jewish families which immigrate to

Israel remove themselves and their children from the danger of assimilatory losses. Besides, the fertility of the Jews of European origin who have come to Israel has gone up here from a level implying a natural decrease to one sufficient for a moderate natural increase. This seems a noteworthy feature not only demographically but also from the viewpoint of the socio-psychological processes involved in *aliya* and absorption of *olim* in Israel. *Aliya* multiplies the personal and family ties between the Diaspora and Israel at a time when Israel assumes an increasingly important role among the "Jewish attachment" of the secularized Diaspora groups.

In the light of the revised Jewish population estimates proposed by this author, Israel's Jews amounted to 23 percent of world Jewry by 1975: 3 Jews resided in Israel for every 10 in the Diaspora. But approximately 40 percent of the "effectively Jewish" babies are being born in Israel.

A temporary boost for Jewish births is now due to the fact that the comparatively many Jewish children born during the "baby boom" around 1950 have become of procreative age, but this constellation will not last.

While the Jewish populations in the U.S.A. and Canada may hold now their own numerically because of increased immigration, despite insufficient fertility and assimilatory losses, most other Diaspora regions and total Diaspora Jewry are already dwindling due to a negative balance of internal changes and/or a negative migration balance. In the overall demographic balance of world Jewry the natural growth of Israel's Jews will compensate for some time longer for the decreases in the Diaspora,

but Israel's Jews will be unable to stem the lowering tide indefinitely. As from the 1990's a decline in the size of world Jewry is to be anticipated. This trend will accelerate at the beginning of the next century when rising numbers of out-married Jews will die without leaving a Jewish progeny.

Diaspora Jewry is also heading for very acute "aging".

The above statements have been confined to numerical assessments. Besides these there were grounds for concern about Jewish attachment and cherishing of Jewish values. The persistence of a relatively small minority group, as are the Jews everywhere in the Diaspora, depends not only on demographic performance per se but also on the continuity of the group identity. In both these respects a will for Jewish survival is necessary.

## REPLY

*Roberto Bachi*

I agree with most of the remarks made by Professor Schmelz, and wish to answer briefly some of the remarks made by Professor Calvin Goldscheider.

1) Total fertility depends largely (not exclusively) upon nuptiality by age, and marital fertility. No doubt both are worth studying, as far as data are available. However with regard to the basic issue of future size of the Diaspora population, the main problem is level of total fertility. Considering together fertility by age and age structure, long run prospects are for considerable decline of the Diaspora population. Whether or not we are entitled to call "population decline" "demographic crisis" is a semantic question.

2) There is no difference of opinion on the fact that size of the "Jewish marriage market" is one of the factors affecting variability in the proportion of outmarriages between Diaspora communities. This size depends, in turn, upon many factors, including: number of males and females of marriage age in each community; the geographical dispersion of the Jews over the area where each community lives; the amount of social contacts among the Jews; the extent to which means which may create

contacts between marriage candidates living in different places are used, etc. Some of these factors are briefly discussed in Sections 6A, 8C, 9A.

3) I did not discuss the shortage of immigrants to Israel from Western countries. I simply tried to stress that propensity to immigrate from these countries has consistently been much lower than propensity to immigrate from other countries. With drastic reduction of the proportion of Jews living in Non-Western countries, total immigration to Israel has had in the past 15 years an average level much lower than in 1948-1964.

4) The complexity in measuring demographic consequences of mixed marriage over the size of the Jewish population and the difference of these consequences between different Jewish Diaspora populations was discussed in Section 9A.

5) Nobody suggests that the Diaspora "will not survive" for several generations. However we can expect that some Diaspora populations will continue to dwindle rapidly in the immediate future and others, including the American community, will start to decline substantially in a few decades. If substantial changes in present trends do not occur, we can expect in the long run a considerable decrease in the Jewish Diaspora population which may not be compensated by the residual natural increase of the Jewish population of Israel. These trends may have many important consequences, which warrant systematic analysis and thought. Some "qualitative" changes may occur, including changes in the proportion of more committed Jews within the reduced Diaspora

population. While I concur with Professor Goldscheider that these qualitative changes also warrant study, I think we should avoid considering "quality" or "quantity" as alternatives in themselves. Both are important.