

DIVERSITY OF VOICES

CONTEMPORARY JEWISH ISSUES IN THEIR ISRAELI CONTEXT



Edited by
Richard Juran and Debbie Sapir

An Anthology Prepared as Part
of The Wexner Israel Course for the Advanced
Jewish Education of Executive Directors
of North American Jewish Community Centers



JCC Association of North America wishes to express its gratitude to The Wexner Foundation for its support of the Wexner Program in Continuing Jewish Education for Executive Directors of JCCs and JCC Camps (1991-1995), and for the Wexner Israel Course for graduates of the program (1995-1997).



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October 30, 1998

Dear Colleague:

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The JCC Association is pleased to send you our newest publication **DIVERSITY OF VOICES: CONTEMPORARY JEWISH ISSUES IN THEIR ISRAELI CONTEXT**. This volume was developed within the context of grants JCC Association received from the Wexner Foundation for an innovative program in continuing Jewish education for executives of Jewish Community Centers and JCC camps. This program included ongoing study in North America (1991-1995) and in Israel (1994-1997), and it also encompassed the collection and publication of exciting resource materials on contemporary Israel.

The essays in **DIVERSITY OF VOICES** clearly demonstrate that Israel of the late 1990s is a very different place than the Israel of former years. The gap between the standard of living of Israel and Western societies has significantly narrowed, and today Israel is a very modern and a very dynamic contemporary society. Tel Aviv is a non-stop city, Israelis travel abroad and many of the issues that preoccupy Israelis are the same issues that preoccupy people all over the world.

At the same time, there are some unique issues and challenges that can only be found in Israel. Contemporary Israel is a laboratory of diverse voices talking to each other - and often not merely talking but shouting and arguing - about what it means to be a Jewish society at the end of the twentieth century. Sometimes these voices create music, sometimes they create noise, but they always create excitement.

This volume captures that excitement. It includes articles that help to explicate contemporary Jewish issues, along with introductions and discussion questions that illustrate the many connections and parallels between Jewish life in Israel and North America at the end of the millennium. These articles can be very useful for continuing education following staff and board trips to Israel, and they also can be used for board and staff retreats and sessions. In addition, there are research reports prepared by JCC executives who participated in the Wexner program which can be useful in connecting what happens in Israel with the realities of JCC life. This publication also includes an essay which provides an educational overview of this entire effort in adult learning which might be useful for others interested in replicating this unique venture.

We wish you a rich and exciting educational journey.

Sincerely,

Allan Finkelstein
Executive Vice-President



Diversity of Voices:
Contemporary Jewish Issues in Their
Israeli Context

*An Anthology Prepared as Part of The Wexner Israel Course
for the Advanced Jewish Education of Executive Directors
of North American Jewish Community Centers*

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Diversity of Voices: Contemporary Jewish Issues in Their Israeli Context

*An Anthology Prepared as Part of The Wexner Israel Course
for the Advanced Jewish Education of Executive Directors
of North American Jewish Community Centers*

The Wexner Israel Course created a new model for serious adult Jewish learning within the context of a JCC Israel seminar experience. The executive directors of North American Jewish Community Centers and JCC camps who participated in the pilot project attended a graduate-level university course interwoven with elements of a Jewish educational training seminar in Israel. At the same time, they engaged in independent research in diverse areas of Israeli society and produced written analyses of their research findings, including implications for North American Jewish life and the role of the JCC as an agent for Jewish continuity in the community. The vision, vocabulary, conceptual frameworks, and ambitious Jewish educational agendas with which these Center executives and JCC camp directors returned from Israel have become a highly regarded, energizing force throughout the North American JCC movement.

The first section of this anthology presents a number of recent articles from journals and newspapers, some translated from Hebrew, spanning a broad range of topics and reflecting the voices and faces of contemporary Israel. Each article focuses on a different issue in its contemporary Israeli context. Each is preceded by some brief background explanations to make the text more accessible to the reader, and is followed by a number of questions for discussion. Some of these questions attempt to help the reader delve into the content of the article itself, while others point to possible connections to parallel North American Jewish contexts. The questions for discussion presume a degree of "insider" familiarity with Israel today, and may therefore be most useful in discussions facilitated by Center Jewish educators or others with prior Israel experience.

The second section of the anthology includes a set of papers written by JCC executive directors and camp directors who participated in the pilot, the Wexner Israel Course (November - December 1995), and another set of papers produced during the second pilot phase, which was incorporated into the final three-week segment of the Israel Fellows program (July 1996). This collection presents paradigm shifts in a variety of areas, as well as first thoughts on possible ramifications for North American Jewish life, including possible roles Jewish Community Centers might play.

The appendix contains an essay about the background, history, and conceptual framework of the Wexner Israel Course, which was an attempt to develop a prototype for a new kind of Israel-based learning and training for North American Jewish community professionals. The summary of the planning, implementation, and analysis of the project is intended to make it accessible to others who might wish to replicate the model. (It has already been used for two groups of Center directors, and based on the outcome of these experiments, it is quite likely that others will wish to follow suit.)

By its very nature, an anthology of this kind is a "snapshot" of reality at a certain point in time - in this case, of Israel in the 1990s. During the three years of the project, Israel went from initial euphoria over the massive *aliyah* from the Former Soviet Union and the pending fruits of peace, including the opening of new markets in the Middle East and beyond, and a dramatic rise in the standard of living, to the shock of political assassination when Prime Minister Rabin was gunned down, and to the waning of economic growth as the peace process slowed during the Netanyahu administration. The story is never complete, and many of the background pieces had to be rewritten and updated while the anthology was being prepared. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the vignettes contained in this volume will con-

tinue to offer relevant insights into the reality of contemporary Israel, and to the rich and important connections to Jews in North American communities and around the world.

Finally, all who have contributed to this anthology have attempted to show the issues in their intricacy and full color. There was no attempt to promote a particular social, political, religious, cultural, or economic point of view. The project operated on the assumption that no single approach or ideology is more legitimate than another. The objective was to help the participants see that the cacophonous coexistence of complex, diverse voices in Israel - and in the North American Jewish community - can be a vital source of strength and inspiration for Jewish life.

Voices of Israel

*Articles on Contemporary Jewish Issues in Israeli Contexts with Introductions
and Questions for Discussion*

100 Years After Basel:
Zionism, Post-Zionism, and Jewish Self-Understanding

Jewishness in Israel:
Identity, Pluralism, and Relevance

New Relationships for Israeli and Diaspora Jews

Cultural and Artistic Expressions of Israel

Introduction

The precursors of Zionism began writing in the middle of the nineteenth century. By 1897, these thoughts and dreams had grown to a full-fledged political movement, and the first Zionist Congress was held in Basel, Switzerland. Half a century later, in 1948, the Jewish people founded a sovereign Jewish State in Eretz Israel. Many diverse Jewish world views in Eastern and Western Europe, among religious and secular Jews, those with socialist or revisionist or cultural ideologies, formed the Zionist movement. They shared a desire to establish a national home for the Jewish people, and in some cases, for Judaism, preferably in the historic homeland.

As the twentieth century draws to a close, the agenda of world Jewry has changed. Millions of Jews died in the Holocaust; millions more settled in the Jewish State (and in smaller numbers, in other Jewish communities in the free world); anti-Semitism, a major force behind the Zionist movement, has waned in many parts of the globe; and Jews in Israel, rather than busying themselves with drying swamps, reclaiming the land, and learning to farm it, are busy building an ever more affluent, Western, in some ways "yuppie" society, strong in agricultural and high tech exports, and divided at the core of its Jewish

soul: In what way is Israel a State for Jews? A Jewish State? Should religion be separated from state in a modern, Western society, or should the state be first and foremost Jewish? Should "Jewish" be defined halachically (i.e., in Orthodox terms), or more pluralistically as in other Western Jewish communities? What should be the status of non-Jewish Israelis in the Jewish State? One hundred years after the founding of the Zionist movement, and after almost fifty years of statehood, the questions, challenges, and controversies only grow.

In order to appreciate some of the debates and the rhetoric in Israel of the 1990s which are discussed throughout this anthology, it is necessary to return to some of the original seminal thinkers who created the terms and defined the challenges of the original debate. Not all of them are represented in the sampling below. The excerpts from the works of these Zionist "founding fathers" represent four of the main schools of thought in the early Zionist movement, reflect the original diversity of the entire Zionist enterprise, and contain some of the essential concepts of prevalent thinking as the Zionist movement gained momentum.

Original Zionist Visions

Theodore Herzl - Political Zionism

The Jewish State (1896).

The idea which I have developed in this pamphlet is an ancient one: It is the restoration of the Jewish State.

The world resounds with clamor against the Jews, and this has revived the dormant idea.... (204)

The decisive factor is our propelling force. And what is that force? The plight of the Jews.

Who would dare to deny that this exists? We shall discuss it fully in the chapter on the causes of anti-Semitism. . . . (205)

It depends on the Jews themselves whether this political document remains for the present a political romance. If this generation is too dull to understand it rightly, a future, finer, more advanced generation will arise to comprehend it. The Jews who will try it shall achieve their State; and they will deserve it. . . . (207)

The Jewish question still exists. It would be foolish to deny it. It is a misplaced piece of medievalism which civilized nations do not even yet seem able to shake off, try as they will. They proved they had this high-minded desire when they emancipated us. The Jewish question persists wherever Jews live in appreciable numbers. Wherever it does not exist, it is brought in together with Jewish immigrants. We are naturally drawn into those places where we are not persecuted, and our appearance there gives rise to persecution. This is the case, and will inevitably be so, everywhere, even in highly civilized countries - see, for instance France - so long as the Jewish question is not solved on the political level. The unfortunate Jews are now carrying the seeds of anti-Semitism into England; they have already introduced it into America.

Anti-Semitism is a highly complex movement, which I think I understand. I approach this movement as a Jew, yet without fear or hatred. I believe that I can see in it the elements of cruel sport, of common commercial rivalry, of inherited prejudice, of religious intolerance - but also of a supposed need for self-defense. I consider

the Jewish question neither a social nor a religious one, even though it sometimes takes these and other forms. It is a national question, and to solve it we must first of all establish it as an international political problem to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council.

We are a people - *one* people. . . . (208-9)

No human being is wealthy or powerful enough to transplant a people from one place of residence to another. Only an idea can achieve that. The State idea surely has that power. The Jews have dreamed this princely dream throughout the long night of their history. "Next year in Jerusalem" is our age-old motto. It is now a matter of showing that the vague dream can be transformed into a clear and glowing idea. . . . (213)

The plan, simple in design but complicated in execution, will be executed by two agencies: the Society of Jews and the Jewish Company.

The scientific plan and political policies which the Society of Jews will establish will be carried out by the Jewish Company.

The Jewish Company will be the liquidating agent for the business interest of departing Jews, and will organize trade and commerce in the new country.

We must not visualize the exodus of the Jews as a sudden one. It will be gradual, proceeding over a period of decades. The poorest will go first and cultivate the soil. They will construct roads, bridges, railways, and telegraph installations, regulate rivers, and provide themselves with homesteads, all according to predetermined plans. Their labor will create trade, trade will create markets, and market will attract new settlers - for every man will go voluntarily, at his own expense and his own risk. The labor invested in the soil will enhance the value. The Jews will soon perceive that a new and permanent frontier has been opened up for that spirit of enterprise which has heretofore brought them only hatred and obloquy.... (220-1)

Is Palestine or Argentina preferable? The Society will take whatever is given and whatever Jewish public opinion favors. The Society will determine both these points.

Argentina is one of the most fertile countries in the world, extends over a vast area, is sparsely populated, and has a temperate climate... .

Palestine is our unforgettable historic homeland. The very name would be a marvelously effective rallying cry. . . . (222)

Let me repeat once more my opening words: The Jews who will it shall achieve their State.

We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and in our own homes peacefully die. (225)

Ahad Ha-Am Cultural Zionism

The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem (1897).

We must admit to ourselves that the "ingathering of the exiles" is unattainable by natural means. We may, by natural means, someday establish a Jewish State; it is possible that the Jews may increase and multiply within it until the "land is filled with them" - but even then the greater part of our people will remain scattered on foreign soils... .

But if this is so, if the Jewish State, too, means not an "ingathering of the exiles" but the settlement of a small part of our people in Palestine, then how will this solve the material problem of the Jewish masses in the lands of the Diaspora?

The material problem will not be ended by the establishment of a Jewish State, and it is, indeed, beyond our power to solve it once and for all. . . . Whether or not we create a Jewish State, the material situation of the Jews will always basically depend on the economic condition and the cultural level of the various nations among which we are dispersed.

Thus we are driven to the conclusion that the real and only basis of Zionism is to be found in another problem, the spiritual one.

But the spiritual problem appears in two differing forms, one in the West and one in the East, which explains the fundamental difference between western "Zionism" and eastern "Hibbat Zion." [the "Lovers of Zion" movement - ed.]....

The western Jew, having left the ghetto and having sought acceptance by the gentile majority, is unhappy because his hope of an open-armed welcome has been disappointed. Perforce he returns to his own people and tries to find within the Jewish community that life for which he yearns - but in vain. . . . For it is not the attainment of the ideal that he needs; its pursuit alone is suffi-

cient to cure him of his spiritual disease, which is that of an inferiority complex, and the loftier and more distant the ideal, the greater its power to exalt.

This is the basis of western Zionism and the secret of its attraction. But eastern Hibbat Zion originated and developed in a different setting. It, too, began as a political movement; but, being a result of material evils, it could not be content with an "activity" consisting only of outbursts of feeling and fine phrases, which may satisfy the heart but not the stomach. Hibbat Zion began at once to express itself in concrete activities - in the establishment of colonies in Palestine. . . . Hibbat Zion could not lessen the material woe of the Jews by one iota. One might, therefore, have thought that, when this fact became patent, the Hovevei Zion would give up their effort and cease wasting time and energy on work which brought them no nearer their goal. But, no... .

For at the very time when the material tragedy in the East was at its height, the heart of the eastern Jews was sensitive to another tragedy as well - a spiritual one; and when the Hovevei Zion began to work for the solution of the material problem, the national instinct of the people felt that in this work it would find the remedy for its spiritual trouble... .

The eastern form of the spiritual problem is absolutely different from the western. In the West it is the problem of the Jews; in the East, the *problem of Judaism*. The first weighs on the individual; the second, on the nation... .

It is not only the Jews who have come out of the ghetto; Judaism has come out, too... wherever it has come into contact with modern culture. . . . The spirit of our people desires further development; it wants to absorb the basic elements of general culture which are reaching it from the outside world, to digest them and make them a part of itself, as it has done before at various periods of its history. But the conditions of life in exile are not suitable for such a task... .

Judaism is therefore in a quandary: It can no longer tolerate the *Galut* [Exile] form which it had to take on, in obedience to its will-to-live, when it was exiled from its own country; but, without that form, its life is in danger. So it seeks to return to its historic center, where it will be able to live a life developing in a natural way, to bring its powers into play in every department of human culture. . . . This Jewish settlement, which will be a gradual growth, will become in course of time the center of the nation, wherein its spirit will find pure expression and develop in all its aspects to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. Then, from this center, the spirit of Judaism will radiate to the great circumference, to all the communities of the Diaspora, to inspire them

with new life and to preserve the over-all unity of our people. When our national culture in Palestine has attained that level, we may be confident that it will produce men in the Land of Israel itself who will be able, at a favorable moment, to establish a State there - one which will be not merely a State of Jews but really a Jewish State... .

"Zionism," therefore, begins its work with political propaganda; Hibbat Zion begins with national culture, because only *through* the national culture and *for its sake* can a Jewish State be established in such a way as to correspond with the will and the needs of the Jewish people. (264- 269 *passim*)

Ber Borochov - Socialist Zionism

"Our Platform" (1906)

Anti-Semitism is becoming a dangerous political movement. Anti-Semitism flourishes because of the national competition between the Jewish and non-Jewish petty bourgeoisie and between the Jewish and non-Jewish proletarianized and unemployed masses.... (361)

The national problem of the declining Jewish petty bourgeoisie consists in a search for a market which should free it from the horrible economic isolation which characterizes it at present.

In the case of this group, the national problem is very acute. To solve it, the Jewish petty bourgeoisie is forced to abandon its native lands and to migrate to new countries, but even there it finds no satisfactory solution. ... It therefore enters the labor market and is transformed into a part of the working masses. In the labor market, too, it must face national competition. . . . Thus there arises a national struggle based on need and the impossibility of satisfying the need... .

Concretely, the problem of the Jewish petty bourgeoisie is that of emigration... The Jewish problem migrates with the Jews. . . . Emigration alone does not solve the Jewish problem. It leaves the Jew helpless in a strange country . . . at the same time it accelerates the rise of national competition. . . . (363)

Such concentration . . . results in the segregation of the newly arrived group and hinders the process of adaptation.... Through their concentration in the large cities, the Jews retain their former economic traditions and are condemned to the final levels of production - the manufacturing of consumers' goods... .

The impossibility of penetrating into higher levels of production creates the need for concentrated immigra-

tion into an undeveloped country. Instead of being limited to the final levels of production, as is the case in all other countries, the Jews could in a short time assume the leading position in the economy of the new land. Jewish migration must be transformed from immigration into colonization. This means a territorial solution of the Jewish problem.... (364)

The class struggle must assume a political character if it is to lead to a better future. Proletarian Zionism is possible only if its aims can be achieved through the class struggle; Zionism can be realized only if proletarian Zionism can be realized. . . . The country into which Jews will immigrate will not be highly industrial nor predominantly agricultural, but rather semiagricultural. Jews alone will migrate there.... (365)

The land of spontaneously concentrated Jewish immigration will be Palestine. Political territorial autonomy in Palestine is the ultimate aim of Zionism. For proletarian Zionists, this is also a step toward socialism...

Parallel with the growth of economic independence will come the growth of political independence. The ideal of political autonomy for the Jews will be consummated by *political territorial autonomy in Palestine.* (366)

* * * * *

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook - Religious Zionism

"The Land of Israel" (1910 - 1930)

Eretz Israel is not something apart from the soul of the Jewish people; it is no mere national possession, serving as a means of unifying our people and buttressing its material, or even its spiritual, survival. Eretz Israel is part of the very essence of our nationhood; it is bound organically to its very life and inner being. Human reason, even at its most sublime, cannot begin to understand the unique holiness of Eretz Israel; it cannot stir the depths of love for the land that have dormant within our people. What Eretz Israel means to the Jew can be felt only through the Spirit of the Lord... .

To regard Eretz Israel as merely a tool for establishing our national unity - or even for sustaining our religion in the Diaspora by preserving its proper character and its faith, piety, and observances - is a sterile notion; it is unworthy of the holiness of Eretz Israel. . . . (419)

Jewish original creativity, whether in the realm of

ideas or in the arena of daily life and action, is impossible except in Eretz Israel. On the other hand, whatever the Jewish people creates in Eretz Israel assimilates the universal into characteristic and unique Jewish form, to the great benefit of the Jewish people and of the world. .

A Jew cannot be as devoted and true to his own ideas, sentiments and imagination in the Diaspora as he can in Eretz Israel. Revelations of the Holy, of whatever degree, are relatively pure in Eretz Israel.... (420)

The Rebirth of Israel (1910 - 1930)

The world and all that it contains is waiting for the light of Israel, for the Exalted Light radiating from Him Whose Name is to be praised. This people was fashioned by God to speak His Glory. . . . (424)

The world of the gentiles is tattered and rent. In its view the body is divided from the soul, and there is no inner bond and identity between matter and spirit, no basic unity between action and idea... .

Redemption is continuous. The Redemption from Egypt and the Final Redemption are part of the same process, "of the mighty hand and outstretched arm," which began in Egypt and is evident in all of history... .

It is a grave error to be insensitive to the distinctive unity of the Jewish spirit, to imagine that the Divine stuff which uniquely characterizes Israel is comparable to the spiritual content of all the other national civilizations. This error is the source of the attempt to sever the national from the religious element of Judaism. Such a division would falsify both our nationalism and our religion.... (425)

But, mistaken as is the attempt to divide these indivisible components of the Jewish spirit, it is an even greater error to imagine that such a sundering could possibly succeed; it is, therefore, pointless to wage a bitter and ill-conceived war against those who are loyal to only one aspect of the Jewish character. . . . No matter what they may think, the particular element of the Jewish spirit that they may make their own, being rooted in the total life of our people, must inevitably contain every aspect of its ethos.

Our quarrel with them must be directed only to the specific task of demonstrating their error and of proving to them that all their effort to fragmentize the higher unity of Israel is foredoomed to failure. We who represent the integrity of the Jewish will and spirit must react in a deeply natural way, by merely analyzing the opposing positions to show that any individual element of the Jewish spirit cannot help but include all the values that

the "sunderers" hope to forget and destroy. Once this truth is established. . . . They will then realize that nationalism, or religion, or any other element of the spirit of Israel, can realize itself only in the context of a Jewish life that is full, stirring, and entirely true to every shade of its essence. (425-6)

Lights for Rebirth (1910 - 1930)

There is an eternal covenant which assures the whole House of Israel that it will not ever become completely unclean... .

But Jewish secular nationalism is a form of self-delusion: the spirit of Israel is so closely linked to the spirit of God that a Jewish nationalist, no matter how secularist his intention may be, must, despite himself, affirm the divine. An individual can sever the tie that binds him to life eternal, but the House of Israel as a whole cannot. All of its most cherished national possessions - its land, language, history, and customs - are vessels of the spirit of the Lord.

How should men of faith respond to an age of ideological ferment which affirms all of these values in the name of nationalism and denies their source, the rootedness of the national spirit, in God? To oppose Jewish nationalism, even in speech, and to denigrate its values is not permissible, for the spirit of God and the spirit of Israel are identical. What they must do is to work all the harder at the task of uncovering the light and holiness implicit in our national spirit, the divine element which is its core. The secularists will thus be constrained to realize that they are immersed and rooted in the life of God and bathed in the radiant sanctity that comes from above.

Despite the grave faults of which we are aware in our life in general, and in Eretz Israel in particular, we must feel that we are being reborn and that we are being created once again as at the beginning of time. . . . All our people believes that we are in the first stage of the Final Redemption. This deep faith is the very secret of its existence; it is the divine mystery implicit in its historical experience. This ancient tradition about the Redemption bears witness to the spiritual light by which the Jew understands himself and all the events of his history to the last generation, the one that is awaiting the Redemption that is near at hand. (430-1)

Original Zionist Visions

Questions for discussion:

1. Each of these Zionist thinkers offers an analysis of the state of the Jewish people at the turn of the century or in the early years of the twentieth century, and each concludes that the solution to the Jewish problem lies in the founding of a Jewish state.

- What are the key arguments of each "school" - political, cultural, socialist, and religious Zionism?
- To what extent are any of these essential elements compatible or in conflict? (In other words, were these Zionist thinkers trying to found the same Jewish State, or were any of their thoughts mutually exclusive?)
- Can the seeds of any of Israel's current controversies be identified in any of the answers to the questions above?

2. Theodore Herzl wrote a book entitled *Der Judenstaat*, "The State of the Jews." Ahad Ha-Am distinguished between the problem of the Jews in the West, and the problem of Judaism in the East (noting that both were ultimately *spiritual*, rather than material, problems). Rav Kook rejected the notion of nationalistic Judaism devoid of religion saying that by definition, Judaism is a total entity from which specific content cannot be deleted. These three different perspectives are reflected in contemporary views of Israel.

- In what ways is modern Israel a Jewish state, a state of Jews, and/or a state of *the* Jews?
- Almost 100 years have passed since Ahad Ha-Am stated that the problem of the Jews was essentially a spiritual one. Does the contemporary Jewish experience in Israel and North America bear out his analysis?
- Earlier in the twentieth century, Rav Kook rejected the distinction between nation and religion in Judaism/Jewish peoplehood. In what ways does Jewish life in late twentieth century Israel and North America support or refute his point of view?

3. Ahad Ha-Am envisioned the development of a new Jewish culture, partly as an outgrowth of the interplay between a Jewish "center" in Eretz Israel and a Jewish periphery in the Diaspora.

- As the twentieth century draws to a close, would it appear that Ahad Ha-Am's vision has been realized?
- Does the Jewish people have a thriving Jewish culture, and if so, what differences in cultural vitality exist among Jewish communities throughout the world?
- Assuming such differences in cultural vitality exist, to what extent are these distinctions essentially distinctions between Jewish life in Israel and the Diaspora? How does North American Jewish cultural life fit into this analysis?
- What criteria constitute distinctly "Jewish" culture, and what conditions might be necessary for it to thrive?

4. Ber Borochov thought that economic and political independence would culminate in political territorial autonomy for the Jews in Palestine. A century later, as Israel has gravitated toward the material pleasures of Western society and *kibbutzim* have moved away from collectivism toward greater individualism and even privatization, what is the legacy of socialist Zionism in Israeli society?

5. Rav Kook believed that the largely secular Zionist movement, rather than being anathema for taking messianic redemption into human hands, was actually the very beginning of the messianic era; in his eyes, Zionists were helping the messiah in the early stages of his work of redeeming the Jewish people and returning them to *Eretz Israel*. In this sense, religious and non-religious, Eastern and Western Zionists were all partners in the same enterprise. One hundred years later, what has changed and what has remained the same in the way religious and non-religious Israelis are able to feel they are part of a shared endeavor?

Introduction

Professor Shapira analyzes what at first might seem an esoteric, academic debate among Israeli historians in the 1990s: the controversy over so-called "post-Zionism," whose historians have slaughtered many of the sacred cows of the Zionist - Jewish (particularistic) understanding of Israeli statehood. However, this inter-generational debate among historians from the Palmah era and the younger ones of today, is in fact one more expression of a cultural current pervading many important dimensions of contemporary Israeli society.

In essence, the issue is whether Israel is to be understood as something uniquely significant in (Jewish) history, as the restoration of the Jewish people's sovereignty in their historical homeland after almost 2,000 years of exile or as one in a long series of twentieth century colonialist ventures, built at the expense of a native population, without any transcendent importance.

According to the familiar Zionist - Jewish version of the story, or "narrative," Israel was founded in the ashes of the Holocaust, as an act of rebirth and redemption after the destruction of European Jewry. Against all odds, tiny Israel defeated massive Arab armies who refused to make peace, and then went on to make the desert bloom, and build a strong economy, a new Jewish culture, and a vibrant society in which Jews could live normal lives in dignity, just like other peoples around the civilized world. Much as the movie "Exodus" presents a romanticized version of this script, there were many songs, stories, books, historical works, and other creative endeavors which immortalized this narrative as the collective memory of the people of Israel.

In Israel today, many of the younger historians who did not experience Israel's War of Independence have questioned whether this story is indeed a truthful presentation of what happened. They call for a more objective, value-neutral look at the events, and conclude that in fact, Israeli immigrants (not 'ohm) came to the Palestinian homeland (not 'Eretz Israel') and displaced the native

population to build their own colonial enterprise. For them, Israel is not a story with particular Jewish or universal value.

Author Aharon Megged has attacked these new "post-Zionist" historians for distorting the facts and ignoring very important aspects of the conflict. Anita Shapira notes that in the guise of post-modernism, which is characterized by nihilistic relativism (i.e., every analysis and narrative is as legitimate as any other), the post-Zionist historians are actually imposing a single, alternative narrative on the minds and the souls of the Israeli public - a modernist story of colonialism that strips the enterprise of Jewish statehood of any transcendent Jewish importance.

Is this merely an academic debate among historians, or is there some other significance to the issues under discussion? In many ways, the argument is about the collective memory of Israeli Jews:

□ Whether Israelis see themselves as another crucial link in the chain of Jewish history and continuity, of Jewish life and culture in the Jewish historical homeland

□ Whether the State of Israel in the 1990s exists for the purpose of building the Jewish future, or is but one more nation among nations, focused on Western pop culture, the pleasures of a lifestyle of affluence and leisure, and the fulfillment of self

□ Whether Israeli Jews share a collective memory

□ Whether Jews and non-Jews in Israel share a collective memory

□ Whether Israeli and Diaspora Jews share a collective memory

In effect, the debate is about how Jews understand where they have come from, what they are a part of, and what future they are building (Jewish or otherwise). In the 1990s, these questions rest in the soul of Jews in Israel and throughout the world.

Politics and Collective Memory: The Debate over the "New Historians" in Israel

The stormy debate surrounding the "new historians" that raged in the Israeli press this past year has left many question marks in its wake. Despite the plethora of articles and discussions, published and unpublished, concerning it, the issues of the debate, its boundaries, essence and purpose remain clear. It was fascinatingly obtuse and astonishingly passionate. Is the debate about facts, methodology, interpretation? Is it limited to the guild of historians or has it also spread to other disciplines? Is it a debate between schools of thought, between generations, between individuals? Does it take issue with the past, or with the present and future? And finally, who initiated it, and where is it leading? Answers to these questions may well clarify the nature of this debate and integrate it into Israel's intellectual dialogue.

The debate began in the late 1980s, when books by Simha Flapan, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim and Ilan Pappé appeared in quick succession. Their publication was accompanied by proclamations in the press that a new school of Israeli historians had been born. Benny Morris, in an article in *Tibhoun*, called them "the new historians," and the name was adopted. It was applied rather loosely to various historians, all of whom had written about the events that had taken place between 1947 and 1952 and related to the founding of the State of Israel, the War of Independence and the agreements following it.

Such intense involvement with these events comes as no surprise. Moments of historical breakthrough become the founding myth of the society in question and quite naturally arouse interest and curiosity.

The concept has never been precisely defined and different writers emphasize different elements as "post-Zionism." Uri Ram, for example, demands recognition of the centrality of the national Jewish-Arab confrontation, of the changes in Palestine wrought by the Zionist movement and of the injustice inflicted on the Palestinians in its wake. He seeks to explain Israel's situation within the context of the Middle East, in conjunction to problems created by the Zionist movement in that region, rather

than to the situation in Europe and its effects on world Jewry. In contrast, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin sees a close connection between the behavior of the Zionist movement in the Middle East and its attitude toward Jewish history and the traditional Jew. In his view the concept of "negation of Exile" engendered the insensitivity and lack of openness shown by that movement toward the "other," whether Jew or Arab, and he proposes an alternative, positive approach to the notion of Exile to encourage tolerance in Israeli society toward types different from the "New Jew," to grant them legitimacy in contemporary Israeli society and to restore them to the Israeli collective memory. He makes the plea for legitimizing other "collective memories" as alternatives to the Zionist master narrative. Baruch Kimmerling contends that the central issue in the history of the *yishuv* (Jewish community in Palestine) and the State of Israel is the Arab-Israeli conflict, as the principal nation-building factor. He rejects the use of the "Jewish uniqueness" paradigm to explain events in Zionist history and the establishment of Israel. Instead, he proposes the paradigm of colonialism, according to which Israel is to be viewed as an immigrant-settler society, similar to many others. Kimmerling urges use of comparative methods to explain events which were formerly presented in sociological research as peculiar to Israeli society. This comparative analysis includes not only the status of the Palestinian Arabs, but that of various kinds of immigrants such as Oriental Jews and Holocaust survivors - a subject of central interest to sociologists such as Shlomo Swirski.

Indeed, the term "post-Zionism" has varied connotations, ranging from a critique of Israeli research on the Palestinians and their treatment by the Zionist movement and Israel to the demand for a completely new approach to the history of Zionism and the history and sociology of Israel. This approach reflects a fundamental change of attitude toward the Zionist enterprise: from regarding it as a positive and even important phenomenon in Jewish history and human history in general, despite the problems created by its implementation, to a view which, although accepting the fact that Israel exists, grants it no

intrinsic value. The old anti-Zionism of the Communist or Bundist variety or that of the New Left and "Matzpen" of the 1970s sought to terminate the Zionist enterprise. This, however, is not true of post-Zionism. Its proponents do not question the existence of Israel, but their attitude to it is, at best, indifferent and, in more extreme cases, a priori suspicious and critical. Their intent is to point out the shortcomings of Zionism and Israel, the injustice inflicted on others, and the historical alternatives whose realization may have been thwarted by the actualization of Zionism. For some among them criticism of the past and present is a starting point for an alternative political program. Its agenda calls for a change in the nature of the State of Israel: the relinquishing of its ideological, Zionist component to become a secular, democratic state without any predominant national character - i.e. no more the "Jewish state." The annulment of the Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to Jews coming to Israel and underscores the difference between their status in the country and that of Arabs, would manifest that change.

Post-Zionism and the 1948 War

Thus, the "new historians" are challenging not so much historians or important historiography works as the images and myth of the War of Independence that have become rooted in the Israeli public consciousness.

Indeed, the debate is less about historiography than it is about collective memory. The current round exploded with renewed force in summer 1994 with the publication of an article by Aharon Megged in the newspaper *HaAretz* that accused the post-Zionists of delegitimizing Zionism and Israel. Megged, a well-known Israeli author active on the left wing of the Labor movement, was responding to the articles by the "new historians" published in the press than to their books. He took issue with them not as historians or sociologists, but as spokesmen for an attempt to shape collective memory in a way he considered destructive. He sought to set his private memory in opposition to the historical version they were trying to imprint upon the Israeli public.

Megged represented the basic ethos of the Palmah generation and the traumatic experiences that formed its world view: setting down roots in Palestine under the British Mandate, which was perceived as inimical and imperialistic; the Arab rebellion, which made the younger generation realize that the struggle between Arabs and Jews over the land was a matter of life and death World War II, in which the world was divided between good and evil, with

no shades of gray; the experience of Jewish weakness and impotent anger vis-a-vis the Holocaust; the War of Independence as the tragic and heroic climax of all that had preceded it. Deep anxieties and fears had accompanied at least the first stages of the war. Hence, the final victory had brought a sense of deliverance which endowed it, in the eyes of that generation, with transcendental meaning as an act of historical justice that was inexplicable in conventional terms. The "new historians," in contrast, were born after the establishment of Israel; for them, it was a state like any other, with virtues and faults and the latter had to be criticized and public opinion aroused against them. Against the metaphysical explanation of victory in the 1948 war, they stressed the prosaic fact that at most stages, the Lord had stood by the strongest troops.

This reduction of Israel's victory to the pragmatic factor of greater physical strength, along with disregard for the sense of deliverance that came in its wake, characterizes the approach of the generation who did not experience that war. The Palmah generation had suffered the loss of friends and peers in what was the most difficult war, with the greatest number of casualties, in Israel's history. However, the new generation was less impressed by 6,000 Jews who had fallen in that war than by the uprooting approximately 700,000 Arabs from Israeli territory.

While Megged and others of his generation primarily focus on war experiences, the post-Zionists deal mainly with what happened or did not happen after the war, with missed opportunities for peace and with the refugee problem. The analogy in their thinking that evolved, whether consciously or unconsciously, between the Israeli conquest in 1967 and Israel's behavior after it, and the events of 1948 and after, leads them to ignore the fragility of Israel's existence in the early years, before it was accepted in the international arena as an unalterable fact. Indeed, only a small minority of Israelis regretted the flight/expulsion of Arabs or were willing to seriously consider their return in massive numbers. The borders established in the war's wake were considered the absolute minimum for the existence of a viable state. The justification for this policy was pragmatic, with the national, existential interest as the decisive factor. Forty years after the events, though, in the light of Israel's political and military strength and evidence of brutality against Palestinians in the occupied territories, those pragmatic contentions are rejected in the name of absolute moral principles. Accordingly, they claim that the expulsion of the Arabs and prevention of their return were unjustifiable under any conditions, even if they had been the ones to start the war.

The "new historians" are not waging a campaign against the Israeli Right and its stances. The fact that for fifteen years the Likud Party, committed to a "Greater Israel" ideology, was at the helm finds no expression in the debate. Their lances are pointed against the Labor movement and its positions; the bad guys in the story are David Ben-Gurion and the old Mapai (Labor) Party, and not Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. This fact is puzzling, as we would expect the Israeli Right, which does not acknowledge any of the Palestinians' contentions, to be the ideological enemy of the "new historians." It seems, however, that their choice of the Zionist Left as the main target of their attack stems from the issue of ethics. The stance taken by the Zionist Left on the Arab question was always ambivalent: aware of the difficulty in striking a balance between the socialist and nationalist components of its ideology, it did not conceal the fact that, at the crucial moment, it would favor the nationalist component over the socialist one.

These historical circumstances are utterly rejected by most of the "new historians." They are not concerned with the processes that occurred in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which led to the emergence of Zionism and the desire to create a Jewish state. In their eyes, the problem of Palestine is isolated from the wider European-Jewish context and stands on a different plane, that of the Middle East. As such, this approach undermines the moral basis for the foundation of a Jewish state and explains its existence in terms of power alone. For that reason they have no grounds for disagreement with the Israeli Right, who lay claim to the whole of Palestine, because it vindicates their own thesis. Rather, it is the Israeli Left's complex, tortured view, riven with internal contradictions, which accepts some of the Arab claims yet at the same time bases its justification of a Jewish presence in the country on moral grounds, that draws their fire. They reject out of hand the claim that Zionism had not set out to usurp the Arabs, but was instead a movement built on certain ethical criteria that strove for a spiritual, social and moral renewal of the Jewish people, and that the trends toward use of force increased within it only over the years, as a result of historical developments. According to their perspective, everything began in 1948. And what happened in 1948 was merely the inevitable result of Zionist policy from its very inception. They do not see two nations caught in a tragic situation which led to an unavoidable clash between them, but one completely innocent side and one completely guilty. The past is not discussed in and of itself, to be explained on the basis of the data and evaluations of the contemporaries of that period, but rather in accordance with the considerations and political agendas of the present.

Zionism and the Holocaust

It is in the context of "justice" and "ethics" that the Palestinian question is linked to the issue of the Holocaust. On the face of it, there would seem to be no connection between Mapai's attitude to the Palestinians, on the one hand, and to the destruction of European Jewry, on the other. But it turns out that numerous threads connect the two subjects. Dan Diner has defined the Holocaust as the true founding myth of the State of Israel. In my view, the Holocaust is but one of its components. However, it is certainly true that the Holocaust has often been presented as the decisive argument in favor of the establishment of Israel, and the latter - as some compensation for the iniquities of the Holocaust, an expression, as it were, of a system of cosmic justice. This contention is reflected in loaded expressions such as "Holocaust and rebirth" or "destruction and redemption," which made the establishment of Israel in 1948 part of a metahistorical process, consistent with Jewish traditions that drew a connection between *hevlei mashiah* - the suffering preceding the advent of the Messiah - and the apocalyptic resolution of the final redemption.

The Holocaust became one of the "official" identity symbols of Israel. The practice that began in the 1960s of taking important guests of state on a mandatory visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, for instance, underscored the causal connection between the Holocaust and Israel, on the one hand, and the lessons to be learned from it, on the other: the disastrous result of weakness, the loneliness of the victim, and Israel's commitment to prevent similar situations in the future. The use of the Holocaust to strengthen nationalistic trends and stress the alienation between Israel and other nations, and the use of images from World War II in the national struggle with the Palestinians (such as comparing Arafat to Hitler, or responding to a picture of an Arab girl killed in the 1982 Lebanon war with that of a boy from the Warsaw ghetto) turned the Holocaust into a weapon in the political battle between the Israeli Left and Right over the preferable settlement with the Palestinians.

This subject infiltrated post-Zionist research along two apparently contradictory paths: the demand to separate discussion of the Holocaust from that of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and the charge that the Zionist movement had not made sufficient efforts to rescue European Jewry. Viewing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a purely Middle Eastern context means removing the Holocaust from the web of reasons and explanations for Israel's behavior. The proposed new, local Israeli identity, detached from Jewish history, leaves no room for consid-

erations stemming from the Holocaust. Similarly, the attempt to place the Arab-Israeli conflict at the focus of Israeli sociology serves to efface the impact of the Holocaust on Israeli identity. The issue of the Holocaust confounds any attempt to draw simple analogies between the situation in Palestine and other colonization countries. Thus, the desire to neutralize that issue is part of the effort to create a seemingly autonomous Israeli-Palestinian narrative, independent of history, circumstances and the biographies of the players.

The second route of infiltration is more complex. The starting point is the claim that the Zionist concept of "negation of Exile" led the leaders of the *yishuv* to close their eyes and hearts during World War II to the catastrophe befalling European Jewry. As a result, they were unwilling to take desperate rescue measures if these might harm the progress of the Zionist enterprise in Palestine.

The causality between an abstract concept such as "negation of Exile" and the actual reactions of people who accept it is complex. Whenever an ideology does not correspond with existential needs, people tend to ignore it. It is sufficient to recall how many people believed in socialism and how many saw themselves as obliged to live by it; how many swore allegiance to Zionism, and how many were willing to risk seasickness (to paraphrase Plekhanov's ironic saying that "A Bundist is a Zionist who fears seasickness"). "Negation of Exile" was an abstract concept which defined the Jew's place in the world according to the Zionist perception, in opposition to diaspora reality, aspiring to make the Jews a nation with a territory of its own. It expressed the desire to bring about a revolution in Jewish lifestyle and mentality. It said nothing about the concrete problems encountered by the Zionist Organization. These were dealt with pragmatically, according to a reading of the situation at any given time. The slowness to understand the meaning of the information concerning the Holocaust that began to seep out in 1942 was not caused by the theory of "negation of Exile," but by the fact that normal people have difficulty believing in monstrous things. Even non-Zionists, adamant believers in the perpetuity of the diaspora, such as American Jews, were no quicker to understand the meaning of that information than the Zionists.

I do not intend to examine the various rescue plans and the Zionist leadership's reaction to them. Most recent research shows that the leadership did the best it could under the circumstances of the time. Even Tom Segev, in his critical book *The Seventh Million*, concludes that apparently little could have been done. Thus the question diverges from the issue of actual rescue possibilities

to that of attitudes. The central question is not why the Zionist leaders did not save European Jewry, but rather why they did not show more concern, more empathy, why they did not try "to move heaven and earth," why they were not more attentive to the distress of the survivors.

The attempt to portray the past as being governed by the same rules of the game as the present creates a distorted perspective: the Zionist leadership was not a government. It had no secret service at its disposal, no air force and no tanks. Its ability to influence the Allied governments was minimal. During a life and death struggle no one had patience for "poor relations," as the Zionists were treated by the British and American governments. Zionists today bear the burden of guilt for the claim they made from the outset to represent the dominant element in the Jewish people, which they did not. The establishment of the State of Israel made them, *a posteriori*, responsible for the fate of Jews during World War II. That, though, was a role completely beyond their capacities at the time.

Post-Zionism and Postmodernism

Discussion of the attitude toward diaspora Jewry takes place on two levels: that of acts and omissions, and that of mental makeup. Its role is to undermine the Israeli self image as the savior of the "surviving remnant" of Jewry. The Arab refugee and the Jewish refugee both become victims of Zionism. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has developed a cultural-political concept which attributes to the theory of "negation of Exile" a dual role: on the one hand, the repression of Jewish diaspora experience as a positive and creative phenomenon in Jewish history and, on the other, the laying of the ideological foundation for removing any memory of the Palestinian story from Israeli collective memory. In its place, he proposes perceiving Jewish diaspora experience not only as a legitimate way of life, but, in effect, as a form of existence derived from Jewish uniqueness, which he defines as a position of constant symbiotic opposition to actual reality. That, in his eyes, is the special moral position typical of Jews. Thus, the diaspora way of life is not one forced upon the Jews, but rather an experience they chose of their own accord. "To choose to be a Jew is to choose *galut* [exile], and it means nothing else," he states. Zionism, in contrast, which seeks to recreate for Jews a territorial national reality to enable them a "total Jewish experience," by its very nature causes the rejection and repression of other options of Jewish existence.

Raz-Krakotzkin writes metahistory, as if the events of the last two centuries, with all their agonies and tribulations, did not happen. The alienation which - according to most testimonies - was the formative experience of Jewish life in the diaspora, especially in Eastern Europe, and which still exists to a certain extent even in today's open, assimilatory societies, takes in his writings the form of ethical-theoretical social criticism and loses the tragic, existential dimension that in fact characterized it. The Jew as victim becomes an ideal. The aspiration, according to him, is "to renew the sense of exile here in Israel, without forgetting those still in a state of real exile, the oppressed of the Third World, the inhabitants of the refugee camps." In other words, *galut* existence as a metaphor of moral sensitivity and openness to the other is a positive attribute - which is not the case of real exile, unless a different rule applies to the Jew than to other people.

Raz-Krakotzkin's thesis reflects erudition and intellectual daring, as well as total detachment from history as it occurred. He clearly demonstrates the postmodernist influence on history: there are no events, people, reality, but only texts and their interpretation. Thus, every text is equal in value to every other, and each construct is equally legitimate.

As we have said, the concept "post-Zionism" was created in an associative context with the debate in the Israeli press on the issue of postmodernism. Some of the post-Zionists like to present themselves as postmodernists. But are they really an Israeli branch of that trend?

The link between the "new historians" and postmodernism is not self-evident. The attack on Zionism or "old" Zionist historiography is launched in the name of modern values such as humanism, equality and democracy and is far from any cultural nihilism, which dismisses absolute values in favor of a relativist approach to culture, politics and ethics. This distinction, though, was blurred in the heat of the debate, which quickly became a discussion on questions of historical methodology, relativism versus objectivism, and the meaning of historical truth. The standard bearer of deconstructionism among the "new historians" is Ilan Pappé. His approach does not seem to be rooted in a crystallized postmodernist world view, but stems more from the question of what role ideology should have in historical representation.

Israeli historiography of the last thirty years has striven to free itself from ideological approaches to history and analysis: academic historiography flourished along with a process of liberating itself from political perspectives. It sought to relieve young Zionist historiography of the bur-

den of hagiography that had marked political literature of the 1930s-1950s. There was, of course, general awareness that all historians are products of their time and place, burdened with the preconceptions inculcated in them by their education, society and personal biography. Nonetheless, the aspiration was that the historian should make a conscious effort to transcend human limitations and allow the source material to speak for itself. The goal was to come as close as possible to a reconstruction of historical reality as it was perceived in that period, and according to its own norms. Placing oneself in the shoes of history makers necessitated understanding their spiritual world, listening to the slightest nuances in their words, comparing their public stances with what they said in private, following the dynamics of social and political relations, distinguishing between central and marginal issues, between slips of the tongue and actual intent, between what had an impact and what remained empty talk and, in effect, setting their words against their deeds.

Some of the "revisionists" have sought to give renewed legitimacy to the politicization of research, justifying this move by means of a vulgarized version of postmodernism: there is no reality but in the eyes of the beholder. Thus, one cannot speak of objective facts, and even less so of historical truth. As a result, interpretation need not be limited by accepted "facts," for such facts are but a vain illusion invented by historians, whose approaches were conditioned by their *a priori* positions. There are no "objective" or "non-objective" historians: there are only historians who recognize the relativity of their data and those who refute it. This view is meant to serve as the basis for the return of ideology to historiography: every historian has a political agenda, whether overt or covert. Thus, the ideological approach is legitimate when analyzing historical material. History, according to this version, is a "narrative," that is, a story invented by historians out of their own ideological needs. The conclusion to be drawn is that no story is more authentic than any other; each is meant to further the political or social ends of its author or the interest group he or she represents.

This view, accepted in certain circles of literary criticism, is valuable to a certain degree: it requires the historian to be exceedingly aware of the infiltration of external views into research. But this is precisely where the connection between post-Zionists and the postmodernist school is most clearly seen to be artificial. According to the internal logic of deconstructionism, every narrative is equal in value to every other. Thus, there is the Zionist narrative and there is the Palestinian narrative. Truth to tell, there are several Zionist narratives - the one told by the Right and the one told by the Left, for example; there is proba-

bly more than one Palestinian narrative as well; and there is the narrative of the post-Zionists. The verity and value of one narrative are no greater than those of another: all of them stem from the subjective vision of an interest group at a certain moment. Pappé, though, believes that the relativism of history stops with himself, and that he and other post-Zionists promote the definitive narrative, the one that will put an end to all narratives. He claims that there exists no absolute truth, yet at the same time insists that it is the historian's duty to "determine what happened in the past, decide, who was the villain and who was responsible for the failure."

Unfortunately, though, some of the "new historians" do not stop there. They claim a far-reaching methodological innovation: when the documents do not yield his desired picture of reality, Pappé considers himself free to supplement those pieces of reality required by the historical narrative he relates, even if they have no basis in the documentation.

An additional methodological issue arises as a result of the research subjects selected by the post-Zionists. History has ceased to relate to what actually happened because even facts are an illusion. Thus, a depiction of what did not happen has equal weight. The question "what would have happened if ...?" is only valuable as an intellectual exercise, which cannot replace a description of what actually did occur. What failed to occur is not history because we do not know how it would have affected subsequent events.

The Issue of Uniqueness

One of the contentions most often made by the post-Zionists is that traditional historiography tended to see the history of the Jews, Zionism and the State of Israel as a unique phenomenon and this developed a particular conceptual system that stemmed from the self-perception of the Zionist state builders and does not answer to universal criteria: instead of analyzing Israel as a society of immigrant settlers in the context of colonialism, it developed a unique concept of a nation returning to its ancient birthplace and employed a system of loaded concepts such as "*aliyah*" (immigration to the "Land of Israel"), settlement, pioneering, redemption, etc. As a result, the "old" historiography and sociology were unable to apply comparative concepts in their understanding of the processes of Zionist settlement in Palestine.

It goes without saying that it is legitimate to analyze a society from the outside; the Jewish *yishuv* could be exam-

ined within the framework of colonialist movements that existed in the Western world from the sixteenth century. The situation of a nation of immigrants settling in a land with "natives" who wish to preserve their exclusive right to that strip of land makes Palestine comparable to North America or Australia, or to the Russian colonization of Central Asia. Use of that model is both legitimate and desirable, just as an understanding of the problems of new immigrants to Israel would be furthered by applying a conceptual framework developed in relation to immigrants to the United States, for instance.

Reluctance to use such concepts stemmed from the fact that they were part of the propaganda that stigmatized Zionism and Israel as belonging to the camp of the forces of evil as opposed to the progressive, anti-colonial world. Today, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which made colonialism the white bogey of the Third World, and with the liberation of that world from the patronage of the West, there is room for dispassionate thought, free of ideologies, on the subject of colonialism. Not every colonization movement is to be dismissed out of hand, and not every national-liberation movement is, by definition, sacred. The use of the colonial model must be examined within an open academic discussion and not from positions that a priori reject or blame: will the white settlement of North America, Australia and New Zealand be remembered with lasting opprobrium because of its treatment of the autochthonous inhabitants? On the other hand, is every Central Asian tribe with a self-styled nationalist regime that oppresses national minorities, women or simply foreigners worthy of our admiration?

Post-Zionism and Politics

Two simultaneous processes can be discerned here. One is the process I call "the iron law of devaluation of the past": if something negative about the past can be conceived, be sure it will gain credence. The harsh critique of the past aims at changing today's politics. The assault on heroes of the past contributes to undermining national identity and to reopening discussion on what its nature should be. Political goals are aided by the power of the press: collective memory is no longer molded by the traditional agents of memory, but rather by journalists, publicists and television interviewers. A shared memory of the past no longer exists. Instead, we witness fragments of memory promoted by the new agents of memory. It is no accident that the "new historians" are featured so prominently in the media: polemics obviously make more interesting material than moderate and balanced analyses of the past. Thus, any kind of far-fetched critical conjecture voiced today is

certain to reappear sooner or later as a central issue in academic research.

The second process is no less important, though it is less visible. I call it "the consensus drift." The fact that ideas that seemed marginal twenty years ago have now become partly legitimate reflects a slow shift in patterns of what is accepted and in patterns of collective memory. Like the change on the political level, from denial of the existence of a Palestinian people to recognition of it and willingness to come to a historical accommodation with it, so on the level of collective memory there is today a greater readiness to accept the notion that the establishment of Israel brought a disaster upon the Palestinians. The current peace process and the concomitant changes in perceiving reality have made Israeli society more willing than ever before to reassess the historical events that gave birth to the state. The new openness to understanding the point of view on the other side of the barricade does not necessarily mean developing a guilt complex and flagellating oneself for the sins of the past, as some of the "new historians" prescribe and as those of the Palmah generation fear. Rather, it mandates a more sober, mature outlook on the past. Just as in the 1980s, when the palpable shift to the right in the Israeli consensus meant that people who had previously placed themselves at the center of the political spectrum suddenly found themselves on the left, so today people who previously considered themselves on the left of the spectrum now find themselves at the center. This process is reflected in the debate surrounding the "new historians."

Historiography becomes an arm of collective memory: instead of aspiring to historical truth, as we previously assumed, it now represents the political interests of groups that battle for positions in the national identity. The tendency to turn history into an ideological construction serving particular interests, to transform it into a series of myths intended to establish or reinforce group identities, is becoming more and more pronounced.

It is still too early to answer the question whether all this is a "new wave" in Israeli historiography or but a passing ripple. If the debate with the "new historians" turns out, in the end, to be a debate on research emphases, subjects and paradigms or, alternatively, an expression of normal youthful enthusiasm for the sensational, it will turn out to have been a limited and transient phenomenon, with the positive contribution of revitalizing scholarly research. However, if the deconstructionist trends followed by some of the "new historians" gain strength, then it will become clear we are facing a total crisis in all that concerns the human sciences and the domain of history in particular. For if no historical reality exists to be

uncovered, if there are no agreed-upon research principles of what is permitted and forbidden, accepted and unaccepted, if there are no methodological rules, then there can be no common language between historians. This problem is unrelated to which subjects are considered legitimate objects of investigation - for every subject is legitimate - but concerns, rather, treatment of sources, rules of historical evidence, the principles guiding the historian when he sits down at his desk. In the final reckoning, history has no content if the ideal guiding the historian is not the quest for truth.

Translated from the Hebrew by Ora Wishind-Elper

Politics and Collective Memory

Questions for discussion:

1. Professor Shapira suggests that a society derives its self-understanding from its collective memory. What are the key components of the collective memory of American or Canadian society? To what extent does this reflect the entire population? Who tends to be included and/or excluded from these formulations in the North American instances?
2. In much the same way that Americans of Jewish or Asian descent might not feel their ancestors were part of the Mayflower story, not all Israelis feel a part of the founding myths of pre-State Zionism. Which segments of Israeli population (by ethnic background, religious orientation, generation, or other criteria) tend to be included and/or excluded from the more traditional Zionist - Jewish narrative of the founding of the State of Israel?
3. Israel maybe perceived as "Zionist redemption," a story of "destruction and rebirth," "ingathering of the exiles," "David and Goliath," a modern, technologically advanced Western state in a developing region, a "colonialist" venture, and so on. What version(s) of the Israel narrative most appeal to Jews in North America in the 1990s?
4. Societies tend to generate - and then to protect - sources of social cohesion. Does a society require consensus about understanding its past, its sacred values and stories? If so, how might it try to foster and sustain such a consensus? In the absence of consensus, what *particular* significance, if any, can Israel have for some of its Jewish citizens and for world Jewry?
5. Professor Shapira concludes her article with the statement that, "In the final reckoning, history has no content if the ideal guiding the historian is not the quest for truth." In what ways do Jewish communal institutions in Israel and the Diaspora utilize Jewish history either in the quest for truth, or as "an arm of collective memory"?

Introduction

Israel is a country of immigrants. When the state was established in 1948, there were 600,000 Jewish residents. Today the Jewish population of the country is close to 4.5 million. The millions of people who came from some 70 countries and who have settled here during the past five decades constitute a myriad of ethnic backgrounds, ideas, and experiences which has shaped the country's unique character and fostered its dynamic evolution. Intense interaction by people of vastly different cultures, necessitated by physical proximity and the need to share limited resources, has produced creative solutions for narrowing the cultural and educational gaps - e.g., the invention of the Hebrew ulpan to collectively teach the language and socialize new immigrants from several different countries. It has also generated fascinating compromises to religious, political, and social challenges - e.g., a bifurcated Chief Rabbinate to serve the Sephardic and Ashkenazic populations.

Since the country's infancy, almost the entire population - in all its diversity - has been united by at least one force: a common external threat, and the accompanying commitment to build the nation in order to combat that threat. The following article was written during Shimon Peres's tenure as Prime Minister, when the peace process still had considerable momentum. A.B. Yehoshua, one of Israel's leading writers and thinkers, contends that the peace process begun in 1991 at the Madrid Conference will successfully eradicate that threat, and with it the last "pillar of solidarity" among the Jewish citizens of Israel will crumble. As long as Israel's Arab neighbors were committed to her destruction, Israelis managed to subju-

gate their ideological and cultural differences to the needs of the country's basic physical survival. Now that peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan have been signed (and other peace treaties seem possible), and a permanent arrangement with the Palestinian people is being negotiated, sub-groups within Israeli society are pursuing their own interests more vigorously, with less regard for the collective values, behavior, and moral code which used to unite the nation.

While Yehoshua fully supports the current efforts to achieve a full and just peace in the region, he is concerned that Israel's remarkable growth and development as a modern, Western country has left in its wake several serious "cracks" in Israeli society - between religious and secular Jews, between Oriental and Western Jews, and between Israeli and Diaspora Jews. Writing less than two months after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Yehoshua expresses some of the frustration, despair, and even panic felt by the majority of Israelis upon realizing that already existing ideological differences could motivate a member of Israeli society to murder the prime minister.

A.B. Yehoshua warns that Israel must consciously rebuild its national identity on new, positive foundations rather than allow random, conflicting values to fill the vacuum left by the absence of a common enemy. His entire discussion is based on the premise that a country's identity can be directed, altered, and engineered - and this should be a priority on Israel's national agenda.

The Cultural Consequences of Peace

A. B. Yehoshua

If I were a millionaire and a distinguished university asked me for a donation, I would give money on one condition: to establish a chair in identity engineering. I would collect scholars from various disciplines to explore the question of how to direct and alter national identities.

The murder of a prime minister has enabled us, for a few weeks, to gaze with panic into the dark hole of the crack between rival identities in Israel. And it is already clear from the reactions, not only by the murderer's family but also by those circles who espouse similar ideas, that it was not the act of someone deviant or crazed. It was an eruption fed by streams that welled up not only from the current political dispute but also from extraordinarily deep religious, and perhaps also ethnic, springs.

It is, I am convinced, a mistake to think that the black holes in the cracks of the Israeli identity are related only to political disagreements over the peace process and the country's partition between two peoples, and that once the dispute is resolved Israel will become a kind of green and pleasant Denmark. A similar mistake is being made by those who believe that if they disown - declaring, "They are not my brothers!" - whole groups in the religious or other camps, those groups will simply disappear from the face of the earth and will therefore not be the spoilers of the "normality" festivities which many construe, superficially, as an exclusively liberal-secular ideology. The burning flash that burst from the pistol of the prime minister's killer is bound with filaments of burning lava to whole realms of being with which a dialogue must constantly be maintained, even at the price of foregoing the one-dimensionality of the secular hedonism which is liable, when peace comes, to become the most certain element of the Israeli identity.

Some of the above could be read as "surrender to the religious sector." Indeed, I want to argue explicitly that it is the secular camp that must initiate a rapprochement with the national religious camp and permanently deepen the dialogue with them. It is essential for secular Israelis, particularly those in the secular-liberal wing, to ponder the problem of our national identity. This they must do even though their instinct tells them to shun the

problem, assume it does not exist, and bask in the convenient and alluring possibility of Israel as another branch of "Western culture," one more station in CNN's global village.

National identity, if I may be permitted a somewhat simplistic definition, is the sum total of the basic agreements on values, behavior, and moral codes which are shared by the members of a nation. They are not only the result of a common existence through a continuous history in a defined geographical territory; their source lies in primal, fundamental agreement on a number of goals. If national identity lacks a minimal unifying core, the result is the emergence of separate, mutually alienated enclaves. Alienation not only reduces the space in the national territory which is available to the individual, it may also pose a concrete threat to his safety and well-being. In the United States, the rifts in the American national identity have already made black neighborhoods in the big cities places of certain danger for the white race. In the same way, some religious neighborhoods in Israel are ruled out as residences for secular people or even for moderate observant Jews. It is therefore crucial to preserve a stable and expanding core of national identity, in some cases even at the expense of extreme pluralism.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been the pillar of Israeli identity for more than a hundred and ten years. The magnificent ability to crystallize a cohesive core of Israeli identity for fifty or sixty years - shared by Jews of different origins who are on different sides of enormous cultural and linguistic divides and are separated by abysses of religious beliefs - derived almost completely from the sense that all faced a common threat. From this point of view, it is not surprising that in a nation divided by radical differences of opinion only about twenty Jews have been killed by other Jews for ideological and political reasons during a century rife with turmoil and fateful decisions. The reason is not that our fanaticism is tamer than it is in other peoples, or that we are endowed with a spirit of tolerance and good democratic habits. The reason is that we were all united by an external threat. Many years ago some perceptive Arabs said that if the Arab world had offered the Jews a modest peace from the

beginning, that peace might have succeeded in imploding the Jewish state better than all the wars that were waged against it.

The pillar of solidarity will gradually fade away as the peace is cemented, and not least because significant shapers of identity which were inextricably bound up with the security struggle, such as the value of land settlement and of *aliyah*, will also disappear. The allure of settlement has already declined in recent years, but when peace comes it will surely cease altogether to be a consensual value among Israelis and will be considered solely in utilitarian, economic terms. In a small country like Israel there might even be opposition to establishing new settlements that eat away vital areas of already scarce nature reserves. The French are not upset if large sections of the border region between France and Switzerland remain unpopulated, and maybe Israelis will also cease to view unsettled territories as a threat or a security blunder. *Aliyah* and absorption, and the fight for them, will also cease to be an agreed, unifying value. In early 1995 the astounding results of a survey were published in which a majority (albeit a tiny one) of Israelis said they were against continued *aliyah* because Israel did not have the ability to absorb the newcomers. This was unprecedented. *Aliyah* was always perceived as a supreme value because of the importance of the Jews' demographic struggle against the Arabs. For the same reason emigration was considered a sin. In a situation of peace, *aliyah* and absorption will no longer be able to serve as agreed values of Israeli identity, because the demographic confrontation with the Arabs will no longer be crucial. After all, Denmark, with four million inhabitants, is not concerned about the number of Germans who live across the border. The disappearance of unifying values will leave a deep, broad gash in the Israeli identity and reduce the commitment to moral imperatives that often went hand in hand with those values: fraternity, self-sacrifice, a modest lifestyle, a desire for equality and economic cooperation, assistance to new immigrants, and receptiveness to people with different cultural backgrounds.

Physics teaches that nature abhors a vacuum, so other values and meanings, good and bad, will compete to fill the vacuum in our sense of identity. The major problem will be to direct the emergence of new, positive values to take the place of the old, fading ones. This is essential because the disappearance of the old values will not only split the core of the existing national identity, but will also broaden existing cracks in the Israeli society.

The first and deepest crack exists already: between religious and secular. The conflict between the people's religious code and its national code is the most basic con-

flict at the heart of Jewish identity. This primal contradiction, of great longevity, informs the essence of the Jewish people; it is the same contradiction that creates the Jewish people's distinctiveness and engenders the resistance of other nations which it encounters.

A religious creed must by its nature be universal - accessible to everyone. If its adherents believe that their religion is true, that it directs human beings to the good and the worthy, then it is only proper that it should propose itself to all people, irrespective of their language and nationality. It is inconceivable to make admittance to a particular religion conditional on joining a particular nation; that would be like insisting that a person who accepts the philosophical principles of Kant must first join the German nation. Nationality is built on biological and historical origin and on a common life in a defined territory and national framework, and it is inconceivable to limit national affiliation by making it conditional on prior religious agreement.

But the Jewish religion proposes itself only to the members of the Jewish people; anyone who wants to join it must exchange his nationality for the Jewish nationality and pledge it full solidarity. And the reverse: a Jew who converts is immediately expelled from the Jewish nation, even if he is bound to it biologically, historically, and experientially. Yet if my son should think differently from me or believe in what I do not believe, it is unimaginable that I will no longer consider him my son.

This essential contradiction is the ground of the tension and disquiet that informs the definition of a Jew, and it is what pushes and enables him to leave the framework of national life in his country for the diaspora, to live in lands that are not his among foreign peoples. The point is that only where there is no [Jewish] national sovereignty can the two codes coexist. Think of the androgynous, with characteristics of both male and female, but who is really neither the one nor the other, and therefore cannot establish a family life in a home of his/her own but must wander among strangers and *rely* on others for sustenance. Just so did the Jewish people try for thousands of years to evade the unresolved contradiction in its identity by keeping its distance from its land. A wandering life in foreign parts and among foreign peoples transforms the struggle over the content of identity into a primary struggle over the very legitimacy of one's existence. That existential struggle unites all Jews and thereby shunts aside that other struggle, which is more inward looking and more content-oriented between two codes that are wrestling for the Jews' soul. It was no accident that religious Jews rejected Zionism. They felt that the return to normal aspects of national identity - territory,

language, a common national life - would reduce the need for religious components of identity.

It is obvious that the contest between the national code and the religious code for the people's soul is liable to emerge in its full ferocity in a situation of peace; a condition of war compels both the religious and the secular camps to show tolerance for each other. But it goes beyond this: in the situation of delicate parliamentary balance between Israel's two large political-ideological camps, both needed the support of the religious bloc and therefore did not give free rein to their entire latent secular potential. When the great ideological dispute over the Land of Israel concludes, the differences between the two large camps will resemble the differences between Democrats and Republicans in the United States, or between Labor and Conservatives in England. Another factor that will help obscure the country's religious character will be the heightened participation of the Israeli Arabs in the life of the state, this after the conflict has ended and immigrants from areas of distress who possess a very diluted Jewish identity continue to arrive. There is no doubt, therefore, that the insularity of the *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) circles, who already now are building themselves ghettos in which to pursue a separate way of life, will intensify, together with their alienation from what happens in Israel, especially when Israel will be inundated by a cosmopolitan identity whose messages will rush into the new void of identity with unprecedented force.

The extremist religious circles, who even now live in Israel just as they did in foreign countries, without identifying and without belonging, may be joined by the national-religious sector, the disappointed and disenfranchised proponents of Greater Israel, who devoted their whole being into the great hope of guiding the Jewish people toward the realization of their dream. Disheartened, they will abandon their desire to do battle against the totally secular reality in the hope of endowing it with religious content, and will enclose themselves in their radical-religious corner.

A second crack that could widen is that between Oriental and Western Jews. Basically a cultural divide, its social aspects could also prove extremely painful. The dialogue between the culture of the East and the culture of the West in Israel is fraught with tension - sometimes productive and creative, but sometimes bitter and recalcitrant. The question has already been raised by our Arab neighbors at the political level, and as the peace process progresses they will reiterate it within a cultural context and it will become a very pointed question: Do you Jews see yourselves as a natural and organic part of the Middle

East, or only as some kind of exiles whose heart and spirit are always drawn to the West?

Throughout the state's existence there has been overt and covert resentment by the Oriental Jews at cultural discrimination, and with the advent of peace that resentment will, I think, flare up anew. The opening of the borders with the Arab states will, to a degree, restore legitimacy to the culture of the Oriental Jews' forebears. Those who feel nostalgia for that culture, and they are many, will be able to satisfy their yearning through trade and tourism relations. This Oriental renaissance, together with a natural flooding of the country with Palestinian visitors, will give Israel a far more pronounced Oriental flavor than it has today, which could provoke repulsion and disgust in those whose model for emulation is New York, Los Angeles, or London. Some Oriental Jews will more forcefully demand rehabilitation for past cultural deprivations. And because the East-West cultural gap is also usually connected to disparities of status, this tension, without the binding ties of "security solidarity," will broaden the cultural gap in Israel and deepen the alienation between Israelis.

Yet another crack that peace could widen is the one between Israeli Jews and Diaspora Jewry. An Israel at peace, enjoying broad international recognition and sympathy, will no longer need Jewish lobbying or fund raising. Jews abroad will be left not only without work but without a rich source of activity and Jewish identity. On the other hand, the chaotic and unstable situation of Jewish identity, in which a Jew will be defined as "anyone who defines himself as a Jew," will make the sense of solidarity and national affiliation that Israelis feel toward Diaspora Jews increasingly abstract. Existentially, Israel will no longer need diaspora Jewry, and therefore the famous bond of destiny will lose much of its point.

I am a strong advocate of the peace that is now beginning to be implemented, characterized principally by territorial concessions and recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination in return for full peace and rigorous security arrangements. There is no other way. However, intellectuals and leaders who seek to understand and direct Israeli identity would already be well-advised to give careful thought to how both to steer possible developments and, especially, to devise creative ways of approaching these developments, and not simply to watch as implacable forces play themselves out. I am talking about new wings that Israel has to sprout, wings that have nothing to do with money but with a deeper understanding of the tensions within Israeli society. Such wings must prompt creative investment along several tracks, both old and new.

In the first place, the left-wing camp and the Labor camp have to renew clear efforts toward greater justice and social equality; while in the national-cultural realm some kind of new charter must be forged between the Jewish majority and the Israeli-Arab minority based on a stubborn determination to maintain Israel not only as the state of the Jews but also as a Jewish state. Alongside this we need a renewal of the alliance between the secular camp and the national-religious camp, even at the price of what may appear to be "concessions" by the former.

In the last twenty years Israeli liberals and left-wingers have dedicated themselves to one issue alone: making peace, recognizing the Palestinians' right to self-determination, and terminating Israeli rule in the territories. That objective united political and social forces which espouse differing and sometimes contradictory views on economic policy and on how to deal with social gaps. In those past twenty years Israeli society, which was initially marked by small economic gaps between the classes and by solid social legislation, became a country in which economic disparities are growing exponentially. The corruption that was engendered by cheap Palestinian labor and by accelerated economic development built on American financial aid brought about rising social inequality. The trend is continuing, and today Israel does not find itself in an honorable place among the family of Western democratic nations in terms of the size of divisions between classes.

Also, an Israel at peace cannot permit herself social gaps American-style; Israel will still constitute a small people surrounded by foreign nations who, even if they have recognized its existence, will remain suspicious. Therefore, if the energy that was devoted to securing the Palestinians' right of self-determination will now be directed only to attaining rights for homosexuals, or supporting battered women - in other words, only to politically correct issues of civil rights and the like - and not to bettering the economic situation of the lower classes, even at the expense of a slowdown in economic development, the "security solidarity" will no longer be sufficient to mitigate the hatred and the social tensions. The classic Zionist left must rediscover its social-democratic identity, even if this entails cooling its passionate liberalism.

As for the alliance with the national-religious camp: this long-lasting classic partnership (it continued until the Six-Day War) was one of the most important alliances of the Israeli political and intellectual center. Every possible effort has to be made to renew it. For decades the national-religious camp was part of the political center and displayed more moderate political positions than even a large part of the Labor movement. Today we have

to try at all costs to heal the rift, especially with that same national religious camp which always tried to be a partner, in its religious way, to the totality of the Zionist enterprise. The initiative for healing the rift has to come from the victorious camp, namely the secular camp, and especially the secular-liberal wing, which must curb its hedonistic secular appetite.

In peacetime the secular-liberal camp must more actively renew the dialogue with the national religious camp. Not for the sake of national reconciliation on the political question that now divides the nation, but in order to extend and enrich Israeli identity. Today we view relations between the camps against the background of the political dispute over Greater Israel. Yet, the decision on this issue has already been made, in the form of the peace agreements. The partition of the Land of Israel between the two peoples who inhabit it will become an acknowledged political reality.

The religious-secular dialogue, which now has a political character, will become a spiritual-cultural one because in the absence of common unifying elements of Israeli identity, it will be far more exposed to the external, cosmopolitan shell of American identity (not to its good inner core). The exposure will be intense thanks to the technological wizardry of the mass media.

The problem of how to preserve cultural components of national identity preoccupies larger and more established nations than ours. But the French, Italians, Dutch, Japanese, and others maintain continuous cultural traditions which are expressed in the preservation and cultivation of valuable and culturally potent physical assets that safeguard the richness of historical consciousness and its specific cultural attributes. Consider the palace of Versailles in France, the museums of Amsterdam and Florence, or the traditional Japanese ways of life that continue to be upheld in the midst of the modern lifestyle. These and similar assets act not only as effective protectors of the inner core of national identity; they are also excellent guides to the organic, natural directions of its development.

We have none of that. We spent most of our history among a great many highly diverse peoples, and therefore our material culture cleaved to other cultures and for the most part melted into them. What remains of us, in the world and in the Land of Israel, as historical evidence, is mainly ancient graves. Consequently, if we wish to look for roots of our identity, we must, even if we are thoroughgoing secularists, do it primarily through texts which are almost all suffused with religious being. Accessibility to those texts can be facilitated by those

who belong to the national-religious camp and therefore, besides having a more natural affinity with the texts, also have a common interest with us to find in them the foundations of a comprehensive national identity.

One of the foundations of Zionism was the idea of a spiritual and cultural return to the East. We did not come to the Land of Israel only because Europe hated us and spewed us out. We returned to the East as to our primal source in the hope of finding in it an old-new synthesis for our identity. We still remember the photograph of Weizman, clad in a kaffiyeh, standing next to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia after the two had formulated a statement of mutual friendship between the Zionist movement and the Arab national movement following the Balfour Declaration. To some of Zionism's founders and leaders the connection with the East meant a return to the authentic ancient sources of Jewish nationality, as well as a challenge for a new cultural endeavor. No wonder, then, that preeminent Jewish scholars devoted themselves to Oriental studies, some becoming Orientalists of international renown. The years of enmity, war, and terrorism washed away the remnants of the romantic view of the Arabs. But with the advent of peace we must take care that the turn and return to the East are not reduced merely to a regression of Oriental Jews to their roots.

An all-inclusive national position must be found which will obligate Western Jews to try and find a way to connect with the East. It will not be easy. The Arab world has been in a state of political and cultural decline for hundreds of years, and the future looks anything but bright. The Arabs have also developed a deep suspiciousness of anything Western and foreign, an attitude which is only heightened when it comes to Jews. Nevertheless, we have to hope that with the termination of the conflict with Israel, which robbed the Arab peoples of precious resources and in which they endured humiliating defeats, some new spark will perhaps be ignited within the great Arab nation, which centuries ago was the world's foremost source of culture. Intellectuals and artists have a duty to make a special effort to understand and penetrate the Oriental codes, and not to despair of them right away. We are neither Oriental nor Westerners, we are Mediterranean, but that Mediterraneanism must be imbued with comprehension and meaning precisely at a time when distances have become so much shorter. Regional identity still has meaning, if not for commerce and tourism, then at least for roots and identity.

That said, a clear stand must be taken toward the Israeli Arabs. With the advent of peace they will demand, and justly, full equality in the Israeli society, and as effective mediators between Israel and the Arab world, they may

seek to blur Jewish identity and urge the creation of an American-style state for all its citizens. Here there can be no compromise. Israel must remain a Jewish state in its symbols and contents, while conferring on its Arab minority a recognized cultural status, neither administrative nor territorial autonomy (the Israeli Arabs are not a territorial minority like the Basques in Spain or the Corsicans of France), but only cultural autonomy, with agreed representation in certain power centers. And of course full and equal civil rights. Everything must be done to ensure that the full integration of the Israeli Arabs within the state will not blur the identity of its Jewish inhabitants by one iota.

On the other hand, the Law of Return must be more rigorously applied with respect to the granting of citizenship. Citizenship should not be conferred automatically but only after a waiting period of several years in which Jewish immigrants will demonstrate their affiliation with the Israeli identity by at least learning the language and becoming acquainted with Israel's laws and customs, in the same way that citizenship is granted in other well-run countries. The Law of Return which allows every Jew the right of residence in Israel will still exist, but it will be a conditional right of residence.

Here I come to the final aspect of our identity, and I shall adduce a proposal which I have already put forward in the past. Its crux is a possible answer to that great and abiding question; what might the mission of the Jewish people in the twentieth century be? In the 1920s, when the distinguished German Jewish philosopher Martin Buber asked his colleague, Hermann Cohen, to support the Zionist movement, Cohen refused. "Do the Jews really want to forsake their grand mission among the nations and strive to be an ordinary, contented people?" he asked angrily and incredulously. "Do the Jews really want to establish another Albania in the Middle East?" Only a few years later the Jews, who were hurled into the lowest circle of hell, grasped that there was nothing wrong with asking for a bit of happiness. After the Holocaust we understood painfully how important it is to forgo fantasies of the "chosen people" type in return for the security of residing on our own soil like all peoples; that is the essence of normality in both the individual and the national realm.

But do we thereby forgo the sense of mission and purpose that has so long accompanied us? Will we move from the extreme viewpoint reflected in the words of Hermann Cohen to the opposite extreme, and say: Let us mind our own business only and forget about the embroiled, confused world which expects nothing from us?

The notion that the Jewish people has a mission and a purpose to fulfill among the nations of the world is two hundred years old. It is not an idea that engages only dreamers and world visionaries; it also engaged practical Zionist leaders like Ben-Gurion. Even after Israel's establishment, leaders and intellectuals continued to ask, "Shall we really be content with something like another Albania?" In an interview he once gave, Gershom Scholem, certainly a hard-headed secular scholar, made a provocative and problematic statement: "If Israel will be like all states and peoples, it will not exist in the next century."

True, even I sometimes feel that it would be better for Israel and the Jewish people to dispense with dreams about missions and with elevated talk about being a moral light to the Gentiles. We know today, after decades of political independence, that the great morality in which we took such pride in the Diaspora, was largely theoretical and resided primarily in well-phrased adages. It assumed a radically different appearance from the moment it was put to the practical test: in managing an economy, creating an army, dealing with minorities, operating secret services, articulating social policy. Nevertheless, I believe that great harm is also entailed in forgoing a consciousness of mission and purpose in favor of immersing ourselves in a narrow national egoism. We have learned from the reality of both the individual and the collective that those who give to others are only strengthened by their giving. Nothing good will come of our forsaking the belief that we have something to give the world; but what concrete mission Israel can undertake, and where?

It is hardly new to say that in recent years the gap between the First World and the Second and Third Worlds has become frighteningly dangerous, and worst of all is the First World's complacent acceptance of this horrendous situation. Since there is no Eastern Bloc, and the inter-bloc competition has ended, there is no longer any need to buy the political support of poor countries with aid and by other means. The tension between the two worlds, the First and the Third, or North and South, is becoming volatile. And with nuclear weapons beginning to find their way into private, usually revenge-crazed hands, we may all soon find ourselves in a situation in which hungry countries will threaten sated countries with a catastrophe.

We have the possibility to help the backward countries, not with money, but by raising the level of their inhabitants, by setting them on a constructive road of becoming effective producers and good consumers, as several examples in Southern Asia have shown. We have to take

part in this mission of the First World, the more so because we ourselves are situated on the boundary between the two worlds: for example, just a few dozen kilometers from the villas of the flourishing Sharon District and Tel Aviv is Gaza, a part of the Third World in every respect.

Jews have always excelled in teaching and learning, and I propose that we draw on that national tradition and skill of ours. Israel can contribute knowledge and know-how to the Third World, and I again propose the establishment of a "Teaching Corps," along the lines of President Kennedy's Peace Corps of the 1960s. Teachers from Israel will go to the Third World and teach everything they know, from chemistry and mathematics to computers, economics, and music. The cost will not be extravagant, it will involve salaries for "soldiers," and the mission will be undertaken jointly with the Jewish people everywhere. Where will we find the forces? They are not lacking. The Jewish people has a tremendous pool of unemployed intellectuals, in Israel, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. All that is needed is salaries for a few thousand people who will be sent for a few years as a Teaching Corps that will serve free of charge in Third World countries. Teaching and learning are gifts that are always accepted willingly, and the recipients will understand that this is not an attempt at economic domination or military intervention. The project can be based on funds earmarked for absorption and on unemployment insurance, which is in any case paid out.

Implementation of the idea will also be of benefit at the world-Jewish level: no more victimized, self-righteous wallowing in memories of the Holocaust, or conducting vacuous arguments with Arabs and common anti-Semites. Instead, a project will be launched that can transform the hollow phraseology of a "light unto the gentiles" into something modest but real.

I have tried to sketch a few new directions which can fill the Israeli identity with new content. Others will undoubtedly adduce different ideas, contradictory or complementary. I remain a firm believer in John Scully's excellent aphorism: "The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

The Cultural Consequences of Peace

Questions for discussion:

1. A.B. Yehoshua places the responsibility for initiating *a rapprochement* between the secular and the national religious Israelis squarely on the shoulders of secular Jews, even if that entails making concessions to the national religious camp. What, according to the author, do the secular stand to gain from the religious camp in terms of preserving cultural components of Israeli national identity? How can national religious Jews help - in practical ways as well as in ideological terms - expand and stabilize the core of Israel's national identity?

2. Yehoshua argues that when peace is cemented, many of the values which were inextricably bound up with the security struggle, such as settling the land and encouraging *aliyah*, will disappear. What evidence could be used to counter this argument? Do land settlement and *aliyah* have any inherent value - distinct from their effect on security - in Israel in the late 1990s? How might each of the following respond to Yehoshua:

a halachically observant Jew?

a survivor of the Holocaust?

a student of classical Zionism?

3. Yehoshua cites the tensions between religious and secular Jews, between Oriental and Western Jews, and between Israeli and Diaspora Jews as three of the forces driving a wedge between different segments of Israelis. Which of these issues, if any, affect Jewish unity in North American Jewish life? Are there uniquely North American tensions which prevent a sense of collective identity? Has the current peace process had an impact on the collective identity of the North American Jewish identity?

4. A.B. Yehoshua believes that the mission of the Jewish People is to share its knowledge and know-how with the Third World and suggests that the Israeli people undertake this challenge. Does Yehoshua's assessment resound similarly in the North American Jewish community? How could that mission be defined more specifically and addressed by North American Jewish communal institutions?

Introduction

This article appeared in Yedi'ot Ahronot, Israel's leading daily newspaper, a few months prior to the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, whose policies were important factors in creating "the Israeli (economic) revolution." Sever Plotzker identifies three factors responsible for Israel's economic revolution in the 1990s: the wave of mass immigration, primarily from the former Soviet Union, which expanded the Israeli work force to a new threshold, and brought an infusion of highly educated and trained workers in a variety of professions; the peace process, which opened doors to new markets, created a more optimistic economic mood, and decreased the share of GDP devoted to defense and security; and sheer economic growth, at one of the highest rates in the Western world.

The stark contrast between Israel of today and that of the early 1980s, let alone in earlier years, cannot escape notice. Evidence of the dramatic rise in standard of living is pervasive, in terms of the size and standard of housing, the number of private cars, the leisure culture that evolved (restaurants, domestic and international tourism, shopping malls, home electronics), the shift to suburbia, and the rise in disposable income for leisure purposes.

Plotzker (like many of the other whose analyses of other categories of life in contemporary Israel are included in this anthology), divides Israelis into several generational categories: those currently in their seventies, who assumed the historical mission of building the state and fighting for security and peace; those in their forties who

created Israel's Western-style economy; and those currently in their teens, who will give Israel a new culture and generate a spiritual turnabout.

In Israel of 1997, a mere two years after this article was written, some of the economic picture has remained the same, but much has changed. Economic growth has dropped to less than half of its former level, unemployment has reached 11%, tourism has waned, and optimism has somewhat dimmed. Many Israelis still enjoy a comfortable standard of living and lifestyle comparable to that of many countries in Western Europe, though the overall picture is not as ebullient as it seemed to be only a couple of years before. This may be partially attributed to the stagnating peace process, the diminishing influx of immigrants, and to certain social, economic and security-related implications of these developments. In any case, Israelis may be less sanguine about the prospects for their economic future, but time will tell whether Plotzker's mid-1990s analysis reflected a passing moment in Israel's economic development, or a more sustained trend.

For additional analysis of economic issues in the 1990s, see "The Economic Development of Israel and the Implications on the Relationship Between Diaspora Jewry and the People of Israel," by Ken Light, Ann Witenstein, and Michael Witenstein, and "Business, Technology, and the Economy," by Marilyn Altman, S. Morton Altman, Mark Dindas, Jay Leipzig, in the second section of this anthology.

The Israeli Revolution

Sever Plotzker

During the last 20 years we turned from a poor country with a small economy into one of the dozen most developed countries in the world. Why then do we go on grumbling?

Israel is in revolution. The daily preoccupations hide it from us and the Israeli tendency to revel in bitter despair, displaces it from our consciousness. Public opinion-shapers ignore it; most of them grew up in the "old" Israel and their range of speech and approach went rusty somewhere in the mid-70s.

So what has changed since then? Rabin and Peres run the country as they also did in 1975. Hussein reigns in Jordan; Assad rules Syria; Arafat presides over the PLO. The three of them carried the same titles and functions in 1975 too. Terrorism continues; *Gush Emunim* demonstrates; exporters complain about the frozen exchange rate of the dollar; Arik Einstein sings "Drive Slowly. Same as before, right? Wrong!

I will start with a basic given that sums up the economic power of a country: the product produced by all its inhabitants. In 1975 the Israelis manufactured a total product of 12 billion dollars. In 1995 the Israeli gross national product was 85 billion dollars - a growth of seven times within 20 years. The Israeli GNP today is 50% larger than the three Arab states surrounding us.

From a small, tiny, unimportant, insignificant economy we have become a Middle Eastern power and one of the twelve most developed countries in the world. Israel 1995 is not just well placed in the middle of the world's countries, but well placed among the 20 leading ones. Three factors caused the Israeli Revolution: mass immigration, peace and growth.

In 1975, the number of inhabitants living in Israel was 3.5 million. In 1995 there will be 5.6 million residing here. More than in Denmark. More than in Norway. A real serious state. Between the years 1975 and 1995, one million immigrants arrived in Israel and stayed here. Yes, a million immigrants, mostly from the USSR. A million immigrants that have changed and will change beyond recognition the mix, the social and economic mixture of

Israel.

The second factor in this success story was and remains the peace process, which began immediately after the Yom Kippur War and continues until today. Let us remember: 20 years ago, in 1975, 75 countries, members of the UN, voted for the proposal equating Zionism with racism. It was undoubtedly the lowest moment in the annals of Israel. Last year that wretched motion was cancelled. From among the 75 countries that voted for it 20 years ago, 65 have already established full diplomatic relations with Israel. Another five countries have partial relations.

And here is the most important point: in 1975 Israel devoted 33% of its GNP to security. In 1995, 9%. Armaments imports 20 years ago took a 15% bite out of our GNP. This year it will take 1.5% - only one and a half per cent of Israel's GNP. If we had to devote to security today the same portion of the GNP that we did 20 years ago, we would remain in a deep social and economic regression and the industrial world would pass us by. The resources that were released from the security burden went to investments and export. And that is how we grew.

Twenty years ago the local product per person in Israel was about \$3,400. In '75, when we looked overseas, we saw in rich Western Europe, a per person product that was three times larger than ours, \$9,000 - \$10,000. The gap between us and the West was so enormous, that returning to Israel from abroad was like landing in a remote province.

And what about America? The average wage of an Israeli employee in 1975 was \$350 per month. The average wage of an American employee in that same year was \$700 per month. This year, in '95, the average wage of an Israeli employee will reach \$1,500 - an increase of 330% within two decades. The wage of an average American employee will also amount to \$1,550 per month. An increase of 120%. The Israeli worker has far better social benefits than the American. The conclusion: in 1995 the Israeli worker earns on the average more than the American worker.

In 1975 a private car was seen as a dream. Only a third of all Israeli families had its own vehicle; only 280,000 cars rode the land's highways. In that year Israelis bought 20,000 new cars.

In 1995 the car is a regular household item. Seventy-five per cent of all Israeli families have a car of their own. 1,100,000 private cars ride the highways of Israel. This year another 130,000 new cars will be sold. In the space of six weeks, Israelis now buy the same number of cars that was purchased in the whole of 1975. And what cars! With all the accessories, more deluxe than in Europe.

In 1975, 800,000 telephone lines operated in Israel. On the average, people then had to wait two years for the installation of a telephone. This year there are 2,300,000 telephone lines operating in Israel. There are 1.5 telephones per home unit. Waiting time for a line is down to nil.

In 1975, 280,000 Israelis went abroad - 8% of the population. They paid travel tax; they had to show a travel permit; they bought flight tickets that were very expensive; they took \$300 as a foreign currency allowance. Only special people were allowed to use international credit cards.

This year 2,000,000 Israelis will have traveled abroad - 36% of the population. The cost of air fares has decreased by half. There is no travel tax and no need for a travel permit; you can spend \$7,000 abroad and every one who wishes has an inter-national credit card in his wallet.

The difference in prices between ourselves and the rest of the world has gone down to few per cent. It isn't worth smuggling anything into Israel anymore. Nothing. You can get everything here, which was not the case 20 years ago. Forty television channels in colour and a TV in every home. A PC in every third home. Holiday camps, charter flights, swimming pools. Hyper-markets, Benneton, Esprit. CDs and video.

What else changed in 20 years? The face of labour changed. Women went out to work. Twenty years ago only a third of the women of working age wanted to work. This year, almost half of all women work. Workers have become wiser, more educated. According to the Bank of Israel's new data, the level of education of the industrial worker in Israel has risen between 1975 and 1995 by 60% (!) and has reached 12 years of schooling. The number of engineers and technicians among the industrial work force has jumped to 18% as

against 4-5% 20 years ago. As a result, productivity has doubled in industry.

Israel has become a significant factor in world commerce and mainly in the most advanced areas: communications, electronics, computers. And yet, says the Bank of Israel, the stock of human capital latent in the recent immigration has not come to full expression. The expression will yet come. By the year 2000 we will reach a per person product of \$20,000.

These are the material and political facts. Surprisingly, they have not brought in their wake a better understanding by Israel society of itself. The Israeli material revolution has not merited research by Israeli sociologists; it is not reflected nor discussed in the Israeli media (except in bitter tears over the loss of values that has accompanied the buying and traveling fever); it does not beckon Israeli philosophers, is not expressed by Israeli writers and creators. Israeli society's self-consciousness has not changed since 1975.

Old fundamental concepts are therefore carried from generation to generation. The basic ideology of the mid-70s tries to exist in the Israel of the mid-90s, as if nothing has changed when everything has changed. In the end, the new Israel republic will develop its own world outlook. Those who will do it, will be our children.

The historical mission of Israelis who are now in their seventies was to build the state and grant it security and peace. They redeemed the sands of Rishon and developed the settlement. The objective of the Israelis who are now in their forties and fifties was to create here an advanced western economy that is strong, open and growing. And the aim of my children, who are in their teens and twenties, will be to translate all this into new ideas, a new culture, a new social episode.

My children, growing up in the new Israeli republic, will lead the spiritual turn-about. A new Israel entity; and I still have no idea how it will look.

The Israeli Revolution

Questions for discussion:

1. Waves of immigration can have dramatic effects on societies and economies. Are there any parallels in this regard between the wave of Jewish immigration to Israel that began in 1989, and the millions of European Jews who made their way to the United States and Canada between 1880 and the 1920s?

2. As Israel has become a more affluent, Westernized country, the earlier romantic era of pioneers dancing *hora* until dawn has given way to houses in the suburbs, MTV, McDonald's, and other cultural imports. Many factors may have contributed to this process.

Is there a connection between dynamic economic growth and the Jewishness of the Jewish State?

Are there any parallels in the North American Jewish experience, in terms of the interplay between growing economic prosperity and the attempt to accommodate a balance between Jewish and Western cultures?

In what ways is a robust economy conducive to cultural innovation and enhanced spirituality? If such a connection exists, does this express itself in a particularistic (rather than universal) Jewish manner in the case of Israel?

3. As the Israeli economy slows down and unemployment rises, workers in the Negev development town of Dimona (where unemployment is higher than in the larger cities) have been quoted as saying that they do not live in the same country as those who live in Tel Aviv. The economic situation has resulted in a widening gap between haves and have nots, between the top and bottom percentiles in Israeli society. To what extent can Jewish or Western cultural common denominators help to provide social cohesion as the socio-economic gap widens?

Introduction

A 1993 study on the subject of Jewishness in Israel conducted by the Guttman Institute of Applied Social Research found that despite the common perceptions of polarized religious and secular camps, most Israelis maintain some measure of Jewishness in their lives and are committed to preserving the Jewish character of the state. The results of the report portray a society that is, overall, more Jewish in attitude and practice than usually thought.

*Sociologically, Israeli Jews can be divided into three or four broadly defined groupings: "religious" - which can be further divided into ultra-Orthodox **haredim** and the national religious camp, "secular," and "traditional." Eight percent of Israel's Jews are **haredim**, meaning that they are strict in their observance of halacha; dress in very modest clothing; live separated from other populations; avoid Western culture whenever possible, though they partake of technology; do not serve in the army but do accept government funds. Some **haredim** are involved in politics and even serve in the government (see the article by Aviezer Ravitzky later in this chapter for a detailed discussion of this issue). There is a small minority among the **haredim** who are extreme in their "anti-Zionism" and refuse to have anything to do with the state, including accepting government funds. The 17% of the Israeli population known as "national religious" are also strictly observant, but mix with the rest of Israeli society and serve in the army. Their "nationalism" is reflected in their activism in the settlement movement and their generally right-wing political orientation. Together, these two groups comprise the one quarter of Israelis that can be called "religious."*

On the other end of the spectrum are the 20% who define themselves as secular, but within that block only 5% are hard core secular, that is, ideologically committed to being completely "non-religious." Most secular Jews follow the most common Jewish practices, such as conducting a Pesach seder, circumcizing their male children, and affixing mezuzot to their doorposts. In the middle of the picture lies the majority of the population - the 55% who are "traditional" in their Jewish observance to varying degrees. This diverse group includes those who subscribe

to the Israeli equivalent of Conservative and Reform Judaism (a small percentage of the population); those, particularly Sephardim, who traditionally will not light fire on Shabbat but will use electricity; those who are likely to attend synagogue services on a Shabbat morning and then drive to the beach in the afternoon, or any other of the familiar variations.

Because there is only one Jewish state in which many different Jewish worldviews compete for the public's favor and for government support, issues of Jewishness have become very politicized in Israel's 50 years of existence. Some of the more significant issues include:

® "Who is a Jew?" - *This refers to defining who is entitled to automatic citizenship (and favorable immigration rights) in the state that was founded with the express purpose of gathering Jewish exiles from around the world. The conflicts have focussed on Reform/Conservative versus halachic conversion, patrilineal descent, and Jews who converted to Christianity.*

® Legitimacy of non-Orthodox Jewish denominations - *The Progressive (Reform) and Masorati (Conservative) movements are attempting to break the monopoly that the Orthodox rabbinate holds in matters of conversion, marriage, divorce, and burial. They are also fighting for the right to be included in local religious councils, to receive government allocations to build synagogues and pay rabbis' salaries, and to conduct prayer services at holy sites such as the Western Wall.*

® Legislation of religious norms in the public domain - *This includes determining standards of kashrut and Shabbat observance in government institutions (e.g., the army, hospitals, schools) as well as prohibitions against opening places of business and entertainment on Shabbat or religious holidays.*

These examples illustrate a few of the diverse identities and aspirations within the Jewish state. Some of the specific beliefs and observances of the various populations are described below in this excerpt of the Guttman Institute's report.

Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews

Preface

The Research Objective

The objective of this study, commissioned by AVI CHAI, is to study religious observance, social interaction, and beliefs and values of Jews in Israel. Specifically, it explores the actual observance of *mitzvot*, social and demographic differences in religious behavior, the role of religion in public life, Jewish identification, Jewish beliefs and values as well as general social values, and issues of interaction among social groups that differ in the character of their religious observance and ethnic origin.

To the best of our knowledge, the present research is the most comprehensive that has been conducted on the topic of religious behavior of Jews in Israel, with respect both to the representativeness of the sample population and the range of topics covered.

The Samples and Field Work

The study was conducted by the Louis Guttman Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, under the direction of Dr. Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn, and Professor Elihu Katz, Scientific Director of the Institute.

The research population consists of Jewish adults twenty years of age and over, residing in all types of communities in Israel. Two samples, each of which comprised about 1,200 respondents (1,195 and 1,204) were selected to ensure proper representation of the population and coverage of a broad range of issues. Different questionnaires were designed for the two samples, one focusing primarily on Jewish religious behavior and social values, and the other focusing primarily on social interaction among Jews. There were 85 common questions asked of the 2,399 respondents.

Field work was conducted between October 20 and December 16, 1991. The respondents were interviewed in their homes by interviewers who were especially

trained for this purpose under the supervision of the Institute's field supervisors. In addition, certain supplementary questions were asked of respondents in field work from February 14 to March 22, 1993. These questions examine prevailing images of religious beliefs and behaviors so that they might be contrast beliefs and behaviors revealed in the main study.

Summary

In sum, the study finds that there are certain tradition attitudes, values and practices that embrace almost all of Israeli Jews: the commitment to Jewish continuity, the celebration of major holidays, the performance of life-cycle rituals. Certain practices - such as marking the Shabbat eve - encompass two-thirds of the population, by virtue of the fact that the I group of "somewhat observant" augments the ranks of "strictly" and "mostly" observant. Israeli Jews are committed to the continuing Jewish character of their society even while they are selective in the forms of their observance. They believe that public life should respect the tradition, but are critical of the "status quo" governing State and Religion.

While there is a sense of tension in the relations between groups of different degrees of religiosity more stereotypical than real, and an antipathy to the ultra-Orthodox and anti-religious, the study strongly suggests that the rhetoric secular and religious polarization generally used to characterize Israeli society is highly misleading. It would be more accurate to say that Israeli society has a strong traditional bent, and, as far as religious practice is concerned, that *there* is a continuum from the "strictly observant" to "non-observant," rather than a great divide between religious minority and a secular majority.

The following are selected findings described in various chapters of the monograph, which is available upon request to AVI CHAI. These Highlights, naturally, are not a substitute for the full monograph of 145 pages analysis, plus Appendices, which include the complete text of the questionnaires and 149 pages of cross tabulations. Like the monograph, these Highlights divide into three

sections: Observances, Social Interaction (including questions concerning the place of religion in public life), and Beliefs and Values.

Observances

Fourteen percent of Israeli Jews define themselves as "strictly observant," and 24% more say they are "observant to a great extent." Approximately 40% report themselves "somewhat observant," and about 20% "totally non-observant."

This distribution of religious observance has remained essentially unchanged over the past 25 years. It extends also to specific observances; for example, the proportion of synagogue attendance corresponds, by and large, to Guttman Institute observations since 1969.

Nevertheless, when asked to estimate the proportion of Israelis "that observe the religious tradition in the same way that you do," respondents at each level of religiosity overestimate the number of others who behave as they do. The majority are not well acquainted with the facts regarding religious observance of the Israeli public, and at each level of religiosity overestimate the proportion of Israelis "that observe the religious tradition in the same way that I do." In other words, regardless of the extent of their observance, Israelis feel well supported in their positions. This sense of support rises with the decline in observance; that is, the less observant feel that there are even more of them.

When asked about affiliation with a particular religious trend, nearly half reported no affiliation. Only in recent years has the Israeli public become aware of the existence of "denominations" in religious affiliation.

Observance By Background Traits

Self-defined religious observance does not much vary among different age groups, between men and women, and between old-timers and newcomers.

Ethnic origin makes a difference, both in observance and in some attitudes. Those from Eastern ethnic backgrounds (Asian-African, known as *Sephardim*) are, in general, more sympathetic to religious tradition, while those from Western ethnic backgrounds (*Ashkenazim*) are, in general, less sympathetic. There is a high concentration (70%) of Jews of Eastern origin in the category, "observant to a great extent," just as there is high concentration

of Western Jews among the "totally non-observant." Israelis born to Eastern parents are generally less observant than their Eastern-born parents, while the Western-born and their Israeli offspring do not differ with respect to religious observance.

Religious observance varies with levels of education, both general and religious. Respondents with low levels of general education are the most observant, while the non-observant concentrate among the better educated, especially those with full university education.

In a religious school setting, however, increased levels of education lead to increased observance. It should be noted that "religious schooling" refers to only 37% of the population, since 63% reported that they had no religious schooling.

Stability of Religious Observance and Attitudes Over Time

In addition to the relative stability of religious observance over time, and the striking similarity in the distribution of observance across age groups, respondents also report high correlations between own and parents' observance. Only 20% report themselves to be radically different from their parents in this respect,

Behaviorally speaking, then, it is fair to conclude that inter-generational continuity outweighs change, to which one should add that there is somewhat more movement toward lesser rather than greater observance. Thus, fewer respondents from "strictly observant" homes follow their parents as closely as those from "totally non-observant" homes.

Nevertheless, there appears to be an attraction toward increased religious observance. A third say that they would like to be "somewhat more" or "much more" observant, while only 5% say that they would want to be "a little less" or "much less" observant. Sixty-two percent say that they would want to remain the same. The more observant the respondent, the greater the wish to be even "more" observant. Interestingly, 10% of the "totally non-observant" also express a wish to be "somewhat more" observant, and one-half of the "non-observant" would prefer their children to be "somewhat observant" rather than "totally non-observant."

Observing Shabbat

Until very recently, the Seventh Day - the Shabbat, was

the whole of the Israeli "weekend," and had to double as a religious holiday replete with *mitzvot*, as well as to serve as a "day off" in the Western sense. For the past few years, Friday has been added to the weekend, and the five-day work week now encompasses about half the work force. As a day off, Friday also carries a burden of traditional duties having to do with preparation for the Sabbath. Public observance of Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday, when shops, most public transportation, and most places of entertainment are closed until after sundown on Saturday.

Two-thirds of the population mark Shabbat as a special day by observing some *mitzvot*, such as lighting candles or participating in a special meal on Friday night; almost half recite *Kiddush*. It should be noted that more households mark Shabbat by lighting candles than is generally perceived to be the case. Overall, 77% say that marking Shabbat in some way is an important principle in their lives, including 39% of those who consider themselves "totally non-observant."

Most Israelis desire that Friday night remain a quiet, home-centered evening (68%), and Friday-night rituals have far more adherents than Shabbat-day observances. Only a minority (20%-30%) "never" observe *mitzvot* such as candle-lighting, *Kiddush*, or a festive meal. Even some of the non-observant mark Shabbat *eve* in a traditional manner (especially by lighting candles and having a special meal).

On the other hand, only a minority attend synagogue on Shabbat morning, and this fact is, by and large, more accurately perceived by the public than the more widespread Shabbat-at-eve practices.

Prescriptive *mitzvot* (*ase*) have more adherents than prescriptive ones (*lo ta'ase*). Only 20-40% "always" observe Shabbat prescriptions against work, lighting fire, travel, paid entertainment, electricity and telephone, while regular observance of prescriptive *mitzvot* ranges from 20-60%. Two thirds "never" observe the prohibitions against turning electricity on or off and using the telephone.

Scale analysis of the prescriptive *mitzvot* for Shabbat suggests that synagogue attendance on Shabbat morning is probably the first precept to be dropped en route to non-observance, while lighting Shabbat candles is the durable commandment ("last to go"). As for Shabbat proscriptions, the first departure from strict observance is using electricity. The next step is travel, followed in turn by paid entertainment, lighting a fire, and working inside the home, while the "last to go" is performing work in

public. Thus, working in public on Shabbat best defines non-observance of prescriptive *mitzvot*.

In short, the Israeli Shabbat is best characterized in terms of (1) in-home rituals of "welcoming Shabbat," (2) refraining from work in public, and (3) relaxing and spending time with the family on a "free" day (not necessarily at home, except for the "strictly observant").

With respect to Shabbat observance, the Western groups - first and second generation - are more consistent than the Eastern groups in the sense of performing "all" or "nothing."

However, non-observant Western groups are more likely to perform certain rituals "symbolically" (e.g., by lighting candles without a blessing, or eating a festive meal) rather than in the manner prescribed. Most of these are Westerners who define themselves as "somewhat observant." In the long run such symbolic patterns may be indicative of those who see themselves as "traditional" (*masorati*) in Israeli society. Compared to the Western groups, the less observant of Eastern origin tend to augment the symbolic marking - candles or special meal - with *Kiddush*.

A generational change is evident between Eastern-born respondents and their Israeli offspring. The latter are less observant and more similar in their religious behavior to other Israeli-born respondents. This applies especially to proscriptive *mitzvot* of Shabbat, such as refraining from travel, using electricity, etc.

Keeping Kosher

Almost all Israeli Jews (90%) observe some *kashrut* behavior at least occasionally; about 40% strictly observe all of the *kashrut* behaviors studied. Public perception of the observance of *hashrut*, however, underestimates the extent of its prevalence.

Two-thirds report that they "always" eat kosher food at home. However, since kosher food is predominant in Israel, a more stringent indicator of *hashrut* is having separate utensils for meat and dairy foods. This practice is maintained by approximately one-half of the population, who also wait an interval between eating meat and dairy foods. Even when abroad, half report observing *kashrut* "always," but a higher proportion of respondents "never" observe *hashrut* abroad compared to "never" observing *hashrut* in Israel.

Scale analysis of *kashrut* practices confirms that the most vulnerable practice ("first to go") is keeping separate utensils for meat and dairy foods, and most tenacious ("last to go") is avoidance of explicitly non-kosher food.

Quality of food (healthy, clean) is considered by the respondents no less important a reason for observing *kashrut* than observing the mitzvah for its own sake.

Celebrating Holidays

Holidays are more widely observed than Shabbat and most aspects of *kashrut*. Indeed, more than the other domains of observance, holidays are a consensual domain, embracing both observant and non-observant. This may be because holidays are special events that occur only rarely, compared to everyday or even weekly routines. Moreover, many of the holidays have a unifying power, national or existential, in addition to their more strictly religious definition. The public is well aware of the pervasive observance of major holidays.

Indeed, a wide consensus prevails with respect to the celebration of the major holidays, both religious/national (Passover, Hanukkah) and religious/existential (Yom Kippur): 78% always participate in a Passover *seder*; 72% always light Hanukkah candles; on Yom Kippur 71% always fast and 69% always pray.

Passover observance is very widespread. Even most of the "totally non-observant" always or frequently participate in a *seder*. Beyond celebration of the *seder*, most Israeli Jews, including more than one-fifth of the "non-observant," refrain from *hametz* on Passover.

Fewer respondents (36%-38%) "always" observe *Sukkot* (having a kosher *sukkah*) or Purim (listening to the *Megillah* of Esther). Customs relating to holidays, such as eating dairy foods on *Shavuot*, are often more widely observed than particular *mitzvot* such as blessing the *lulav* on *Subbot*.

Those of Eastern origin, whether born abroad or in Israel, tend to be more observant of the holidays than Westerners. Noteworthy is the fact that lighting Hanukkah candles, participating in a *seder*, and building a *sukkah* (not necessarily a kosher one) are more prevalent among Israeli-born respondents of Western origin than among their foreign-born parents. This is apparently a function of age and the presence of small children, as well as an expression of the desire for Jewish continuity even among this relatively non-observant sector of

Israeli society.

Marking the Life-Cycle

Over 80% feel it is important to them that life-cycle events be invested with a Jewish religious character: *brit milah* (92%); bar mitzvah (83%); wedding (87%); burial, *shivah* and *Kaddish* for parents (88%-91%). Only a small minority (4%-7%) consider such ceremonies "not at all important." Even most of the "totally non-observant" consider it important to mark these turning points (birth, maturity, marriage, death) with Jewish ceremony.

Attending Synagogue and Prayer

Most Israeli Jews go to synagogue at some time during the *year*. About one-quarter attend regularly-daily or weekly-and the remainder go occasionally on High Holidays or for special events. About one-fifth report that they "never" go to synagogue. Present synagogue attendance of Israelis is very similar to that reported by the Guttman Institute a quarter of a century ago. Those born in the East attend synagogue most regularly.

Almost a fifth (22%) of men and 10% of women say that they pray daily. Asked, "Do you know how to pray from a prayer book?" 46% replied, "only a little" or "not at all."

Other Observances: *Mezuzah*, *Kippah*, *Tefillin*, *Mibveh*

Four perennial observances exemplify the wide range of similarities and differences in religious behavior: *mezuzah*, *hippah*, *tefillin*, *mibveh*.

There is no difference at all between the "strictly observant" and the "totally non-observant" in affixing a *mezuzah*. Virtually all respondents (98%) have a *mezuzah* on their front doors; the great majority have one on each of the required doors. Almost all of the "non-observant" (92%) have a *mezuzah* at least on the entrance door of their homes, with 36% of them having a *mezuzah* on each of the doors traditionally required to have one. Seventy-four percent (46% "definitely") believe that "the *mezuzah* protects your home."

Wearing a *hippah* moves between the extremes of always (22%) and never (37%), with a plurality using a head-covering on a variety of special occasions. Among those

who do wear a *kippah*, 62% use a "knitted *kippah*," 30% a "black *hippah*," and 8% use other types of head-covering.

Over half (56%) of married women never use a head-covering, compared to 13% who always do so. About a third (30%) use a head-covering occasionally, mainly when lighting Shabbat candles, when praying, and on a variety of special occasions.

Seventy-nine percent of Jewish men own *tefillin*, and about a quarter use them regularly. About half do not use them at all. For their part, 16% of women go to a *mikveh* regularly, and an additional 8% go occasionally. This proportion is unchanged since 1969, as is also noted with respect to certain other practices - synagogue attendance, for example.

Scope of Observance and Reasons for Non-Observance

If performance is taken as the measure of observing *mitzvot* - regardless of intent or frequency - virtually all Israeli Jews are observant in some way. The ubiquitous *mezuzah* is an example. Even if intent or the attribution of "importance" is added to the behavioral definition of observance, some 80%-90% of Israeli Jews would qualify as observant of *mitzvot* such as ritual circumcision, bar mitzvah and Passover seder.

Additional evidence comes from scalogram analysis of ten observances from three different domains - Shabbat, *kashrut* and holidays - which reveals that 93 % of Israelis observe at least one of the relevant *mitzvot* from these domains. That is, only a small minority (7%) of respondents are objectively non-observant in terms of these ten cross-domain precepts, compared to one-fifth who describe themselves as "totally non-observant."

Respondents were asked to accept or reject four different explanations for non-observance and to rate the importance of each as an explanation. The rank order ranges from 67% who said that "people lack proper education" to 38% who said that "ethical people don't need *mitzvot*." In between, the explanations that "mitzvot are hard to observe" and "mitzvot may be observed selectively" were supported by about half of the respondents. For the "strictly observant," the predominant explanation is that "people lack proper education" and, perhaps surprisingly, over half of the "totally non-observant" agree. The non-observant give more weight to "ethical people don't need *mitzvot*." In sum, non-observance - in the eyes of both the "strictly observant" and the "totally non-

observant" - is not so much a matter of difficulty of performance as it is a matter of different outlook, related to education and ethics. In fact, about half of the non-observant agree with all four of the explanations offered for non-observance.

Beliefs and Values

Principles of Faith

Sixty percent of respondents firmly believe in the existence of God or a Supreme Power that guides the world. Even among the non-observant, one-fifth hold these beliefs.

About half of Israeli Jews firmly believe the Torah was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, that Divine Providence watches over everyone, that the Torah and *mitzvot* are God's commands, and that good deeds are rewarded. Over 40% believe that bad deeds are punished, and a smaller number (27%) believe that those who don't observe *mitzvot* will be punished. More than a third believe in a world-to-come, and in the coming of the Messiah.

These principles of faith are very highly inter-correlated - that is, one belief leads to another. Multivariate analysis reveals that the same structure of inter-relations among beliefs holds, by and large, across religious and ethnic groups.

The more observant the respondents, the more they report belief in each of the principles. However, the "strictly observant" and the "totally non-observant" are at polar ends with respect to only two main issues: the world-to-come including the coming of the Messiah, and the origin of *mitzvot* (as God's command, as well as punishment for non-observance).

More of those of Eastern ethnicity believe in each of the principles of faith than do their Western counterparts. The second generation of Eastern origin is slightly less believing than their parents, while the first and second generation of Western origin do not differ at all.

Belief declines with years of education: without taking account of specifically religious education, those with more years of schooling tend to believe somewhat less in the principles of faith. But belief is not correlated with age; respondents of different age groups are similar in their belief in each of the principles of faith.

General and Jewish Values

"To honor parents" and "to raise a family" are at the top of the ranking of values for the entire population (and for all the religious groupings who report at least "some observance"). Among the non-observant, values of self-fulfillment such as "to be at peace with oneself" and interpersonal values stemming from general ethics rank higher than "to honor parents" and "to raise a family." However, the vast majority among the non-observant, as well as among respondents from the other religious groupings, also regards these precepts as very important guiding principles.

Multivariate analysis of the inter-relations among Jewish values ("importance") and performance ("observance") suggests that the public, in general, acts a great extent in accordance with its values.

Adherence to general ethical values, as well as to values implying belongingness to the Jewish people, and attributing importance to Jewish holidays and Jewish life-cycle ceremonies, are considered as guiding principles across all sectors of society. Values related to observance of *mitzvot* are not shared across sectors (except for a few *mitzvot* governing interpersonal relations) and are guiding principles only in the eyes of the observant.

Factors that Motivate Jewish Identification

Living in Israel, upbringing at home, and observances related to the life-cycle, Shabbat and holidays, are all viewed as factors which influence the feelings of Israelis that they are part of the Jewish people.

At the top of a list of factors that motivate Jewish identification, respondents name the Zionist experience (the history of Israel in recent times, the respondent's living in Israel) and parental influence. Current history is followed by celebrating national/religious holidays (Passover *seder* and Hanukkah), family gathering on Shabbat and participating in life-cycle ceremonies such as *brit milah* and *Kaddish*. At the bottom of the list - but still affirmed by two-thirds to three-quarters of respondents - are specific religious observances, "the Jewish religion, and "ancient" history. These self-assessments imply that the Jewish tradition motivates Jewish identification through holidays and certain life-cycle rituals, more than through specific religious observances. This result coincides with results reported above on observances and values.

It is noteworthy that 84% of the respondents report visiting the Western Wall: 11% often, 35% sometimes, and 35% seldom. The Wall is considered a visible symbol of the continuity of history and heritage.

An "objective analysis" correlating the importance attributed to each motivating factor of Jewish identification with the respondents' overall sense of belonging to the Jewish people, suggests that religious and national factors may have almost equal influence after all. In other words, the objective ranking differs from the subjective ranking in that the former gives equal weight to the religious and national factors, while the latter places more emphasis on recent national events as a motivator of Jewish identification than on the Jewish religious tradition.

Earlier research revealed that a tie to Israel alone (recent history), when not accompanied by others of the motivating factors, may actually be associated with a lower level of Jewish identification. This proposition finds support in the rather lower feeling of belongingness to the Jewish people expressed by the "totally non-observant" in the present study.

Israel and the Diaspora

Israelis overwhelmingly take pride in being Jewish (94%) and believe it is important to live in Israel (93%). They also feel a connectedness to fellow Jews around the world (96%). The observant exceed the non-observant not only in this aspect of Jewish peoplehood, but, interestingly, also in answer to the question, "Do you consider yourself a Zionist?: Sixty-percent of the "strictly observant" answered "definitely, yes" compared to 40% of the non-observant.

Three-fourths of Israelis believe that Jews in Israel and Jews in the Diaspora share a common fate. More than half believe the Jews are a chosen people. About two-thirds agree to the proposition that Israel would not be able to survive without a strong relationship with the Jewish people worldwide. A somewhat larger majority agree to the reciprocal proposition that the Jewish people in the Diaspora would not be able to survive without the existence of the State of Israel. In other words, the percentage of respondents who believe that the survival of Diaspora Jewry is dependent on the existence of the State of Israel is somewhat higher than those who believe that the existence of the State is dependent on a strong relationship with Diaspora Jewry.

It is of interest to note that the reverse situation prevailed in 1975, when more respondents thought that Israel could not survive without a strong relationship with the Jewish Diaspora than those who agreed to the reciprocal proposition, that the Jewish people in the Diaspora could not survive without Israel. It appears that during the past 18 years Israelis have gained more confidence in the independence of the State and its centrality for the

Jewish people. These views are shared across all sectors of the population. In effect, most Israeli Jews see the State of Israel as the State of the Jewish people as a whole, essential for the survival of Jews in the Diaspora, but also dependent upon them.

Beliefs, Observances and Social Interactions Among Israeli Jews

Questions for discussion:

1. The authors of the report claim that Israel's Jewish population can more appropriately be understood as a continuum of religiosity than as a clear-cut division between two extremes. Does this model apply as well to the North American Jewish community? In North America there is a much higher degree of affiliation with particular religious trends and a much lower degree of ethnic variety. How do these factors affect the structure of the continuum there?
2. The report states that Israelis from Eastern ethnic backgrounds - those whose families originated in North African and the Middle East - are more sympathetic to religious tradition than those from Western ethnic backgrounds. What are some of the historical, socio-economic, and political factors that may account for this tendency? How has rapid modernization in Western countries affected their citizens' relationship with traditional heritage?
3. Think about the ways in which Shabbat is celebrated in the North American Jewish community. What are the most significant elements of observance? How might this be explained? According to the report, what seem to be the most important elements of Shabbat for most Israelis? How do their priorities parallel or differ from those of North American Jews?
4. The study found that belief declines with years of education: those with more years of schooling tend to believe somewhat less in the principles of faith. Is advanced education another challenge that modernity poses to Jewish tradition? If so, what strategies might be adopted or developed - in Israel and in North American Jewish communities - to facilitate a better synthesis between higher education and basic Jewish beliefs?
5. Referring to the section on "Factors that Motivate Jewish Identification," develop a similar list of factors that motivate Jewish identification in North America. Do some of the national factors that Israelis cite manifest themselves differently among North Americans? Are any personal expressions of religion on the North American list missing among the Israelis? To what extent does this strengthen the case for global Jewish unity, or point to fundamental differences between Jewish communities?

Introduction

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Israeli school system has been divided into two main streams: general state education designed to educate children from non-religious homes, and religious state education for those from religious homes. A smaller, independent third stream serves children of haredim (ultra-Orthodox), and is not under the supervision of Israel's Ministry of Education.

Within general state schools, where the majority of Israeli children study, Jewish subjects - including Bible, Talmud, Jewish philosophy, Jewish history, Israel studies, archaeology, folklore, Hebrew literature, and Zionism - are taught, but their status has waned over the years. While many of these subjects are mandatory, the time devoted to such studies had been reduced, the quality of instruction in some instances is of lower standard than in secular subjects, and the curriculum is viewed by some as outmoded. Because non-observant teachers are less likely to specialize in Judaic areas, these subjects are increasingly taught by religious teachers, even in general state schools. The Orthodox interpretation of Judaism generally presented has not been successful in engaging the secular youth of the 1990s, and in many cases has engendered apathy toward Jewish subjects.

During the pre-state period and the first decades of statehood, both religious and non-religious Israelis felt a strong attachment to their Jewish roots. The Bible, for example, was not the sole property of the religious; non-religious Jews identified with the elements of the Bible linking them to the Jewish homeland, Jewish culture, agriculture in Eretz Yisrael, and so on. Since the 1970s, the religious have become more militant in Israel as in other parts of the world, and the less observant Jews have been dramatically influenced by the deluge of Western culture. As a result, there have been shifts in attachment to Jewish values among virtually all sectors of Israeli society, including growing fervor for Judaism in many religious circles, and diminished attachment to Jewishness among less observant Israelis. The growing gap between the world

views of the religious and non-religious has concerned many. While it need not be seen as a radical polarization (see "Beliefs, Observances, and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews" earlier in this chapter for a detailed discussion of this issue), it nonetheless has significant implications for Jewish identity and social cohesion in Israel. Therefore it constitutes a critical challenge for the education system.

In 1991, prompted by the growing concern over the declining status of Jewish studies in general state education, a public committee was established by then Minister of Education Zevulun Hammer (of the National Religious Party) to investigate the issue. The committee, headed by Haifa University Rector Aliza Shenhar (subsequently named Israel's ambassador to Russia) spent three years examining how Jewish subjects are taught in secular schools and presented its findings in the summer of 1994 to Hammer's successor as Minister of Education, Amnon Rubinstein (of the Meretz party).

As a result of the May 1996 elections, Zevulun Hammer resumed the position of Minister of Education in the Netanyahu (Likud) government, and promptly suspended implementation of the committee's recommendations. Hammer distanced himself from the pluralistic approach to Jewish education that the committee had adopted (and from a second project devoted to fostering democratic values) and created a new unit dedicated to promoting Jewish values in the general state education system - to be headed by a controversial, staunchly religious educator from the National Religious Party. This caused a public outrage in non-Orthodox realm, where the move was viewed as Hammer's attempt to impose Orthodox notions of Judaism on non-Orthodox pupils in the general state education system.

The Shenhar Report, a summary of which follows, and the NRP's alternative approach, are two examples of the numerous competing visions of the Jewish character of the State of Israel.

The Shenhar Report on Jewish Education in the Non-Orthodox Public School System in Israel

Changes in Jewish Education in State Schools in Israel and Plans for the Future

The changes taking place in Jewish history over the past few generations - especially the exodus from the ghettos, the Enlightenment, Jewish nationalism and Zionism, the great waves of world-wide migration and immigration to the Land of Israel, the Holocaust, and the establishment of the State of Israel - have all engendered far-reaching changes in the living conditions of the Jewish People and in forming its cultural and spiritual values. These changes continue to shape the cultural ethos in the State of Israel in a process of constant interaction among systems, correlated with political, cultural, and ideological changes in Israel, among the Jewish People and throughout the world.

This process has always led to slightly significant changes in the self-perceived identity and the national, social, cultural, and religious affinities of the Israeli public. As such, it is also reflected in the attitudes of the state educational system and its students towards the study of subjects connected with the history, creativity, and culture of the Jewish People.

A public committee was established in 1991 to assess the situation of Jewish studies in general state education in light of these changes. Its conclusions and recommendations are presented herein to the Minister of Education, Culture, and Sports.

The Committee's work took place as two major historical developments unfolded: the great wave of immigration from the FSU and Ethiopia, and the peace negotiations. These processes posed two key spiritual challenges for Israeli society: (a) absorption of immigrants, consolidating their Israeli identity, and deepening their Jewish roots to foster a sense of belonging and partnership, while creating new patterns in relations with the Diaspora; (b) creating a personal and social culture and values that are not based on a battle for survival and subsistence within a reality of war, but on free choice, dialogue, and creative

living in an open world. The educational-cultural challenges to Israeli society posed by peace and immigrant absorption underscore a constant need to address questions of Israeli and Jewish identity. Recognition of the significance of Jewish history and culture is a primary condition for accomplishment of this mission, obligating the entire educational system, including the general education system, to re-examine the role of Jewish studies.

The Committee included the following subjects under the heading "Jewish Studies": Hebrew language and literature, Jewish history, Bible, Talmud, Jewish philosophy, Israel studies, archaeology, folklore and other subjects and fields of study that relate to Jewish history and culture, the Land of Israel, the Zionist Movement and the State of Israel, in both formal and informal education.

The target public towards which the Committee directed its assessment views Judaism as a national, pluralistic culture in formation; the Jewish component of the general public identity combines a variety of fundamentals that include elements of religious tradition; attachment to the Land of Israel - its past, sites, nature, and landscapes; the Hebrew language and its variety of original and translated creative works; the Hebrew calendar, its holidays and festivals, both religious and natural, creating new holiday patterns combining elements of religious ceremony with ethnic traditions and components restored as part of Zionist creativity, expressing an attachment to the Land of Israel in general and to agricultural settlement in particular; personal, social, and ethical values derived from the Jewish heritage, the Zionist ethos and the ideologies, and moral philosophies of all mankind.

According to the standard terminology used in Israeli society, the public that educates its children in general-state education is called "secular." However, the common use of the term "secular" is unacceptable to extensive sectors of the public that it is supposed to define and whose cultural-Jewish identity it is said to reflect. Many would prefer alternative designations, such as the "liberal" public or the "general" public. Objection to the term "secular" is directed primarily at its attendant negative connotation, implying that the group it describes lacks

Jewish identity of positive content or presenting the group solely as the antithesis of the Orthodox public. These conceptions and similar ones of the concept of "secular" distort the cultural image of the public it is intended to define. Nevertheless, although the Committee objects in principle to the term "secular," considering its extensive popularity in Israeli society, it will continue to use this descriptor to designate the public that educates its children in general state education, constituting the vast majority of the population of the State of Israel.

The Israeli educational system is divided into sectors. The State-Religious and Independent-Orthodox sectors are each defined by affiliation with a cultural system that maintains a distinct overall outlook and is subject to a clearly-defined spiritual and communal authority. In contrast, the general state sector consists of students and teachers manifesting a variety of outlooks - secular or free of any binding commitment to Jewish law, revelation, faith in God and the Divine origins of the Torah - who prefer that the school be open to a variety of opinions, even if they consider themselves bound to specific elements therein. The general state school is indeed characterized by openness to a variety of views and outlooks, a positive attitude towards human rights and democratic life, affinity with world culture, a conscious perception of changing times and historical change, and an encouraging view of the developing natural sciences.

The essential pluralism of general education and the constant need to cope with a variety of schools of thought and outlooks embodies internal tension that is particularly manifested in the teaching of Jewish subjects. As this tension can also be exciting and productive, general education mentors may prefer to avoid the moral and educational disputes entailed in the teaching of Jewish history and culture by ignoring and obscuring the subject. The Committee believes that this approach encourages evasion of commitment and involvement and is consequently destructive, leading to shallowness and indifference. The Committee maintains that using democratic tools to address differences, while demonstrating respect and tolerance for the various viewpoints and a readiness to accept the new and the different is part of the very essence of the general school. Moreover, Jewish studies are an element of humanistic studies, focusing on creative development through free dialogue with the variety of manifestations of the human spirit and coping constantly with the challenges it poses. The multiplicity of view inherent in Jewish studies should be perceived as an opportunity not only for expansion of knowledge but also for intensive discussion and for tackling individual and public questions, enabling teachers

and students to contribute some of their own experience and to share their cultural and intellectual worlds.

The Committee believes that pluralism in general education should be used as a means of achieving significant cultural intensification, enrichment, and educational experience, responding to the challenges of the times. The general school should become a focus for development of various options concerning Jewish-Israeli cultural survival, independent of halachic authority, linked critically and innovatively with the creativity and history of the Jewish People from a variety of viewpoints.

The problematics affecting the teaching of Jewish subjects in general education are evident at all levels and in all study programs. The Committee emphasizes that familiarity with Jewish history and culture is an essential foundation for building the identity and spiritual and moral world of the young Israeli. Therefore, the educational system must devise curricula and study materials appropriate to the study of Jewish subjects for youth at all levels and in all study programs, consolidating a variety of methods and work patterns suiting the needs of various student populations. Special priority should be accorded to preparing a curriculum for students in non-academic programs, especially those who do not take matriculation examinations and do not complete senior high school. Education towards moral values should be capable of reaching youth at all levels and in all study programs, seeking the delicate balance between the rudiments of the various separate disciplines and the interdisciplinary nature of Jewish studies.

The Committee expresses its admiration for teachers in the general state educational system who strive to teach Jewish history, creativity, and culture. The Committee finds it appropriate to emphasize that its conclusions and recommendations are not to be construed as criticism of teachers of Jewish subjects. Rather, on the contrary, it seeks to institute changes aimed at helping these teachers realize their professional abilities, their pedagogical outlook, and their mission as educators.

The Teaching of Jewish Subjects General Education

The Committee received extensive information on the situation of Jewish studies instruction in general education. Despite differences of opinion regarding the data's significance, all Committee members view with grave concern the continuing decline in the status of Jewish studies at all levels of education, including at teachers'

colleges and universities. The sad state of Jewish studies is particularly reflected in the constant decline in number of hours devoted to such instruction; the number of students selecting Jewish subjects for compulsory matriculation examinations and choosing to continue their Jewish studies and train as teachers; and the difficulties encountered in developing innovative curricula and teaching methods.

The Committee believes that the continuing decline in the status of Jewish subjects in general state education is a result of social, political, and ethical changes that affect schools and are most strongly reflected in humanistic studies emphasizing the moral order of which Jewish studies are a part. Among the factors involved in this decline, the Committee especially noted the decline of ideologies; the rise of the consumer society and the global village that bring various values and world views into confrontation; the information explosion that threatens this generation's ability to impart authoritative knowledge to its successors; the increasing trend towards professional expertise, rendering it difficult to educate renaissance persons; the prestige and attraction of science and technology; the paradoxical change in the status of the Hebrew language - the more linguistically and culturally dominant it became, the farther it strayed from its classical sources and its function as the key to general and Jewish knowledge, instead becoming a subject separate from other spheres of knowledge; the increasing politicization of the Jewish religion and its institutions and intensification of the polarity between the religious and secular public; the decline in the power and authority of volunteer organizations; intensification of the social gap and ethnic conflicts; political disputes based on the tension between the state of war and the hope for peace, exacerbating ideological-political application of traditional texts. These developments led to uncertainty, disputes, ignorance, and fanaticism, constituting a palpable threat to society in Israel and to its chances of formulating a culture that accommodates expansion. Moreover, such developments also contributed to the decline in the status of Jewish subjects as a common cultural element and the foundation of intellectual and artistic creativity in Israeli society.

The Committee is aware that the factors responsible for the decline in the status of Jewish subjects, as well as the difficulties of the educational system in general, did not emerge from within, but are the result of the state of humanistic education in a technological society and the far-reaching changes and differences of opinion that divide Israeli society. Therefore, the Committee believes that the educational system must prepare to address these issues in a comprehensive manner, as the effects of

its response may well extend beyond the school sphere and affect Israeli society as a whole.

The key to changing the present situation must be the restoration of responsibility for education to the own society and community from which the students originate. Regarding Jewish studies instruction in general education, this feature must be reflected primarily in teacher training and in the preparation of curricula and study material suiting the outlooks and values of the secular public. At present, the lack of appropriate teachers sometimes compels a society to entrust the education of its children to anyone prepared to assume the mission, even if *they* manifest intentions that overtly conflict with the beliefs and outlooks of that society, as is often the case regarding Jewish studies instruction in general schools, for example. The Committee considers this situation to be an abnormal one that leads to confrontation or bargaining. The general school does not have to choose between surrendering to fanaticism or to a spiritual vacuum. It must encourage all elements of the secular public to express their values, develop their culture, view their achievements critically, and confront the younger generation.

The Committee believes that an active policy must be adopted to transform the culture and history of the Jewish People from an alienating factor into a component of positive significance in building the self-identity of the young secular Jew. Changes should be instituted in principles and in approaches to the teaching of Jewish subjects at the general school, accompanying intensified study of the various separate disciplines with encouragement of experiments promoting interdisciplinary instruction.

Principles of Jewish Studies Instruction

Considering the initial assumptions mentioned above, the Committee recommends the following principles as guidelines for Jewish studies instruction in general education:

Jewish subjects should be taught in a manner that emphasizes their character as humanistic subjects that impart culture and values and provide tools with which to develop an outlook.

® Instruction in Jewish history, creativity, and culture is a key tool for national and cultural socialization of stu-

dents. Hence such subjects should not be presented from a patronizing standpoint, seeking to "win the hearts of children who have gone astray" The history, creativity, and culture of the Jewish People should not be taught in the context of introversion or moralizing, but rather as part of a consolidated cultural ethos that presents the uniqueness of Jewish culture with a positive affinity with world culture, through encounter with a broad range of creativity by ethnic groups, movements, and political, intellectual, and cultural trends among the Jewish People.

® We should strive for the development of an educational process based on study, criticism, and dialogue and not only drill and analysis, aiming towards internalization of universal and Jewish values from a pluralistic approach. This method not only presents a picture of the past, but also contributes to the development of coping strategies, involvement, and a global outlook. An educational approach of this type is likely to reinforce a sense of identity, belonging, and responsibility among students regarding their future and role in Israeli society.

- The teaching of Jewish history and culture should emphasize scientific-critical aspects, especially in high school.

® Jewish subjects and Jewish philosophy throughout the ages should be taught with a search and emphasis for components that are relevant, significant, and actual for the contemporary student.

® We should aspire towards transformation of the study of Jewish history, creativity, and culture into an integral part of cultural and spiritual activity in the students' own communities.

® Jewish history instruction should emphasize the destiny of the Jewish communities in the Diaspora, their extensive cultural creativity, and their attempts at coping with the challenges that the surrounding society poses.

® Studies should address the role of anti-Semitism in the modern world and the significance and lessons to be learned from the Holocaust.

® Instruction in the history of the Zionist movement should emphasize its uniqueness in Jewish history and the revolutionary character of the solution it proposed for the Jewish Problem in the modern world.

® Besides familiarizing students with the varied sources

of Jewish culture, we should emphasize that secular or free Judaism is a Jewish identity with a positive value that sprouts from the modern Jewish experience as well as the ancient one and integrates Jewish and universal cultural values.

® We should emphasize the affinity and mutual responsibility that links Israel with the Jewish Diaspora as an important component of Jewish identity among the secular public and as part of its national Zionist consciousness.

® Curricula for Jewish subjects should be based on four principal elements

- A. Jewish-universal culture
- B. Hebrew
- C. Zionism
- D. The Land of Israel

[Details of the conclusions derived from this structure will be presented in the chapter on recommendations.]

® We should attempt to develop interdisciplinary, integrated curricula for instruction in Jewish subjects.

Considering the importance of this approach, the Committee finds it appropriate to describe it in greater detail below.

The Committee recommends the development of curricula to be based on interdisciplinary work in Jewish subjects. Interdisciplinary instruction will complement and intensify subject-specific learning and will not supplant it or detract from it.

It should be emphasized that Jewish studies, as part of the humanities, are interdisciplinary by nature. Consequently, intensive and multifaceted study of each individual discipline necessarily leads to encounter with kindred disciplines. Therefore, broad interdisciplinary study should be encouraged, comprising a variety of approaches and study methods. So far, only partial attempts have been made to introduce interdisciplinary instruction in Jewish subjects, The Committee believes that this approach should be adopted and modified according to age group, type of school, and available teaching skills.

The interdisciplinary approach can be reflected in integrated, focused study of topics covering a variety of subjects, encouraging independent work by individual pupils and groups that extends beyond the study of a given subject or discipline. It can provide a critical encounter with texts from various periods or various cultures that clarify

personal moral dilemmas or express existential problems. Furthermore, it is capable of addressing the confrontation between artistic and communicative self-expression and elements of culture and significant historical situations by familiarizing and involving parents, students, and the entire community with study and moral topics, while creating the background for fruitful encounter and dialogue with those holding different views.

Interdisciplinary work must constitute a corrective counterweight to the self-limiting tendency of disciplinary subject study in its desire to impart methodological skills and foster narrow expertise. An interdisciplinary approach can reinforce interpersonal ties, break down the social barrier that keeps school and community apart, and confront the school with its commitment and allegiance to the community. It is important to intensify

the educating group's sense of equality in value and partnership in destiny.

Development of interdisciplinary instruction is now at an experimental stage. University instruction has only begun to tap its interdisciplinary resources and even teacher training barely approaches the issue. Some teaching teams and individual teachers do develop interdisciplinary syllabi and teaching methods, however, and the Committee recommends encouraging various experiments to advance interdisciplinary instruction at universities, teachers' colleges, and schools. Interdisciplinary work is more common among the younger age groups, while a subject-specific orientation is of greater influence in the upper grades. Consequently, we should focus on the preparation of interdisciplinary curricula for older students, based on intensive and critical subject-oriented study.

The Shenhar Report Jewish Education in the Non-Orthodox Public School System in Israel

Questions for discussion:

1. The committee admits to its problematic use of the term "secular." The word has a negative connotation, as it implies a lack of something, or simply an antithesis of Orthodoxy, rather than a statement of a positive alternative. What does the committee view as the advantageous qualities of so-called "secular" education and the admirable characteristics of the general state school? If Jewish studies were to be taught more successfully in a secular environment, how would that contribute to bridging the widening gap between the religious and non-religious in Israel? Is there a parallel dynamic in the North American Jewish community?
2. The authors of the report carefully defined its targeted readership as those who "view Judaism as a national, pluralistic culture in formation." With this audience in mind, they listed several of the elements which comprise the Jewish component of Israeli identity (see the paragraph which begins "The target public ..."). Consider how the list might have read if the committee had been charged with assessing Jewish studies in the state religious or independent school systems and had geared its report for a religious or ultra-Orthodox audience. How would a list of components of North American Jewish identity compare to either of the two Israeli lists?
3. The report identified the key to change as "restoring responsibility for education to the own society and community from which the students originate." Professor Aviezer Ravitzky, Chair of the Department of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University and member of the Shenhar Committee, warned, "Jewish studies are not the domain of the Orthodox. It is the domain of all and the general society must prepare Jewish studies teachers. If only the Orthodox and the ultra-Orthodox have knowledge of Jewish texts, it will be a catastrophe for general society." He was referring to the fact that graduates of Orthodox *yeshivot*, who are not particularly accessible role models for non-religious pupils, are often hired to teach Jewish subjects due to a lack of qualified non-Orthodox teachers of Jewish studies. One of the committee's stated goals was to find ways of making Jewish subjects more relevant to students' lives, and for them to see the Jewish subjects as part of a broader cultural education. To what extent does the identity of the teacher play a role in this, and what other factors might be important? How does this issue manifest itself in Jewish education in North America?
4. Many issues raised in the report may sound surprisingly familiar to Jewish educators and community leaders living in North America. For example, the committee determined that the educational system "must transform the culture and history of the Jewish People from an alienating factor into a component of positive significance in building the self-identity of the young secular Jew." How is this challenge addressed by Jewish communal institutions in North America? How does this differ from the way it is addressed by public institutions in Israel?
5. In its recommended guidelines, the committee stresses the importance of interdisciplinary study and of incorporating themes from Jewish studies into contemporary Israeli and world culture. This fits into the larger, ongoing challenge that Jews in the twentieth century face: integrating Jewishness into their modern, Western lifestyles, as opposed to compartmentalizing different components of their identities. To what extent is Jewishness integrated or compartmentalized in the general cultural identity of Jews in North America? In what ways might it be different for Jews in Israel?

Introduction

In the aftermath of the May 1996 elections, most political analysts agreed that the biggest victors were the religious parties. The religious camp received a total of 23 seats in the Knesset, more than ever before. Shas, the ultra-Orthodox Sephardic party, increased its six seats in the previous government to 10; the National Religious Party grew from six to nine; and the United Torah Front, the Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox party, held on to its four seats. This significant bloc of power is well-represented among the cabinet ministers and deputy ministers. Among the non-religious public, these developments generated heated discussion about the growing influence of the religious in Israeli society.

*One of the more remarkable developments is the scope and tenor of the haredi (ultra-Orthodox) involvement in the public sphere. No longer a marginal phenomenon in Israeli society, their numbers (among Ashkenazim and Sephardim alike) have grown and they speak with increasing forcefulness, even militancy. This is a puzzling phenomenon, ironic in a way, given their theological and ideological rejection of the Jewish State. According to their ultra-Orthodox doctrine, any attempt to hasten the coming of the messiah and pre-empt redemption of Jews in exile (by creating a Jewish state) is forbidden. In his recently published book entitled *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, Professor Aviezer Ravitzky, chair of the Department of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, outlines the conceptual, historical, and political evolution of this story, which has extensive implications for many aspects of life in contemporary Israel: religion and state, Israel-Diaspora ties, economic priorities, the peace process, and more. And because this "minority" Jewish population has become an even more influential swing note in Israeli coalition poli-*

tics, the tension between haredi and non-religious Israelis and the accompanying rhetoric of the public debate has grown even more acrimonious.

On Lag B'Omer of this year the media reported incidents of haredim in Meah Shearim and B'nai Berate burning Israeli flags. This followed isolated but troubling reports during Israel's "civil high holidays" of haredim throwing rocks at policemen during the memorial siren on Yom HaZikaron, and refusing to stand during the Israeli national anthem on Yom HaAtzmaut. Meir Porush, Deputy Minister of Housing from the United Torah Front Party, said in a radio interview after Lag B'Omer that he stands for Hatikvah but "there is no doubt I feel better singing the words 'Ani ma'amin b'emunah shlaima . . . : (I believe with a full heart in the coming of the messiah) than I do singing Hatikvah."

On another front, a committee of haredi, Orthodox, and non-Orthodox Israelis attempted to find a solution to the battle over Bar Ilan Street in Jerusalem where ultra-Orthodox residents demanded that the main thoroughfare be closed on Shabbat, and the few secular residents of the area, as well as the police, ambulance drivers, and many other citizens, insisted on keeping the traffic artery open. A compromise denying access during "prayer times" has effectively closed the street and given the haredim a victory.

The excerpt below, taken from Chapter Four of Professor Ravitzky's book, the author explains the dilemma in which non-Zionistic, ultra-Orthodox politicians may find themselves and describes how some of them resolve it in terms that are coherent with their own haredi world view.

The Dilemma of Haredi Jewry

Aviezer Ravitzky

The Consciousness Exile

The social group commonly known as Haredi Jewry is composed of many *diverse* factions, each of which differs significantly from the others: Hasidim as against Mitnagedim; Lubavitcher Hasidim as against those of Belz; Agudat Israel as against the Jerusalem Edah Haredit - each loyal to its own path and its own rabbi (and one may include among these also the followers of the Shas party - the Sephardic Torah Observant).

The differences among the various sections of Haredi Jewry occur at a number of different levels. One may distinguish between the various camps on the basis of their attitude toward modern culture or, alternatively, on the basis of their approach toward the Jewish people as a whole (*kelal Yisrael*), or toward the Zionist enterprise, or toward the historical dimension, and so forth. That is to say, the major dividing lines fall between moderate rejection of modernity, and a view of modernity as the devil incarnate; between a sense of responsibility for the Jewish people in its entirety, and a preference to seclude and isolate the truly faithful; between non-Zionism and anti-Zionism; between a theology that sees direct divine intervention reflected in the unfolding historical process, and a worldview of halakhists for whom current historical events are almost totally devoid of religious significance; or, as stated earlier, between the world of the Hasidic Rebbe and that of the Lithuanian *rosh yeshivah*.

As a generic term, therefore, "Haredi Jewry" may be artificial and only valid from the perspective of the outside observer who sees surface manifestations, but not the underlying conflicts of philosophy and outlook. This problem certainly presents itself when we consider the variety of Haredi attitudes toward the existence, laws, mores, and activities of the sovereign Jewish state in the current (i.e., pre-messianic) era. That issue stands at the center of a sharp conflict within the Haredi community, occasionally resulting in mutual rejection and boycott. In light of this fragmentation, we must begin with the question, What common characteristics do these groups, in fact, share?

From one crucial angle, it would appear that all Haredi groups share a common base. This becomes clear via the following formulation: Who is a Haredi? Whoever views and experiences life in the Jewish state in Eretz Israel as exile - the exile of Israel in the Holy Land. One pole of the Haredi camp, the radical anti-Zionist one (particularly Neturei Karta circles), states that it is in exile because of the existence of the State of Israel, owing to both its betrayal of the Messiah and secular nationality; the opposite pole, the accommodationist non-Zionist one, maintains that it is in exile despite the existence of the State of Israel, despite the physical rescue and "the beginning of the ingathering of the exiles" that has accompanied its birth and existence. In any event - exile.

Those who share this perception, in all its various shadings, deny the possibility of an interim historical situation that is neither exile nor redemption. They unequivocally reject the validity of such a hybrid and recognize no halakhic or theoretical model appropriate to it. Any reality that is not totally messianic is, by *very* definition, total exile. For exile is not a geographic condition that can be overcome by *aliyah* and settlement alone. Neither is exile a political condition that can be corrected by the attainment of national sovereignty and independence. The concept "exile" is a theological, metaphysical one - the exile of the Shekhinah (Divine Presence) - that will expire only with the final setting right of humankind and the world. This responsibility imposed by exile on the Jewish people focuses exclusively on religious-spiritual activity, not on mundane political activity. The concept "exile" represents, first and foremost, a reality that has not yet been redeemed from sin: "Because of our sins we were exiled from our land" and "Israel will be redeemed only by repentance."

For example, the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902 - 1994), explicitly stated:

The period in which we are now living is not the beginning of the redemption, and the *aliyah* of many Jews to the Holy Land is not the ingathering of the exiles, but rather the possibility of rescuing many Jews *during the time of exile* ... The false redemption does

not allow the true redemption to be revealed, for those who think that they are already living in the redemption do not perform the [religious] actions required for the going forth from exile and the revealing of the true redemption; they cause the prolongation of the Exile, the exile of the individual, the exile of the community, the exile of all Israel, and the exile of the Shekhinah.

Similarly, his outstanding critic Rabbi Eliezer Menahem Schach, the leader of the Lithuanian *rashei yeshivot* in Israel, declared, "The Jewish people is still in exile, until the arrival of the redeemer, even when it is in Eretz Israel; this is neither redemption nor the beginning of the redemption."

The common factor shared by these two opponents is clear: all historical reality, by the very fact of its gradual course - progressing "bit by bit, and by natural means" - is the reality of exile. Any existence that is not messianic, perfect and miraculous and from which the flavor of sin has not been removed, is the existence of exile. This holds true for the partial return to Zion and for Jewish political resurrection in our time as well.

This perception of the present historical reality as exile is not limited solely to a theological awareness. It is also reflected in a psychological and existential stance toward the secular environment, in a sense of personal and communal alienation. The concept "exile" does not merely denote the opposite of the destined messianic redemption; it also denotes the lack of a home, the home of one's father and grandfather as well as the sense of estrangement from the external society, its lifestyles and culture, and from the secular government and its institutions. These are depicted in many instances as a society and government that have completely lost all Jewish identifying characteristics, with nothing to distinguish them from the Gentile environment in any country - in other words, "exile."

This consciousness is reinforced by the intermittently renewed sharp public conflicts with the secular society and its leaders. For example, in a public assembly held in 1986 to protest the arson resulting in the burning of holy books in a Tel Aviv yeshiva, Rabbi Pinhas Menachem Alter, then head of the Sefat Emet Yeshiva of Gur Hasidim and the present Gurer Rebbe, lamented, "This is the most difficult exile, exile under Jewish rule." This is the "most difficult exile," specifically because that which was supposed to be home seems strange and hostile and arouses in the mind of the speaker associations with persecutions of Jews by non-Jewish nations. Or, as Rabbi Binyamin Mendelson, the late rabbi of Moshav Komemiyut stated, "Our sins have led to our being put

in exile in the Holy Land, in the hands of the non-religious." These are not metaphysical statements on the question of messianic redemption, but rather expressions of an existential state of alienation, both personal and collective, reflected in the identification of secular Jewish authority with the Gentile ruler. As Israel Eichler, editor of *Ha-Mabaneh ba-Haredi* (the mouthpiece of Belzer Hasidism), protested against the celebrations of the thirty-eighth anniversary of the State of Israel: "You should refute the heretics and defiant ones who seek to uproot our holy Torah, saying to them: Your rejoicing is our mourning and despair. To the innocent, unsophisticated ones among them, however, we are obligated to tell the story of our exile - the State of Israel within the Land of Israel. For this exile is the most difficult of all exiles; it is founded in that very declaration of him who declared the creation of the State."

Here a certain distinction needs to be made. Exile, in its primary, theological, meaning - that is, the absence of redemption - is not necessarily meant to express an attitude of delegitimation and principled negation of the contemporary collective Jewish enterprise in Eretz Israel. Rather, it is meant to convey the idea that the Jewish state exists within history, not beyond it: not in the End of Days. Only a messianic reality could redeem and break through the category of exile. On the other hand, exile in the second sense - the absence of a home - reflects a distancing from, and rejection of, the secular reconstruction of the Holy Land, of Jewish nationalism that is not anchored in the Torah and its commandments. This life together with, and under the leadership of, transgressors is the life of the exiled, of the resident alien, of the cast aside, even beyond the fact of the Messiah's tarrying. Those speaking for Haredi Jewry recurrently use, in various contexts, expressions and depictions that express this consciousness of a double exile in the Holy Land.

A State in the Secular Realm

As stated in the first chapter, there have been three basic elements in the ultra-Orthodox opposition to Zionism. The Haredi polemic against the fledgling Zionist movement began with an opposition to the secular nature of the modern Jewish national revival, speedily moving on to challenge the very legitimacy of the collective historical effort for mass aliyah from the Exile - depicted as trespassing on the bounds of the promised messianic redemption. In addition, it was argued on pragmatic grounds that the Zionist idea was simply an illusion, lacking any basis in actual historical reality: "What is the

difference between those who believe that the Messiah will come, humbly and riding on an ass, or on a light cloud, and the Zionists in our time, who believe that the kingdoms will assemble and will give them the land of Palestine with the agreement of the Sultan? Is there anything in this belief, even the smallest particle, about which we can say that it will come about in a natural way?" To the contrary, it seemed that the messianic idea is the only realistic solution.

The success and gradual fulfillment of Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, the strengthening of the Yishuv in Eretz Israel, and, finally, the establishment of the State of Israel and the *aliyah* of several million Jews (and, on the other hand, the terrible destruction of European Jewry who simply wished to dwell in tranquility) - all left their mark in the ideological sphere and generated profound changes in the conduct of the debate. The practical argument concerning Zionism was gradually set aside by the force of historical reality. The standing of the theological argument, which regarded Zionism as an undue hastening of the End, was greatly undermined, retaining its original validity only among the separatist camp of the Neturei Karta and the Satmar Hasidim. Only the argument concerning the nature of secular nationalism and the abandonment of the Torah has retained its force. Indeed, recent events have provided a broad arena for a renewed and intensified confrontation over this issue.

But a noticeable change has taken place in this sphere as well. A confrontation with an abstract idea, with a Jewish state that is merely a vision or dream of the future, is not the same as a real-life confrontation with an actual and concrete Jewish state. The aspiration for radical separation from an ideological movement (Zionism) and from individual Jews (the secularists) was markedly different from any present attempt to maintain one's distance from an entire society with its own political, judicial, and economic institutions. Therefore, a sharp distinction has developed between the separating theoretical sphere of principles and the unifying pragmatic sphere; between forbidden ideas and values, on the one hand, and permitted political institutions and organizational tools, on the other hand; between a priori assumptions and ex post facto adaptations.

To bring matters into focus: the prevalent position currently dominant among most of the Haredi circles in the State of Israel (in a variety of versions) recognizes the secular Jewish state de facto, but has not granted it de jure recognition. Haredi representatives cooperate in a circumscribed and conditional manner with the institutions that are the outcome of the Zionist idea and the Zionist movement, but they deny the validity of the

Zionist doctrine per se; that is, they reject the founding ideology of the national enterprise. The State of Israel as a political entity and act of political organization by Jews is deemed to be devoid of religious significance, whether positive or negative; it is in itself a neutral phenomenon, existing within the secular realm; it is neither within the sphere of transgression nor of obligation, but rather within the voluntary sphere. The position of the outstanding scholar and leader of the previous generation, Rabbi Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz (known as the Hazon Ish), was recently and reliably summed up: "The Hazon Ish did not view the state as the height of the darkness of exile, and certainly not as redemption, but rather as something merely technical and administrative; it therefore has no significance in principle, neither as a success nor as a disaster, and it has no connection with the redemption."

This consistent distinction drawn between the constituent idea of an Israeli state and the political institution itself, between values and "technical and administrative" tools and instruments, is intended to avoid the need of taking any essential a priori - and certainly theological - position vis-a-vis the Jewish state in pre-messianic times. The distinction permits both a clearly pragmatic approach to the state and its enterprises, and life alongside the State of Israel and cooperation with its institutions, openly based on accommodation in practice - that is, on post factum acceptance of the given political reality. This life is supposed to be free of ideological commitment or identification, innocent of any normative decision and a priori recognition. "We stand before the fact that they established a state on a part of our Holy Land, and hence we do not have before us a halakhic question of permitted or prohibited, for this question has already been resolved by those who do not ask [religious] questions. All that remains is for us to clarify our position and our attitude toward this reality with which *they* have presented us .. And we have not found, either in the Torah or in the Talmud or in the later halakhic authorities, any concepts or laws indicating when to recognize or not to recognize a state. This is nothing but a custom employed by Gentiles for propaganda purposes." Thus Rabbi Avraham Weinfeld, one of the distinguished *mashgibirri* and ethical preachers within the world of Lithuanian yeshivot. This is likewise the tradition conveyed in the name of the Klausenberger Rebbe, the late leader of the Sanz Hasidim. Or, as the idea was formulated by other Haredi leadership: citizenship in the new state, as distinct from membership in a voluntary movement (e.g., the Zionist movement), is compulsory participation, a given reality that is imposed on the residents of the state, therefore lacking normative significance. It takes place within the realm of facts, not within that of beliefs.

Accordingly, every assessment regarding the state and its actions (like every other mundane phenomenon) must be taken ad hoc according to the merits of the case: based upon its link with, and assistance to, the Torah and its students; and according to the attitude of the state's leaders to the demands of the halakhah. If the state, its institutions, and its budgets support Torah students and bring closer those distant from the tradition, then they are judged favorably. If they deny Torah Jews their due and cause those close to the tradition to abandon it, they are judged unfavorably. When the state rescues Jews and contributes to protecting the lives and well-being of Jews, wherever they are, the evaluation will be positive (i.e., the saving of life as a religious value). When it endangers the safety of Jews, the evaluation will be negative. This criterion is used to evaluate every collective Jewish enterprise in the lands of their dispersion and remains applicable to their activity in the exile of Israel in the Holy Land. It follows that, when Haredi circles make their support of one government or another conditional on increased financial allocations to yeshivot and Torah institutions, for example, they are merely being faithful to their philosophy: Of what use is a Jewish state, of what use are public institutions and parliamentary committees, if not for the purpose of promoting Torah study in the Holy Land?

Reality, of course, is more complicated and complex, and often does not correspond to such precise formulations. For example, the community does not recite prayers for the welfare of the State of Israel customary for every other state in which Jews live, despite the claim that Israel is a state like any other. (It refrains from doing so, for fear that it be interpreted as support of Zionism.) Does this not indicate that the State of Israel is, nonetheless, different from all other states? In fact, the declaration of indifference toward the uniqueness of the new political-historical reality has been unsuccessful. Israel's specific nature as a Jewish state - and as a secular Jewish state - is not ignored, and the fine line separating the political-institutional and the ideological-normative realms is not easily maintained.

In any event, it is precisely this consciousness of exile that removes historical affairs and political realities from the dimension of religious and of Jewish uniqueness that, paradoxically, enables Haredim to coexistence with the state. It also facilitates pragmatic political and economic cooperation with the authorities, just as Jews have always throughout the centuries of their exile. In the words of Rabbi Meir Karelitz, "In all the countries of the nations of the world, Jews would seek *a shtadlan*, (intercessor) who would act on behalf of Haredi Jewry within government circles; therefore, if there is a possibility of

including within the government of Israel *a shtadlan* who will be on guard for the affairs of Torah Jewry, then this must be done, unhesitatingly." Or, as it was radically put Rabbi Raphael Reuven Grozovsky, the head of the Council of Torah Sages in the United States during the last generation, "There are those who compare the present situation to that of Joseph [in Egypt!], of Mordecai, Daniel, and Nehemiah [in Persia!], of Rabbi Samuel Hanagid [in Granada!], of Abrabanel [in Portugal and Spain!], or of Obadiah [the prophet] in the court of [King] Ahab, and of many *shtadlanim* among Israel." Thus the emissary of Haredi Jewry to the political institutions of the State of Israel is perceived as *a shtadlan*, in a long chain of *shtadlanim*, who acts within a "nation" among the nations. These spokesmen thereby seek to avoid coming to grips at the value level with the profound change that has taken place in the situation of the Jewish people, a change that has actually confronted them with an exceptional and unanticipated historical entity: Jewish sovereignty in the Holy Land prior to the messianic era, led by transgressors.

An acute dilemma is revealed at this point as a direct result of the changes in the political power and standing of the Haredi circles in the State of Israel in the past decade. Such a worldview (or state of mind) is possible only from a position of weakness, from a social position on the margins of society. It is nurtured by, and constructed from, the self-consciousness of a minority on the defensive, of resident aliens in their own land - politically economically sociologically and psychologically. In the past years, however, these groups have been propelled from the margins of the Israeli political arena into its center, to a position of decision-making authority and responsibility that had not been chosen initially by their leaders and that they now have difficulty in absorbing.

Certain developments in Israel - pertaining to coalition politics; demographic, electoral, and ethnic changes; and a loss of self-confidence on the part of the secular majority of society - have suddenly provided Haredim with power and influence, both material and spiritual, to a degree far exceeding that required by, or appropriate to, a life based on a qualified acceptance of a strange and alien reality. These developments have increased their direct involvement - in questions of society and economy, land settlement and foreign policy, and peace and war to a degree that is inconsistent with their intellectual and psychological inclinations, based as these are on passive ex post facto adaptation and retreat and spiritual turning inward. On the other hand, once power and responsibility have been conferred, they are not easily waived or abandoned.

I shall illustrate this in one area, that of political involvement. In 1949, after Agudat Israel had joined the Israeli government (together with other religious parties within the framework of the United Religious Front), Rabbi Aaron Kotler, a leading *rosh yeshivah* in America, sharply censured its coalition participation at the Agudat Israel Convention in the United States. It showed lack of fidelity to principles and was pragmatically unwise. At the same time, he praised the Marxist-oriented Mapam (of all parties) for not joining a government with whose basic principles it disagreed. The emissaries of Haredi Jewry, he insisted, had a much greater chance of reaching goals and attaining concessions from their natural place outside the government.

In response to this criticism, Rabbi Yitzhak Meir Levin, Agudah's representative in the Israeli government, wrote to New York providing a dramatic description of the scenario to be expected were it not for the influence and presence of religious cabinet ministers in government institutions. The railway would run on the Sabbath; the State of Israel would openly import nonkosher meat; yeshivah students would all be drafted into the army; the independent Haredi educational network (Hinukh Atzma'i) would be seriously impaired, and other religious needs would not be supplied. The general tone of this response was that of a minority group, threatened and besieged by the secular majority, seeking to salvage what it could and to defend its soul and that of its children. This was further illustrated in an apologetic article published by Agudat Israel alongside Rabbi Levin's letter, expressing the Haredi situation and consciousness as follows: "It is essential for Haredi Jewry that its representatives sit in the government . . . Unfortunately, we do not possess the institutions around which we could unite and struggle against the tremendous torrents that inundate us from every side. We are weak; the strong instruments are in the hands of our opponents; separated and divided, we stand against storms that threaten to annihilate us, God forbid. Laws that will injure our innermost being will make our situation tragic and unbearable, and we must therefore maintain our guard and repulse the attacks against us from within the government." Paradoxically, membership in the government was not presented here as an expression of strength, but rather as one of weakness. The cabinet minister does not seek power or national leadership; instead he is required to stand in the breach, to serve as a barrier against the attack of the well-organized secular public. Thus the political involvement of Haredi Jews was not directed on the practical level toward the enactment of religious legislation, but rather toward preventing the passage of antireligious legislation. Fears were even expressed that the *aliyah* of Haredim would be actively hampered by the

responsible officials.

An upheaval had taken place in Jewish history: those who had until recently constituted the overwhelming majority of the Jewish people had now become few in number and were called on to defend the very right of the minority to live its life according to its faith and its custom. In the words of the prolific and influential Haredi writer, Rabbi Moshe Sheinfeld,

The first to be exiled in the State of Israel was the Shekhinah . . . the spirit of the Torah and its commandments were driven out from the courts, the schools, the Army, the sessions of the Knesset, the city streets, and the government ministries, into the remote corner of synagogues and study halls . . . *Thus we have come from the exile of the Shekhinah to the exile of the Torah observant in the State of Israel.* Years ago those throwing off the yoke of the Torah demanded from us an attitude of toleration and freedom of conscience for themselves. Today we demand for ourselves the freedom to enjoy the Sabbath rest in our special neighborhoods, a right enjoyed by all the ghetto dwellers in the countries of the non-Jew.

Agudat Israel left the government in 1952 over the specific issue of the drafting of young women into the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF); thereafter, it remained outside the cabinet as part of a general decision to refrain from overall ministerial responsibility for the actions and failings of the sovereign secular Jewish government. The very policy that had previously been advocated by Rabbi Kotler was finally adopted by the Haredi leadership under the guidance of the Council of Torah Sages. It was no longer a patchwork solution of political participation as a reflection of weakness, but rather the demonstrative choice of a remote existence, of opposition in principle to the ruling majority. For the next twenty-five years, the Agudah followed the political pattern aptly described by Zalman Abramov: The Neturei Karta attacks Agudat Israel for its participation in the Knesset, and Agudat Israel replies with an attack upon the National Religious Party for its membership in the government. Thus in 1965 Rabbi Schach criticized the political activity of the Mizrahi: "The state is not a state of halakhah, but rather a state of [secular] law. . . . And for this they compromise, and in this they participate and share responsibility. Where is this liable to lead?"

Given recent changes, the very same criticism clearly applies to the representatives of Haredi Jewry, including those who accept the direct authority of Rabbi Schach. During the past fifteen years, Haredi members of Knesset have attained key positions prior to the formation of

every coalition and, at the same time, benefited from the rising strength of a nationalist right that views them favorably. This has resulted in a new, clever, and effective pattern: participation in government in ministerial roles, no; support for the government coalition as a quid pro quo for achievements in the religious sphere, yes; chairmanship of key Knesset committees such as the Finance Committee and the Labor and Social Welfare Committee, yes; appointment as deputy minister, yes.

Thus the traditional policy is formally maintained, but involvement and power have, in fact, continued to increase. If one adds to this the formation of a new, ethnic-based party (Shas), which is close in spirit to Ashkenazi Haredi circles but not committed to their traditional anti-Zionist political position and which, therefore, is ready to join the government in ministerial roles, one can understand the strength of this new trend.

A Theological and Existential Dilemma

These developments currently pose a direct threat to one of the central concepts of Haredi self-consciousness in the State of Israel - that of exile. This holds true with regard to both aspects of exile mentioned earlier: alienation (the absence of home) and a downtrodden existence in the theological sense (the opposite of redemption).

As to the first, the nature of the dilemma troubling Haredi circles is clear, for example, from a complaint that appeared in 1984 in the Agudat Israel newspaper, *Ha-Modi'a*: "In the last seven years Haredi Jews have swarmed [!] through the Knesset building - from all points of view a negative phenomenon. We must examine whether we have not begun to think that this is our building." In other words, a building that was intended, in the Haredi view, to be a focal point of exile, of *shtadlanut*, is suddenly beginning to resemble a home, and the sensation of being alien is likely to fade. The writer specifically attributes the beginning of this phenomenon to the political upheaval of 1977 that brought the right-wing Likud to power, warning of the emergence of a broad gap between the ideological doctrine, on the one hand, and the new psychological reality, on the other - a reality that is gradually and imperceptibly being fashioned as a result of increasing political, social, and economic involvement. A comparison of current developments with Y. Gitlin's 1959 programmatic essay, "Torah Jewry and the State," further illustrates this point. He writes: "Abstaining totally from the acceptance of govern-

ment services is a burden that the community cannot bear . . . Obviously, it is no tragedy to utilize the right to vote so as to elect representatives to government institutions who will defend to the hilt the rights of the Torah, and express a more public protest from the Knesset rostrum - on condition, of course, that they do not take any step that entails bearing shared responsibility for the government of the state as a whole."

As noted, the declared attitude of Haredi Jewry toward the State of Israel was initially one of de facto recognition and post factum participation, not de jure recognition and involvement in principle; pragmatic cooperation, not long-term ideological solutions. Emerging reality, it seems, is gradually undermining the validity of this position. The moment participation in institutions also entails the adoption of comprehensive national policies, taking positions with regard to long-term issues and undertakings, and engaging in decision making concerning the funding of secular-state educational and cultural institutions, one indeed draws closer to a more active and a priori acquiescence,

Paradoxically, this change is one of the major reasons for the present escalation of the public conflict between Haredim and secular Israelis. A consciousness of exile is by its very nature a moderating factor. The exilic Jew always knew how to come to terms with a given reality, to restrain him and herself and to wait patiently until the storm had passed. Exile is a period of nonrealization, of deficiency and half and quarter solutions. In the words of Maimon the Dayan (the father of Maimonides), "While the stream destroys walls and sweeps away stones, the pliant object remains standing. Thus is the Exile . . . The Holy One, blessed be He, saves the pliant nation." As this factor decreases, and the feeling of gradually striking roots and of achievement and fulfillment increases (even if it remains undeclared), the motive for confrontation grows. From this point on, the responsibility of the Haredi Jew is not restricted to what happens in certain enclaves in Jerusalem and B'nai Berak, but covers the larger "home," including secular neighborhoods such as Rehavia in Jerusalem and north del Aviv. It is highly implausible that persons who find themselves in a pivotal position with regard to major national questions, such as the convening of an international peace conference (Rabbi Schach) or the development of the Lavi aircraft (the chairman of the Knesset Finance Committee, Abraham Shapira), will adopt a stance of passivity and resignation only with regard to religious issues.

This open confrontation reflects an additional inner tension. The increasing involvement described here is restricted to functional areas, to the political and eco-

conomic realms of "this world," but is not expressed in cultural terms and does not profoundly touch the life of the Haredi individual. A profound gap still exists between Haredi society and the secular community (and even modern Orthodoxy) with regard to patterns of education, culture, and creativity. Moreover, various processes, such as the unprecedented growth of Torah study and of Haredi yeshivot, on the one hand, and a decrease in the Judaic education and links to tradition among broad sectors of secular society, on the other hand, only serve to deepen this gap. These factors are reinforced by late entry into the work force, which results in the postponement of daily contact with the external environment, and a steady increase in exemptions from military service among Haredi youth, who are thus excluded from one of the most decisive socialization experiences of Israeli society. These and other factors dearly prevent the creation of a culture and mentality common to both the majority and the minority. They create difficulties for the construction of a shared language - not to speak of a common faith and lifestyle. Under such circumstances, public ferment becomes inevitable, creating conflicts and clashes for which Israeli society may be ill prepared.

The theological dilemma is even more profound. The basic assumption that permits the majority of Haredi Jewry - as distinct from Neturei Karta and Satmar Hasidim - to coexist alongside the State of Israel is a total and consistent separation between the longed-for future redemption, on the one hand, and Jewish political organization in current pre-messianic time, on the other. As the Lubavitcher Rebbe put it more than a decade ago: "Since there is such a large ingathering of Jews, they must have leadership (and not a kingdom, God forbid, because there will only be a kingdom upon the coming of the Messiah), so that there will be order, both in internal affairs and in their dealings with kings and ministers of other nations, as well as in matters of security, vehicles, etc., as is the natural way of things. However, it should be remembered that all this has no connection with the matter of redemption."

Having come this far with the secular national community founded by the Zionists, however, the Haredim, who preferred to place themselves consciously and as a matter of principle in a remote corner of this community, now find themselves propelled into its center. Thus, willingly, or unwillingly, they occupy a position of influence and decision-making responsibility.

Assuming that they were able to go beyond the constant struggle for religious legislation and succeeded in establishing in the Holy Land a state based entirely on Torah law, would this not also threaten to hasten the End? In

other words, would not a Jewish people who had ingathered its exiles, returned to its land, freed itself of foreign oppression, enjoyed the fruits of the land, and repented and built its life according to the Torah, have to be regarded as reaching at least the outer edge of redemption? And having attained all this gradually and naturally by human action, would it not mean that they had "forcefully and collectively returned" and intruded into the sphere of authority of "the presumed Messiah" (in the words of Maimonides)? In view of the fact that the Zionist enterprise was founded against the explicit wishes of the leading Torah scholars of previous generations and was characterized for many years by the abandonment of religion and the rejection of Jewish law, the theological dilemma is even sharper. Can the wicked bring about good things? Can the Holy Land be rebuilt in a profane manner?

Apart from that of Neturei Karta, the most extreme rejection of Zionism appears in the newspaper of the Lithuanian circles, *Yated Ne'em-an*; "We do not protest against the antireligious acts of party X . . . We demonstrate against the entire Zionist enterprise in Eretz Israel. The leading Torah scholars already warned, at the birth of Zionism, that whoever thinks that the Zionist goal is the establishment of a state, errs. Their goal is the uprooting of religion."

On the other hand, in past years it would appear that no other spiritual leader in Israel has wielded greater influence on issues concerning the coalition and the government than Rabbi Schach. During the Eleventh Knesset (1984-88), two Israeli political parties fell under the range of his direct authority: Agudat Israel and Shas. To be sure, Rabbi Schach takes care to formulate his positions within the context of axioms characteristic of the period of exile. Gentile nations initiate and are active within the mundane political sphere; Jews react and respond and do not rebel against them, although they do not trust them. Thus Israel should agree in principle to a territorial withdrawal and refrain from establishing settlements in Judea and Samaria, which would constitute rebellion against the nations of the world; but an independent Israeli initiative for an international peace conference is opposed, because one can neither trust the nations who will attend the conference nor the promises given by Arab leaders. The development of the Lavi combat aircraft had to be halted as it was against the wishes of the United States, and the State of Israel must not rebel against America. Thus, according to Rabbi Schach, "the Jewish people is still in exile until the coming of the Redeemer" . . . and we are commanded not to provoke the nations of the world . . . , [even though] this Gentile today shows you a smiling face for political gain, but in

truth acts deceitfully."

"Our participation in the state and its institutions is performed due to the pressures of the time and the force of circumstance, similar to our behavior under foreign regimes outside of the land. It may be defined as stealing into the camp of the enemy," declared recently Rabbi Nathan Ze'ev Grossman, the editor of *Yated Ne'eman*. He went on to protest in harsh and alienated tones: "We consider the secular government as an alien and hostile regime. Just as Jews in the lands of exile have sent their representatives to the foreign parliaments, and no one has interpreted it as an act of recognition or sympathy for the foreign government, we too do not mean to express any kind of identification with the Knesset and the institutions of the ruling state by electing representatives to them ... One who, during the course of two thousand years of exile, has been accustomed to participate in ruling bodies, while feeling contempt for them in his heart, and to conduct negotiations with his enemies," does not see any connection between these two spheres."

Need one reiterate that these statements were issued by one who at the time (1991) was an explicit spokesman for one of the ruling parties in Israel? True, they represent an apologetic response to the attacks of the radicals against his party's political involvement. It is precisely for that reason, however, that these statements reflect the sharpness of the dilemma discussed here - the inner gap between exiles who walk on the side of the road and rulers who march on the high road.

Indeed, even the spiritual leader himself, Rabbi Schach, is not freed this problem in principle. Let us close with his words, which illuminate the dilemma and add to it a new, peculiar dimension.

We see a terrible and frightening sight. A collective revolt against the kingdom of heaven ... There is a tremendous difference between an individual who sins in matters concerning himself, and a mass community that has organized to live systematically a life of sin and iniquity. This is especially serious when there exists a Hebrew government in Eretz Israel . . . We are talking about free Jews, in our own state, the State of Israel, with our own president, with a government and an army, everything our own product - and who is it that prevents our holy Sabbath being observed here? It is a state of [secular] law, and not a state of the halakhah, and in this regard things are worse here than abroad, as there everyone who transgresses commits an individual sin, while here sinning is legalized. According to our conviction and faith, those who presume to maintain the state are those who endanger it, and despite what is written in the Torah, "So

let not the land spew you out for defiling it" [Lev. 18:28]; they enacted laws to permit the most severe [transgressions], such as bloodshed, as in the Abortion Law, and so forth.

The Dilemma of Haredi Jewry

Questions for discussion:

1. Several *haredim* leaders are quoted in this chapter as saying that "this is the most difficult exile." Why do *haredim* living in the Jewish state feel more estranged from the "host culture" than *haredim* did who have lived in the other countries of the world? What is meant by "double exile in the Holy Land"?
2. According to the author, the *haredi* politicians have a set of clear criteria by which they judge the state and its actions. Why do the *haredim* feel justified in frequently switching their political allegiance to the larger political parties in order to gain financial support for their religious and educational institutions? What do the *haredim* see as their ultimate "mission" in the current Israeli reality? How do these policies resemble or differ from those of *haredi* communities in North America (e.g., in New York)?
3. Some *haredim* claim that Israel is just another state where Jews live, but in some ways their "declaration of indifference" toward the Jewish state is not always borne out by their actions. What individual or collective behaviors by *haredim* affirm the uniqueness of Israel? For example, what are some of the special allowances that the *haredi* population has come to expect from certain government institutions that it would not expect from a gentile government?
4. Prof. Ravitzky explains that "certain developments in Israel ... have suddenly provided *haredim* with power and influence [which have] . . . increased their direct involvement in questions of society and economy, land settlement and foreign policy, and peace and war." Despite this increased involvement on a national scale, and the delicate cooperation the *haredim* have developed with the so-called Zionist institutions, the gap between *haredi* Jews and the rest of Israel's population seems to be deepening. What are some of the factors impeding a common culture, language, or *even* basic understanding between the two sectors? What practical steps might be taken, on both sides, to relieve the growing tension between them?
5. Do the policies of the *haredi* communities vis-a-vis the state raise any moral or ethical issues? If so, would these be understood differently from the respective points of view of the *haredi* and non-religious sectors of Israeli society? How would they be perceived in a North American context?

Introduction

This document, in essence, is a platform for redefining the role of the "National Institutions" (i.e., the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization), which serve as quasi-governmental links between the State of Israel and the Jewish people around the world. Their functions include Jewish-Zionist education, promotion of aliyah, assistance with immigrant absorption in Israel, settlement, and so on. The raison d'être of these institutions was clear when they served as precursor to the Israeli government during the pre-State era, but in recent years there has been much public debate in the Jewish world about whether they continue to fulfill a unique role in Israel's partnership with world Jewry, or whether they should be disbanded, with their functions subsumed within the operations of Israel's government ministries.

The selection included in this anthology is a kind of mid-1990s "State of the Union" message from the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive. Avraham Burg presents threats, opportunities, challenges, and an agenda (including guidelines, projects, and topics for discussion) reflecting a shift away from a now anachronistic mind set in which wealthy Diaspora Jews engage in philanthropy and political lobbying in order to save their poor Israeli cousins. This alternative "platform" reflects an attempt to create a genuine dialogue between partners in Israel in the Diaspora, with effective outreach to Jewish youth who face the similar temptations of cultural assimilation in Israel and throughout much of the Jewish Diaspora. This is the substance of his call for the establishment of a new brit (covenant) between Israel and world Jewry.

Brit Am - A Covenant of the People

Proposed Policy Guidelines for the National Institutions the Jewish People

Summary of Major Issues

Avraham Burg

Major Threats to the Jewish People

Threats to Physical Existence

In various places in the world, there are Jews whose very lives are at stake. In some of the states of the CIS (the former Soviet Union), there are communities in which Jews do not enjoy even a minimum level of personal safety. There are still Jewish communities extant in Arab nations as well as individual Jews who do not live in a communal Jewish framework. Many of these Jews are in urgent need of assistance, and possibly evacuation.

Threat to communal existence due to the rise in anti-Semitism and chauvinism

In other parts of the world, Jewish lives are not in danger, but the freedom to engage in Jewish communal life is threatened by the rise of anti-Semitic and nationalist extremists.

Economic Hardship

Difficult economic conditions of poor nations often create fertile ground for the growth of anti-Semitism and hostility to those perceived as "foreign elements." In the event that the financial situation of the Jews is better than that of the general population, the Jews may become the object of envy and the targets for threatening behavior by their neighbors. A different form of economic distress affects Jewish communities in affluent countries where the cost of living may prevent Jews from participating in Jewish communal life and making use of its institutions and services. The cost of quality Jewish education is so high as to be prohibitive for many families.

Threat to social cohesion and a sense of community
One of the dangers faced by the Jewish People results

from the weakening of interpersonal relationships in a technologically oriented and competitive society. This danger is particularly acute in Israeli society, which has failed to develop the community frameworks which have flourished in many places in the Diaspora. [This] reality in which many Jews, in Israel and in the Diaspora, are unable to find satisfaction in a strong, protective, personalized and caring community, distances them from the diverse Jewish activity which exists and leads them to seek satisfaction in spheres devoid of Jewish content.

The spiritual threat of assimilation in the Diaspora
Insofar as many Jewish children in Western communities have received no Jewish education or meaningful Jewish life experience, their membership in the Jewish People has become a marginal fact with no real place in their lives and no real weight in making the decisions that shape their future. Unaware of their people's heritage and culture, they adopt other religions or renounce religion altogether without a backward glance. In many Jewish communities in the world, and particularly in the West, the individual does not feel threatened by assimilation and integration into non-Jewish society. The sense of danger to the continued existence of the Jewish People is not paralleled by a similar sense of danger to the individual Jew. Thus the most profound threat to the future of the Jewish People is the indifference of the individual to his/her Jewishness as s/he makes a place for him/herself in non-Jewish society.

The spiritual threat of weakened Jewish identity and alienation from Judaism in Israel

A primary cause of alienation from Judaism among many sectors of the Israeli public is the manner in which religion and politics are linked in the State of Israel. Many Israelis perceive Judaism as inseparable from party politics in which material, sectarian interests

take priority over faith. Values of tolerance and openness are not values associated by most Israelis with the religious world in their country. Values of pluralism, respect for others and the legitimacy of their traditions, beliefs and way of life, are not part of the picture of Jewishness which has been implanted in the minds of many Israelis. Many Israelis express their revulsion at the religious world they see embroiled in politics by fleeing from any connection with religion or national identity. They define themselves in terms of citizenship, not in terms of belonging to the Jewish People.

The dangers of a widening chasm between the Jews of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora

Not only are the ties of Diaspora Jews to Judaism and the Jewish People weakening; not only is the link of the Jews in Israel to the Jewish People weakening; the bond of Diaspora Jews to Israel is weakening. A survey of the Jewish population in the U.S. indicates that one quarter of American Jews feel no connection whatsoever with Israel; half feel a slight connection; and only one quarter feel a deep emotional bond with Israel. 74% of American Jews have never visited Israel. An indicator of Israelis' lack of a sense of connection to the Jewish People is their open antagonism toward Diaspora Jewish leaders. The breach is largely a function of ignorance and disinterest in the realities of Diaspora Jewish life.

Opportunities Open to the Jewish People

A decrease in the physical threat to the State of Israel Israel has undergone dramatic changes in recent years and, for the first time since its establishment, its existence is not in danger. The treaties and agreements with Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians have been instrumental in making Israel an integral part of the Middle East. Parallel to the gradual diminishing of the external threat, Israeli society has been extraordinarily successful in developing a modern economy, to the point of attaining the level of an industrialized, developed, Western country. The political, economic and other resources of the Jewish world can now be turned toward new goals, and Israel's growing economic independence and security will release a large part of its budget for strengthening the Jewish People in the next century.

Possibilities of continued mass Aliyah to Israel

Conditions in Eastern Europe have now opened the door for hundreds of thousands more Jews in numerous communities to immigrate to Israel. For Jews who were denied the right to live a Jewish life for generations, there

is now an opportunity to live a full Jewish life in the Land of Israel and to make a significant contribution to Israeli society.

Growing communal awareness and willingness to act in order to impart a new sense of meaning to Jewish life offers a framework of social belonging which many people lack, as well as a sense of self-worth which derives from putting values into practice and helping others in the Jewish world.

The emergence of new young leadership in Jewish communal life

A new generation of Jewish leaders can explore the changes in the Jewish world in innovative ways and gain support for the activities of the Jewish National Institutions among young people.

Growing willingness for change in Diaspora communities and Israeli society

The degree of readiness for change in leadership and the structure of the National Institutions, and the delineation of a new agenda for the Jewish People, is surprisingly strong and widespread. There is a growing sense both in the Diaspora and in Israeli society that what has been before can no longer continue.

Innovative and accessible technologies

Breathtaking technological advances offer the Jewish National Institutions a new array of tools for implementing their aims. In the past, an individual could convey his/her opinions once every few years through conventional delegates, whereas today, every Jew, wherever he/she lives, can make his/her voice heard in the ongoing dialogue of the Jewish People.

Challenges Facing the National Institutions

To impart Jewish-Zionist education

There are three million children and youths in the Jewish world today. Half of them are being raised and educated in Israel, and half in the Diaspora. Only half of the children in the Diaspora receive Jewish education of any sort. Only a small minority of children living in Israel receive a Jewish-Zionist education which gives them the ability to weigh the long-term implications of life in the state of the Jewish People against other options. These children are the target population for the Jewish-Zionist educational activities of our National Institutions and we must reach them.

To shape a new Jewish-Zionist identity in Israel

In order to bring young people in Israel back into the fold of the Jewish People, we need to instigate sweeping changes in the relationship between Judaism and the state, i.e., a separation of religion and politics. Israelis must be introduced to a Judaism which is vibrant and relevant to their lives in the modern world. The Jewish People and its institutions must be receptive and sensitive to every stream and every approach to Judaism in our Jewish world.

To strengthen the sense of community among Jews in Israel

In their daily operations, the National Institutions of the Jewish People today offer a model of cooperation between all streams of Judaism as they work together to achieve common goals of the Jewish People. Such a model demonstrates the direction for change and offers young Israelis hope for cooperation between Jews of all denominations, united in the respect they accord their tradition and culture.

To build a new partnership between the Jews in Israel and the Jews in the Diaspora

We must change the structure of management of our national institutions so as to reflect a true partnership of equality between Jews living in Israel and in the Diaspora. The partnership must be expressed in all bodies of our institutions through equal representation of Jews from Israel and Jews from the Diaspora.

Guidelines for a New Policy

- Development of multi-faceted programs for formal and informal Jewish and Zionist education for use in Israel and the Diaspora; development of quality family programming
- 6 Creation of meaningful content for Israeli Jewishness through programming in schools; recognition of the validity of various modes of Judaism in the State of Israel; effective responses to the civil needs of immigrants in Israel and the depoliticization of religion
- Creation of an equitable partnership between the Jews of the Diaspora and Israel in the management of Jewish national institutions
- Ⓜ Negotiation with the Government of Israel regarding a new division of responsibilities between the government and the Jewish national institutions

- e Allocation of resources for programs in the Diaspora targeting unaffiliated Jews
- Encouragement of visits to Israel in a broad range of frameworks
- Ⓜ Involvement of Israelis residing abroad, including *shlichim*, academics on sabbatical, and *yordim*, in Jewish education in the Diaspora
- Ⓜ Emphasis in the Diaspora on activities sponsored by communal institutions and frameworks such as community centers, synagogues, college campuses, and summer camps
- e Ongoing involvement of Diaspora community leaders in decision-making

Projects for Consideration and Approval During 1995

- Ⓜ Establishment of an Open University of the Jewish People in Jerusalem
- i Establishment of an Israeli United Fundraising Appeal
- e Establishment of a Jewish lobby in Israel within the framework of the Jewish National Institutions
- Ⓜ Merger between the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization
- e Improvement of the public perception of the Jewish National Institutions
- Establishment of an Authority for Returning *Shlichim*
- Establishment of an information unit in charge of data collection, analysis and survey affiliated with the Jewish Agency Executive

Projects for Discussion and Response

- Establishment of *Koren Matat*: A Fund for Future Generations
- Ⓜ Ensuring a regular income for activities of the National Institutions of the Jewish People
- Development of frameworks for training teachers and other educational personnel; promoting Jewish education as a preferred profession
- Ⓜ A referendum of the Jewish People
- e Establishment of an umbrella organization for Jewish organizations
- Ⓜ Establishment of a network of high-quality Jewish schools
- Ⓜ Establishment of a Jewish Peace Corps which will emphasize the value of national service for the entire Jewish People, will create a joint corps of Jews from Israel and the Diaspora to serve in distressed Jewish communities, to rebuild, maintain and preserve sites

- and facilities of importance to the Jewish People throughout the world, to provide services to the elderly, the young and the infirm, and to engage in humanitarian activities, also among non-Jewish populations
- Development of a satellite communications network for Jewish and Israeli culture
 - ® Participation in the development of centers of science and advanced technology in Israel
 - ® Participation in the creation of an advanced information infrastructure in Israel
 - ® Development of a broad range of computer-based educational programs, multimedia programs for individual study, the use of information highways as a tool for Jewish education, and interactive information banks specializing in Jewish-Zionist subjects
 - ® Establishment of a distribution system for books, software, radio and television programs about Jewish, Israeli and Zionist issues

Brit Covenant of the People

Questions for discussion:

1. Avraham Burg proposes a new *brit* (covenant) between Jews in Israel and throughout the world. Is this realistic in the later 1990s? Who in Israel and in North America might be interested in such a partnership, which would focus on shared Jewish, Zionist, and Israel-Diaspora agendas - e.g., Ultra-Orthodox / Orthodox / Conservative / Reform / Reconstructionist Jews / Jews deeply immersed in Western culture?
2. Burg's proposal for a new *brit am* (covenant for the people) would attempt to bring together Jews with different views and outlooks, in the interest of a new kind of Israel-Diaspora relationship. Can such an Israel-Diaspora dialogue help in overcoming divisions within the Jewish people today, or could it gain attention only once the Jewish people have begun to find a solution to their present schisms? Are there other means by which the Jewish people might seek to resolve some of their internal differences?
3. Burg's concept of a new covenant for the people expresses a belief in the value of Israel as a Jewish educational tool or context - i.e., that Israel has something unique to offer to Diaspora Jews and Jewish identity. To what extent does this apply to:

- Ⓜ Jews who comprise the membership of North American Jewish Community Centers?
- Ⓜ Other segments of the Jewish community?

Introduction

The Israel-Diaspora relationship precedes the State of Israel. For as long as Jews have been living outside of Eretz Israel, they have related to the land and its citizens spiritually, culturally, and emotionally. But since the establishment of the state in May 1948, most organized Jewish communities in the West have related to Israel on two primary levels: philanthropic and political.

As a fledgling state surrounded by hostile enemies and trying to absorb hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from all corners of the world, Israel was dependent on financial contributions from Jews in the West. Jews in North America also played crucial roles in mobilizing their governments' advocacy for Israel in the international arena. Even when supporters in the West were critical of Israeli policies, Israeli leaders seemed to prefer informed involvement rather than apathy toward Israel.

While Jewish leaders in Israel and throughout the world have maintained a belief that a strong Israel-Diaspora relationship is critical to the future of the Jewish People, the vitality of the connection seems to have waned over the last decade or so. A stronger Israel has led to a decline in both its need for Diaspora Jewish support and her attractiveness as a cause worthy of that support. Today, nearly 50 years old, Israel is basically secure and enjoys steady economic growth. Due to the Oslo Accords and the signing of a peace treaty with Jordan, Israel is no longer the isolated, endangered country that it was. With the arrival of more than 800,000 olim from the Former

Soviet Union, the Jewish population has grown and Israel will soon be the largest Jewish community in the world. Israel still needs support, but now earns it through political avenues, military accomplishments, and economic achievements.

At the same time, North American Jews have turned their attention inward. Flatter fund-raising campaigns, more directed giving, and increased demands to keep more dollars in the local community for growing educational and social needs have reduced the largesse towards Israel. Many communal institutions have established local needs as priority over support of, or even interest in, Israel.

Some observers say that perhaps the tables have turned, and that now Israel is the stronger partner in the relationship, with advice and educational resources to offer the North American communities in their battle with assimilation and intermarriage. But most Jewish leaders agree that reversing the disparate model is not ultimately useful. Only if both sides are recognized as equal, with mutually valuable contributions to make to Jewish culture, tradition, and continuity, will the relationship flourish.

Numerous academics, politicians, and communal leaders have written on this complex subject. In this article, Steven Cohen and Charles Liebman sketch out some of the historical and sociological factors that have shaped the relationship, and offer some preliminary suggestions for strengthening it.

Israel and American Jewry in the 21st Century

Professor Steven M. Cohen and Charles S. Liebman

Introduction

The values which writers bring with them may condition their analyses and almost always condition their recommendations. Accordingly, we wish to make our own values clear.

Our primary commitment is to the Jewish People, a commitment which precedes our concern with Israel, Israeli Jews, or American Jews. We have no doubt that the Jewish People are entitled to a state of their own, and that Israel, therefore, should properly remain a Jewish state.

We also believe that the good of Israel and the Jewish People is best served by the existence of a strong and vibrant American Jewish community with close links to Israel. These links, not *alijrb* per se, are our primary concern. They should be strengthened by enriching the cultural relationships between Israeli and American Jews. In such relationships, Israeli Jews are likely to serve as senior partners, giving more than they receive. But American Jews also have an important contribution to make. They constitute important allies in the battle to preserve a Jewish state, and in defining what the Jewishness of Israel should mean.

Like others, we are increasingly anxious about the prospects for a healthy and vital relationship between the two largest Jewish communities in the world. In the past, the fear which animated Israeli policy makers was that American Jews would refuse to support Israeli policies. Such concerns emerged most dramatically when Israeli policies were opposed by the American government; for example during the Sinai War and the intifada. Drawing, perhaps, upon classic Zionist images of *Galuti* (Exilic) Jews, Israeli policy-makers feared that American Jews were insufficiently committed to Israel or lacked the courage to support Israel in the face of American governmental opposition and negative public opinion. On the other hand, many Israelis continue to perceive American

Jews as troubled by issues of "dual-loyalty"

Although this concern may have had its justification in the past, the dual-loyalty "paradigm" is no longer helpful in understanding American Jews' relationship with Israel. In focusing on such matters as support or loyalty, Israeli leaders, have concerned themselves with the wrong issue. The real issue is not whether American Jews would oppose Israel, much less support U.S. government policy in opposition to Israel. The critical issue was - and still is - the level of interest which American Jews express in Israel. Opposition to Israeli policy, as reflected for example in the "Who Is a Jew?" issue, or opposition to Likud policies during the intifada, or opposition to the peace process in the Rabin-Peres years, or anxieties after the Netanyahu victory, are signs of a healthy interest in and commitment to Israel. In a series of surveys of American Jews conducted by Steven Cohen for the American Jewish Committee during the 1980s, those who were most critical of Israeli policies were also most attached to Israel. Israel would be fortunate if it could sustain the kind of interest that characterized American Jewry at the most critical historic moments, provided it prefers an informed, but engaged opposition rather than uncritical, if sometimes tepid support.

Unfortunately what we are observing today is growing indifference on both sides. Despite evidence from social surveys of relative stability in measures of attachment to Israel, at least until the early 1990s, Israel now occupies a smaller and narrower place in the consciousness of American Jews (Cohen 1992, 1996). This is also true of Israeli concerns about American Jews though, as we shall see, it takes a somewhat different form among them.

Why is the Relationship Troubled?

The analysis of the problem has by now become commonplace. In broad strokes, since the inception of the Zionist movement, Diaspora Jews in affluent societies (of

which American Jewry is the outstanding case) have pursued a largely two-dimensional relationship with the Jewish community of Israel (first the *Yishuv*, and then the State). One dimension consisted of lobbying their national leaders to extend economic, military, and diplomatic support to Israel. The other dimension comprised fundraising to support social welfare needs that largely flowed from the rescue of Jewish refugees and their re-settlement in Israel. More generally, the funds were meant to lend material support to a society perceived as having to expend a disproportionate share of its resources on security needs. We refer to this relationship, which embraces political advocacy and philanthropic activism, as the "Mobilized" model.

We now appear to be in the midst of a steady erosion in the Mobilized model, an erosion that is unlikely to be reversed in the near future. Objectively, Israel no longer requires the financial and political assistance it once did; and, subjectively, American Jews no longer feel compelled to offer it.

The Decline of the Mobilized Model - Or the Passing of the "Golden Age"

To gain some perspective on the Mobilized model, and to begin to understand why it now seems to be running out of steam, we need to turn back to what may be its Golden Age, the decade immediately following the Six Day War (1967-1977). For it was then that the level of American Jewish political advocacy and philanthropic activity on behalf of Israel reached its zenith.

Israel became - and remains until this day - the number one item on the Jewish public agenda, surpassing liberal politics and the fight against anti-Semitic discrimination, Israel's rise to prominence on the agenda of Jewish public life occasioned a dramatic turnabout in the political mobilization of American Jews and signaled their willingness to confront American political leaders in a forthright manner.

The impact of Israel on fund raising is also well known. In the early years of statehood, the Jewish State was in dire need of financial aid. In the absence of large-scale assistance from other governments, contributions from American Jews constituted an important source of support. But the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War propelled levels of giving to UJA/Federation campaigns to unprecedented heights.

Social concerns also enhanced the relationship between Israeli officials and American Jewish philanthropic leaders. During the early years of the State, the Israeli government feared political intervention from American Zionist leaders. Philanthropic leaders, unlike the Zionists, were less intimately involved in domestic Israeli politics, and were quite content to contribute money which Israel desperately needed in return for status rewards. When, beginning in the late 1960s, Israel assumed an increasingly important place on the public agenda of American Jewish life, the status rewards which Israel was able to confer increased in value.

During this very special period (1967-77), several interrelated factors served to enhance Israel's prominence in the consciousness of American Jews. A quick review of these factors is in order if only to illustrate the special character of that period, and the unlikelihood of its return. The key factors included:

1. The traumatic fears for the future of Israel which emerged in the period immediately preceding the Six Day War, the War itself, the exhilaration which followed the victory, and the Yom Kippur War. Many American Jews, including many of their leaders, discovered that they harbored deeper emotional links with Israel and its survival than they had heretofore realized.
2. The emergence of the Holocaust as a central symbol of Jewish life. This phenomenon was embodied in the slogan of "never again," the sense that the Holocaust threat was a constant of Jewish history, and that Israel was the obvious location for its recurrence.
3. The blatant Jew-hatred which energized the Arab enemies, and the unambiguous character of the Arab-Israel conflict. After 1967, Israelis apparently seeking peace were publicly threatened by seemingly villainous and violent Arab neighbors. Moreover, the apparent isolation of Israel in a world that appeared to range from hostility to indifference also evoked strong emotional resonances.
4. The erosion of the liberal political coalition that had provided a context of meaning for many American Jews and their major organizations. We must recall that the central force which energized American Jewish organizations until the end of World War II was the defense against anti-Semitism. But following the end of the War, doors which heretofore had been closed to Jews - in universities, in large corporations, in financial institutions, and even in social clubs - were now opened (Silberman 1985). Jewish organizations that

had been created to oppose anti-Semitism required new programs and a new rationale for existence. They centered around the notion of Jewish liberalism in general, and the struggle for Black equality in particular, as a mandate of the Jewish tradition and the first line of defense against a potential re-emergence of anti-Semitism.

But in the late 1960s the Black struggle took on an anti-White and anti-Semitic turn. Black organizations turned their attention - and their protests - to the economic disparity between Blacks and Whites, rather than legal discrimination alone. They protested not so much the lack of equality in opportunity (an agenda congenial to the Jewish world view), but the lack of equality in results (an agenda in tension with the traditional civil rights orientation of most Jewish organizations).

In the space of a few years, the older moderate Black leadership, which had emphasized coalitions with Jews and other liberals, was replaced by younger militants. Some Jews who had held prominent positions in Black organizations were displaced. The new Black leaders tended to dismiss the Jewish contribution to legal desegregation and the assistance which Jews had accorded Blacks. In addition, some of the new Black organizations and leaders were strongly anti-Israel.

5. The emerging legitimacy of ethnic assertiveness among American Whites. The early 1970s witnessed a surge of interest in European (White) ethnicity, partly as a response to Black militancy, that undoubtedly overflowed into Jewish precincts. As one prominent Federation leader said, "If Black can be beautiful, surely Jewish can be beautiful." This woman, heretofore identified with nearly assimilationist tendencies in Jewish life, was now found actively engaged in aggressively pro-Israel programs.
6. The awakening of the Soviet Jewry movement that provided American Jews with yet another important Israel-related objective and focus of mobilization.
7. The coming of age of a highly educated, relatively affluent, third generation of American Jews. This generation was so secure in its Americanism that it harbored little fear of charges of "dual loyalty" that had dissuaded a prior generation from pursuing an aggressive pro-Israel stance.

These factors coincided at a particular moment in history, a time when American Jews had started wondering who is a Jew, what is a Jew. Israel, beyond everything

else filled a symbolic vacuum. The factors that made for the focus upon Israel operated synergistically to propel Israel to the top of the American Jewish consciousness, to the extent that it came, for a time, to dominate, if not reshape, that consciousness. We do not anticipate the re-emergence of the passionate political and philanthropic activism that characterized the Mobilized model in its Golden Age. In addition, one other key trend has served to erode commitment to political advocacy and philanthropic generosity.

Another Reason: A Stronger Israel

In addition to the factors listed above, the decline of the Mobilized model can be traced to developments that have occurred in the last five to ten years in Israel itself. Most important among these is that, objectively speaking, Israel is less in need of the financial and political support that American Jews have provided.

Politically and militarily, Israel is perceived as basically secure. The collapse of the USSR, the subsequent agreements with the PLO, the treaty with Jordan, and the recognition by other Arab states have significantly diminished the level of international hostility and the likelihood of significant, sustained violent clashes. The long-term prospects for Israel's security may not be as sanguine as some on Israel's Left believe, but it is perception that is significant.

In addition, the image of the Israeli economy is one of steady and even dramatic growth in the last few years. With relatively moderate inflation, increased foreign investment, declining unemployment, and abundant signs of conspicuous consumption, it is difficult for Israel's advocates to argue on behalf of economic assistance to absorb the diminished flow of new immigrants. Hence, the case for Israel as a beneficiary of Jewish largesse and of Jewish political support has never been more difficult,

Philanthropic Decline

From the American Jewish side, several factors have conspired to reduce in absolute and relative terms the share of philanthropic funds designated for Israel. The most significant constraint has been the stagnant levels of donations to Jewish Federations (which may, in fact, reflect declining passions for Israel). In contrast with the "Golden Age" of mobilization when donations grew substantially, the past twenty years and more have witnessed

declines in contributions in real, inflation-adjusted terms, to the central Federation-sponsored philanthropic campaigns. In addition, as we noted, the Israeli share of these philanthropic contributions has declined as well.

Public and Private Spheres

Another factor that has diminished the significance of the Mobilization model relates to the distinction between public and private spheres of Judaism among American Jews. The public sphere refers to Jewish organizations, politics, and fund raising. Its rhetoric is sprinkled with such themes as community, solidarity, and peoplehood, or such slogans as "Keep the Promise" and "We are One." In contrast, the private sphere of Jewish identity relates to family, ritual, synagogue, religiosity, and education. Its rhetoric is characterized by such terms as spirituality, meaning, search, and journeys. Its language is softer, more comforting, non-judgmental, and, these days, more personally engaging.

Obviously, Judaism encompasses both the public and the private sphere. It is composed of an ethnic dimension which evokes the sense of a common history, communal obligations, even a national or quasi-national identity. The private dimension is the more spiritual and narrowly religious dimension encompassing aspects of Jews' relationship to God. Whereas the Jewish tradition insists upon and socializes Jews to both public and private commitments, the decline of the tradition has been accompanied by the bifurcation of these two spheres, as they have become increasingly distinctive aspects of Jewish life.

Of primary importance for our present concern is that over the last several years, the public sphere has declined, whereas the private sphere has been holding its own. Thus, with respect to indicators of Jewish activity in the private realm, day school enrollments are up, as are Jewish studies courses, and the publication of Jewish books. Ritual levels are increasing among Orthodox and committed Conservative Jews. Softer evidence points to continued ferment and creativity in Jewish feminism, and in what has been called the Jewish spiritual renewal movement.

But Jewish life in the public sphere seems to be in decline. It involves fewer and fewer Jews whose commitments seem to be increasingly tenuous. In addition to the stagnation or decline in contributions to Jewish Federations there is diminished mobilization around political causes (of all sorts); rapidly aging memberships of mass Jewish organizations; and a decline in volun-

teerism, particularly when comparing women born after World War II (now middle-aged and younger) with their older counterparts.

Links between American Jews and Israel, one might argue, have been hitched to the wrong horse. Because involvement with Israel has been primarily political and philanthropic, the historic links of American Jews with Israel have been undermined by the declining interest in Jewish politics and philanthropy. In turn, because much of the American Jewish public sphere has been linked to Israel, the fatigue associated with the declining Mobilization model may have dragged down the entire public sphere with it. In any event, because Israel has had little real meaning in American Jewish religious, spiritual, or cultural life, the relative vitality in recent years in these areas does little to renew interest in things Israeli.

Who Needs American Jews?

American Jewish policy makers need not turn to theoretical analyses by social scientists to learn that their political and philanthropic contributions are no longer prized by Israelis as they once were. They need only listen to the leaders of Israel who have been telling them in loud and clear voices: "We don't need you." The voices expressing disdain for American Jewish assistance were heard most clearly after the 1992 Labor Party victory. In his first visit to the U.S. after his election as Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin told AIPAC officials that Israel no longer needed their help lobbying Congress and the Administration. He announced that, from now on, Israel would handle her lobbying by herself. Shortly thereafter, Finance Minister Avraham Shochat commented that Israel no longer needed over-priced Israel Bonds - that Israel could (and soon would) borrow more cheaply on the open markets. Yossi Beilin, serving as Deputy Foreign Minister, observed on several occasions, that Israel no longer needed Diaspora contributions for social needs. And, in repeated statements, President Ezer Weizman announced that Israel needs nothing at all from the Diaspora, with the single exception of young Jewish bodies coming on aliyah.

The Values of American Jews

American Judaism is characterized by four distinctive features: universalism, moralism, personalism and individualism, and voluntarism (Liebman and Cohen 1990). Each feature merits some elaboration.

1. Universalism is the idea that the Jewish tradition has a message for all people, not only for Jews; that Judaism is open to the messages of other traditions and cultures; and that Jews ought to be involved with improving the lot of all people, not just Jews alone. The vast majority of American Jews are only comfortable in supporting Israel when Israeli policies are perceived as consistent with universalist and moralist values (moralism is described below).

2. Moralism was defined by the sociologist Marshall Sklare as the idea that "religious man is distinguished not by his observance of rituals but rather by the scrupulousness of his ethical behavior" (Sklare and Greenblum 1979: 89). In its ideal-typical form, moralism is the opposite of ritualism, a perspective that finds significance and transcendence in the performance of certain religiously or culturally ordained acts for their own sake.

In an interview with the editors of *Yabadut Hofshbit*, a publication of the Secular Israeli Movement for a Humanist Judaism (*Tnuah Hilonit Yisraelit L'Yabadut Humanistit*), Dr. (air Auron, lecturer on Contemporary Jewry at *Seminar HaKibbutzim*) stated the following:

One of the great failures of Jewish-Zionist education is [that]... we hardly ever affirm the legitimacy of different contemporary religious expressions. The young secularist has only a faint knowledge of non-Orthodox expressions [of Judaism]. He generally adopts the perspective of Israeli Orthodoxy with regard to these movements. (1994: 21)

This observation helps explain why American Jews have such difficulty in appreciating the virtual monopoly which the Orthodox exercise over the meaning of Judaism in Israel. It also explains why, for the most part, Israelis have such difficulty in taking the non-Orthodox denominations in the United States seriously. Israelis' disdain for non-Orthodox religious movements constitutes an obstacle to stronger links between Israeli and American Jews, although, in this case, the burden to change, we believe, is on the Israeli side.

3. Personalism and individualism are reflected in the observation that "the modern Jew selects from the vast storehouse of the past what is not only objectively possible for him to practice but subjectively possible for him to identify with" (Sklare and Greenblum 1979: 48). Personalism is the tendency to transform and evaluate the tradition in terms of its utility or significance to the individual. Personalism provides the basis for innovations, such as those undertaken by

American Jews, which the more conventional Israelis find outlandish or disturbing.

4. Voluntarism is closely related to personalism. It refers to the voluntary nature of Jewish identity and the manner in which it is expressed. Jews in the United States are free to identify or not to identify as Jews; there is no fixed national registry of the population by religion or ethnicity.

Diversification, Not Decline, in American Jews' Group Identity

We reject the widely shared image of a uniform American Jewish population whose Jewish loyalties and commitments are, in the short run, steadily eroding. (We are less confident in our assessment of the long run). Rather, we believe American Jewry is becoming increasingly fragmented as it responds in diverse ways to the temptations and the challenges posed by contemporary American culture and society to Jewish identity, Jewish family formation, and the sense of Jewish Peoplehood. These challenges are expressed in increased intermarriage, but also in increased day school enrollments; in the adoption of patrilineal descent by the Reform (a decidedly non-traditional move), but also in the call, by a new brand of Reform leaders, for increased ritualism; in the trivializing of Judaism, but also in spiritual search; in institutional disaffiliation, but also in the growth of Jewish studies at the college level; in residential dispersion, but also in an explosion in the number of Jewish discussion groups on the internet, etc. The contradictory trends in Jewish demographics and institutional behavior both reflect and provoke contradictory trends in patterns of Jewish identification on the individual and local levels. We believe that virtually all American Jews have absorbed the values of universalism, moralism, personalism, and voluntarism, but they have done so in different measures, and interpreted them in different ways.

Jews who have remained actively engaged in Jewish life are resisting, unconsciously if not consciously, many of the values to which we have alluded. One reason, we suspect, that Israel is important in the lives of some Jews, is precisely because, almost by definition, relationships with Israel run contrary to the values which the majority of American Jews espouse. With respect to the remaining Jews, policies which explicitly contradict values of universalism, personalism, and voluntarism are unlikely to attract more than a tiny constituency. On the other hand, these values diminish ties between American Jews and the Jewish People, and the stronger they become, the

more trivial Israel becomes. What we are suggesting is that, to the extent that one can formulate policy in these spheres, Israel must project itself as a source of resistance to these prevailing values (moralism aside), while at the same time appreciating that head-on confrontation is counter-productive.

Major Options for American Jews^o Relationship With Israel

We cannot dismiss the possibility that the relationship of American Jews to Israel will be increasingly characterized by irrelevance. Israel already evokes little meaning to many American Jews. Indeed, even some active and involved Jews conduct their Jewish lives in ways in which Israel is largely divorced from their Jewish concerns.

About a third of American Jews now find Israel clearly irrelevant (and they say so, almost in so many words). Israel is not all that important for their sense of being a Jew. They do not even express an interest in visiting there.

Among other American Jews, Israel is little more than a tourist attraction, an interesting place to visit, a country whose places of historical interest evoke some romantic and even nostalgic associations, but little else. About half of American Jews find Israel an exciting tourist attraction - a minority of this group has actually been there already and the remainder report that they would like to do so when they can afford the time and money. To the extent that Israel projects itself only as a tourist attraction, it serves to strengthen a model which undermines meaningful relationships between Israel, Israeli Jews, and American Jews.

The models which strengthen such relationships are the Mobilized model to which we already referred, and a model which we call the Source of Personal Meaning, upon which we elaborate below. (We do not mean to suggest that these are the only plausible options for reinvigorating the Israel-American Jewry relationship.)

Although in decline, the Mobilized model characterizes the manner in which most actively engaged Jews still relate to Israel. Israel is seen as a needy country and American Jews are obligated to come to its defense. The model does not demand that American Jews relate to Israel or Israelis in any depth in religious, educational, cultural, or social terms. We already indicated that this model is poorly suited to the changes overcoming American Jews, especially as the private sphere of Jewish

life strengthens at the expense of the public sphere. But this model has by no means vanished and there are some important points to be made on its behalf.

First, it is foolish to believe that because Israel is no longer as dependent on the financial and political support of Diaspora Jewry as it once was, this dependency will not recur or that even today it is of no value. It is true that philanthropic contributions represent a declining proportion of Israelis national income. But when considered as a contribution to a targeted need, for example funds invested in Diaspora education or some aspects of immigrant absorption, the Diaspora contribution may represent a major source of income. It is a mistake to believe that the government of Israel picks up the slack represented by diminished contributions. The programs which the contributions underwrite suffer. Even some Israeli leaders who deny the importance of philanthropic and political support from American Jews know their remarks are exaggerated. They do so to score political points with their domestic constituency.

Secondly, the Mobilized model still serves tens of thousands of highly active albeit generally older American Jews. It has not only served the interests of Israel, but of American Jews whose ties to Judaism are primarily ethnic rather than religious. As early as twenty years ago, we recall attending a meeting between American Jews and Israelis in which the Israelis told American Jews that their philanthropic contributions were increasingly marginal to the Israeli economy. An American Jewish leader replied, "We don't care if you bum the money we send you, but we have to keep on raising money if we are to involve American Jews with Judaism." The Mobilized model may appeal to fewer and fewer Jews, but it has by no means disappeared.

Finally, the Mobilized model is not necessarily an alternative to other models. Indeed, it has served as a path into personal meaning. In other words, many American Jews, especially the elite group of contributors and political activists, became involved with Israel through their public-ethnic concerns and then discovered personal, even spiritual, meaning in this effort. As a result, they built richer Jewish lives for themselves and their families. In a clear way, public sphere activity enriched private sphere meaning. If we were forced to choose between the Mobilized and the Personal Meaning model, we would prefer the latter, but the choice is not always necessary.

The "Source of Personal Meaning" model envisions (and is inspired by) a community of American Jews with strong personal ties to Israel and to Israeli Jews. Some

significant number of American Jews today regularly visit, call, and write their friends and family members in Israel. They follow news of Israel in the Jewish as well as the general press. They know some Hebrew, and are at least somewhat familiar with Israeli society and culture beyond the question of Israel-Arab relations. They maintain direct relations with Israeli people, not just formal ties with institutions. They may have business relationships as well. Many of them envy American Jews who make aliyah, and would be satisfied, if not pleased, were their own children to do so. Such American Jews may be characterized as those who spend the major portion of their lives in the United States, but who have significant emotional lives in Israeli society as well.

While not unknown among Conservative and even Reform Jews, these sorts of relationships are more typical of many Orthodox communities where, for example, spending a year in Israel between high school and college is the norm, and where at least a few families in their synagogue have made aliyah.

It is among the most committed Jews that we find the greatest number who see Israel as a source of personal meaning. What is striking, however, is that these Jews also are easily mobilized in the public support of Israel. In other words, the two models - one conducted in the public sphere, the other in the private sphere - are by no means exclusive. For the most committed of Jews, the private and public spheres of Judaism reinforce one another.

This, in turn, implies that developing the private sphere of Zionist or pro-Israel identity will not come at the expense of the public sphere, where the Mobilized model is played out. It also suggests that currently Mobilized Jews may be the best candidates for new private sphere relationships.

About fifteen percent of American Jews fit these two models. About fifteen percent have visited Israel at least twice, a sign of a more-than-passing interest. Perhaps two thirds of this group - roughly 10% of all American Jews - are, or have been, heavily involved in fund raising or political work on Israel's behalf, but only a third of this group - about five percent of all American Jews - can be classified as deeply personally attached to Israel in the manner we described.

In our view, given the relative strength in the private sphere of Jewish life, and given the cultural influences of American modernity upon contemporary Jewish identity, the most fruitful policy for enriching American Jews' relationship with Israel lies in expanding the number who

draw powerful, enduring, and compelling personal meaning from their relationship with Israel and Israelis. This would mean policies aimed at augmenting the meaning of Israel for those who are now in the Mobilized mode, and trying to elevate erstwhile mere "tourists" to a more serious and personal engagement with Israel.

Is such a policy feasible? The answer is that it is possible if we concentrate our efforts on that segment of American Jews which is already engaged or involved in Jewish activity. This is the segment of Jews that is seeking a focus which can assist in constructing a meaningful Judaism. It is the segment of Jews which is anxious about the threats to its Jewish roots and is likely, therefore, to respond to a message which subtly and tactfully challenges the values of universalism, personalism, and individualism.

Policy Directions

Projecting Israel in this manner is no simple task, nor do we pretend to have many answers. If Israel is to become a focus of personal meaning, then American Jews will have to take serious interest in Israeli life. It follows that the image of Israel and Israelis will be more realistic than that which presently exists. And the question American Jews will ask themselves is whether Israelis are really interested in them as American Jews rather than as potential contributors or political allies.

Recent work by Daniel Elazar points us in a useful direction. He notes that the Jewish People are now engaged in a world-wide struggle between what he calls "Judaizers" and "normalizers." The struggle is taking place in both Israel and the Diaspora. He calls upon the Judaizers in all countries to unite in efforts to assure the Judaic character of the Jewish People. Such an alliance would provide a common ground for Israeli-Diaspora interaction.

The Israeli Judaizers will need Diaspora support. Their constituency is predominantly the Orthodox, *edot hamizrach* (Oriental ethnic groups), and ultra-nationalist secularists. This constituency's influence is limited by the under-representation in the academic, cultural, industrial, and bureaucratic establishments, and that it is situated, predominantly, in one part of the political spectrum (the Right). It is also identified most prominently in the public mind with *dati* (religious) political parties and *haredim* (ultra-Orthodox) associations that do little to enhance the reputation or attractiveness of the Judaizers

positions. To succeed, this camp needs support from Ashkenazi-politically left Jews who have yet to involve themselves in the conflict. Their participation would strengthen democratic tendencies among the Judaizers, thereby indirectly undercutting much of the appeal of the normalizers, and directly undercutting the more extreme Judaizers who are no great friends of Western, modern, and democratic cultural tendencies.

In addition, the Judaizers among the non-Orthodox need one another's help in establishing models of Jewish vitality which are attractive and coherent. The battle for modern Judaism must be waged against the normalizers in Israel who seek to de-Judaize the State of Israel, and the normalizers in the United States who would universalize and personalize Judaism by ridding it of its ethnic components and its ritual traditions.

Relationships built around this struggle necessarily mean engagement in the private as well as the public arena. The struggle would render Israel and the Diaspora relevant to one's private identity as well as one's public commitments. Such a common struggle would provide the conceptual framework for all sorts of common activities and joint relationships tying Israeli and Diaspora Jews to one another.

There may be other bases for action as well. We need to identify other struggles where the moral, symbolic, political, and financial support of Jews from one country can be utilized on behalf of Jews in the other country. Environmentalism, feminism, civil liberties, democracy, and consumers' rights suggest themselves as causes that might draw small, but culturally significant, numbers of Jews from both societies together. Israeli and American Jews should welcome one another's participation in their own struggles.

Orthodox Jews throughout the world are pioneers in advocating their particular vision of Israel, and in advancing the interests of their own communities, institutions, and programs. They also exhibit, as we suggested, the highest rates of personal involvement in Israel. The two phenomena are connected. Other Diaspora Jews and Israelis would do well to adopt the Orthodox model, not in substance, of course, but in form. That is, they should feel free to advance their particular, ideologically driven visions of Judaism and of Israel regardless of where they live.

The endeavor to forge meaningful and enduring cultural relationships between Israel and American Jewry, and more broadly, Israel and the Diaspora, is a daunting one. Yet, we remain convinced that the construction of such

relationships, or perhaps just the search for effective ways to do so, constitutes a national priority for the State of Israel in the 21st century, and an essential feature of the contemporary Zionist movement.

Israel and American Jewry in the 21st Century: A Search for New Relationships

Questions for discussion:

1. The authors claim that the links between American Jews and Israel have been "hitched to the wrong horse," as involvement with Israel has been in what they call the public sphere of Judaism, i.e., political advocacy and philanthropy. They suggest that the most effective way to enrich American Jews' relationship with Israel is to find ways to move their involvement with Israel into the private sphere, i.e., education, spirituality, ritual, and personal relationships. Is this proposal a valid one? How can this kind of involvement be fostered? How could communal organizations in North America "re-tool" themselves to meet this new challenge? How can Israelis contribute to this effort?
2. The authors further suggest that when designing policies for enriching American Jews' relationship with Israel, "we concentrate our efforts on that segment of American Jews which is already engaged or involved in Jewish activity." This notion of "in-reach" (as opposed to reaching out to unaffiliated Jews) has become a common, though debated, theme in discussions about Jewish continuity. Is this a useful tactic for strengthening ties between the Israeli and North American Jewish communities? Should there be alternative strategies for building personal interest in Israel among Diaspora Jews who are not specifically involved in Jewish activity in their local communities?
3. Cohen and Liebman make the interesting point that "one reason that Israel is important in the lives of some Diaspora Jews is precisely because relationships with Israel run contrary to the values which the majority of North American Jews espouse" (i.e., universalism, moralism, personalism and individualism, and voluntarism). How does a Jewish State, with a Jewish government and a Jewish majority, serve to contradict those four values? *Why* would living in a place where Jewish life is not characterized by these values be attractive to some Diaspora Jews?
4. Yitzhak Rabin, Yossi Beilin, Avraham Shochat, and Ezer Weizman all said, in one form or another, that Israel no longer needs Diaspora Jewry as it once did. While these statements angered many Diaspora leaders, others recognized them as evidence that Israel has reached a new stage of maturity. What are some of the arguments that might be used to defend or counter the statements of these Israeli leaders?

Introduction

As in the previous article by Steven M. Cohen and Charles Liebman, the following monologue by sociologist Janet Aviad describes recent shifts in the relationship between Jews living in Israel and Jews in the Diaspora. Professor Aviad, however, approaches the subject from a more individual perspective. She analyzes what the Jew living in North America has sought and gained from his/her philanthropic ties to Israel over the past several decades, and how that personal agenda has changed, and she looks at how the identity of the Jew living in Israel has evolved independently of the rest of the Jewish world.

In an age when Israel's existence is more or less taken for granted, both Israeli and Diaspora Jews are freer to redefine their relationships to each other. Echoing the sentiments of A.B. Yehoshua (see the article "The Cultural Consequences of Peace" earlier in this section), Janet Aviad implies that both partners need to rebuild the relationship based on mutually agreed upon goals which will draw them both closer to Jewishness and the Jewish people.

Israel - Diaspora Relations: Some Thoughts

Janet Aviad

Introduction

One might ask why re-approach this tired subject. And the response would be that changes occurring today within Israeli society and within the Diaspora carry with them the seeds for significant changes in this long-standing but complicated relationship. Papers and analyses written five, three, or even one year ago do not reflect sufficiently the changes in the Middle East whose repercussions have an impact upon Israel-Diaspora relations.

Israel in an age of peace is a new reality. If indeed the more than one hundred year war with our Arab neighbors is coming to an end, at least temporarily, the conflict with the external enemy which united Israelis among themselves, despite huge inner tensions, and which created solidarity with Diaspora Jews, will no longer play this role. What new positive forces will emerge as the glue within Israel and between Israel and Jews throughout the world?

The Israeli Perspective

The question which emerges in light of the new reality is the nature of the bonds when Israel exists in relative peace, is prosperous, and is working towards a situation of normalization in the Middle East. Middle and surely upper-middle class Israelis resemble their European and North American bourgeois contemporaries, and do not represent the endangered long-suffering brothers in need of aid and identification. When Israel appears more and more "a nation like all others" and not "a light unto the nations," what will be the attraction to Jews of the Diaspora who have viewed the Jewish State for half a century as a besieged ghetto, surrounded by enemies, whose precarious existence they were called upon to defend?

Israel has become the center of Jewish life in terms of absolute numbers. Today there are four and a half million Hebrew speaking Jews in Israel. If immigration from the former Soviet Union continues, there will be five million Israeli Jews by the year 2,000. Thus, Israel is

becoming the largest Jewish community in the world, and is no longer in the situation of a small young brother looking to the elders of world Jewry for sustenance.

Despite this acknowledgement, because of the growth of the Israeli center, and with the ongoing weakening of Diaspora communities in terms of numbers, Israelis may tend more and more to regard themselves as a separate entity. They will continue to feel the sentimental bonds which link them to world Jewry but will not experience these bonds as existential, i.e., necessary for survival of this state.

It is possible that new links may emerge which are not based on survival needs. Elements in the collective identities of the Jewish people can link its various parts. But they must be identified and nurtured in the new context.

Most recently the term "post-Zionism" has been used to describe the new experience and reality in Israel. The meaning of this term is important in this discussion, because of its implications for Israel-Diaspora issues, "Post-Zionism" assumes that the fundamental goal of the Zionist movement - creating a state in which the majority of Jews live - has been completed. This does not mean that many serious social, political, and cultural problems do not remain unresolved, but that the ideological framework of Zionism is insufficient for their resolution.

For many, in a post-Zionist reality the focus changes from the Jewish nature of Israeli society, and the relationship to Jewish symbols and people, to the inherent problem of a democratic society in which all its citizens are formally equal and have equal representation in its institutions and governing bodies.

It can be said that contemporary secular Jews in Israel do not differ from their brothers and sisters in the Diaspora in the questions which surround their individual relationship to Jewish tradition. Each defines a personal credo through decisions on religious and cultural issues. The struggle with Jewish tradition exists in both Israeli and Diaspora frameworks, and is fought out on the popular and intellectual levels.

And yet, despite what has just been said, there are striking differences between the situations of a person living in Israel and in the Diaspora in relationship to Judaism and Jewishness. In Israel, for those Jews who do not concern themselves with religious belief and observance, a personal and national Jewish identity exists which has very little to do with theological questions or religious observance. One's characteristics or virtues as a Jew are one's place in the country, one's service to the country, one's relationship to work and to culture.

Because Israeli Jewish identity is based on a network of connections and duties, it is not necessarily sought and achieved through the inner intellectual struggle which is the lot of an American or Canadian Jew who goes through a process of self-commitment. Hence, the Jewish identity of the young Israeli, even when emotionally intense, can go hand in hand with ignorance of Jewish texts, traditions, and customs. This specific Israeli Jewish national identity is not blind; it may indeed be highly conscious and articulated,

As a result of this built-in situation, an Israeli secular Jew may be free of the conflicts which exist in the mental life of the Diaspora Jew if he/she so chooses. The flip side is that the Israeli may also be "free" of the depth and profundity of a Jewish identity achieved after a long intellectual or spiritual struggle,

North American Perspective

The need to respond to the major challenge facing North American Jewry, namely the continuity of the community itself, may imply changes in the relationship of the Diaspora to Israel. We already witness a call for a new allocation of resources as North American communities seek to channel more of their financial resources inward to their own educational structures. This demand coincides with the lessening need of Israel for financial aid from Diaspora Jewry.

The "giving-culture" developed in North America, however, was based upon an exchange mechanism. It was not only the recipient who benefited, but the contributing community itself. Identification with the weak, beleaguered but heroic Israel was a vehicle for rallying masses of Jews and linking them to communal frameworks. Israel oriented activity provided *a raison d'être* for American Jewish life. A functional exchange emerged in which Israel received funds and support and North American Jewry received symbols for identification. The basis for this functional relationship - Israel in crisis -

is now not self-evident. Indeed, a prosperous rather than a weak Israel, an Israel marching towards peace rather than besieged and bombarded, will no longer arouse the same emotional outpouring of identification and subsequent funds.

A change in the philanthropic agenda, however, is two-sided. Israel is indeed less needy and therefore "unreal" in the old categories of a weak struggling relative or victim. It may be necessary objectively to funnel greater funds back into North American communal institutions, and send less and less to Israel. However, it is not at all clear that any cause other than Israel can fill the spiritual and symbolic functions which Israel fulfilled, and which led to the very outpouring of funds.

It is true that causes other than Israel created energies within the North American Jewish community. However, they were all linked to emergencies and were grounded in the survivalist ethic. The question is whether the connection between education and survival can be demonstrated in a way which will transform this neglected cause into one which has resonance and mobilizing power.

North American Jews, even those highly identified and active, live in their own culture and their own reality. It is distinctive, interwoven in many ways with the "American Way." The language is English, the Jewishness is a product of transformed religious traditions, immigrant experience, special American and universal values filtered through Judaism and Jewishness, and the impact of twentieth century Jewish experiences such as the Holocaust and the history of the State of Israel. The culture of American Jews is diverse, ranging from Borough Park Orthodoxy to Beverly Hills Reform, from American Jewish writers who considered themselves part of the Jewish community, such as Irving Howe and Philip Roth, to highly marginal Jews, such as Paul Auster or Erica Jong. The connection of this pluralistic North American Jewish culture to Israeli culture is shaky. The lack of a common language makes primary communication difficult. The gap in historical experience and contemporary cultural experiences intensifies this difficulty.

What is to be done?

Theoretical analysis of a situation is much easier than constructing adequate responses to new challenges. We have described a situation in both Israel and in the Diaspora which effects their inter-relationships. As indicated, guilt is no longer the operative sentiment, and the agen-

da built upon crises and defense is no longer relevant. The challenge for those involved in this sphere is to stake out a positive agenda based upon shared cultural and social bonds. These bonds must be seen as components of a total Jewish identity. Links between Israeli and Diaspora Jews do not exist in an autonomous sphere, but are dependent upon a broader context - attitudes, values, and commitments in relationship to Judaism and Jewishness.

Educators must assume that Jewish identity is no where automatically achieved. Rather, it is a theme or aspect of one's life which can be elevated and become important or can be denigrated and become paralyzed. Institutionalized educational processes contribute to this process by displaying the individual forms, values, styles that he/she may adopt or reject. A rich display of Jewish culture in all its religious and secular varieties will bring about a conscious struggle with this special aspect of the individual's identity.

In this light, links between Israel and the Diaspora may add significantly to the display of Jewishness offered in each context. Precisely because the meaning of Jewishness is different in each place, knowing one another broadens the imaginative grasp of Israelis and Jews in the Diaspora. It broadens their understanding, induces them to compare experiences, enriches them intellectually, and may influence choices.

The goal of those concerned with strengthening Israel-Diaspora relations is to invoke curiosity within Israeli and Diaspora Jews about each other, and create as broad and interesting a display of each culture as possible. This is a two-stage project whose implementation is difficult. The first stage is arousing interest through education; the second, developing a range of programs which attract and link. While it is theoretically possible to interest anyone in any subject, the first and obvious target groups are those involved in organized Jewish educational frameworks, both youngsters and adults. These are the people who are interested in some way, whose eyes are open to see the display, whose heads and hearts are open to hear the message. A widely varied Israel education program, which will be an integral part of all normative Jewish educational tracks, must be created. Similarly, a rich program on Jewish peoplehood must be integrated into the Israel school system, as part of the study of Jewish values and identity.

We begin with a recognition that the gap between the two communities is enormous. The historical experiences of the past one hundred years differ; the immediate life experiences of the present differ; the languages

are different. Beyond these differences, however, are universal interests which can bring people together (intellectual, professional, cultural, social) and particular Jewish ties which bind. The first assumption here is that adults meet best around a common interest, and that primary ties can be built on this foundation. The second assumption is that personal contacts create understanding if not sameness, agreement, or unity, and that this understanding may lead to friendship, loyalty, and commitment.

Thus, the fundamental way to affect the relationship between Jews in Israel and the Diaspora in the direction of heightened recognition, understanding, and involvement is through various forms of linkage. This means building ongoing and long-term relationships between groups of people through direct person-to-person contacts. This is a slow path which promises modest successes. It is a tried path, however, and one whose concrete results can be seen empirically. A greater and greater flow of people would bring increasing understanding and an increasing number of personal relationships. While direct contacts are a necessary stage, personal interchange may be maintained through contemporary technological vehicles.

The goal of both North American and Israeli leadership should be to create areas of shared reality in the life experiences of Diaspora and Israeli Jews. While it is clear that in the ordinary existence of the average person in either the Diaspora or Israel there will be little relationship or reference to the other, extraordinary opportunities can be made available through a concentrated effort whose effects will penetrate the routine of daily life.

Israel - Diaspora Relations: Some Thoughts

Questions for discussion:

1. Janet Aviad describes what she sees as "striking differences" between the Israeli Jewish identity and North American Jewish identity - at least among those who do not share religious belief and observance. Have these differences alienated Israeli and Diaspora Jews from each other? If so, how is this alienation manifested on a personal level and/or on an institutional level?
2. Aviad claims that within the classic model of Israel-Diaspora relations the "givers" (i.e., the North American Jews) received as much as the recipients (i.e., the Israelis). In return for their financial support of the needy Israel, the North Americans gained symbols for identification and a stimulus for rallying the Jewish community. To what extent has this kind of mutual exchange existed in your community? Has it undergone changes during the past decade?
3. The author herself poses the question of whether, now that Israel no longer arouses the same emotional outpouring it once did, any other cause will fill that spiritual function. Will the call for funds for local Jewish education - if seen as a prerequisite for Jewish survival - mobilize the community in the same way? Should the North American communities consciously attempt to liken the urgency for Jewish education to the urgency that once existed regarding Israel?
4. There is a legitimate communication gap between Jews living in Israel and those living in North America due to a lack of common language, different collective historical experiences, and different sets of operating values. What strategies might be employed, on both sides of the ocean, to bridge this gap?
5. In the previous article, Cohen and Liebman posit that the "Judaizers" in both Israel and the Diaspora must join forces to assure the Judaic character of the Jewish People, thus providing a common ground for Israeli-Diaspora interaction. How does that fit in, or contend with, Aviad's suggestion that Israeli and Diaspora Jews "create as broad and interesting a display of each culture as possible" in order to invoke curiosity about each other?

Introduction

These three articles depict the state of the arts in Israel of the mid-1990s. In all three genres (theatre, literature, cinema), a similar pattern emerges: a shift away from some measure of solidarity with the founding Zionist-Jewish ethos of the State of Israel, towards alternatives which question or run contrary to many of the founding myths and legends.

In the 1970s, Israeli theatre distanced itself from an identification with social goals, and moved in the direction of an artistic mode with professionalism - rather than a pre-determined agenda - at its core. The former a priori commitment to theatre's social role was superseded by a more artistic priority - the desire to produce highly professional theatre.

In Israeli literature, three periods are identified:

- *Authors in the pre-State Palmach generation, whose writing was characterized by realism and a sense of the collective;*
- *The "Generation of the State" writers, who, writing in the 1950s and 1960s, could take the existence of the State for granted. Their writing style relied on symbolism and parables, and focused on the individual in the context of a presumed monolithic national experience which was essentially male, Ashkenazic, socialist, pioneering and secular;*
- *A post-1977 school, which appeared within the new reality defined by the Likud's rise to power and the emergence of a distinct Sephardic social-political constituency in Israel. (These two developments cast a pale on central founding myths of the Jewish State, particu-*

larly the notion of Israel created and built by socialist, pioneering East European Jews, with all later immigrants expected to adopt the national, cultural and religious values of this founding generation.) This last period of writing brought diverse personal narratives, an explosion of women writers, and a focus on childhood, religion, Arabs, regionalism within Israel, and Tel Aviv "yuppiedom." Interestingly, these post-modern writers are not perceived as jaded, but rather as having something fresh and important to say.

Israeli cinema also used to deliver a socially "correct" message, until the definition of correctness became blurred in the 1980s as a result of events during the controversial Lebanon War and the intifada. Cinema after this time is more heterogeneous, including "Sheinkin" movies (i.e., reflecting the trendy but vacuous Tel Aviv chic associated with the street by the same name), or movies which grapple with identity crises rooted in ethnic origins, generational conflicts, etc.

The phenomenon of waning societal consensus characterizes trends all three artistic genres. Israel of the 1990s bears less of its former orientation to the collective and to societal common denominators. Individualism and cynicism have replaced some of the earlier mores, as a result of Israel's shift away from sacrosanct elements of Jewish particularism towards a more Western cultural orientation. Perhaps this trend renders Israeli arts and culture more universal and accessible to the Western public, but less explicitly Jewish.

The State of the Arts

The State of the Arts: Israeli Theatre 1995

Shosh Weitz

Two productions of note on the Israeli stage this past year were "Gorodish," an Israeli drama at the Cameri Theatre, and "P.S. Your Cat is Dead," an imported commercial success at Habima. "Gorodish" was enthusiastically hailed by the critics both for its subject matter and for the standard of its design and production. The dead cat, on the other hand, was dismissed as being beneath contempt, an insult to good taste and a "national disgrace." Both shows, however, have been very successful at the box office, and they highlight the major dilemma of Israeli theatre in the second half of the 1990s and probably into the next century: how to hold on to existing audiences, and particularly how to lure a new and young audience to theatres.

At first glance, the 1990s have been a good decade for the Israeli theatre. In each year since 1990, the ten public theatres have produced about 140 plays and sold about a million and half tickets. Dozens more productions have been shown at theatre festivals by fringe theatre and by children and youth ensembles. A survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 1992 showed that every third person in Israel attended a play at least once a year. The same statistics, however, indicate that since 1970, the number of people going to the theatre has declined by 15 percent. The decline is most conspicuous among the educated young. In 1970, 64 percent attended the theatre "several times" a year, while in 1990, this figure had dropped to 29 percent. Thus, although the theatre is still a very popular medium, it is groping for ways to break through to the younger generation that clearly prefers other types of entertainment.

"Gorodish" and "RS. Your Cat is Dead" represent two different solutions to the problem. The first continued the tradition of theatre *engage* taking a position on current issues. "The Dead Cat" had no such ethical or artis-

tic pretensions. Its only goal was to provide entertainment for a young, hedonistic audience. However, this polarization between the socially committed and the professionally entertaining type of production is not new in Israeli theatre and has, in fact, marked it from its beginnings. The Hebrew theatre has always seen itself as an artistic-social institution where at times the artistic goal superseded the social, and at others, the demands of time and place overwhelmed the artistic criteria. In fact, this oscillation can be seen as one of its major characteristics.

In the early years of statehood, the theatre's social role took precedence over its artistic function, and the theatre concentrated on Israeli plays that dealt with the burning issues of the day. The *Ha'aretz* theatre critic, Nahum Gamzu, writing on Yigal Mossinsohn's "In the Wilderness of the Negev," commented that, although the play was flawed and at best a piece of journalism, its relevance was praiseworthy. He added that when the curtain came down, he felt such an identification with the characters that he felt like leaving the theatre, joining the fighters and weeping on the grave of the hero, Uri, who had fallen in battle.

The playwrights, mostly of the *Palмах* generation (Moshe Shamir, Hanoah Bartov, Aharon Megged, Yigal Mossinsohn, Yehudit Hendel and others) expressed the national consensus. The voicing of extremist socio-political positions, at times censored, was usually limited to the fringe theatres which blossomed from the early 1950s to the late 1960s. However, even on the fringe, the consensus was maintained, and the "revolt" usually went no further than the adoption of avant garde modes such as the Theatre of the Absurd, which was popular at the time in Europe and in the USA.

In the eyes of the Israeli audience, who has always wished to see itself and its problems on stage, the secret of the theatre's success lies in the strong links it forges with society. The audience is willing to be provoked, but only within limits. It is open to controversial and critical theatre but only as long as it stays within the national consensus. Theatre thus faithfully reflects the changes wrought in Israeli society from its early days, including

the rupture in the consensus beginning with the Six-Day War of 1967 and the subsequent occupation of the territories.

The rift in the consensus began with Hanoach Levin's biting satire, "The Queen of the Bathtub," performed at the Cameri, which was forced to close almost as soon as it opened. Bowing to violent public pressure, the theatre's board decided not to violate its audience's wishes, or, as actress Orna Porat put it: "We cherish freedom of speech, but we cherish our audience more." The Cameri, together with Habimah, has toed that line ever since.

The group which stretched the national consensus to its limits was the Haifa Municipal Theatre, which, in the 1970s and 1980s, mounted several plays that challenged government policy both in the political and in the social arenas. Many of these were documentaries or semi-documentaries and their artistic value was minimal. But they gave vociferous expression to ideological positions that aroused fierce public debate and often resulted in political or financial pressure being brought to bear on the theatre.

This flourishing period in the Haifa Theatre was a particular boon for a new and young generation of writers who today constitute Israel's foremost playwrights, including Hanoach Levin, Yehoshua Sobol, Hillel Mittelpunkt, and others. It also gave voice to the attitudes of a young audience which identified with attacks on the values of the founding generation and rebelled against the concept of paying the price of the nation's wars with its life. In retrospect, however, it seems that although the Haifa revolt stretched the limits of the consensus, it did not actually break it.

The social crisis of 1978 and the rise of the Likud political party, both events which transformed the face of Israeli society and redefined the national consensus, also brought about changes in the theatre. The political reversal was expressed by an ever-increasing pressure on the theatre to moderate their message, an influence which reached its peak at the end of the 1980s. The Arabic stage of the Haifa Theatre was closed down, and plays containing a particularly strong anti-establishment statement, such as "Ephraim Goes Back to the Army," which drew an analogy between the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the Holocaust, were rejected by the theatre. The situation came to a head in 1988 with the closing of Sobol's "Jerusalem Syndrome" in the wake of which the theatre management resigned.

The closing of the "Jerusalem Syndrome" which, ironically, took place during "Original Play Week" in Israel, is

only one aspect of the change that has left its mark on theatre to this day. The other is the "Les Miserables" syndrome. Mounted by the Cameri in 1988, the world-famous musical inaugurated the concept of the "professional" theatre. A huge success with the audiences and critics alike, it was greatly admired for its professional standard and wealth of technical effects. "Les Miserables" drew audiences from all walks of life, those who are not normally theatre-goers. Over the next three years, the main theatres competed with one another in mounting large spectacles, the most "populist" of which was Ephraim Kishon's "OSalah Shabati" at Habimah. It might be said that 1987-8 saw the swing of the pendulum in Israel from the social to the artistic and professional theatre.

The first half of the 1990s has been a period of complacency and plenty. Repertoires were built to satisfy audiences wishing to see well-performed, easily-digestible and "respectable" plays. One example of this can be seen in the wave of Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller plays from the 1950s that enjoyed revivals in 1990-92. Realistic and innovative in their time, they are now accessible and classical. The same swing of the pendulum left its mark on Israeli drama. In 1990, Oded Kotler, the man who initiated the Haifa revolt in 1970, stated that the "political era" of Israeli theatre was over. Today, he said, an original Hebrew play must be, first and foremost, well-written. An even more extreme expression of this attitude was voiced by Gary Bilu, until recently the artistic director of Habimah, when he claimed that the Hebrew play was "backward" and that only artistic criteria, i.e., the skill of the playwright regardless of subject or profundity, should be at issue when considering a play for production. In other words, the Israeli theatre of the early 1990s conforms to Susan Benett's description of western bourgeois theatre as an institution whose repertoire is aimed at "middle-aged and middle-class" audiences ("Theater Audiences," New York, 1992).

The truth of this statement is reflected today not only in the repertoire, but also in the nature of Israeli theatre audiences, marketing strategies and the playwrights. The majority of theatre-goers are subscribers, or people who have obtained tickets through their staff organizations who offer "culture" to their members. The "young" playwrights of the 1970s are still in their prime and as yet no significant younger generation has replaced them. One result is that young audiences flock to stand-up comedy shows, a genre that has begun to flourish in Israel and has been legitimized both in the press and on television.

On the face of it, the picture is bleak. Israeli theatre seems to have lost its uniqueness, and its manifest ageing

and fossilization resembles that of western theatre as a whole. However, over the last two and the influence of left-of-centre forces, there has been a cautious swing back to a national-social agenda. The Cameri recently mounted a hugely successful series of Hebrew dramas. Oded Kotler, who in 1990 proclaimed the death of the documentary, directed a play, now in its third season, based on a real-life rape case that sent shock waves through Israeli society. Even Habimah mounted a political drama which, although sharply criticized for its level of writing and directing, was praised for dealing with the subject it addressed. Nine out of the ten shows on the list of most successful plays, published in 1994 by the Public Council for Art and Culture, were local works dealing with socio-political issues. A case in point: Hillel Mittelpunkt's "Gorodish," demonstrates both the continuity and the change evident in Israeli plays of the mid-1990s. On the one hand, it deals with a socio-political subject; on the other, it is well-written and excellently direct and acted, and is performed on a large stage abounding with technical effects. Taking the cult of the hero as its theme, "Gorodish" traces the downfall of a Six-Day War hero to humiliation and disgrace in the Yom Kippur War. However, while attacking the myth of the macho hero, it also harks back to Israel's heroic period. Thus it satisfies both the older members of the audience who come to the theatre to look back with nostalgia at the days of heroism and splendour, and the younger audience who see in it a reflection of their service in the army. In other words, "Gorodish" is a sophisticated example of the combination that has worked so well throughout the history of Israeli theatre. Other recent productions are no exception. They take on accepted targets such as religious fanaticism ("Fleischer" and "Sheindele") or petty corruption ("The Inspector-General"); they are easily understood and they give the audience the feeling that it is seeing itself reflected on stage. The Israeli theatre thus seems to have returned to the bosom of consensus and to the heart of the social establishment. Once again it seems that the formula for success is to mix relevance with accessibility - to which now is also added professionalism. As it worked in the past, so it will probably work in the first decade of the next century. But to keep it from expiring with the middle-aged generation to which it caters, it is also crucial to open up channels of communication with the younger generation.

We began this survey with "RS. Your Cat is Dead," representing the "professional" approach. This play was mounted not because of its quality but because its language and style addressed the younger generation, and the popularity of the show would, indeed, seem to indicate that Habimah found the right way to revitalize its audience. But, in this writer's opinion, the price is too

high. By compromising the artistic quality of its productions, a theatre forfeits the ethical justification of its existence as a formative public-social institution. Moreover, the younger generation does attend quality plays which appeal to them, either on the grounds of their relevance or because of their innovative modes of expression. Besides "Gorodish," which continues to attract a young audience, there have been successful avant garde productions of Shakespeare mounted by the Itim Company, directed by Rina Yerushalmi. "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliet" are not easy to comprehend, but the style is contemporary and the codes that the audience is asked to use in deciphering them are taken from the storehouse of images of the world today - the world at the eve of a new century.

While it is impossible to prophesy, it is my belief that Israeli theatre at its best will continue to thrive. I believe that even in the 21st century, Israelis will want a living theatre, one alert to society, and responsive to its problems. They will want a theatre that constantly renews itself technically while maintaining a high artistic and professional level, and most of all, one that is always on a quest for the right, but not necessarily the easy, way.

The State of the Arts: Israeli Literature 1995

Rochelle Furstenberg

The last decade has been a time of great literary energy, of abundance in Hebrew fiction. This cultural energy and vitality might be compared to the holiday of Purim, which is being celebrated as I write. The fiction that has emerged in the last decade might be compared to the children's Purim costumes. It is colourful; there is more variety. In good post-modernist spirit, it is also less earnest: there's more play, more posturing, and like all those children dressed up as Power Rangers, it is influenced by America, by film and television.

But Purim is not only Mardi Gras. The festival celebrates the saving of the Jewish people from destruction in Persia in the fifth century BCE. What could better symbolize the Jewish people's triumph over destruction in our century than that Jewish culture, and particularly Hebrew literature, is alive and thriving? Perhaps, because of the Holocaust, Israelis are more self-conscious than they should be about this vitality. They cloth protest too much; they declare: "Look at us; we're alive, our litera-

ture is alive." And one is often tempted to say, OK, enough. Let up, relax a little.

But the objective situation is that many literary-historical strains have come together to create a new vitality. A real literary revolution has taken place since 1985. A new wave has emerged. But what are some of the signs, the indications of this literary abundance? First, there is the sheer number of new young writers that have surfaced. Seemingly, at least every week a new name appears. They are not yet Marquez or Faulkner, authors who were much loved and imitated by Israeli novelists in the past, or Raymond Carver, who is a strong influence at present. But still there are many, original young voices coming to the fore.

Of course, it is not enough that there be original young writers: what is also needed are editors who will appreciate and encourage these voices: a breed singularly few and far between in Israel until recently. But now, there are Israeli editors poised to listen, to seek out and discover new possibilities, and they are competing for the bright new stars. So, on the whole, good writers can expect to be taken up, cultivated, if not always paid well or edited sufficiently, or given time to ripen. But published and read.

There is also a greater variety, different genres, different kinds of fiction. There is women's writing, ethnic writing. There are original Hebrew mysteries and thrillers. With the exception of the historian Michael Ben Zohar, writing under the pseudonym of Michael Barak, these really did not exist in Hebrew literature until seven or eight years ago. Until then, detective and spy novels were translated from other languages. Israeli literature was serious. It related to the big issues. It didn't produce light entertainment.

The writer who began the revolution in bringing original detectives to Israel was Batya Gur, whose intellectual whodunits have been translated into several languages. There are also the detective novels of Shulamit Lapid, which are yet to be translated and are great fun. She has created a wonderful feminist sleuth in the form of Lizi Badichi, a flatfooted Sephardi Beersheba journalist. Lapid's works are true social commentaries, pointing up the corruption of establishment figures. It is not the unravelling of the mystery, the puzzle, that is the important thing, but for Gur, the closed society, the intellectual system, that one must penetrate to solve the murder. In Lapid it is also revealing the social fabric of a small town in Israel that is the goal. But since these two women began writing, there has been a flood of less successful detective and spy novels. Every once in a while there's a

unique, well-written one, but most of the time one has a feeling of *deja-vu*.

Although there has been a decrease in the reading of books among children (TV is probably at fault), on the whole, Israeli fiction holds its own among adults. Those in their 20s and 30s are avid for new Israeli fiction. Although American bestsellers feature prominently on the Israeli bestseller lists, they nevertheless never do as well as an original Israeli bestseller.

The new generation of adult readers wants books that relate to their own personal situations, their everyday lives, the street, the neighborhood, the city in which they live. They are tired of the large issues and are bored by the fate of the Jewish people, the political situation, the Arab-Israeli conflict. They want to read about the normal, the everyday. Some of the newest writers that appeal to them are Gadi Taub, Mira Magen, Shimon Zimmer, Lily Perri. Some of them write stylistically sensitive, conventional psychological stories, and some have, until now, only published short stories. But among them there is a whole group paring their language down to the bare bones, and writing in street language. They are suspicious of "literary language" of Hebrew that has too many allusions to the Bible, the Talmud and other traditional sources. In fact, a new journal called *Rehov* ("Street") has just appeared, which advocates just such language.

A good example of this new wave is Etgar Keret, a columnist for a local newspaper, who sees himself as walking in Raymond Carver's footsteps. He writes flat prose, short, pithy sentences. While there is a great deal of playing with cliques and biblical allusions, it is casual, ironic, iconoclastic. The violence, too, is matter-of-fact, a part of life. Keret has said, "They say I take this violence from American movies. But look at Israeli life. The intifada. A Hamas believer blowing himself up. No one has to teach us about violence. It's an everyday part of life here."

Keret's last book of stories, "Longings for Kissinger," published in 1994, was on the bestseller list for months. Iris Linor, another journalist much read by young Israeli yuppies, writes romances in a frank, tell-them-as-it-is Tel Aviv tone. Her "Siren's Song" takes place in the Gulf War. But in line with the new Israeli literary taste, it does not relate to the big questions of war and peace in the Middle East, but is simply a romance between a PR executive and a chemist. But it has sold 70,000 copies. In the USA, this would be the equivalent of more than three million!

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of this literary renaissance is that it has not only brought a new and varied group of young writers to the fore, but has revitalized some of the older writers. It is difficult to trace, to demonstrate the effect of the energy, the electricity, but somehow it exists. S. Yizhar (Yizhar Smilansky) is the most surprising example. His story is one of an amazing literary comeback. One of Israel's most influential writers of the 1948 generation, he questioned accepted truths about heroism and the pioneering society, infused anti-establishment political consciousness into the bloodstream of generations of writers from Amos Oz and A. B. Yehoshua to David Grossman and recently Yitzhak Laor. One might easily surmise that without these writers' consciousness-raising to the plight of the Arabs, there would be no peace process today. But Yizhar stopped writing in the early 1960s and has only now started again.

Other writers have maintained their art even as a younger generation has moved in. The master Aharon Appelfeld has slowly but surely built an oeuvre creating the panorama of Jews and gentiles in central Europe under the shadow of the Holocaust. He is the novelist whose name has been most bandied about for a second Israeli Nobel Prize in literature. "He too is part of this renewed flourishing.

In order to understand this, we have to put Hebrew literature into perspective. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, there emerged what is called the "Generation of the State" writers, those who began their careers after the State of Israel was established in 1948 and took its existence for granted. The "great triumvirate," Amos Oz, Aharon Appelfeld and A. B. Yehoshua, are of this generation, and to some extent, they continue to dominate the scene because of the power of their work, their persona, and the national needs they answered. Initially, they rebelled against the realism of the previous literary generation (the so-called "Palmah Generation," including writers such as Yizhar, Haim Gouri, Moshe Shamir, Benjamin Tammuz, Hanoch Barton, and others), and wrote symbolic parables. They attempted to retreat from the earlier generation's emphasis on the collective. They had imbibed Kafka and European existentialism, and ostensibly they claimed to be writing about the individual. But the state was too young, the fate of the Jewish people too important. They couldn't ignore it. Ostensibly they wrote about individuals and family situations, but their works were often structured to satisfy symbolic, allegorical needs. The family situation often became a symbol for the larger collective Israeli experience. In the case of Appelfeld, it referred to the fate of the Jewish people in the 20th century.

But the assumption underlying this generation's symbolic writing had to be that there was one monolithic, national experience that could be allegorized, symbolized. And this monolithic experience was, on the whole, male, Ashkenazi, socialist, pioneering and secular. Certainly, there were many other writers: women, Sephardi, communist, realistic, personal. But they were not considered "mainstream." They were not seen as representing the collective, and whatever claims to the contrary, it was the collective that was important.

There is, for example, Yehoshua Kenaz, who writes psychologically sensitive works in a realistic-grotesque mode. There is Amalia Kahana-Carmon, whose radiant stories about a young girl's childhood, or philosophically-based fiction taking place in England, were highly respected, but as she has claimed, she was relegated to the "personal, women's section" of literature, as the orthodox Jewish woman is relegated to the women's section of the synagogue, and cannot represent the community.

But in 1977, there was a tremendous political upheaval, The Likud party, led by Menahem Begin, came to power, with a large Sephardi constituency coming into its own. And this was a turning point. It immediately signalled greater pluralism; culturally sociologically and politically, in this country. It stated that no more was there only one monolithic socialist, pioneering, male, Ashkenazi reality.

And when there was a Zionist epic, as Meir Shalev's *Roman Russi* (published as "Blue Mountain" in English), it was playful, fantastic surrealistic, turning Zionism upside down. His latest novel, *K'yamim Abadim* ("But a Few Days") also depicts the pioneering period, but this serves as a convenient background for a wonderfully whimsical love story.

On the whole, a Pandora's Box of personal narrative opened up. The pent-up energies of those seeking to express their own small world exploded. The personal story, almost a luxury during the initial period of nation-building, emerged.

Women's writing, in particular, gained legitimization. The wave of women's fiction in America and Europe fed the Israeli situation. But Israeli women who had been waiting in the wings created an explosion. Older women, like Kahana-Carmon, Shulamit Hareven and Yehudit Hendel, became more prolific.

Young women's manuscripts began to pour in to the publishers. Most of the women were not pragmatically

feminist, although if one looks carefully one discerns deep anger. And the older women expressed this no less than the younger ones.

Yehudit Hendel's story, "My Friend B's Dinner Party," for example, is a chilling, unsubtle depiction of a woman dying of cancer who comes home from her hospital bed to make a dinner party. She attends to all the trivia of the occasion, fussing about the seating arrangement, the sauces for the meat, as she stands on the edge of the abyss. And her husband has already ensconced a younger consort in her place. Her more complex story, "Small Change," is another example of this deep anger at the treatment of women.

Among younger women, one of the most interesting writers is Orly Castel-Bloom. Her book "Dolly City" is brilliantly cathartic in expressing ambivalence toward motherhood. Her protagonist doctor is driven to madness over the dangers that lie in wait for her infant son. To stave them off, she operates on him, subjects him to vats of Mercurochrome, chemotherapy. Ultimately she wreaks havoc on his body, her deepest existential anxieties transformed into self-fulfilling prophecies. But one cannot but feel that there is hostility at the bottom of these concerns too.

Yehudit Katzir, whose first full-length novel, "Matisse Has the Sun in his Belly" (a quote from Picasso), has just been published, is women's writing of a different type. Her first book of short stories, "Closing the Sea," contained images of the limitlessness and freedom of childhood, painted over and against the growing realization of the sordidness of life. The stories hit a deep chord in Israeli consciousness.

There is a great involvement in childhood in Israeli literature. It does not claim that youth is a rose garden. David Grossman's works, and particularly "The Book of Intimate Grammar," points up how children are riveted with anxiety in decoding the adult world, fighting the shadows of that world, and worrying about whether they will be able to function sexually in the adult realm.

The pluralism which surfaced after 1977 was, to an overwhelming extent, brought about by Israel's Sephardi population, those (or whose parents) who had immigrated in the 1950s from Moslem countries. By 1977 they had come of age and they sought a voice in the nation. But the new pluralism that had brought women to the fore in literature has not yet produced many young, Sephardi, ethnic voices. The Israeli literary world still awaits the Sephardi writer who will capture the trauma of immigration. Albert Suissa is the only young voice to

surface heretofore. His dense novel *Ahud* ("Bound") is a grotesque metaphoric depiction of growing up Moroccan in a Jerusalem slum.

What is perhaps more surprising is that the new openness has affected older writers of Sephardi background. A. B. Yehoshua, a scion of an aristocratic Sephardi family that came to Palestine in the 19th century, did not, in his early works, call upon his particular ethnic roots. It was only in the 1980s that he began to create a distinctly Sephardi protagonist. And in his masterpiece "Mr. Mani," he plumbed his deepest cultural self in creating a novel about five generations of a Sephardi family.

Sami Michael is another older Sephardi writer. He came as a young man from Iraq, and has been re-invigorated by the recent spirit of pluralism. His work, *Victoria*, which was on the bestseller list for a year, depicts his mother, the spirit of the ethnic woman and the hardships she encountered in the new state.

The religious dimension has mostly been absent from mainstream Israeli literature since the death of Agnon, who bridged the Diaspora with the new Jewish country. There is now, with the greater Pluralism, an emergence of literature that grapples with religious issues. This is particularly evident in Israeli poetry. But a recently published book called *Hashem* (literally, "The Name," a synonym for God), written by Michal Govrin, is a deep and densely-written pilgrimage into the soul of a young woman who has become newly religious.

The hope that this new pluralism would also include Israeli Arabs has been disappointed. The appearance of "Arabesques" by the Israeli-Christian Arab writer, Anton Shammas, in 1986, led to the hope that a body of Israeli-Arab literature might emerge in Hebrew. But this has not happened. Israeli Arabs, including Israel Prize winner Emil Habibi, write in Arabic, and their work, as yet, has not joined the Hebrew mainstream.

Another characteristic of the new wave in literature is that of regionalism, the breaking down of the nation to the local and the personal. Local newspapers have become a particularly influential force, with many of the newer writers emerging from them. And more than any other area, it is Tel Aviv that has been the incubator for the new literature.

The increasing urbanization of the country, the great leap forward in business and consumerism, revolves around Tel Aviv. And the local version of the American yuppie class has sprouted in Tel Aviv with a strong, self-confident image, and a proud voracious cultural appetite

expressed in the local Tel Aviv newspapers. And this has, in turn, fed the literature.'

Much of the best Israeli writing falls into the postmodernist category. When we speak of postmodernism, we refer initially to disjointed narrative that the reader must piece together. Among the pioneers of postmodernism in Israel and its finest practitioners are Itamar Levi and Yoel Hoffman. Levi's "Letters of the Sun, Letters of the Moon" attempted to catch the Palestinian reality through the eyes of a child protagonist without taking sides. Yoel Hoffman, an exquisitely sensitive writer, in his book "Christ of Fish," depicts the displacement of a central European family thrown into the Middle East through the contrariness of history.

In conclusion, Israeli literature has never been as congruent, in sync, with world literature as it is now. Altogether, Israel has emerged from the ideological, Zionist grappling of earlier periods and entered not only to a personal literature, but beyond that to the flat, abstract postmodernist mode, shorn of psychological motivation, literary allusion and narrative theme. The writer himself takes no stand, whether moral, ideological, or literary. It is quite amazing that writers who are so constantly confronted with the issues of the collective, nationalist values based in the 19th century, could make so great a leap into a postmodernist *Weltanschauung*, leaving shards of Zionism behind them. What is equally amazing is that these writers, in spite of their disaffection, are not yet jaded. They still believe there is something to say, and that they want to say it. This might be naive. But for this we are thankful.

The State of the Arts: Israeli Cinema 1995

Dan Fainaru

"Our cinema has reached a turning point," says producer Haim Sharir. "From now on, it should be perfectly clear that Israeli films cannot rely on private investments any more. Either *we* can get enough money from public sources or we'll have to look for another profession." Sharir is not the only one to think so. Jonathan Aroch, whose "Siren's Song" is considered the most successful Israeli film of 1994 (approximately 100,000 admissions) concurs, and so do practically all those who have recently gone through the experience of producing an Israeli feature film. In other words, history is repeating itself.

Every time it seemed as if Israeli cinema was about to assume its own place both as an art form and an industry (sadly, the two are inseparable and interdependent in order to exist), something happened to set the whole process back.

As awkward as it may seem, one cannot discuss Israeli cinema before dealing with its economic condition. This is always frustrating for a film critic, who would much rather deal with themes and aesthetics, form and content, than dollars and cents. Ideally, money should be the means to an end; a film may cost a fortune and turn out to be a disaster, and vice versa. But films, being the costliest artistic medium yet invented, cannot begin to exist without funds, and every penny deducted from the budget leaves a visible void on the screen. While money by itself has never produced a masterpiece, it certainly doesn't hurt to have some.

And the Israeli cinema does not get much. The reason may be that, in spite of all statements to the contrary the people in charge of the cultural scene in the country still have doubts about it. Is it indeed an art form, as they are told ad nauseam by interested parties, or is it a branch of the entertainment industry that is supposed to survive on its own? Possibly an outdated question by international standards, which could be explained by the lack of absolute achievements of Israeli films. One Bergman or one Anghelopoulos, to give obvious examples, would have established the reputation necessary to dispel such doubts. But as long as an indisputable master does not materialize, the arts establishment will continue to suspect that money invested in films is a waste.

Such reservations will never be voiced in public because no one wishes to appear dated and deny the importance of the "art of the 20th century." But recent figures indicate that cinema is receiving only about five percent (11 million shekel,) out of the budget dedicated to cultural activities by the Arts Ministry, which is about 64 percent of the sum allocated to one theatre alone, Habimah.

Investors willing to underwrite half a film's budget (assuming the other half is covered by the Fund for the Promotion of Quality Films or TV commitments) are a rare breed. No wonder, since Israeli film audiences seem to have lost interest altogether in their home product and too many of 1994's crop attracted less than 10,000 spectators. Some of the reasons are obvious. The explosion of the electronic media in recent years has made a substantial dent in overall cinema attendance. Audiences are more selective and obviously feel they get better value from American movies. Moreover, the juggernaut of the Hollywood studios pushing all competition out of the

theatres to make room for its own products is making the distribution of Israeli films, unprotected by law, fiendishly difficult even on its home ground.

On top of this, producers complain there is a stigma attached to them in recent years, and they lay the responsibility at the critics' door, accusing them of being destructive and vindictive. Traditionally, the most successful Israeli films have never been great favourites with the critics, while most of the films praised by the critics have fared badly at the box office. Lukewarm opinions on "Zohar," the film biography of Zohar Argov, a controversial popular singer who died at the age of 30 from a drug overdose, did not prevent it becoming the biggest hit of recent years, while Dan Wolman's "The Distance," considered by most critics to be a lucid, intelligent and sensitive observation on Israeli society, played briefly to empty houses. The one place where a film which failed in the cinemas has a chance to redeem itself is on television, where home products are usually highly rated. However, none of the existing channels can offer the kind of money that would justify the existence of the Israeli cinema.

If there is any doubt that commercial Israeli cinema is in deep trouble, a quick glance at the films made in the course of the last two years will confirm it. Ethnic comedies, sex-oriented youth pranks, "candid camera" extravaganzas, all of them commercial genres par excellence, enthusiastically embraced at one time by Israeli audiences, in spite of the devastating voices of the critics, have now been rejected by the audiences, all of them landing up as popular shows and sitcoms in the warm bosom of commercial television, where they receive top ratings and the same acerbic reviews they deserved and received in the past. Obviously, they are still well liked, but not enough to warrant leaving one's comfortable armchair.

Another type of cinema is fading away as well. In the not very distant past, it was considered irrelevant to complain about the quality of certain Israeli films, as long as the message they tried to deliver was "correct." Well-intentioned liberal, desperately striving for political correctness, these films dealt with the Israeli-Arab conflict, castigating conservatives on both sides, trying to shake the audience out of its complacency. Sincere, if sometimes clumsy, films like "The Smile of the Lamb," "Green Fields," "A Very Narrow Bridge" and many others, were supposed to sound a warning that not many people wanted to hear. Somehow, with the outbreak of the Intifada, which proved the warnings sounded by these films to be true, they started to disappear. Possibly, because clearcut messages in the new; climate were much

more difficult to formulate and the notion of political correctness, at least for an Israeli, became far more complicated to define. This was certainly true for the audiences, who did appreciate some well-made militant pictures in the past (to wit, "Behind the Bars" or "Ricochets,") but chose to ignore Eran Riklis's "Cup Final," whose humanistic message implied in the encounter between Israelis and Palestinians during the Lebanon War was more appreciated abroad than at home.

The most popular genre to emerge lately is the so-called "Sheinkin movie," named for Tel Aviv's "in" street, where artists and pseudo artists, writers and journalists, trend-setters and groupies rub elbows every day and night of the week. These films are distinguished by flashes of "video-clip" glitz, the latest slang and vacuous but exceedingly loquacious characters. The impact of films like Shabi Gabison's "Shure," in which all these people are searching for a guru to tell them how to live; Nirit Yaron and Ayelet Menahemi's "Tel Aviv Stories," a triptych on three young ladies determined to have their own way in a fast-moving, male-oriented society, or Eytan Fox's "Sirens' Song" (based on Irit Linur's best-selling novel), about the love life a glib, 30-ish woman publicist during the Gulf War, indicate that at the moment, although no one knows for how long, this is the way to an audience's heart.

The other direction which seems to be extremely popular, if less with the public than with the filmmakers, leads back into the past, trying to come to terms with ancestors, parents and childhood. To mention last year's output only, there is Hanna Azoulai and Shmuel Hasfari's "Sh'ur," a drama with autobiographical undertones about Moroccan family adapting to life in Israel in the early 1970s; "Dreams of Innocence" by Dina Zvi-Riklis, dealing with the same community but focusing on a mythomaniac father who refuses to accept reality; "The New Land," in which Orna Ben Dor-Niv uses surrealism in order to recreate the atmosphere of the immigrant camps in the early 1950s and "Aya - An Imaginary Autobiography," which allows Michal Bat Adam to explore once again her childhood (already dealt with in two of her earlier films) from the perspective of her status as filmmaker and wife. It is interesting to notice that women are the driving force behind all these projects (Azoulai wrote the script "Sh'ur," which her husband, Hasfari, directed). All of them concentrate on childhood experiences, on the identity crisis of people from different origins in a new country and on the generation gap. Three of the examples cited (Bat-Adam's film being the exception) could be easily defined as ethnic and yet they are far removed from earlier films of this type - light

comedies which made a joke out of the entire issue. Nowadays, this kind of subject clearly does not generate any smiles, let alone the guffaws of the past.

Conflict between generations emerges time and again. In Aner Preminger's "Blindman's Bluff," a young woman severs the umbilical cord which kept her tied to her parents and prevented her from growing into an adult. In "On the Edge," directed by Amnon Rubinstein from a novel by Yehoshua Kenaz, two daughters ruthlessly rebel against their father and his second wife. "The Flying Camel" has a despondent old professor fighting to preserve the Bauhaus vestiges of Tel Aviv of the 1930s in the face of the invasion of shapeless constructions put up by a mindless, profit-driven Tel Aviv of the 1990s.

To be fair, political relevance has not disappeared altogether. Not as long as there is Assi Dayan to produce doomsday prophecies such as "Life According to Agfa," whose portrayal of a self-destructive Israeli society tearing itself apart in a Tel Aviv pub shocked local audiences. But when Dayan, the enfant terrible of Israeli cinema in more senses than one, followed "Agfa" with the chaotically existentialist and intentionally foul-mouthed "Electric Blanket Syndrome," even his most devoted followers were taken aback, some arguing it was intentionally horrifying, others rejecting it as hopelessly vulgar.

Incidentally Dayan is one of the rare examples of an Israeli film-maker who works regularly at his craft. And indeed, except for Dayan, Dan Wolman, Michal Bat-Adam and Amnon Rubinstein, practically the entire output of last year is the work of newcomers. While it is encouraging to see so many new faces, this is one of the major problems of the Israeli cinema. Promising directors, whose work generated interest and who should have worked constantly, are so exhausted by the effort involved in making a film that they either give up or allow such a long period of time to elapse that every time they go back behind a camera, it is as if they are once again making their first film. Wolman's last film before "The Distance" was nine years ago; directors like Avraham Heffner, Daniel Wachsmann, Yehuda "Judd" Neeman, Itzhak "Zeppel" Yeshurun, Eitan Green, while not officially retired, have been silent for too long.

Finally, coming back to political relevance and its absence from most recent feature films, the one place where they are still of prime importance is the documentary cinema. Once discounted as no more than glorified newsreels, Israeli documentaries have lately found a place of their own, courageously tackling some of the most painful subjects of the day and often displaying more sense and sensitivity than most of the feature films

which attempted to do so in the past. The heavy burden of the Holocaust is exemplarily dealt with in such films as Orna Ben Dor-Niv's "Because of That War" and Zippi Riebenbach's "The Choice and the Destiny." "Behind the Wall of Exile," by David Ben-Shitrit, effectively presented the point of view of three vastly different Arab women, two of them living in Gaza and a third in a refugee camp near Jericho. Amos Citai, who updated an older documentary, "The Wadi," about the mixed population of a forlorn Haifa slum, and Julie Schlez in "Sanjin," about a temporary immigrant camp populated by Russian and Ethiopian newcomers, leave no doubt about the difficulty of fitting into mainstream Israeli society. Amit Goren uses his own family in "1966 Was a Great Year for Tourism" to show that wandering Jews are not a thing of the past. In "6 Open, 21 Closed," he points his camera at Shlomo Tvezer, the commander of a Beersheba jail, to draw an exceptional portrait of a man who at any moment in his life might *have* gone wrong but did not, and can understand those who did.

As a matter of fact, documentaries have been so well received lately that a special government fund (modest, to be sure) has been started to encourage more initiatives of this kind. Whether this qualifies as cinema and whether such films have a future in movie theatres and can attract audiences on their own merits remains to be seen. For the time being, television remains their only means of exhibition, outside festivals and cinematheque screenings. But they are well-received and appreciated, and this is definitely a step forward. Maybe feature films will follow.

¹ *The striking force of the Haganah, the pre-state forerunner of the Israel Defence Forces.*

² *Shmuel Yosef Agnon received the prize in 1966.*

³ *Some of this literature is often referred to as "Shenkin Street" literature, after the popular and fashionable "in" street in Tel Aviv frequented by the local yuppie set.*

The State of the Arts: Israeli Theatre, Israeli Literature, Israeli Cinema 1995

Questions or discussion:

1. Israeli culture might be defined as culture produced by Israelis, as part of their local experience. To what extent do Israeli and Jewish culture overlap, and in what ways are they distinct from one another?
2. What criteria define Jewish culture (e.g., the identity of the creator, the subject matter, the medium in which the culture is created, the substance of the "message," or some other factor)? Would the answer be the same for Jewish culture in Israel and the Diaspora?
3. In the genres analyzed in this chapter, among the salient features of the 1990s is the liberation of society from earlier "correct" stories which represented the "myths of origin" of some segments of society, but which were not accessible to others who were not included in the narrative. In what ways has this dynamic pervaded artistic creation in North America, and what are the more obvious pros and cons of such a situation?
4. To what extent is Jewish culture created in the Diaspora? Does Jewish culture there interact with general culture, and if so, what is the outcome of this interaction? Is North American Jewish culture relevant to Israeli Jewish culture, and vice versa?

Introduction

The poetry of Israel, from the period of Zionist pioneers and throughout the twentieth century, reflects the dreams and visions of the people. Those who left their homes decades ago to brave the challenges of building a Jewish homeland amidst the difficult conditions of Eretz Israel wrote in a style reflecting their somewhat romantic era and the dramatic aspirations of early Zionist halutzim (pioneers). Almost a century later, contemporary Israeli poets of Ashkenazi and Middle Eastern backgrounds write about the banality of post-modern, urban life in the cosmopolitan Israeli metropolis, or about the social issues which continue to trouble Israeli society half a century after the State was born. In poetry, as in so many other genres and contexts, intellectual and aesthetic expression often reflect the prevailing mores and sentiments of the period, and as such, can afford rich insights into the texture and tenor of society's shifting sands.

Shaul Tchernichovsky (1875 - 1943) wrote during the period of the Haskalah or Jewish Enlightenment, when European Jews on the brink of the modern period expanded their horizons and embraced elements of Western civilization. Unlike many of his fellow travelers during the Haskalah, Tchernichovsky lacked extensive education in many areas of classical Jewish learning. His writing infused Jewish creativity with elements of Western literary tradition. He is also credited with important contributions to the development of the Hebrew language and to the translation of Western literary works into modern Hebrew. In his poem, "Before the Statue of Apollo," Tchernichovsky juxtaposes the pagan god Apollo, associated with the pleasures of Western culture, with the limitations imposed by the God of the Jews; his protest reflects the tensions of Jewish life at a time when Jews were emerging from a more sheltered existence, and grappling with two cultural traditions competing for their souls.

The well-known poetry of Rachel (1890 - 1931) resonates with the romantic idealism of the pioneers' encounter with the land of Israel - its landscape, local color, and the

challenges of settling it and building a new Jewish society. Her poetry, written in a simpler, conversational style, portrays the new Jew, the pioneer and farmer in Eretz Israel.

Since the middle of the century, Yehudah Amichai (1924-) has depicted life and love in the Jewish State. Through common, day-to-day situations, he provides insightful commentary on unique aspects of life in Israel. Many of his most familiar poems are set in some of Jerusalem's best known locales. In many ways, the personal vignettes of Amichai's first person stories are reflections of life's essences, resonating with familiarity to those who live, love, work, and play there everyday.

The selections by Dahlia Ravikovitch (1935 -) and Erez Biton (born in the 1930s) further illustrate the use of the genre for capturing the seemingly banal realities of daily life in the Jewish State. Each portrays a negative feature of life in the Tel Aviv metropolis - Ravikovitch writes of "a stinking Mediterranean city" and Biton of his alienation from the "Elite of Dizengoff Street." And yet each clearly includes her/himself as an integral part of the Israeli enterprise.

This brief sampling of poetry spans a century which began in a more romantic time, when newly modernized Jews wrote of the difficulties of integrating Judaism and Western civilization, and of the charm and challenge of being pioneers, and concludes with Israeli poets who write about personal and societal issues in the State that eventually became a central feature of the Jewish world. The subject matter, style, language, and other literary aspects of their writing mirror many of the dramatic developments and paradigm shifts during this first century of rebirth and rebuilding in Eretz Israel.

(Some of the content of this section was adapted from material in The Modern Hebrew Poem Itself.)

Dreams and Visions of Israel - Selections of Poetry Over a Century

Shaul Tchernichovsky

Before the Statue of Apollo

I come to you, forgotten god of the ages,
god of ancient times and other days,
ruling the tempests of vigorous men,
the breakers of their strength in youth's plenty!
God of a generation of mighty ones and giants,
conquering with their strength the bounds of Olympus,
an abode for their heroes, and adorning with garlands
of laurel-leaf the pride of their foreheads -
masters of their idol and like unto them,
adding to the councils of the world's ruler;
a generation of god on earth, drunk
with the plenty of life, and estranged
from a sick people and tribe of sufferers.
Fresh youth-god, magnificent, full beautiful,
subduer of the sun and life's hidden truths
with clouds of song and all its treasured hues,
with seas of melody's manifold waves;
god of life's joy, its riches and splendor,
its strength and secret stores of light and shade.

I come to you - do you know me still?
I am the Jew: your adversary of old! ..
The waters of every ocean on earth
with all their multitudinous uproar,
could not completely fill the gulf that yawns between us.
Heaven itself and the ample plains could not,
stretching, annihilate the abyss dividing
the Torah of my fathers from your adorers' cult.
Look you upon me! Because I have gone my way
farther than all others before me and to come,
in the path where man, death-doomed, must stray -
therefore I am first among those who return to you,
in a moment when I loathed death-throes forever,
my vital soul, to earth cleaving, burst the chains that
bound it.
The people is old - and its gods have grown old!
Passions suppressed in men of failing strength,
from out the cage of centuries, spring to life.
The light of God is mine! cries every bone within me,

Life, ah life! each limb, each vein cries out.
The light of God and life!
And I come to you.
I come to you, before your statue kneeling,
your image - symbol of life's brightness;
I kneel, I bow to the good and the sublime,
to that which is exalted throughout the world,
to all things splendid throughout creation,
and elevated among secret-mysteries of the Cosmos.
I bow to life, to valour and to beauty,
I bow to all precious things - robbed now
by human corpses and the rotten seed of man,
who rebel against the life bestowed by God,
the Almighty -the God of mysterious wildernesses,
the God of men who conquered Canaan in a whirlwind -
then bound Him with the straps of their phylacteries ..

(1899)

Rachel

Kinneret

The Golan Heights are over there,
Stretch out your hand and touch them!
They order you to halt, with silent confidence.
"Grandpa Hermon" is sleeping in glorious solitude
And the chill blows from its white summit.

There is a low palm tree on the lake shore,
its hair is disheveled as a naughty baby's hair,
And is paddling his feet in the water.

There are many flowers here in the winter,
The blood-colored Anemone and the golden Crocus.
There are days when the grass is seven times greener
And the sky is seventy times bluer than blue.

Even if I become impoverished and wander, humbled
My heart filled with desolation among strangers
Could I betray you, could I forget you
Affection of my youth?

Perhaps These Things Never Happened

Perhaps all this never was,
Perhaps
I never rose at dawn, to till
The garden by the sweat of my brow?

Nor even on long burning days
Of harvest,
Atop a sheaf-laden cart
Raised my voice in song?

Never purified myself in the quiet blue
And innocence
Of my Kinneret ... 0, my Kinneret,
Were you real, or only a dream?

Yehudah Amichai

When I Was Young, the Whole Country Was Young

When I was young, the country was young too. My
father
was everybody's father. When I was happy, the country
was happy, when I jumped
up on her, she jumped
under me. The grass that covered her in spring
softened me too. Her soil in summer pained me
As parched skin in my soles.
When I loved immensely,
her independence was announced, when my hair
waved her banner waved. When I fought
She fought, when I rose
she rose too, and when I declined
she began declining with me.

Now I part from all that:
like a thing glued on to something when the glue dries
up,
I'm separate and roll into myself.

Recently I saw a clarinet player
in the Police Orchestra playing in David's Tower.
His hair was white and his face calm: a face
from 1946, that sole year
between famous and terrible years
when nothing happened but a great hope and his
playing,
and me lying with a girl in a quiet room in Jerusalem
nights.

I hadn't seen him since then,
but the hope for a better world
hasn't left his face, till now.

Later I bought some non-kosher salami
and two rolls, and went home.
I heard the evening news
ate and went to bed,
and the memory of first love came back to me
like a feeling of falling
before you fall asleep.

Dahlia Ravikovitch

Stretched Out on the Water

A stinking Mediterranean *city*
sprawling over the water
her head between her knees
her body infected with fumes and debris.
Who will bring this rotten Mediterranean city
up from the debris
her feet plagued with eczema,
each against the other her sons
reciprocate with knives.

And now the city's overflowing with crates of grapes and
plums
cherries hold court for all in the market to see.
The setting sun is pink as peach fruit
who could truly loathe
this Mediterranean city, stoned
like a mooing estrus cow
her walls of Italian marble and crumbling ocean sand.
Dressed in embroidered rags
but she doesn't mean it,
she has no intentions.
And the ocean's brimming at her blind brow
and the sun delivers her his rays abound in mercy
as his fury fades towards sunset.
And the gourds and the cucumbers and the lemons
bursting with juice and color
windsweep the faint incense of summer upon her.
And she is undeserving.
Undeserving of love or compassion.

A polluted Mediterranean city
how has my soul been bound up in hers.
Because of a lifetime,
because of a lifetime.

Erez Biton

Buying a Shop on Dizengoff

I bought a shop on Dizengoff
A way of purchasing roots
Of anchoring myself and finding a place
Among the Elite of Dizengoff Street
But
All these Elite of Dizengoff Street
Who are they, I ask myself
What is it with them, what do they do
These Elite of Dizengoff Street?
When *they* turn to me
Though I have not turned to them
I answer in purest tones
Yes, Monsieur
But of course, Monsieur
Whatever you say, Monsieur, to be sure
It is fine up-to-date Hebrew I speak
Unsheathing the language of Dizengoff Street.

But the houses that rise here above me
Towering high overhead
And the doors that stand open for them here
Have no doorways left open for me.

At the hour of dusk, then I wrap up my things
To close the shop . . . on Dizengoff
For the journey back to a separate life
And to a very different Hebrew.

Dreams and Visions Israel - Selections o Poetry Over a Century

Questions for discussion:

1. In Tchernichovsky's address to Apollo, the poem conveys his sense of the essence of Western civilization and of Judaism. What does the poem say in this regard, and how does the "narrator" attempt to reconcile the obvious tension between the two? A century after the poem was written, how do Jews relate to this inherent conflict? How do they attempt to overcome it? Is there any difference between grappling with this challenge in Israel or in the Diaspora today?
2. Different Jews in Israel and the Diaspora might identify in varying ways or intensity with the portrayal of attachment to the Land of Israel in Rachel's poetry. To what extent does the rapture of Rachel's love for the land resonate in Israel and among Jews throughout the world today? How could such groups be characterized, and what would be the nature of their attachments? How can the evolution of this process (of changing attitudes toward the Land, over the course of the twentieth century) be understood? Were there any similarities in the North American immigrant experience?
3. To a certain extent, the changing "mind set" of these poets and their poetry mirror the larger society in *Eretz Israel* during the course of this century. In reading Tchernichovsky and Rachel, and then Amichai, Ravikovitch, and Biton, what changes in outlook or world view are apparent? Is their existential-cultural footing grounded in the same place (for example, in an orientation to peoplehood, Jewish cultural heritage, the collective, some other cultural heritage, or the individual)?
4. In the writing of Tchernichovsky, Ravikovitch, and Biton, there is an interplay between attraction and repulsion towards the poet's roots. How is this dynamic expressed similarly or differently by these poets in these selections from their poetry?

Arts and Culture

Joel Dinkin, Allan Just, Ron Mogel, Deborah Pinsky, Arnie Sohinki

What does it mean to be Israeli? Israel is composed of a multitude of peoples with various ethnic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds. As a country, it believes it can build a community that encompasses diversity while maintaining a core set of common values which unites all Jews. Is it succeeding? If we use culture as a barometer, then Israel is certainly making headway. Israeli culture provides a unique lens through which to view the complex nature of its society. Culture helps us cultivate the ability to put ourselves in other people's shoes, to understand their hopes and aspirations, and to recognize how close they are to our own. Exposure to the arts allows us to become more sensitive to the experience of others and acknowledge the differences while celebrating the unity.

We Jews have always understood the social value of culture. Through the arts, we have poured out our souls, our joys, and our frustrations. If personal prayer has been our channel to divinity, then the arts has been our path to each other and to the world out there. Nevertheless, on an institutional level, we tend to treat the arts as a lower priority. In terms of funding and support, we often ignore many opportunities to present our message through culture or to explore the meaning of Judaism in dramatic forms. As part of our quest for a solution to our continuity problem we need to recognize the value of Jewish artistic expression. Our visit to Israel provided us with an opportunity to see how Israel showcases its faith, its history, its humor, and its philosophy through a variety of different media such as radio, television, live theater, concerts, and museums. It further brought home the fact that we need to create Jewishly knowledgeable generations and to portray the drama of the Jewish people through our most creative forces.

During the course of our tutorial, we were fortunate to meet five extraordinary individuals: Zvi Bekerman, Michal Govrin, Avi Hadari, Dan Amalgor, and Erez Biton. They presented five views of Israel from which we gleaned important insights. Clearly, they do not represent the totality of Israeli art and culture. They do, however, form part of a picture that helps us examine people and their values.

How do we turn these snapshots into a meaningful col-

lage which can impact our Center work? If we view each as a potential lesson in new vocabulary for understanding Israel today, we take an important step. If each experience makes us aware of Israel's growing role in the global village, we take another important step. And if we can see the impact of these changes on the Israeli society, through its art and culture, then we come even closer to an understanding of the country with which we so closely identify.

Working on the assumption that the business of JCCs is Jewish continuity and survival, we, as JCC executives, must begin to put Israeli art and culture into the curriculum of the Center and explore what we can learn from each other as cultural societies. Sophisticated arts and cultural programs that touch the Jewish soul can become the core of the JCC. JCCs have already established goals for the development of cultural identity and improved inter-group relations. It is a logical step for us to further integrate arts and cultural offerings within the Center to a greater degree than presently experienced.

Definitions of Art and Culture Zvi Bekerman

Our goal was to view Israeli society through the lens of its art and culture. Dr. Zvi Bekerman helped us to focus our lens, and in order to understand the experience of our tutorial on art and culture, it is important to understand this new perspective. Zvi's approach can be described as post-modernist. It speaks of art and culture in a context and therefore focuses our attention on the context. Zvi uses a different language than the one we generally use.

We have come to know art as non-participatory, as what is referred to as "high art." Examples of this are going to a concert, seeing a play, walking through a museum. It is passive and detached. We go to a place and react to the painting or music, but we do not actively participate or creatively interact. Zvi would say this is not art.

Art is "doing." "Art is a result of action, not mind. One experiences art through participation and not through

observation. Art is, and is not about. " Art is active and connects with the context in which it is being created. It connects the context with the past as well. That is, art is a dialectic of memory and doing. An artist is not detached but expresses his or her memory and experience. Therefore, art is not original or individual but is a human product that echoes history and experience.

"Culture is an environment that promotes growth." Much like a "culture" in a Petri dish, to use a biological example, it is an environment that facilitates growth. It cannot be transferred nor is it detached. Rather, it is the substrata that allows art to succeed.

Michal Govrin

The bridging of two cultures and the crossing of borders are the notions which pervade the world of Israeli culture as seen through the eyes of Michal Govrin, author and theater creator. Meshing the history of her family (pioneer father and Holocaust survivor mother), her work is based on memories of texts and narratives as she attempts to create renovating dialogue to pull the story together.

To Michal, life is theater and Jews are always on stage. She interprets *mitzvot* as a code of gestures and chastises our history for leaving out theater altogether as evidenced by the scotoma or amnesia surrounding the *Kabalah*. She went to Paris to find culture and the Jewish psyche - two terms she sees as one. She uses her writing to create the narrative for which she feels each of us is responsible, and through its telling she feels that we can make choices,

The Israeli influence is an extremely important component of her melting pot. Israel produces a volcano of thought which erupts with the intensity of events and themes prevalent in this land. She sees each moment as a prism through which something larger in life can be seen, and she attributes the energy level in Israel with everything from Zionism to the killing of Rabin. The Hebrew language, from its most formal to its basic slang, is also essential in the telling of the tale.

Michal and her work conform to the definition of art as doing. Her theater is interactive, requiring shifts and experimentation, both mental and physical. She even provides take-home material. But she sees Israel's national identity as problematic for individual self identity, likening it to the assimilation of American Jews. She is attempting to develop the how and what of a termi-

nology that will create a literature and theatrical laboratory setting for Israel. The result will be a definition of Israeli culture that will sustain Israelis outside of their society and land.

Avi Hadari

According to drama and gestalt therapist Avi Hadari, "music has to carry a story." At a time of ongoing broadening of Israeli culture, the stories expressed through music become more diverse and unique to the societal issues that the musicians choose to address. Hadari shared three particular "stories" that cited individual expressions of different themes in Israel's society today. These include a song expressing the sadness of the Rabin assassination which conveyed the message that the country (people) needed to continue their lives; a song for peace expressed through a multi-cultural children's choir; and the "stories" of Shlomo Gronich.

Storytellers come in a multitude of shapes and sizes. Their stories, based on a lifetime of experiences, transmit many different messages. Shlomo Gronich is a "*shaliach tsibur*," a messenger. His music is regarded as one of the symbols of Israeli culture as it blends Eastern, jazz, modern, and old. Gronich's music is more than just notes and words. It represents the journey of Judaism where stories about the past are woven into the music as an expression of hope.

What are the influences on the creativity of the artist? If you subscribe to the theory that our experiences affect who and what we are, then each artist expresses himself in a unique and individual way. In this particular case, Gronich's work provides opportunities to comment on society and his hopes for the future. Gronich is on a mission to impact Israel by linking the past and future. An example is his blending of his Sephardic background into modern culture.

One of the unique benefits of music is that it brings people together. It is an experience of "oneness," a sense of belonging that contributes to the formation of a culture. In our Jewish communities, we have the ability to bring people together to share culture. Our JCCs can provide opportunities for our own self expressions. We must think of ways in which we can further enable people to "do" and to learn which will create memories for more "doing" and learning.

Dan Almagor

Looking at Israeli culture through the lens of the theater, our group met with Dan Almagor, a leading artist, translator, and lyricist. We met in the Cameri Theater, the municipal theater of Tel Aviv and the second largest theater in Israel. The largest theater is Habima, also located in Tel Aviv.

The Habima Theater was born in Russia in 1917 as the first Hebrew-speaking theater in Russia. One of its founders was Stanislavski, one of the greatest teachers of acting techniques in Western civilization. His methods formed the foundation for teaching acting for decades throughout Western countries. After many years, Habima finally moved from Russia and made its home in Tel Aviv. It became the leading state theater of Israel and continues to produce many classical works.

Theater in Israel, according to Almagor, plays a very important part in the life of Israelis. So important, that fully equipped theaters have been built in every municipality and town. It is interesting to note that many community centers in Israel have also built theaters. There is virtually no unemployment of actors in Israel. Due to the close proximity of cities, which allows actors to appear in several productions on the same day in various locations, and to the abundance of theatrical and movie productions, their skills and talents are in demand.

According to Almagor, theater reflects a natural desire within Israelis to associate, to come together, to share common experiences and events. Cultural events are a national pastime. Israelis' attendance rate at theater events is perhaps one of the highest in Western civilization.

Although, as you would expect, most theater is performed in Hebrew, there are other culturally-based theaters which reflect other ethnic groups within Israeli society. The range of theatrical experiences spans the avant-garde to the traditional classics. The avant-garde, which is more experimental, draws its materials from several sources. Among them:

1. From the history of the land and the people as contrasted with modern society; how they interact and the tension between the two.
2. Interpreting theater works like Shakespeare and setting them in modern circumstances so as to make them more accessible to contemporary Israel.

At the other end of the spectrum are traditionally structured plays and other theatrical pieces which interpret and share the human experience through the stage. Dan Almagor has taken classical plays, as well as American musicals, and translated them into Hebrew. Through his works, Israel is able to experience life in other lands. And what a challenge this is! Imagine translating the English cockney accent in *My Fair Lady* into Hebrew without losing the humor. Just how would you say "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain"?

As we spoke, we learned that the theater in Israel is really a melting pot of individuals with varying talents and cultural backgrounds who combine all of these attributes to create a Hebrew language experience. The actors come from many lands, including Arab countries. Necessarily their languages are different. The Cameri Theater employs several Hebrew teachers who not only teach the actors how to speak Hebrew but how to speak different dialects as well.

One might ask if these productions are "Jewish." If we narrowly define Jewish culture as culture imparted through the Hebrew language, our answer would be "yes." If we define it as an experience shared by a Jewish audience, then the response is also "yes." Perhaps the question should not be asked at all; it is unnecessary because art and culture can be universal as well as particular. However, if the scenario's content is pertinent to the Jewish experience, the theatrical event is experiential and not necessarily designed to further the understanding or appreciation of Jewish issues, history, or culture.

It was interesting to learn during our tour of the theater that performances at the Cameri on Tuesday evenings are performed with simultaneous English translations. This is probably done to accommodate American Jewish visitors, most of whom do not speak Hebrew.

As previously noted, theater is very important to the Israeli society. Already mentioned was the commitment to building theaters. Many of the leading theaters are heavily subsidized by the government, thereby creating a more financially stable environment for the endeavors and the actors. Productions for children are also important and incorporated into the state school curriculum. Of course, these are subsidized as well. We were surprised to learn that private businesses in Tel Aviv often support theater through a mandatory withholding of salaries in order to purchase season tickets for individual employees.

Israeli theater, then, if we can generalize from our brief encounter with Dan Almagor, is alive and flourishing.

Due to the high volume of attendance at new productions, there is an opportunity for a longer run, thereby allowing for changes and improvements during the run.

As in all societies, theater in Israel reflects the traditional and the contemporary through the depiction of the Jewish and universal experience. Theater in and of itself is also its own culture - a culture of doing, experimenting, growing, changing, and moving on. This also symbolizes and reflects the life in Israel.

Erez Biton

Erez Biton is a Sephardic, Jewish Arab who was blinded by a hand grenade that he found after the War of Independence. He was only 11 years old at the time. Erez describes himself as a house with three floors: the first floor is his childhood and his Jewish upbringing in Algeria. His mother was Moroccan and spoke to him in Arabic, His father, a religious Zionist, spoke to him in Hebrew. After making *aliyah* at an early age, Erez talks about adopting a new culture, a new language, a new land. His father's definitive choice to make *aliyah* rather than to live in the Diaspora had a profound effect on his own development. It is on this first floor that he begins to bridge the gap between Israeli and Arabic cultures.

The second floor is his adult Israeli/Hebrew culture coinciding with his Arabic culture. He dreams and writes in Hebrew, but he loves his mother in Arabic. In dealing with this issue, Erez explains that the problem between the two cultures is that there is not enough contact or communication to work through differences or to gain a better understanding of each other.

The third floor of his inner house is the culture of the world. This is not only the culture from his childhood, but the influences of Western, American, and German cultures. It is here that everything is integrated.

After his accident, Erez was enrolled in the Institute for the Blind in Jerusalem. His experience was like an adventure, searching for new elements to move forward. He received a B.A. in social studies at The Hebrew University and an M.A. in psychology from Bar Ilan University. He evolved from being an immigrant into someone who helps new *olim* settle in Israel.

Erez began writing poetry when he was 14 years old. It was therapy for him - talking with his inner self and solving his problems. Erez feels that a real poet can write about his inner conflicts and expose himself; it is the

most private type of action, yet the most non-private. He knows that he is in a physical prison because of his blindness, but he knows that he must break out of this prison.

Poetry helped him to integrate his Sephardic, Oriental, and Western backgrounds. In the beginning, he tried to avoid all of these special elements in his work as he wanted to be universal in his poetry, without any specific signs or labels. By the age of 34, he began to see and better understand his Arab elements but he wanted to *deny* them because they were primitive. He only wanted to be a part of Israel, part of the melting pot.

It was then that he realized that Israeli culture meant taking something from our roots and meshing it with our modern culture. He began to expose himself as a person who came from a very specific Oriental culture. He was one of the first poets in Israel to begin writing about his roots. Erez said that his Sephardic voice had to be heard in Israeli society in order to bring Oriental Jews into the cultural awakening taking place. He legitimized the use of Oriental writings in Israel. When he began writing about his past, he gave permission for other ethnicities to do the same. He feels that Israeli culture cannot disassociate itself from its mixed traditions and cultural values.

He uses his poetry to reinforce the importance of building a bridge between the Arab world and Israel. Dialogue makes positive inroads. He feels that we must develop the tools to meet and understand each other culturally and translate materials into each other's language. Communication is a bridge to knowledge and we must not be afraid to be influenced by each other, to share with each other, and to talk with each other.

Conclusions

1. Clearly, art involves a merging of the past and present and a bridging of cultures as individuals share their experiences. When developing programs and projects with artists, it is imperative to recognize that their perspective will be unique. The programs should be developed with the artists to reflect their individuality.
2. The JCC can be the context for the expression of art. When creating cultural experiences within the JCC, staff must have opportunities to create interaction, "doing experiences." One example would be a children's art show where children have opportunity to express themselves on a particular theme.

3. Cultural experiences should be happenings. People come together to share, to express themselves, and to be part of a whole regardless of the place or medium. Positive "doing" experiences are tremendously reinforcing for the participants. Interactions at any level create a sense of belonging and help formulate identity.
4. As a result of a world event, instant art can be created to express reactions. JCCs should position themselves to allow for opportunities to create expressions.
5. Judaism has many rich traditions. In providing opportunities for expression, we should be open to the broad spectrum that includes Sephardic, Ashkenazic, old, new, East, and West.

Bible, Archaeology, and Modern Israel

Ken Kramarz, Judy Namak, Judy Wolff-Bolton, Woody Bolton

Israel is often referred to as the Land of the Bible, as it is the setting of most of the stories told in the Bible. Israel is also a rich archaeological site where evidence of thousands of years of civilization has been preserved. At the same time, Israel is a technologically advanced country with a growing population. And, of course, Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people. While pilgrims of all faiths are drawn to Israel's Biblical character, and archaeologists from around the world come to share in its treasures, Jews who live in and visit Israel have a far more complex connection with the place. In our tutorial group, we attempted to take a closer look at how the legacy of the Bible and the proof of archaeology affect the people of modern Israel.

In the Beginning: The Bible

The Bible has had an impact on every person in the land of Israel, from the most religious to the most secular, from the very young to the very old. It has provided the *raison d'être* for the believer; the geographic and topographic clues that have facilitated archaeological findings; a history for poets and writers; a guide by which people can live their lives; and the basis of the most violent and destructive rift in our people in modern times.

Our tutorial study began with an examination of the *Akedah*, the story of the binding of Isaac, through the Biblical text and the commentaries from the Talmud, Midrash, modern Jewish thinkers, leading Israeli educators, and our own thoughts. With his divine faith in G-d, Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his most beloved son Isaac. As we all know, Abraham did not sacrifice Isaac, but sacrificed a ram instead. Because Abraham passed his test of faith, and was the first to believe in a monotheistic G-d, he became *Avraham Avinu*, the Father of all Jews, and the beginning of our people.

We continued our exploration of the Bible and its relationship and relevancy to modern Israel. We met with Rabbi Gershon Zim, principal and Bible teacher at the Himmelfarb Junior High School for Boys - a religious public school which caters to the sons of Modern

Orthodox professional families. The Bible is taught at this progressive school at a level appropriate to the pupils' ages and degree of Orthodoxy. However, their teacher assured us that the students are allowed to discuss and to question the text.

We learned that the *haredi* population has its own schools and *yeshivot* which receive government funding but teach a curriculum according to their own sect's *rebbe*. The secular public schools provide no "religious" training, but do teach Bible, along with commentaries from Talmud, Midrash and modern Jewish thinkers, as a means to educate students about the history, geography, and literature of the people and land of Israel.

The next educator we met was Dr. Benjamin Ish Shalom, a most interesting man, who shared with us "a revelation" on the *Akeda*. He serves as rector of Beit Morasha of Jerusalem, a center for advanced Jewish Studies, and writes curriculum for the religious public school system. His commentary on the story, unpublished to date, states that G-d was not testing Abraham. Rather, Abraham "learned" that one never sacrifices another human being. In the days of Abraham, it was customary to sacrifice first born sons to the pagan gods in the Valley of Hinnon. The sacrifice of Isaac was to have taken place on Mount Moriah. The Hebrew word *moreh*, meaning teacher, is a derivative of Moriah. When Abraham went up to Mt. Moriah, he was taught that human sacrifice is prohibited.

The land of Israel itself - the deserts and springs, the hills and the mountains, the plants and the trees - is living testimony of the continuity of what we read in the Bible. Orthodox or secular, Israelis can connect what they see around them with the texts in the Bible. The sources have provided us with detailed geographic information on historical sites, burial plots, battle sites, villages, and travel routes that we have been able to corroborate through archaeological finds. Many recent major finds have validated what believers have known for centuries.

An example of this is the inscription of the priestly benediction that was found on a small silver scroll on the grounds of a Scottish Church across the Hinnon Valley from the Old City, and is now on display at the Israel

Museum. The benediction, taken from Chapter Six of the Book of Numbers, is recited every Shabbat. It reads as follows:

And the Lord spoke to Moshe, saying, speak to Aharon and to his sons, saying, In this way you shall bless the children of Yisra'el, saying to them: The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee; the Lord lift up his countenance to thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Yisra'el; and I will bless them.

The same alphabet that appears in the Book of Isaiah is used today by every Israeli as well as every Jew who learns to read or write Hebrew. Even more amazing, the story of Isaiah which was found in its complete form when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, is almost identical to what is recited today.

Modern Israeli society, whether consciously or unconsciously, lives and relives the texts of the Bible each day, along with the modern history of the State with its Zionist pioneers and its fallen heroes. Every street name, park, square, hill, mountain, and monument is part of a 4,000 year old history of a people and a land. Every cobblestone and every Herodian stone has a tale to tell. Israeli artists and poets allude to our past, and scientists refer to the past as they explore the future. For many, the Bible is the daily guide for moral and ethical living. For others it provides the basis of law or politics. And even in spite of one's religious or political beliefs, the Bible is connected to and reflected in the lives of most Israelis.

The Study of Archaeology

Archaeology is defined as the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of physical remains. From the elements that past civilizations left behind we can learn about their daily life. Archaeology explains history, but it does not prove faith. People may use excavated findings to justify or substantiate their beliefs, but archaeologists will not make such a leap. Their job is to explain the finding in an historical context and determine the specific nature of the object or structure, such as the approximate date of its origin, and its exact use or purpose.

A scientific, technical approach is taken to archaeological research. Sites are often identified by chance, when a hiker stumbles upon something or when construction

workers begin building a road. Other times, a written source is used to find a location, as in the case of the excavations at the Temple wall. Once a site is determined, an excavation takes place to unearth artifacts such as pottery, ossuaries and utensils, or possibly a structure such as a tomb, arcade, or bridge. When archaeologists are very fortunate they uncover an inscription as well. Various methods are used to date the items or structures found during a dig. In Israel, coins discovered at a site are the primary tool for dating other items. Our tutorial group was fortunate to meet with the chief curator of the Israel Museum, Yaakov Meshorer, an expert in the study of coins, who has written fifteen books on the subject.

Generally, items discovered in an excavation that are at least 200-400 years old are considered to be an archaeological find. However, there is a dispute as to whether an item under 400 years old has sufficient archaeological value. The primary archaeological periods pertinent to Israel are:

Patriarchs/Moses/Conquest Periods.....	2000-1000BCE
First Temple Period.....	1000-586 BCE
Second Temple Period.....	536-70 CE
Roman Period.....	70-33 CE
Byzantine Period.....	332-638 CE
Early Arab Period.....	638-1099 CE
Crusader Period.....	1099-1300 CE
Late Arab Period.....	1300-1917 CE

In order to understand archaeology in Israel, our group visited sites in and surrounding the Old City, such as the Southern/Western Wall excavations, the Rabbinic Tunnels, the Ketef Hinom burial caves, and the Christian and Jewish Quarters. We met with archaeologists Dr. Ronnie Reich and Yaakov Billing in charge of the Southern Wall excavations to learn about their findings to date and the plans for opening the site to the public. We also discussed with them the intersection of their archaeological work and their personal lives. Both spoke eloquently and emotionally about the relationship between Jewish texts and the science of archaeology, although from the different perspectives of a secular Zionist and a religious Zionist, respectively.

The Integration of Religion and Archaeology

Written Jewish sources, such as the Bible and Talmud, and the science of archaeology are mutually validating, particularly in Israel. Each supports and enriches the

other; there are simultaneous desires to uncover remains identified in the texts and to link findings to a written source. The texts, because they are written records as opposed to simply oral traditions, are crucial references for archaeologists. They provide valuable information about the historic events that occurred at excavated sites and greater appreciation of the specific findings.

Conversely, unearthed artifacts illustrate the meanings of the texts and offer proof of the written accounts. An example of this was presented by Ya'akov Billing when he described the large pot decorated with a picture of two upside down birds that was uncovered at the Southern Wall excavations. This unique vessel was used as a carrier for birds to be sacrificed on the Temple Mount, as explained in the Torah.

The link between the Bible and archaeology in *Eretz Yisrael* is a powerful vehicle for teaching Jewish history and enhancing Jewish identity. The Bible and Talmud become more tangible through excavations. This is most evident at the Southern/Western Wall excavations which offer a concrete, visual image of Jewish rituals and lifestyle in the Second Temple Period. Similarly, our sense of peoplehood is strengthened as we find physical evidence of our Biblical ancestors' daily life in the land of Israel. For example, excavators in the City of David found a seal with the name of a scribe, Gmariyahu Ben Shafan, written on it. His name also appears in the Book of Jeremiah. Our emotional bond to *Eretz Yisrael* is substantiated and deepened through ancient findings that still have meaning for us in today's world, such as the silver scroll inscribed with the priestly blessing mentioned above. For some religious groups, archaeological discoveries serve to increase faith. While the archaeologists offer scientific explanations and provide facts, some people extrapolate religious meaning and declare sites holy, as is the case with King David's Tomb in the Old City. The Israel Museum is currently redesigning its entire collection to include the Biblical reference and context for all exhibited pieces. The curators believe that such a model will enhance the museum's educational effectiveness and allow visitors to find deeper personal meaning.

The various ways in which different people interpret the Bible-archaeology link - for proving history enhancing faith, validating an emotional bond - are not mutually exclusive, as we discovered in our discussions with the Southern/Western Wall archaeologists. Dr. Ronnie Reich, site director, identifies with his work from a historical perspective, in keeping with his secular Zionist background. He finds intense meaning in his work and relevancy in applying the texts to the site because "it is the history of my people, not the Aztecs or the Mayans, but my ancestry and culture." Whereas his assistant director,

Ya'akov Billing, finds great religious value in his work with the discovery of artifacts referred to in the written sources. He gave an example of the inscription found at the Southern Wall site where the shofar was blown to announce the coming of the Sabbath. This practice is continued to this day with the siren that is sounded in Jerusalem each Friday afternoon - still an important event in the lives of observant Jews.

The Dialectic of Israel Today

By Ken Kramarz

Two weeks ago, I flew to Israel for two weeks of study in the Wexner Foundation-JCC Association Seminar on Israel and Contemporary Jewry. Driving from the airport on the day we arrived, I anxiously looked forward to seeing Jerusalem after a nine-year hiatus. But instead of finding *Yerushalayim she/zahav* (Jerusalem of Gold), I found *Yerushalayim* of the Cellular Phone. Where was my quaint, quasi Third World homeland? Traffic, construction, and a multi-level parking structure at the Old City told me that much had changed since my last visit. I have enough trouble containing my natural cynicism at home, and seeing McDonald's and Blockbuster Video in the capital of world Jewry didn't help.

Then we met our tutor, Ezra Korman, of the JCC Association Israel Office staff who was assigned to our tutorial group. Ezra was the key to rediscovering *Yerushalayim shel mala* (Heavenly Jerusalem), the Jerusalem of my heart. Ezra presented a wonderful role model of a modern Jerusalemite. He is clearly inspired by the Bible, yet I have no idea whether he thinks it was given at Mount Sinai or written by men. His love of the Jewish people, heritage, and ancestry is manifest, though it would not matter to him if tomorrow a telegram arrived informing him that he actually was adopted and has no genetic link to the Jewish people. His feeling of connection to *Am Yisrael* (the People Israel) and *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel) transcends the corporeal.

During our two weeks together, we walked for miles throughout the city. The boundaries of Jerusalem have evolved since its Jewish founding by David in 1,000 B.C.E. Today it appears as a sprawling, modern metropolis with the Old City at its spiritual (though not geographic) center. All of its buildings are faced with beautiful Jerusalem stone, a soft blend of whites, pinks, and grays, ordained not by the Jews but by the British gover-

Hors who controlled this city from 1917 to 1947. Everywhere we went, the Bible was present for Ezra, from streets that modern Israelis named for Biblical characters, to the eternal mountains and valleys which still bear the names given to them by our ancestors in Biblical times. He is thrilled at the discoveries made by archaeologists, not because they bolster his faith or theology, but because they track precisely the accounts given in the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew acronym for *Torah*, *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings). Faith is much too personal to share in such a short time. Each of us conjures up our own image, thought, or feeling when we speak of the divine source of the universe. Each of us must find our own way to fill in the gap between G and D. Ezra even sees today's debate on the peace process reflected in the Bible, with Joshua describing the taking of the land by force of arms, and Isaiah urging the force of words. Thus we began our physical and spiritual journey into the archaeology of Jerusalem.

With each new discovery, I found myself challenged to let go of my own myths and stereotypes about Israel and Jewry. Actually, the challenge was not in letting go, as that natural cynicism I mentioned was always armed and ready to pick off vulnerable *bubbe meises* (Yiddish for "grandma stories" or fairy tales). The real challenge was in finding new meanings to attach to the powerful historical contents of the land and the texts for which the Jewish people are caretakers: Israel and the Bible. As a parent and as a camp director, I take seriously the words contained in the *v'havta*, taken from the book of Deuteronomy: "and you shall teach these diligently unto thy children. This required me to attach the kind of meanings and beliefs which I really believed in and which could be defended to my children.

The ancient Temple of Jerusalem and its environs became the focal point of this effort, which began on the balcony of my hotel room at the Sheraton Plaza Hotel. From there, Ezra pointed out the path that Abraham took with his favored son Isaac, whom he loved, from the desert to the Ben Hinom Valley (in Hebrew, *gai ben hinom*) some 4,000 years ago. At that time, we learned, it was common practice for fathers to kill their children as sacrificial offerings to the god Molech. That this was the site of such a satanic rite is reflected in the contemporary Hebrew word for Hell, *gehinom*. We could see the path Abraham and Isaac took from this valley up to the top of Mount Moriah. It is not much of a hike, as this mountain is more of what we would call a big hill. And on the top of that mountain we could see the Moslem Dome of the Rock, sitting in the same place where once stood the great Jewish Temple of Jerusalem. The Torah portion (parsha) describing this scene is found in the Book of

Genesis, and is called the *Akedah b'Yitzhah*, the binding of Isaac. In the story, Abraham feels commanded to leave his home and his country and come to the land which we now call Israel. There he is to go to the top of Mount Moriah and kill Isaac.

When we went to a leading public school of the religious type (Himmelfarb Junior High School), we heard from its Bible teacher the interpretation that most of us hear every Rosh Hashanah in synagogue: that God was testing Abraham's faith (and perhaps Isaac's as well) to make sure that Abraham was willing to kill his son for God (and, perhaps, that Isaac was willing to give his life). This is a very powerful story in modern Israel, a place that expects parents to be ready to sacrifice their children for the needs of the state, and which expects children to be ready to give their lives in the same way. This is not an interpretation which I would like to share with my children.

In the aftermath of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel, which took place shortly before we arrived, a brilliant scholar named Dr. Benjamin Ish Shalom provided the solution. Dr. Ish Shalom, the rector of the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and the father of six boys, shared with us a new interpretation of this portion, replete with citations from all of the great commentators. He taught us that the story is not a test, but rather, a "teaching." With his new translations of the ancient words, he showed us that the lesson of the *akedah* was for Abraham to be the first person not to kill his child, to break with the tradition which we now call paganism. This new, more humane interpretation from an observant, Orthodox scholar was a great gift. More than this though, he gave us the gift of bursting another myth of Judaism, namely, that our understandings of the Bible are a static, fixed set of answers. To the contrary, he stated what so many others subsequently validated, that the Bible must be interpreted by each of us in the context of our present conditions, and through the lens of our own moral centers.

Our next stop was the holiest place in all of Jewry: the Western Wall of the great Temple of Jerusalem! Except that it is not. Nothing identifiable exists of either the First Temple (built by King Solomon in 1,000 B.C.E. and destroyed in 586 B.C.E.) nor the Second Temple (built in 538 B.C.E. and destroyed in 70 C.E.) What we call the Western Wall, or *hotel*, was simply a retaining wall, the kind we build in Marin to prevent mud slides from the area below our homes. This retaining wall did not exist at the time of the First Temple nor at the construction of the Second Temple. It was built by King Herod in the first century B.C.E. So why do Jews - including myself -

feel so drawn to it? Have I simply fallen prey to the marketing materials of the Israeli tourist bureau? Perhaps so, but it is still both impressive and important to me, not as a symbol of what we once accomplished, but as a symbol of a great failure from which we can learn.

Archaeologists and historians, combined with our own Jewish sources, mainly, Josephus, tell us that the cult of the Temple did not fall because of foreign invaders. Rather, foreigners invaded because the Temple cult had collapsed on itself. And it collapsed, I would suggest, because the people had devolved into the worst kind of idolatry. They believed that the only way to salvation and redemption was through the High Priest of the Temple, and the only way the Priest could intercede on their behalf was by the payment of fees and by giving them a portion of the animals brought to the Temple for sacrifice. By the end of the Second Temple era, this had led to a corrupt class of priests (whom we call the Sadducees) and the creation of many opposition groups, chief among them being the Pharisees (the progenitors of what we now call "rabbis"). Some splinter groups included the Zealots who killed themselves at Masada and the Nazarenes who evolved into the early Christians.

We modern Jews practice the religion which was re-invented by the Pharisees who escaped from Jerusalem after the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. They re-settled in the northern part of the country and established centers of study which we now call "synagogues." Without the Temple as the exclusive means of connecting with G-d, the Pharisees focused on the Torah. Their innovations created a religious tradition that was completely portable, as the written Torah could be copied and carried anywhere. This made our survival in the Diaspora possible. The devotion to the precise words of the original texts was made dramatically clear in our visit to the Israel Museum. Here, we saw the Dead Sea Scrolls which were written some 2,000 years ago, side by side with the next oldest surviving copy of the Bible written about 1,000 years ago, and they are word for word the same.

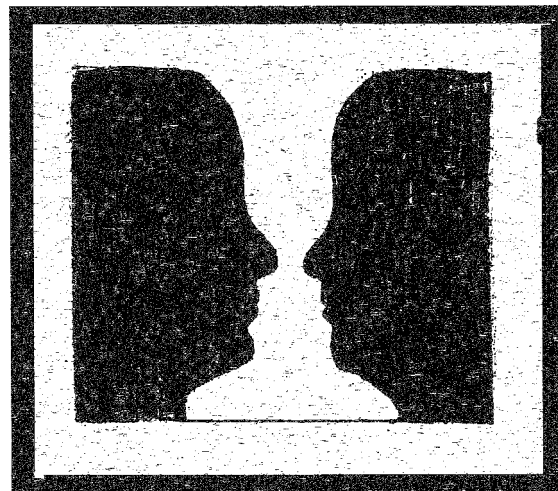
The lesson I would teach my children diligently at the *hotel is* to revere neither material objects nor the physical trappings of ritual. Objects and places have sentimental value but they are not divine. Children should save their devotion for what is really important in Judaism: our faith, our values, and, of course, our dialectical approach to our traditions.

This dialectical approach is at the heart of the rabbinic tradition which began after the fall of the Second Temple. For hundreds of years, our scholarly ancestors debated the meanings of the words of the Bible. The

beauty of our tradition is that we recorded every side of the debates, so that the process of discussion was as important as the decisions actually taken. This theme of dialogue, debate, and dialectic became a continuous thread throughout our time in Israel. At the risk of creating a graven image, I tried to find a graphic way to communicate the idea of dialectic thinking that defined our learning approach in Israel.

My first thought was Yin and Yang, the eastern symbol combining dark and light, each side completing the other, and each half containing the seed of the other. But that was not from my Jewish tradition so I kept searching. The image below worked better for me. As we look at it, we see two opposing faces. Are they exchanging words of love or words of disagreement? Is it a dialogue or a dispute? The alternative image is the wine glass, the traditional Jewish symbol of *simcha* (joy) and *kiddushin* (marriage). But is the glass full or is it empty? And isn't this the glass we break during the height of our joy at every wedding to remind us of the destruction of the Temple?

The Hebrew root of *kiddushin* is the same as the word *kiddush*, the blessing of the wine, which is the same for *kaddosh*, which means holy. And the meaning of that root is "separation." It is in the separation or space between the two sides that holiness is found, just like the space between G and D.



The Economic Development of Israel and the Implications of the Relationship Between Diaspora Jewry and the People of Israel

eKen Light, Michael Witenstein, Ann Witenstein

Summary

Dramatic growth in the Israeli economy is a direct result of the peace process and the absorption of huge numbers of talented and educated Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Despite the infusion of 700,000 - 800,000 new olim and the continued absorption of 70,000 - 80,000 per *year*, unemployment in Israel is down to 6.5 per cent. The peace process has opened new foreign markets for Israel in Europe, China, India, Malaysia, and other countries due to the end of the boycott and increased stability in the region.

Israel's neighbors are, understandably, concerned that Israel's economy may swallow them up. Initiatives need to be undertaken to minimize this imbalance, not only for economic viability, but for the sake of peace as well. Toward this goal, several programs are in place to help develop a regional infrastructure within the Middle East.

Israel today abounds with opportunities for astute business people with foresight and vision and a realistic, patient view of the current situation. A thriving economy with a highly skilled work force and a strong foundation in technology gives Israel a professional edge. Progress toward peace creates a sense of stability which acts as a springboard for economic prosperity.

Today the Israeli stock market offers a unique buying opportunity. The Israeli market is currently very undervalued. The average P/E ratios of Israeli companies is between 11-12 versus the average P/E ratio of United States companies at over 20. Inflation is at 8%, the lowest since 1967, and the growth rate is at 6% (over twice the rate of the U.S. economy). There are several hundred overseas companies which operate manufacturing and exporting subsidiaries throughout Israel. Foreign investors participate in trading on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and over 60 Israeli companies are listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

There is an opportunity to build a new relationship between Diaspora Jews and Israel. Israel needs American Jews to encourage American businesses to invest in the industrial projects of the peace process and to interpret the need for parity in the region if peace is to last. There is still a need for Jewish giving to support new housing for the olim and to address issues such as religious plurality and civil rights. Beyond philanthropy, individuals who invest in Israeli businesses will provide growth capital and will gain a personal relationship with Israel based on mutual self interest. In this way Israel will truly be a central element in the life of North American Jews.

L Tutors and Speakers

During our time in Israel we met with experts from a broad cross section of disciplines and economic sectors, including businessmen and women, government officials, economists, an Israeli Arab, an entrepreneurship trainer, non-profit administrators, a financial analyst and money manager. The following individuals gave us an enlightening look at the economy of Israel and its impact on the changing relationship between Israel and world Jewry:

Mr. Avi Armoni - businessman, attorney, entrepreneur, executive director of The New Israel Fund

Mr. Dan Catarivas - director of the Middle East Desk of the Foreign Trade Administration at the Ministry of Industry and Trade

Natan Golan - representative of the San Francisco Jewish Federation in Israel

Ms. Robin Hacke-Farhi - president and owner of HK Associates, marketing and strategy consultant

Mr. Hilmi Kitanah - co-director of the Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development

Ms. Vered Dar - economist at Bank HaPoalim

Mr. Uri Scharf - Director General of the Center for

Business Development in Jerusalem
Prof. Dan Galai - Joint General Manager of Sigma
Portfolio Selection, Consulting & Management Ltd.
Mr. Don Scher, Director JCC Association Israel Office

H. Basic Assumptions

The significant boom in the Israeli economy is a direct result of the current peace process (reconciliation) and the absorption of huge numbers of talented and educated Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. These two events, more than any others over the last 20 years, have had a dramatic impact on the shaping of Israeli society. They produced a synergistic effect on the fast and dynamic growth of the Israeli economy.

The important connection between Israel and Jews around the world was once again emphasized by these two events. Diaspora Jewry, particularly Jews from North America, played a vital role in shaping the United States foreign policy which led to the opening of the gates by the former Soviet Union, and the reconciliation between Israel and neighboring Arab countries,

Israel's political stature in the international community and position in the world marketplace are improving as trade embargoes are lifted. At the same time, a fascinating process of redefining the relationship between Israel and world Jewry is underway. Economic softness in the Western world on one hand, and Israel's prosperity on the other, have compounded the need to re-examine the philanthropic connection between Israel and the Diaspora.

Historic Factors

Dr. Michael Oren described three pillars in the history of the relationship between North American Jewry and Israel.

A. Intervention/Mediation

North American Jewry directly affected U.S. government policies and actions toward Israel by lobbying Congress, the White House, and other government bodies.

B. Hasbara (public relations/propaganda)

Jews took on the role of publicizing the Israeli point of view in the media. Federations, Community Relations Councils, and synagogues established media committees,

conducted letter-writing campaigns, and appointed spokespeople.

C. Giving

For many Jews during the middle third of the twentieth century, giving to Israel was their primary expression of being Jewish. As North American Jewry evolved from the European shtetl to the secular American suburb, being Jewish meant giving to Israel, voting to support Israel, and "Israel watching." Tzedakah for Israel was a religious ritual. American Jews, who comprised 1.5% of the U.S. population, historically raised more money for Israel than the other 98.5% of the population raised for any other cause except the United Way.

IV. The Peace Process and Immigration

No two factors had more impact on the economy of Israel than the current peace process and the wave of immigration. In spite of the infusion of 700,000 - 800,000 new olim and the continued absorption of 70,000 - 80,000 immigrants per year, unemployment in Israel is down to 6.5 per cent. The collective value of the new immigrants' higher education has been estimated to exceed \$30 to \$40 billion, paid for by the Soviet Union. This value far exceeds the cost of resettlement. In addition, these olim infused a huge brain trust into the country (over 70% come from a scientific, professional, or technical background). The peace process has opened new foreign markets for Israel in Europe, China, India, Malaysia, and other countries due to the end of the boycott and increasing stability in the region. With growing wealth in Israel, there is also a growing gap between the "haves" and "have-nots."

Increasing pressure on the Israeli government by interest groups is bringing new attention to the gap between Israeli Arabs and Jews. Before 1992 Arab families were earning 50% of the earnings of Israeli Jews. In 1994 they were up to 70 per cent. More telling, the average per capita income in 1994 for Israelis was nearing \$15,000 per year, but in Jordan it was less than \$1,000 per year and in Egypt only \$400 per year. In 1994, the GNP of Syria, Jordan, and Egypt combined, with a marketplace of 80 million people, was \$14 billion. Israel's GNP for the same period was nearing \$70 billion for its 5.5 million citizens. Israel's neighbors are, therefore, understandably concerned that Israel's economy may swallow them up. Initiatives need to be undertaken to minimize this imbalance, not only for economic viability, but for

the sake of peace as well. Parity with surrounding Arab neighbors is essential, or all assumptions about the peace process will break down.

There are already new initiatives to help bring parity about, and partnership agreements have *been* signed between Israeli Arabs, Egyptians, and Jordanians to produce high quality goods for export to Europe. Much effort and concern are being directed at developing working relationships among neighboring countries as the peace process continues. The success of the peace process will be directly determined by the success of both the political partnerships and economic partnerships within the region.

Several efforts are already contributing to the development of a regional infrastructure. Washington, along with international investors, continues to back the Middle East Development Bank which supports Palestinian business initiatives. Jordan has liberalized its tax and investment laws and signed a bilateral trade pact with Israel. Now Arabs and Israelis are coordinating policies on everything from finances to tourism. The Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development based in Jerusalem is working to develop cooperation between Arabs and Jews. A new airport, to serve both Eilat in Israel and Aqaba in Jordan, is in the planning stages. As a result of the peace agreement with Jordan, Samir M. Kawai, the first Jordanian entrepreneur to travel openly in Israel, came to negotiate with several Israeli high-tech companies to bring their services to Jordan. Tadiran, an Israeli company, is hiring Jordanian programmers. Additional projects, some 200 in number, are under way, including endeavors in the fields of power, agriculture, textiles, and water. With each partnership that is negotiated, economic parity within the region becomes more attainable.

V. Israel's Economy

Israel today abounds with opportunities for astute business people with foresight and vision and a realistic, patient view of the current situation. A thriving economy with a highly skilled work force and a strong foundation in technology gives Israel a professional edge. Progress toward peace creates a sense of stability which acts as a springboard for economic prosperity. Several economic policies are in place which strengthen the economic structure.

A. Economic Policies

1. Privatization

Approximately 160 companies are government owned. In 1987 a master plan was commissioned to assist in the privatization efforts. It identified 80 companies that are appropriate for privatization, which represent 86% of all personnel employed by the government, \$17 billion of balance sheet assets, and sales that account for 18% of GDP. Due to other pressing issues, such as the beginning of the uprising in the territories, the wave of immigration, and the Gulf War, the privatization program did not begin to take off until 1992. With the full support of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, the following six objectives were established:

- ®To reduce government involvement in the economy in order to foster competition
- ®To modernize state-owned monopoly companies
- ®To integrate Israel with the world economy and attract foreign money
- ®To reduce internal debt
- ®To promote labor market flexibility and employee ownership
- ®To develop and expand the domestic capital market

Between the years 1987 - 1992, five companies were privatized and seven other companies offered shares on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, raising approximately \$590 million. In 1993 the program topped \$1 billion! The stock market's steep fall in 1994 temporarily stalled the program, but it is anticipated to be back on target in 1995, especially with the government's offer to provide discounted options on government companies to citizens.

2. Economic Infrastructure Investment

From 1991 to 1994 over \$8 billion was spent on the country's physical infrastructure, an expenditure unparalleled in the history of Israel. In 1995 the total public sector infrastructure investment is expected to reach over \$3 billion and the government infrastructure expenditure is expected to grow by 10 per cent.

3. Financial Deregulation

Since 1987 decentralization has been implemented to stimulate competition by limiting government intervention in financial markets. Reform measures have changed policies regarding mandatory investment requirement for pension plans and insurance plans, stock and bond regulations, reserve requirements for bank deposits, loan ceilings, and the exchange rate policy.

The exchange rate policies and fluctuations have always been at the core of the economic dilemma. An innovative diagonal exchange rate policy was introduced in December 1991 which allows the exchange rate to adjust gradually based on a preset schedule reflecting Israel's inflationary gap with its trading partners. It is allowed to vary no more than 5% above or below this diagonal line. This projected band approach has significantly enhanced the stability of the shekel in the foreign market and has contributed to the strengthening of the Israeli export sector.

B. Industrial Policy

The main goals of Israel's foreign trade policy are to promote Israeli exports to all foreign markets and to expand business and industrial alliances. Because international trade accounts for 75% of the GDP, the importance of trade agreements was recognized early. In 1975 a free-trade agreement was signed with Europe and in 1985 an agreement was signed with the United States. In fact, trade with the U.S. increased 200% between 1985 - 1995. As of 1995 all tariffs on goods traded between Israel and the United States were lifted. Since 1991 the liberalization of policies in regards to tariffs, import licenses, quotas, and final duties gave rise to a significant increase in the volume of trade with Southeast Asia. During 1993 - 1994 imports from Asia, excluding Japan, increased by 43 per cent. Israel continues to work to increase trade with Europe, Scandinavia, Austria, South American, Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, North America, India, and China.

C. Investment Incentives

The Israel Investment Center (IIC) encourages capital investment and caters to both the domestic and foreign investors who are interested in expanding the economy of Israel through manufacturing, oil exploration, real estate, tourism, film production, and industrial research and development. The IIC offers governmental support for selected enterprises in the way of reduced taxation, investment grants or loans. The degree of the support is determined by the priority of the region in which the enterprise will settle. The criteria for research and development support are inventiveness, marketability in international markets, and the experience of the company's management.

The Chief Scientist's Office of the Ministry of Industry and Trade recently committed half a billion dollars to funding high technology companies in Israel - twice the amount designated for high tech two years ago. For example, Telcom, Bezeq, and Tadiran, and Technion

University in Haifa and Tel Aviv University were funded to deliver high speed technology. Another company which benefitted from the new funding is Enigma, a company founded by veterans of army intelligence which has developed a way of simplifying the creation of CD-ROM programs. The Chief Scientist Office pays Jonathan Yaron, Enigma's CEO, to develop contracts. In June of 1995, Bankers Trust paid \$1.8 million for 15% of Enigma.

D. Business Promotion

Currently there are several hundred overseas companies which operate manufacturing and exporting subsidiaries throughout Israel. Foreign investors participate in trading on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and over 60 Israeli companies are listed on the New York Stock Exchange. The government-run Center for Business Promotion has been commissioned to identify potential foreign investors, to locate strategic partners for local companies, and to provide individualized service to investors visiting from abroad. Written material and assistance to individual business persons is available through the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

E. History of the Israel Stock Exchange

Today the Israeli stock market offers a unique buying opportunity. The Israeli market is currently very undervalued. The average P/E ratios of Israeli companies is between 11-12 versus the average P/E ratio of United States companies at over 230. Blue chips are up slightly and the secondary market is still down. Inflation is at 8%, the lowest since 1967, and the growth rate is at 6% (over twice the rate of the U.S. economy).

Israeli Stock Market Average Returns:

<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>
+65%	+25%	-40%	+5%	projected +25%

1948-1967

Israel experienced tremendous growth in population. The number of residents grew from 600,000 to 3 million Jews, or about 9% annually.

1967-1973

These years marked the period of territorial expansion.

1973-1985

During the Yom Kippur War and the Arab oil crisis, the growth rate slowed. This came at a time when the coun-

try felt increased pressure to develop fast and to increase defense production.

With pressure building, the inflation rate went from 30 - 40% in the 1970s to over 400% in 1984. The high inflation, high deficit, and high internal debt contributed to a stock market crash in 1983. This also affected the banking industry as indications of bank and government manipulation of shares surfaced. The government was called upon to bail out the banks. The year 1984 was the year of hyperinflation - 445%!

During 1985 the economy was frozen. Price controls devalued the shekel and the government budget was reduced considerably. Dan Galat credits the U.S. reduction in oil prices and a few miracles like the improved exchange rate between the dollar and Europe with the reduction in inflation from 400+% to 20% by 1985.

1983-1993

Between the years 1983 - 1993 the stock market grew by over 700%! In February of 1994 the stock market crashed to the bottom and slowly began to work its way back up. About one year later, in March of 1995, the blue chip fell 40% and the secondary market fell 70%. Several factors contributed to the decline in the market.

A technical correction was necessary to adjust for the previous growth. Banks gave credit to individuals based on a high M1 and M2 money rate. The money was put into the stock market with basically no collateral. The interest rate increase in 1993 and 1994 put pressure on the market in 1995. Companies had become inefficient during the "boom" years because the market was so high. Even with the inefficiencies the return on investor dollar in 1992 was as high as 65%. In 1993 the return dropped to 25% which put pressure on borrowed money accustomed to much higher returns.

VL Seeds of a New Relationship

There are two distinct areas of need in Israel which provide opportunities for a meaningful relationship between North American Jews and Israel. The first area is that of social needs. Issues related to the widening gap in incomes, civil rights, ecology, normalizing relations with Israeli Arabs and with Israel's neighbors, and religious pluralism within Jewish society are not yet sufficiently addressed by the Israeli government or supported by Israel's economy.

The second area is that of peace. The peace process has a

vision but it also has a price tag. Industrial and environmental development on a grand scale are essential to make the peace process work by creating viable and interrelated economies. Two hundred specific projects, at a total cost of \$18.3 billion, are committed as part of the peace process.

The pillars of the relationship between Israel and North American Jewry have changed.

A.

Intervention is needed with American and foreign businesses to encourage investment in these projects.

B.

Israel does still need North American Jews to speak to populations that are becoming more powerful, such as religious groups, women's rights groups, ecological groups, and state governments. It is important for these groups to understand that parity in the region is necessary to insure peace.

C.

There is still a need for philanthropic support for the resettlement of tens of thousands of immigrants annually, and for social needs, civil rights, and issues of religious plurality.

D.

Beyond philanthropy, investing in Israeli businesses, buying from Israeli companies, and building strategic partnerships with Israeli businesses will help the Israeli economy to grow while creating bridges of personal and mutual self interest. Direct relationships with Israeli colleagues in the private sphere will help make Israel a central part of the life of Jews worldwide.

Indicators of Israel's Economic Development

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Rate of Inflation	17.6	18	9.4	11.2	14.8	8
Gross Domestic Product (Billion \$ US)	51.3	59	64.3	65	69.4	75
Real Growth of G.D.P. (96)	5.8	6.2	6.6	3.4	6.8	6.8
Unemployment Rate (96)	9.6	10.6	11.2	10	7.8	6.5
Exchange Rate, Year End NIS / US Dollar	2.048	2.283	2.764	2.998	3.026	3.11

Families', Women's, and Men's Issues

Eve Bier, Myron Flager, Diane Rubin, Jeanne Siegel

The focus of our tutorial work was the family in contemporary Israeli society. We chose to explore the key issues of religion, ethnic differences, military service in the Israel Defense Forces, alternative lifestyles, and how Israeli society deals with all aspects of abuse. As we talked with each other and with the many leading figures whom we met, our group realized that we had begun the process with a set of assumptions. The history of the creation of the State of Israel, especially from the perspective of the kibbutz movement, has always portrayed women and men working together equally, side by side. Our studies revealed that many of our preconceived notions are based on myths, not realities.

One theme that recurred throughout our meetings was that the strength of Israeli society is tied to the strength of the family. Family life is, and continues to be, central to Israelis. The degree to which different sub-groups have achieved more equal roles is often related to their academic level and lifestyle, and is based on the mutual negotiation between couples. Our discussions with various groups and individuals did not portray a society in which women are oppressed, but a society that values the supremacy of the family.

Religion

We had assumed that "religious women have less liberties and rights than other women in Israeli society" and that "religious law is unfair to women." Our meetings with Rabbi Yeshaya Steinberger, Director of the Ramot Sharet Community-Spiritual Center, and Professor Alice Shalvi, the founder of the Israel Women's Network, shed some very different light on our preconceptions.

Rabbi Steinberger shared with us the concept of the woman being the superior sex and described her as being on a "pedestal." Women have clearly defined roles according to the tradition. They are seen as the center of the family, and within the religious community it is considered prestigious to be a homemaker and raise children. He talked about the Jewish family as a "success story" and explained that the laws of purity which lead

to times of separation are a means to help sanctify the marriage and keep it exciting. In the educational realm, there is some tension between women and men within the religious community. Men study Talmud, while women receive a more universal education and are frequently more educated than men in general studies. Women also actively pursue Jewish learning, studying in groups separate from men. This is *halachically* legitimate and encouraged, but women will never be able to move into "rabbinic" roles in the religious community.

Rabbi Steinberger told us that problems in the family, such as violence and abuse, are handled within the community. The "goon" squads exert influence on the abusing spouse or parent and the knowledge that this can be exposed to the rest of the community often helps to put an end to undesirable behavior. Rabbi Steinberger's view of divorce and the means of achieving a satisfying result through the rabbinic courts was very open and liberal. His concept of teams working with a couple seems similar to the approach of divorce mediation in the United States.

The basic laws of the State of Israel give the rabbinate (or other religious governing bodies, such as the Waqf for the Islamic population) control over marriage and divorce. For religious Jews who live according to *halacha*, this does not present a conflict, but secular Jews find the imposition of *halacha* on their private lives to be difficult, restrictive, unfair and irrelevant. Couples can only be married by clergymen recognized by the governing religious councils. This means that non-Orthodox rabbis, who are not recognized by the rabbinate, are not allowed to perform weddings. In protest, some secular couples leave the country to marry or marry by mail order through Paraguay. When a secular couple seeks a divorce, it must approach the religious court - which is not a comfortable or natural setting for secular Jews. It can be particularly difficult for the woman, as the man can exploit his power in the religious court to withhold a get. In extreme cases men have sought financial compensation and/or have stalled the system for lengthy periods of time.

Religious women sometimes experience problems in the

area of marriage and divorce, but because their lives are governed by *halacha*, they prefer to find solutions within their community. For example, they may turn to a rabbi who can pressure a husband to grant *a get*. Their address for change is within the religious community itself.

Alice Shalvi's outlook on divorce within Israel raised different issues. We had assumed that the biggest problems were within the religious community; but they are, instead, among the secular population. The secular community sees a strong need for separation between religion and state. The Israel Women's Network is currently focussing its work on changing the laws that require an individual to be married and divorced through the religious courts.

Shalvi has developed the Israel Women's Network into an advocacy group for more and better services for women and families; for the establishment of policies that would lead to a more egalitarian society; and for promoting women into the mainstream of public life. Important test cases now under discussion will hopefully open doors and lead to the equalization of women's and men's rights and roles. The Network has also been advocating for more women in government. To date, the number of women in the Knesset has changed little since the establishment of the State of Israel (roughly 7-12 out of 120 Knesset members).

Family

We had assumed that women's issues reflect the society's issues, and in most cases we found support for this. Israel today is struggling with gender roles, economics, and the changing family - not unlike the societal struggles we see in North America. The family plays a dominant role in Israeli society - among both the secular and religious populations - with the mother figure central to family life. Jewish tradition has always valued the role of a good mother and homemaker.

We had assumed that women need to be "supermoms" in order to pursue professional goals. In fact, it is easier for Israeli women to balance career and family due to the fact that part-time professional employment is commonplace in Israel. Contrary to popular belief, women are often the primary income producers in religious families, but this does not make them the heads of the households. Religious women tend to be in occupations such as banking, accounting, and teaching which are taught in non-university settings and do not require academic degrees.

We had also assumed that services available to families and to women in general are inadequate. We were quite impressed by the highly developed institutions dealing with them. This is not to say that there is an abundance of services, but what exists is first rate. Women's counseling services and havens for battered women and their children are on the rise. These services are staffed by qualified professionals.

We met Bella Savran of the Counseling Center for Women, an individual pushing to empower women to make positive changes in themselves, their families and their society. The center, established by female social workers who had made *aliyah* from North America, deals with abuse, relationships, and depression issues. It has an interesting management process: it runs according to consensus; there is no one director in charge of administrative issues. The center has over 20 therapists who work with women of all backgrounds, including Sephardic, Russian, religious, and Arab. Bella reminded us that traditions of different ethnic groups, especially in Sephardic and Arab households, still dictate the role of the women and often lead to their abuse.

The center established hotlines for religious women to call for help and support. The hotlines are advertised as a service to help women become more religiously observant and to be better wives. Under this pretext it is possible to discuss deeper issues, such as abuse by their spouses, without fear of others finding out. One of the major obstacles the counseling center faces in providing services to the religious community is the shortage of trained religious women counselors. A religious woman is not likely to discuss personal issues with a male, unless it is her rabbi, or with a non-religious female who would probably not understand the religious way of life.

Battered women's shelters are growing in number and spreading across the country. To date there are eight shelters, and while they operate independently from each other, *they* do network. These shelters are staffed by therapists and the Jerusalem shelter we visited also employs an attorney to aid the women in the courts.

Services such as the ones mentioned above are funded through a variety of means, including The New Israel Fund, private donors, and some municipal money. Often key sources of funding for these private, non-profit agencies comes from North America.

Alternative Lifestyles

We visited the Society for the Protection of Personal Rights, another non-profit organization. We began this meeting with two assumptions: a) that homosexual lifestyles were not accepted, and b) that the gay community was involved Jewishly within the community at large.

The Society is the only recognized organization whose primary aim is to advance the legal, social, and cultural rights of the gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in Israel. Amit Kamaly, the executive director, has had better success within the legal system than the women's rights groups have had, due to the fact that he is working through the civil courts, rather than the religious courts. Laws instituted protecting the gay community cover sodomy, spouse's benefits, anti-discrimination in the work place, and military service. With all these gains, Kamaly stated that the openness of the gay community is limited. While gays and lesbians express themselves freely within their community, the majority do not come out publicly and to their families.

Kamaly relayed a story illustrating this conflict. A gay man in the diplomatic corp who had just been assigned to a foreign country petitioned for the right to bring his partner with him, just as a married heterosexual would bring a spouse. With the support of the Society for the Protection of Personal Rights, the issue was successfully fought in the courts. The case was publicized in the newspaper and although the Society made sure that the man's name did not appear, some readers recognized the circumstances. The man was upset at the Society because his mother discovered through the newspaper that he was gay.

Unlike in North America, there is no place for gays within organized religion in Israel. Most gays join their families for Shabbat and for the Passover *sefer* rather than organize themselves. The strength of the traditional family holds even in the gay community.

Like other human rights groups in Israel, the Society for the Protection of Personal Rights was developed by North Americans and receives support from the New Israel Fund. Non-profit organizations are on the rise in Israel. It was clear to us from our visits that the energy and support of North American Jews is needed to create and assist these organizations. Together we can help each other by networking, sharing ideas, and combining our resources.

Women in the Israel Defense Forces

Another myth of Israeli society in the minds of Americans is the importance of women in the founding of the State of Israel and the role they played in the War of Liberation. The extension of this idea is that women today play an equally important role, and do not suffer from discrimination, in the Israel army. In assessing the level of equality of women in Israel, we had assumed that the army would be an area holding great promise.

We learned from Lt. Col. Noga Meliniak, Commander of the Women's Corps Central District, that there is a fundamental, legal problem for women in the IDF Since the founding of the State, a law of the Knesset prohibits women from serving in a combat unit. Thus, the elite units to which young men aspire are never an option for a young woman.

All young men and women are required by law to perform army service; men must serve for 36 months and women for 21 months. The requirement for women was recently reduced from 25 months to 21 months due to economic and demographic reasons. An increase of 15% in Israel's youth population during the past three years has led to a shortage of jobs and housing in the army. For many, the army experience is marked by long periods of waiting and boredom. While the majority of women do serve, the option not to is more readily available to them than to men, Religious women generally do not serve directly in the army but do community service jobs, such as working in schools, youth centers, and day care centers. We met one young woman at the child care center of the Battered Women's Shelter in Jerusalem.

The army is one of the most important experiences in an Israeli's life, offering the opportunity to get away from home, to grow as an individual, to learn a skill, to gain status and recognition, to develop leadership. Careers begin in the army. Identities are formulated. It is the great social mixer of Israel where people from different backgrounds meet, and where people fall in love.

Soldiers are tested to determine their area of service, They then go through training courses lasting from a few weeks to over a year. The most elite course is the 24-month pilot training course. Women are excluded from many courses simply because of their duration; a long training period is not economically feasible for a woman who serves only 21 months. Women do comprise the majority (70%) of the instructors in the army. As the "best" men go into the elite units, the brightest women qualify for the instructors program. The upper echelon of the army is entirely male.

Despite Ezer Weizman infamous quote, "The best boys go to be pilots; the best girls go to the pilots," there is a strong consciousness and concern regarding the potential for sexual abuse inherent in these types of environments. Lt. Col. Noga stressed the strict rules and enforcement practices related to sexual conduct maintained in the IDF.

The vast majority of young women in Israel today do not aspire to army careers. In fact, Lt. Col. Noga achieved her status, one of the highest ranks held by a woman, more by accident than design. She explained that when she completed her compulsory service she was unsure what to study at university, so she re-enlisted. She advanced in her area, but when her assignment was completed she still did not know what to study, so she enlisted for a third time. She credits her unusual success in an army career to her husband, who supports her in all the demands of her job. He does laundry, cooks meals, and accepts that she has to spend occasional nights on the base. Her son views this as normal, while his friends think that the Meliniak household is quite odd. Noga does have aspirations for her daughter, who she describes as a gifted young woman. She is concerned, however, that if her daughter chooses an army career she will face limitations she would not face in other professions.

Lt. Col. Noga explained that from the army's vantage, the system is in no need of correction. Its primary mission is to defend the country. The issues confronting the army regarding the status of women are not military issues; they are societal issues and should be addressed by the country. In fact, while we were in Israel a major Supreme Court case was decided regarding a woman's rights to take the pilot's examination. The Court ruled in favor of Alice Miller's request to take the exam which, if she passes, would allow her to enroll in the pilot's training course. Despite her degree in aeronautics from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and her private pilot's license, the army denied her request on a variety of grounds. The Court ruled that she and a test group of 10 women be allowed to take the test and try to become IDF pilots. Even if Alice Miller succeeds, she will not be allowed to fly in combat, but she could be assigned to other air force tasks.

Change is difficult in the army; it will not come from within. However, as the entire landscape of contemporary Israel changes due to the increase in the population (approaching six million) and new peace treaties with Arab countries, the whole conception of compulsory army service may be re-evaluated. If the idea of a voluntary army is considered, it will open the discussion of the role of women in the *army*. And if a voluntary army comes to be, then the best and the brightest, regardless of

gender, will be able to choose their own military career path. Hopefully, the Middle East will soon enjoy a just and lasting peace, and Isaiah's prophecy that "we shall beat our swords into plowshares" will prove true. Then we will not have to worry about the quality of Israel's army at all.

Questions Consider

- e What will be the catalyst for change? (i.e., economic, political, religious factors)
- e Will the development of a constitution result in separation of religion and state?
 - Will a civil constitution make the state less Jewish?
- @Will peace in the Middle East change the nature and structure of the army? If so, how will that effect the individual in society?
 - Will the State of Israel become an egalitarian society?

Jewishness, Jewish Education, and Pluralism in Israel

Alan Feldman, Dale Glasser, Avi Namak

Among the most significant factors influencing Jewish identity and continuity today are the many changes occurring in Israeli society. The political rhetoric, the Rabin assassination, the emergence of organized liberal movements of Judaism, the changing dynamics of the Israel - Diaspora relationship, Israel's transition from a Third World country to a full member of the global village, and the post-modern, post-Zionist environment present the context for change. The people we met during the course of our tutorial had varying perspectives on these factors and their impact on Jewish identity and continuity among Israelis.

Rabbi David Lazar of Ya'ar Ramot Congregation suggested that most families participate in his *hehillah* (congregation) because they are not *dati* (religious) or *haredi* (secular), but they want more for their children than secular schools or *TALI* schools can offer. They are seeking a liberal, spiritual approach to Judaism. They do not choose to belong in order to preserve their Jewish identity; rather they participate to define their Jewish identity.

While Rabbi Lazar focuses on issues in his community rather than national, political struggles, he suggests that increased government funding of his efforts would enable him to spend less time raising money and more time building the community. He acknowledges that legitimacy for non-Orthodox clergy to perform life cycle events would be optimal, yet is aware and supportive of the fact that the peace process takes priority on the national agenda.

Rabbi Lazar is optimistic that a move towards pluralism will continue, citing the unprecedented grant of \$50,000 from the Ministry of Education that *the Masorti* Movement recently received to write curricula, and his regular meetings with army officers (as part of his reserve duty) to introduce them to the progressive movements in Israel. Rabbi Lazar suggests that Rabin's assassination may help move the country closer to pluralism because the Modern Orthodox have seen first-hand the dangers of extremism.

Zemira Segev is working to create change on a societal level. She directs *HEMDAT* - The Council for Freedom of Science, Religion, and Culture in Israel, a coalition of eight organizations ranging in nature from secular to Modern Orthodox. Its founders felt that in light of the sweeping changes in Israeli society, a greater degree of freedom was necessary in the areas of religion, science, and culture. The organization works on educating youth towards pluralism, and is heavily involved in the national fight to amend the Law of the Religious Courts.

Ms. Segev indicated that the number of people interested in *HEMDAT* is growing, and many have sought out the group following press coverage of *HEMDAT's* activities. She suggests that the Rabin assassination may lead to further change, as Israelis try to understand how such an event could have happened. She cites a recent meeting between the head of Peace NOW and settlers of Judea and Samaria as an example of change, contending that this meeting could not have taken place before the assassination.

Rabbi Na'ama Kelman shared information about the *TALI* School in Bayit VeGan and the *TALI* school system. Another indicator of changing society, this system represents a privatization of the public school system by parents who want another option for their children's education. Begun by Conservative *olim* and modeled after Solomon Schechter schools, *TALI* schools include daily *tefilah* (prayer) and relate to the Torah as a living document. Proponents of this system would like to see increased government financial support, and increased support from the Conservative and Reform movements in the United States.

Dr. Noam Zion of the Hartman Institute noted that the radical change which occurred in 1967 continues to impact the issue of Jewish identity in Israel today. From the Religious Zionist perspective, the reunification of Jerusalem and the recapture of Judea and Samaria were a "miracle" which made it imperative to settle these lands. This prompted a resurgence of Religious Zionism and a secular response that the Bible belonged to *the dati'im*

(religious). Consequently, the *hiloni* (secular) school curriculum eliminated the study of medieval and ancient Jewish history, and the number of Bible students in Israeli universities dropped significantly. Another indication of increasing polarization is the contradicting views of the Religious Zionists settling in the territories who see themselves as the new *halutzim* (pioneers), and the present government which sees them as obstacles to peace.

Dr. Zion warned that as Israel moves towards full membership in the "global village," many Israelis may not remain Jewish just because Israel is Israel. This critical development has potentially wide-ranging significance for Jewish identity and continuity, but is more closely related to the political system than to the educational system.

At *ELUL*, Melila Helner shared her perspective about the importance of *chevruta* learning and its potential positive contribution to moving Israeli society towards pluralism. This model requires shared responsibility and acceptance that there are many valid perspectives. Ms. Hefner believes that there are no short cuts to building culture, and that it must be done through study. Furthermore, in order for Israelis to maintain Jewish identity, many options for Jewish life must be developed using a contemporary Israeli perspective to connect with the past.

She suggested that in the midst of societal changes, secular Israelis are partly "politically" motivated to come to *ELUL*. That is, they want to know who they are, and learn how to tap into the sources as "ammunition" for dealing with the Orthodox. She noted that since Rabin's assassination, extensive soul searching among Israelis has created space for change to occur - space which previously had been filled immediately by Orthodox ideas.

Dr. David Zissenwine, a professor of education at Tel Aviv University, sees the direct impact of changing Israeli society on today's maturing adults. He claims that while religious pluralism is happening reluctantly, political pluralism is "out of control," and cultural pluralism is not only tolerated, but considered chic. In the cultural war taking place, religion and politics are intertwined. The Orthodox establishment prevents change through their control of funding, and the non-Orthodox are resentful that do not get their fair share in return for the taxes they pay. As a result, public support for the status quo continues to erode each time the Orthodox engage in a public battle. Dr. Zissenwine believes that Rabin's assassination has further exacerbated the negative attitude towards the Orthodox, intensifying the perception that religious people are a negative, conservative force which is preventing

progress in the state. He views the battle for pluralism and modernization as a legitimate one, where Israelis must make the choice as to whether to move forward as a modern nation.

For most Israelis, Jewish education continues to be national education. The teaching profession is increasingly feminized, and while there is a shortage of elementary school teachers, there is an adequate number of high school teachers. Dr. Zissenwine suggests that the Shenhar Report [*see this document in section III of this anthology*] may have overstated the seriousness of the state of Israeli education, but would welcome a sharper focus on democratic values in the school curriculum. Overall, he states that the Israeli educational system is succeeding, and predicts a bright future with some rough spots.

Professor Yair Auron of the *Seminar Hakibbutzim* indicated that there is a crisis of Jewish identity among young Israelis today which is related to a move from a Zionist to a post-Zionist modern society. He traced the progression from the need in the 1920s to create a "new Jew," a *sabra* who knew how to both fight a war and work the land, through the pinnacle of that image during the Six Day War, to the decline of that image as the result of the War of Attrition in the Suez Canal zone, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Today, as Israel moves toward peace, there is a growing tension between being a Jew and an Israeli. Increasingly, young Israelis identify themselves as "Jew" to move *away* from the *kibbutz*nik/brave soldier image. At the same time, they do not deal with the ritual content of being a Jew. Professor Auron claims that since the shift in attitudes of 1970s and 1980s, the Holocaust has become the single most critical factor in Israeli identity, as it is the one experience shared by all segments of Israeli society. Professor Auron pointed to several changes in the educational system support his thesis: in 1980, the Law of Education was changed to mandate teaching of the Holocaust; the subject became part of the matriculation exam; and a compulsory teacher training course and field visit on the Holocaust was instituted. One hundred percent of those surveyed in his study of the Jewish identity of Israeli teachers (including all segments of the population) mentioned the Holocaust as both a significant historical event and one that influenced them personally.

Professor Auron sees teaching the value of pluralism to young Israelis as a critical challenge. Israelis need to move away from the polarizing perspective of the Religious Zionists and the secular, and to view themselves as part of one Jewish people throughout the world.

An increased emphasis on both religious and national values will help to build the bridges of understanding.

At Congregation Beit Daniel, located in an upper middle class area of cosmopolitan Tel Aviv, President Bruria Barish and Program Director Ruth Heiges discussed the challenges facing the Progressive Movement (Reform) in Israel today. Their congregation's participation pattern reflects what has been observed in other settings: Israelis do not join synagogues in large numbers, but will participate in meaningful programs. Beit Daniel offers a number of successful outreach programs, including an alternative to *dati bar mitzvah* training. They noted that Shimon Peres' granddaughter became a *bat mitzvah* at their congregation, and that it was not well received by the Orthodox establishment.

The ongoing clash between the Orthodox establishment and those who seek pluralistic change is personified by Ms. Barish, who is the first Reform woman in Israel ever elected to an area religious council, which wields considerable fiscal and municipal authority. The council has refused to meet since her election, and this may result in a Supreme Court battle.

Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg, a senior fellow at the Van Leer Institute, participates in think tank discussions and oversees projects which attempt to respond to many of the changes in contemporary Israeli society. He noted that the Orthodox establishment's attempt to bring Judaism "from above" and force it on people is not working. He suggests that non-*dati* Israelis react negatively to being forced into something, and that a separation between the political and religious, while difficult to imagine, would ease the tension and result in less fear of Jewish tradition.

Rabbi Rothenberg is convinced that the liberal movements in Israel will eventually win their battle to amend the Law of the Religious Courts, but it will be a political rather than a cultural development and will not create any major societal change. Rabbi Rothenberg explained that by invoking the name of God, Rabin's assassin intensified polarization in Israel, and augmented the secular backlash against the religious establishment.

During our tutorial studies, we used the considerable changes occurring on many levels of Israeli society as a lens through which to view the issues of Jewish identity and continuity in Israel. We observed that critical to Americans' understanding of these issues is their ability to leave behind the American vocabulary and outlook and to have an openness towards a uniquely Israeli system and perspective in which political, societal, and reli-

gious issues are intertwined.

As Israeli society continues to change, there are potentially wide-ranging implications for Jews in Israel and for *klal Yisrael*. Many unanswered questions remain, including:

- 9 What will the long-term effects of the Rabin assassination be on the pluralism and polarization in Israeli society ?
- e Given the move towards a post-Zionist, post-modern society, will Israelis be able to preserve Jewish continuity simply by being part of Israeli society?
- How can technological advances be used to create links between Israeli and non-Israeli Jews and strengthen *klal Yisrael*?
- o Given the limited impact of the liberal Jewish movements in Israel, the diminished need for American dollars to fund Israel's infrastructure, and the fact that many pluralistic organizations in Israel are dependent on American funding, what are the implications for redefining the North American - Israeli relationship?
- What will the long-term impact be of recent changes in Israel's education system, such as the growth of *TALI* schools and the mandate of Holocaust education?
- How will the changing dynamic of the teaching profession in Israel impact the public school's ability to serve as an institutional transmitter of Jewish values and culture?

What will the impact of the large wave of immigration be on the public school infrastructure and on Israeli cultural norms?

Appendix 1: The Israeli Education System

The Israeli education system is divided into three (3) primary tracts:

1. The *haredi* tract of "ultra-Orthodox" education comprises about 10% of the students in the overall system. Although Torah is studied in the early grades (along with basic secular skills such as math), the focus is primarily on the study of Talmud. It is often referred to as *dati*. A small movement within the *haredi* system is traditional *heder* education that includes only Jewish

text study and receives no government funding.

Outside of the *haredi* tract, every Israeli, by law, is offered a choice of one of the following education alternatives within their geographic region:

2. The secular tract (*mamlachti*) focuses on education to create a nationalist Jewish identity and serves approximately 60% of the students in the country. The curriculum emphasizes: field trips, music, modern Hebrew, Hebrew literature and poetry, Jewish history and Bible (not Torah, but the Bible as national history), and a complete spectrum of secular studies.

Over the last ten years, a second tract within *mamlachti* has emerged. The *TALI* (*Tigbor Limudei Yahadut* - Jewish Studies Enrichment) schools were created in response to parent initiatives and reflect the input of the Conservative and Reform movements. In the *TALI* tract, a religious component is added to the curriculum without transforming the schools into totally religious educational environments. There are currently only 12 *TALI* schools in the country (serving a very small segment of the population) but the trend is growing.

Another small segment within the secular tract are kibbutz schools.

3. The state religious tract (*mamlachti dati*) serves approximately 30% of the population. It offers a combination of religious Zionist education and secular studies. The religious curriculum includes the study of the land of Israel, Jewish peoplehood, and the whole Torah.

Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

status quo

A political term in Israel that refers to the 1947 agreement between David Ben Gurion and Agudat Yisrael to maintain the British Mandate's status quo regarding the governance of religious life. When the United Nations was ready to grant political sovereignty for the State of Israel, the ultra-Orthodox were fearful that the Labor Zionists would gain control over religious life and felt that their rights would be better protected under the rules established by the British Mandate.

constitution

Israel does not have a constitution. When the State was founded, the rival political and religious factions could not agree on such issues as freedom of worship, freedom of speech, etc. They feared that codifying laws concerning these issues would (a) threaten the status quo and (b) would have equal or greater power than the *halacha*.

Declaration of Independence

The statement of intent regarding the character of the State of Israel. It uses the term "Jewish State" and includes a list of principles which refer to the liberal freedoms that will exist in the State. The document does not have legal status, but the Supreme Court has often used it as a de facto constitution.

Israel's Jewish Character

- a. National Symbols - the menorah, the Jewish star on the flag, the *Sh'ma* on the radio each morning, etc.
- b. Institutional Regulations - the legal status of Judaism in the country's national institutions (e.g., kosher food in the army, in hospitals).
- c. Laws - For all intents and purposes, Israel is a secular state. Religious laws, though significant, are few. Despite the status quo ethic, most issues are not legally infused with a particular Jewish perspective (although they may be culturally Jewish). Only Knesset laws are binding.
- d. Religious Legislation - In the Law of the Religious Courts (1953), the Knesset gave authority to the Chief Rabbinate (an Orthodox body) over matters of personal status (marriage, divorce).
- e. Education - Prior to 1948, the British allowed a variety of educational options. After the founding of the State, Ben Gurion standardized education by advocating for State schools. The 1953 Law of Public Education created State Secular (*mamlachti*) and State Religious (*mamlachti dati*) school systems. Parents must choose the school system for their child(ren), thereby defining themselves as either secular or religious.

The World of Community Centers in Israel

Marvin Friedman, David Sorkin, Gerald Weisberg

We identified the following goals at the outset of our tutorial:

1. Understanding the role and importance of the *matnasim* (community centers) in contemporary Israeli society:
2. Understanding the basic operations and philosophy of selected *matnassim*, as well as the role of the Israel Association of Community Centers (IACC) and their relationship to one another.
3. Exploring the possibility of building a professional connection between professionals in North America and their Israeli counterparts.
4. Exploring the possibility of replicating programs and services that are offered in Israel.
5. Developing a series of recommendations for future areas of exploration.

Ⓜ Overview of Israel Association of Community Centers (IACC)

The idea of establishing community centers in Israel was initiated and formulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The IACC was created in 1969 as a national institution, and only then were the first community centers initiated in disadvantaged areas and development towns. The IACC's development started at the top and filtered down to the community level. Haim Zippori is acknowledged as the founder of the movement.

Today, there are 170 community centers operating under the auspices of the IACC, with another 90 communities on a waiting list. These centers provide services to more than one million Israeli residents, which represents about 20% of the population. Several of the *matnassim* exist in large cities and well-to-do neighborhoods. Over

the last five years, the IACC has also opened community centers in the non-Jewish sector and at present approximately 26 such centers are operating.

The IACC is a governmental agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The IACC board determines policy, and is composed of public representatives, representatives of governmental and municipal authorities, and representatives of institutions such as JDC-Israel and the Jewish Agency. The IACC's total budget is 70 million dollars, with a significant portion coming from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Support from the IACC for the *matnassim* includes funding, staff training, and other resources that will be discussed later in this paper.

A. Goals of the IACC

1. To enhance young Israelis' sense of Jewish identity, and foster their quest for learning and experiences related to Jewish and Zionist heritage.
2. To help in the absorption of the large number of new immigrants into the country.
3. To reduce educational gaps, specifically in the areas of science and technology, and community communications.
4. To improve Jewish Arab co-existence by decreasing the sense of alienation between the two people and creating frameworks for contact between them.
5. To promote democracy, community development, and empowerment of the people.
6. To advance special projects and models of national interest.
7. To promote the professional advancement of community center directors and staff.

B. The Structure of the IACC

The IACC is professionally led by a managing director who is assisted by the heads of the four key departments:

1) Human Resources and Special Projects; 2) Finance; 3) Development {facilities and equipment}; 4. Training {program services, leadership development, staff training, arts and culture, Jewish and Israeli heritage, community development}. Within each department, a professional staff oversees a multitude of programs and services.

The community center network is divided into six districts of approximately 30-35 community center units. Each district is headed by a regional director whose role is to supervise and oversee all of the center directors in the region.

The IACC interviews and assesses candidates for *matnas* director, and then presents a selection of approved candidates to a community for its decision as to whom to hire. The IACC is responsible for paying each director's salary. During the first year new directors must participate in an IACC training program for two days each month.

Ongoing in-service training, including IACC workshops and university level courses, is strongly encouraged and paid for by the IACC. In addition to the preliminary assessment and supervision of directors, the IACC provides counselling services for individual personnel and a professional mentoring program.

H. The *Matnas*

The word *matnas* is an acronym for *Ivlercaz Tarbut, Noar, v Sport* (Center for Youth, Culture, and Sports). [Note: Here we use the words *matnas* and community center interchangeably.] The *matnas* originally developed as a new means for accelerating the socialization process in developing communities and among weaker population groups.

The *matnas* is a multi-faceted organization providing an array of services, including: community development with the involvement of individuals, groups and organizations; age appropriate programming; absorption services; community communications; learning centers; arts and culture; health, lifestyle and sports; national heritage, Zionism and tradition; education for science and technology; and services for the disabled. As noted before, more than one million citizens take part in a wide range of *matnas* activities. As in the States, community center programs span the entire population from

early childhood to the elderly, including educational courses, social and cultural groups, sports teams, crafts classes, field trips, music and dance troupes. In addition, the centers run special programs and local initiatives (e.g., support groups for single parent families, "youth at risk").

One significant difference between JCCs and *matnassim* is the emphasis that the latter places on community development and the extensive efforts it invests in integrating enormous numbers of new immigrants into the existing population.

Initially *matnassim* were located in underprivileged or disadvantaged areas and many of their facilities were developed with the support of a Project Renewal partner from abroad. In the last five years, with Israel's tremendous economic growth, facilities serving middle class communities are becoming more commonplace. The *matnas* offers typical Center facilities, like a gymnasium, auditorium, swimming pool, meeting rooms, and early childhood classrooms.

A. Types of Community Centers

1. A neighborhood center serves a specific neighborhoods within a city, i.e., the three neighborhood centers in Ashdod.
2. A city-wide center serves a small city.
3. A network community center operates several branches in a city, similar to the JCC networks found in U.S. cities like Philadelphia and Chicago.
4. A regional community center serves several entities (kibbutzim, Arab villages) in a specific geographic area.
5. A community council, in cooperation with the local municipality and area residents, may oversee and/or coordinate important community services, such as street cleaning, city planning, security, housing. In this way, residents are empowered to be active in their community affairs.

B. Operating Principles of the *Matnas*

1. The programs of the community center will stem from the needs and aspirations of the local community, within the framework of the overall ideology.

2. The community center will serve the entire community while maintaining a balance between the needs of the various groups.
3. The community center will strive for maximum involvement of members of the community in planning and implementing its programs.
4. The activities and services of the community center will enhance the quality of life of the community.
5. The community center will cooperate with other social agencies in the planning and delivery of services.
6. The community center will maintain organizational and functional flexibility in utilizing its resources and implementing its programs.
7. The community center will strive for maximum economy through flexible and efficient allocation of resources and manpower.
8. The community center will strive to maintain local autonomy and loyalty to the community and its elected representatives.
9. The community center will provide services in exchange for payment, either monetary or in kind.

C. Governance of the *Matnas*

The community center is an independent body functioning as a limited liability company or non-profit organization. Each is under the direction of an executive board responsible for the center's management, budget, and programs. The executive board (board of directors) includes representatives of the local authority or municipality (40%); elected residents who participate regularly in the activities of the center (40%); and representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Jewish Agency and the IACC (20%). The executive boards include an average of 15 members, most of whom live in the community where the center is located.

Most centers function with three key committees: the financial committee, the human resources committee, and the control committee. The control committee is selected from outside of the board and its specific duties are to oversee financial and operational concerns. Other program and service committees are developed when necessary.

D. Community Center Personnel

The director general (executive director) is employed by the IACC and not by the community. His/her salary is determined by a work contract that applies to all IACC employees. This unique situation requires the director to work closely with the IACC as well as with the local board of directors and the residents. The complex relationship between the *matnas* and the municipality heightens the political component of the director's duties and responsibilities.

More than 8,000 full and part-time staff work in the community center system. Departmental staff have overall responsibilities for center services and cover for one another when a colleague goes to military reserve duty. Significant emphasis is placed on staff training on all levels, funded by the IACC.

E. Mamas Funding and Budget

The programs and services that a *matnas* offers, like in JCCs, are determined on the basis of consumer demand. Services that attract enrollment survive, while services that do not attract enrollment are discarded unless they are underwritten by a sponsor or the government. As a general rule, *matnas* revenue comes from:

- @ program fees - 50%
- @ fundraising - 20%
- @ government/municipality funding - 30%

Unlike JCCs, membership dues are not charged, except for some minor usages fees (i.e., swimming pool). In Israel, as elsewhere, community centers have introduced sliding fee scales and do offer assistance to disadvantaged groups.

F. Some Key Differences Between Community Centers in the United States and Israel

While there are many similarities between the *Matnassim* and the JCCs in the States, there are distinct differences:

1. It is important to remember the difference in culture. We in the States talk about the importance of Jewish education and promoting Jewish identity as part of our mission, but this issue has a totally different connotation in Israel. All of Israel can be compared to a synagogue in North America. Israelis are immersed in Jewish culture: the language; *glatt* kosher restaurants

on every block; the public celebration of the holidays. Israeli-style Jewish education means learning about the land, Zionism, and one's religion.

2. In the United States a community can develop a Jewish Community Center and then affiliate with the national organization (JCCA). If you want to be part of the Israel Association of Centers, it's the reverse - Centers start from the "top down."
3. In Israel, the *matnassim* are a product of the government, through the Ministry of Education, and the national goal is immigrant absorption to teach people about democracy. The latest trend in Israel is to empower people and decentralize.
4. While the program services are often similar to those in the States, there is a much heavier emphasis on what's happening in the community outside the *matnas*, relative to community development and the politics of an area. There are also no membership dues, so everyone belongs.
5. In terms of governance, a significant portion of the board is appointed by the mayor, giving a large number of seats to local politicians.
6. The executive director is employed by the IACC - and actually paid by the IACC. Israeli communities get to choose their executive from a group of candidates who are first approved by IACC. The new executive director, once hired, is obligated to train two days a month with the IACC for his/her first year on the job.
7. In the U.S., sometimes you'll find a counseling center in a JCC, or other social service agencies represented. In the *matnas*, it's part of what they are expected to do.
8. *Matnassim* heavily rely on the government (through the municipality) for revenue, whereas most of our U.S. Centers seek funds through community funding bodies (i.e., Federation and United Way).
9. JCCA is not, nor would ever be, involved in the development of non-Jewish Centers in the United States. We are very concerned about the proportion of non-Jewish membership becoming too high. In Israel, the IACC develops *matnassim* for Arab neighborhoods.
10. The *matnassim*, like JCCs in the States, respond to community needs and changes in society, but the Israeli Centers are much more pro-active, as "agents of change."

HI. The *Matnas* as a Reflection of Contemporary Israeli Society

During our meetings with IACC staff members and selected *matnas* personnel, we learned that *matnassim* serve as "the well of the village" (central address) for their communities. It is not a conglomeration of various services or a "shopping mall" of services, but rather a local, social body founded on the principle of extensive involvement, integration and cooperation on the part of individuals, groups, institutions, and organization all working for a common goal - the advancement of the community. Residents expect that their local *matnas* will provide them with, among other things, the accessibility and support needed to dialogue with municipal representatives, residents in general, other bordering communities, as well as the diverse social, cultural, and religious sectors within their community.

Because of the inclusive nature of *matnassim*, a specific community center could serve many groups on the secular to religious continuum. Thus a debate about whether the community center should be open on Shabbat could fracture a community and actually lead to aggressive or violent acts. The role of the *matnassim* is to bring these diverse groups together, utilizing staff who understand cultural differences, in an effort to calmly negotiate these issues. Given the religious complexities of Israeli society, those services or policies that intersect with religious life often present ongoing issues in the community.

The turbulent environment caused by rapid changes in a given community also has an impact the *matnas* and requires institutional flexibility. For example, some *matnassim* which historically served poor residents are now also serving residents who have obtained middle class status. This socio-demographic dimension, added to the cultural diversity of the community, generates a wide spectrum of service demands on the community centers.

Some of the staff also noted the highly charged "political" environment of the community center which gets played out on many levels. As detailed earlier, the board of directors of a *matnas* is comprised of local politicians, professionals, government representatives, and area residents. This mix creates a complicated and sometimes disjointed working environment, with issues arising from hiring of the executive director, selection of board members, change in the status of an elected official/mayor, the authority of funds or funds for specific program directions, advocacy issues, or designating the recipients of specific municipal services. Center directors note that a high percentage of their time is spent on managing local

politics, and a high proportion of their daily problems - including interference from special interest groups - comes from working with a heterogeneous board. In some extreme cases, the director's future in a community is dependent upon his/her ability to operate in this highly political environment.

During the tutorial presentations, we discussed Israeli social services in general, and women's issues in particular. Again, many of the *matnassim* provide the staff, facility and programmatic focus for serving all ages, needs, and specific populations. Support groups for women, empowerment groups for the elderly, counseling for teens, etc. are regular center services. Even the army plays a part in these services. Religious girls who do not serve in the military must provide community service, and many of them are assigned to community centers.

Another way in which the functioning of the *matnas* reflects Israeli society is in its ideology to involve citizens in policy decisions. Historically, community centers have been viewed as vehicles for social change and thus provide groups with the opportunity to learn social norms, cultural values, and in general, the democratic process. Almost all activities can be used for teaching the democratic process, as well as developing the concept of grass roots empowerment. This in turn becomes a means for promoting community development and interaction among its diverse populations.

IV. Recommendations for Future Areas of Exploration Between North American JCCs and Matnassim

Although not always similar in culture, philosophy, services or programs, Jewish Community Centers in North America and *matnassim* in Israel would do well to forge cooperative bonds. By sharing knowledge and research, exchanging program ideas, supporting common projects, and learning from each other's successes, JCCs and *matnassim* could build bridges between Israel and the Diaspora.

During the course of our tutorial, several ideas were explored as potential joint ventures:

A. Projects in "Partnership 2000" or "Sister Center" Communities

1. Pen Pals
2. Video exchanges
3. Sports team exchange programs
4. Arts and culture exchange
5. Summer *shlichim* from Israel to work in JCCs
6. Israeli teen participation in JCC summer camp programming

B. Professional Exchange

1. Bring skilled professionals (i.e., youth workers) to each other's communities to lead workshops in their area of expertise. For economic efficiency, this can be done on a regional basis.
2. Provide opportunities for community center staff from North America and Israel to meet their appropriate counterparts on an ad hoc basis. A liaison could be appointed within the JCCA and the IACC to orchestrate meetings among kindred professionals when they are travelling to Israel/North America on non-Center business.
3. Share program ideas in specific areas of expertise. For example, *matnassim* have quite sophisticated programs in the areas of early childhood, senior adults, and cultural arts which North American JCCs may learn from.
4. The Haim Zipori World Center for Community Education should be utilized to bring together colleagues from around the world. The Center's goals include linking academia to practice, developing original initiatives, and trying new models in the field.

It is clear to us that both professional communities have much to offer each other. Now what is needed is the will to do it.

Business, Technology, and the Economy

Marilyn Altman, S. Morton Altman, Mark Dindas, Jay Leipzig

Introduction

As we began to prepare for our tutorial program we realized that we needed a context within which to assess our meetings with various business and governmental experts. We also came to appreciate the need to consider the dream and vision that has characterized Israel as well as the changes that have occurred. We believed that business and technology could add a whole new dimension to our understanding. After much discussion we considered the following questions to be the relevant ones for our dialogue.

- e What is the current state of the Israeli economy?
- ® What major factors contribute to the current reality?
- ® How do the economic and political realities influence each other?
- ® Do the rapid changes occurring in Israel, particularly in the economic arena, impact the potential for creating and developing new kinds of connections between Israel and American Jewry?
- ® Are there connections that can be made between the business sector and the kind of work in which North American JCCs are engaged?

The Experience

Meeting with our tutorial leader, Avi Armoni (the executive director of the New Israel Fund), we reviewed our questions and interests before undertaking a series of meetings with a diversity of business, economic, and governmental leaders, each of whom provided his or her perspective on the current Israel scene. As a result of these meetings and subsequent meetings with Avi, the following major themes emerged.

Israel's economy has gone from its roots as a pioneering agricultural movement to one with an emphasis on science, which has in turn led to a specialization and increasing world role in high technology research. The profit motive came to be recognized as a legitimate goal in the mid-1980s, and the next natural step for the economy was to focus on developing the business of technol-

ogy, i.e., the creation of products. The Israeli economy's dramatic expansion, with an annual growth rate of 6-8% over the last five years and an export growth rate of over 12% per year over the last decade - the highest among Western nations, was the result of two major events occurring at the same time:

1. The immigration of over 700,000 Russians who brought with them over 30 billion dollars in educational capital.
2. The establishment of the peace process, especially the Oslo accords.

The combination of these two factors created a significant new pool of talented individuals with educational backgrounds particularly suited to the science and technology fields, as well as an atmosphere of hope and climate of investment in Israel by the world community.

For every 10,000 employees in Israel, 135 are scientists or engineers working in research and development. This compares to 70 out of 10,000 in the U.S. More recently, the election of Benyamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister will also influence the current reality. His anticipated leadership could also dramatically change the current political agenda due to his desire to accelerate the privatization of industry which was begun under the previous administrations. Toward that end he has created a special office for privatization.

The brain gain from the Soviet immigrants, previously thought to represent a significant burden on the economy, served instead not only as an impetus for new business start-ups, but as an immediate and easily trained labor pool for the high tech industries. This gain also provided for a concomitant impetus to retool the higher education programs in science and technology. This keeps the best and brightest students in these fields in Israel rather than studying abroad and/or staying abroad.

The establishment of the peace process combined with the Soviet immigration sustained a rapid growth rate with a dramatic drop in unemployment. This growth was assisted by the freeing up of 10 billion dollars in loan guarantees from the U.S. government not needed for

instruments for war, which were instead made available for use in the domestic sector. Another important by product was the availability of military technologies for civilian application, and the willingness of the U.S. government to give Israel access to formerly restricted equipment and technology, i.e., super computers.

At the same time, however, the rapidly expanding economy led the government to undertake expenditures which exceeded revenue received. This resulted in a disequilibrium in the economy. Inflation is currently rising and the capital markets are oversold (from being greatly overvalued, stocks are now moving toward being undervalued). Another factor creating the disequilibrium is the exchange rate between *shkalim* and dollars which has remained constant while the inflation rate runs at 14-15% per annum. If the economy is to continue to expand, significant measures will have to be taken. Two specific steps which may need to be undertaken to sustain the growth are the reduction of government expenses and the controlling or reduction of annual interest rates. Netanyahu's expressed desire to reduce the budget will therefore have significant impact, i.e., a reduction of jobs and social welfare grants.

The government has reacted slowly to the changing economic reality. As a result private initiatives, both profit and not for profit, have been created to fill the gap. Three examples are: Uri Scharf's *Mati*: The Center for Business Development in Jerusalem, Robin Hacke's H.K. Investments Associates Investment Co., and Sara Kreimer's Jewish-Arab Center for Economic Development. Each of these organizations seeks to stimulate new small business ventures by providing business consultation, seed loans, and access to financial markets including private venture capital. At the same time, exciting long range development options are being created by the government based on cooperation within the Middle East/East Mediterranean region.

The current situation has caused the expansion of the Israeli high tech industry to the point where Israel is now the second largest software developer in the world. It has also created opportunities for new business ventures such as business consulting firms, mutual funds and venture capital firms seeking to invest in both start-up and growth projects. Because the majority of Israeli development efforts tend to be product oriented rather than market driven, the new business ventures need such business inputs to expand their business ideas and products into larger world markets.

Conclusions and Implications

Historically, the American Jewish community has related to Israel in three primary ways:

1. *tzedakah*
2. political influence
3. *hasbarah* (the dissemination of information about Israel to the general public).

With the new realities in Israel, by and large these connections are no longer as effective or needed to the same degree. Replacing these connections requires new strategies, and the following may provide the beginning of a different approach:

1. Political influence formerly directed to the government can potentially be shifted to the business sector.
2. *Hasbarah* which was formerly used to interpret Israel's political agenda can be shifted to help North America better understand the values of Jewish pluralism, the changing business reality, and the opportunities resulting.
3. *Tzedakah*, formerly a key element in the conscience and rationale for much of American philanthropy, is no longer critical for Israel's survival, and thus we need to identify new and appropriate ways for investing in the Israel of the future.

Among the trends we learned about was the development of new industrial parks which have attracted significant investment from U.S. and multi-national corporations. The Malcha Industrial Park which began with five companies three years ago now contains more than 70 companies, and the number of venture capital firms has grown from three to more than 20 during same period. In addition, we were also surprised to learn of the rapidly growing number of Israeli companies using the NASDAQ exchange for their listings and initial public offerings. Therefore, we believe that the growth and rapid expansion of Israel's business, technology, and the economy provides opportunities for establishing new linkages to the American Jewish community. The vehicle of investing in Israeli businesses seems to offer a new and especially effective way to connect to the generation of young Jews who do not relate to the idealized version of Israel.

Centers can serve as focal points of leadership to the community by convening meetings both in the U.S. and Israel with Israeli business leaders. Conferences on investment opportunities as well as discussions on the

nature and direction of the Israeli economy could be created. On a smaller scale Centers could consider programming initiatives which help members of our communities to become better informed. For example, the development of investment clubs seeking to benefit from the Israeli economic growth could be used to provide one tangible path for such connections. In addition, trips to Israel which often focus on community and Center leaders' understanding Israel's social needs and political realities and structure, could be expanded to incorporate meetings with business, technology and economic leaders an in depth perspective and connection to the Israeli reality. The business community's optimism and long term perspective presents a different and much more hopeful vision of Israel and its role in the Middle East. Borders and ethnic differences become less important as profit becomes a legitimate motive for interacting with Arab neighbors.

Politics, Process, and Current Events in Israel

Adolfo Cheistweir, Mark Lit, Moises Paz

During the concluding seminar of the Israel Fellows II program, which took place in Israel in July of 1996, our tutorial group examined the current political, economic, and social situation of Israel. Because the issues were too numerous to cover thoroughly in our limited time frame, we decided to focus on three specific areas and to present them each here separately. They are:

- Religious Polarization and Jewish Identity (Moises Paz)
- ®The Peace Process (Mark Lit)
- ®The Israeli Economy: The Impact of Immigration and the Peace Process (Adolfo Cheistweir)

Our appreciation is extended to the JCC Association Israel office staff, especially Richie Juran and Sara Sless, for arranging a truly unique opportunity for us to study Israeli society in a most productive and interesting fashion.

Special thanks goes to our tutor Yossi Klein Halevi, a senior writer at the *Jerusalem Report*. His enthusiasm, support, and guidance reflected the best possible mentoring techniques. We also express our appreciation to the following who granted interviews and provided information:

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Aluf Hareven - Sikui, Organization for Rights of Israeli

Arabs

Eliezer Zandberg - Member of Knesset, Tzomet Party
Dr. Yossi Olmert - Likud Press Office
Tsali Reshef - Founder of Peace Now and Member of Labor Party

Religious Polarization and Jewish Identity

Moises Paz

Introduction

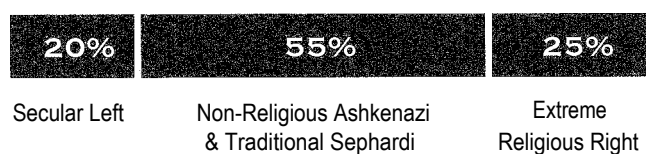
During the course of our three-week seminar, we interviewed a number of distinguished personalities, listed on the previous page, as well as a variety of other Israelis. In an informal discussion with Zvi Inbar, Director of the Joint Program for Jewish Education, he agreed with our group's findings that the most pressing issue facing Israeli society today is that of religious expression. This opinion was reflected in several of the discussions and lectures during the two-year-long Israel Fellows Program. Personal contacts with Israeli residents - a "typical" Sephardic family from Rishon L'zion, a modern non-religious family from North Tel Aviv, and a strictly Orthodox family living in the Old City of Jerusalem - in addition to many spontaneous interactions, confirmed religious polarization as a central topic in Israel today.

Religious Polarization and Jewish Identity in 1996

Moderate religious practice and identity is by far the most popular form of Jewish expression in Israel today. Yet, the extreme right wing religious and left wing secular forces are the strongest and most often heard voices in the national debate regarding Jewish identity.

It is extremely important to define terms and groups prior to undertaking a discussion on this topic. A helpful tool in understanding religious practice and the dialogue taking place is the following diagram and definitions provided by Dr. Yair Auron of the *Seminar HaKibbutzim* College in Tel Aviv. Dr. Auron is widely recognized for the extensive studies and surveys he has conducted pertaining to Jewish identity in Israel today.

Religious Identification of Jews Living in Israel Today - A Simplified Version



More than 50% of the Jewish population in Israel would be classified as non-religious or traditional Jews. Religious Right represents approximately 25% of Jewish Israelis and secular Israelis represent less than 20% of Israel's Jewish population.

Definitions

Extreme Religious, *Haredi* Jews: Identify Jewishly in all aspects of life. This includes a most obvious form of dress: long coats, *kapotas*, black hats, etc. These Israelis believe in the total and absolute following of traditions and interpretations of the Torah as they interpret them. There is very little, if any, tolerance for alternate forms of religious expression.

Traditional Sephardic: Commonly of Sephardic origins, this group believes in the traditional Orthodox fashion. However, they are very comfortable participating in secular life as well. A classic example is attending an Orthodox synagogue on Shabbat morning and driving to attend a soccer game on Shabbat afternoon. This style of religious expression and identity is part of a rich Sephardic lifestyle and tradition of tolerance for alternate forms of personal religious expression.

Non-Religious Ashkenazi: Commonly of European origins, their religious outlook stems from the tradition of following *halacha* with little tolerance for alternate forms of religious expression. This same group, in the United States, created for itself an alternate tradition or *halacha*, *i.e.*, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist Jewish religious expression, hence, allowing itself to follow *halacha* and practice religion with alternative forms of expression.

Secular: This segment of Israeli society is hopeful of moving the State of Israel to a post-Zionist society, one which does not necessarily see Israel as the fulfillment of the Jewish dream, but rather as a country responsive to the needs of its citizens. In this society, equality for Arabs and all citizens would be paramount and religious ambitions for the nation would be rejected. Jewish symbols, education and state sponsored efforts would be replaced by consumerism and the pursuit of individual rights and nationalistic ambitions.

Religious Polarization

In Israel today, society considers its options for religious expression limited. The centrist majority, traditional and non-religious, are not evident in the national dialogue. There is not a perceived option for religious expression or identity and individuals of these two camps see themselves as being forced to choose religious identification from either the religious right or the secular left.

Historically, Jewish identity in Israel was linked to strong Zionist ideology. In recent years Zionism has been under assault by the development of a modern secular state, Russian immigrants, Arab citizens and a consumer oriented society in pursuit of individual rights and expression. Recent studies of college age youth, in their early 20s, shows that Zionist identification is being replaced by alternate forms of Jewish identity. In particular, Holocaust identification is reported as the common Jewish theme among this population. This is due in part to the fact that this topic is taught most widely in all schools, religious right as well as secular left. There is also a strong desire for a more significant and meaningful form of Jewish identity. The community center staff at the Shenkin Street Community Center, located in modern, central Tel Aviv (a "yuppie" neighborhood) also reports a visible trend toward a more significant form of religious expression. Interestingly enough, the community center does not see Jewish programming or the fostering of Jewish identity as part of its mission or job.

Options for Religious Expression

Conservative/Reform Jewish identification and practice: These movements are very weak and virtually absent from Israeli society. *They* are seen as an imported form of Jewish practice with very little grass roots support. Unfortunately, these movements have aligned with extreme secular, anti-religious political parties and have failed to identify themselves as credible forms of religious practice.

Hemdat - Religious Freedom Movement: The religious freedom movement has focused its efforts on political and judicial efforts. Perhaps seen as an effort for intellectuals, it too has identified with the left wing Meretz party and placed very little effort in grass roots organizing or in obtaining popular support.

National Religious Party (Mafdal): The national religious movement has become almost entirely consumed with the issue of West Bank settlements and in an effort to gain support has forged increased associations with the religious right.

Religious Right: This is comprised of diverse groups advocating Orthodox religious principals. The Shas party has by far made the greatest strides in gaining popular support and, consequently, won 10 Knesset seats in the 1996 elections. Of Sephardic origins, the party has had much appeal for the Sephardic "traditional" Jews. Its efforts at grass roots organizing include radio talk shows and special radio shows aimed at teens. Popular personalities including celebrity status soccer players have responded favorably to Shas and actively support its efforts. Shas has managed to enter into an effective dialogue with many segments of society and has been successful in recruiting converts to religious Sephardic observance.

Conclusion

Many feel that the success of the Likud Party in the 1996 national elections is consistent with the fear that society under the Labor Party was moving too fast and too far to the secular, post Zionist left. Conversely, the 1992 loss of the Likud Party was seen as an expression that the country was moving too far right. Israeli society is seeking a balance between extreme right and extreme left and a new form of Jewish identity and religious expression. The majority of Israel's population is traditionalist and non-religious, but this quiet majority is unaddressed by both extreme factions. Although attracted to the well organized and charismatic Shas movement, it is, at the same time, repelled by other religious extremist groups. While seduced by the left, modern, consumer oriented secular society, it is disillusioned by an excessive weakening of important Jewish symbols, values and identity. The missing partner is in the center: a more liberal religious movement committed to grass roots organizing with the traditionalist Sephardic and non-religious Ashkenazi populations, a credible movement which will provide an alternate form of Jewish religious expression which more adequately reflects the interest and desires of

the majority of Israelis. Some believe current centrist movements, which may have the potential to address the needs of the majority of Israelis, are ineffective because they are dominated by non-Israeli leadership or by the intellectually elite. These groups lack the passion of the religious right, and the grass roots organizing effort of a Shas Party. Although many Israelis are seeking alternate forms of Jewish expression, there is currently no force to fill this vacuum. In the meantime, the majority of centrist Jews living in Israel will continue to seek identification and religious expression. The highly visible struggle between the extreme right and extreme left will continue. In the words of Dr. Naftali Rothenberg, "The key to a pluralistic society in Israel is dialogue. This may require bitter fights, but as long as we are talking, or fighting, together, there is hope."

Implications for Israeli Americans

Herein lies a possible approach for reaching Israeli Jews living in the United States. Recognizing their need to identify Jewishly and at the same time their natural resistance to participating in organized religion may provide essential clues to addressing this population. When asked "if you were living abroad, what would attract you or your children to the JCC?" a common answer provided by Israelis was "Israeli programs" such as those related to *Yom HaAtzmaut*, *Yom HaZikaron*, or Passover. Perhaps the organizers of such JCC events should make more of an effort to involve local Israelis in planning them, and these activities should be heavily marketed to the Israeli population in the community.

The Peace Process

Mark Lit

In this short presentation I will attempt to delineate a rather simplistic understanding of the current political situation in Israel. My thesis is that now, perhaps more than ever before, Israeli politics has clearly defined "sides" to the political spectrum. Led by Labor, the Left is characterized by the belief that the State of Israel is in the truly unique position of being able to draw her enemies into a process of peace from which they will be unable to escape. This "web" of peace will eventually lead to a peaceful coexistence between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Under Likud's banner, the Right believes that if Israel does not slow the peace process, and bring it to a

complete stop, or at least alter the many concessions being made, the Arabs will continue a process of "phases" which will eventually lead to the destruction of the State of Israel as we now know it. So, who is correct?

The beginning of the modern state saw ideologies which overlapped. The secular founding fathers sought a normalized Jewish State, a haven for the Jews of all lands, particularly from anti-Semitism. They envisioned a society full of Jews, from scientists to prostitutes. The religious founding fathers, on the other hand, realized a return to Zion. They sought the abnormalization of Judaism and saw a modern state as the fulfillment of prophecy. There was, however, much in common between the two positions. Even the secular founding fathers believed in the mystical nature of the Jewish State. In fact and practice, the religious had feelings on the left, and the secular had feelings on the right.

Although this dichotomy in many ways may still describe the majority of today's Israeli society, clearly the 1996 party lines are more boldly drawn. The Left, sometimes defining its vision as post-Zionist, believes Israel is not a Jewish State, but a state which is made up mostly of Jews. It is grounded in the belief of justice to all its citizens, and American-style pluralism. The Right believes that Israel is first and foremost a Jewish State, currently led by Benjamin Netanyahu who does not wear a kippah but who peppers his speech with the expression "with the help of God."

And more than ever before, Israeli politics is defined by one critical issue: the peace process. Since 56% of the Jewish population voted for Netanyahu, we must assume that those voters were telling the Labor party of Shimon Peres, "You went too far."

During the course of the Fellows seminar, we learned about two groups of non-Jewish inhabitants of the former Palestine: one which has claimed Israeli citizenship and lives within its borders (Israeli Arabs), and the other which believes its people are the victims of history and remain suspended in time and space (which they define as occupied territory). They are referred to as the Palestinians. Our tutorial group conducted two interviews on these subjects. The first was with Alouph Hareven, perhaps the most respected Jewish researcher and advocate for Israeli Arabs' rights. The other session was held in East Jerusalem (or, as our host said, "occupied East Jerusalem") with Jamil Rabah, one of the founders of the Jerusalem Media Service, perhaps the most widely read of the Palestinian circulars.

Alouph Hareven is the co-director of *Sikkui* (Chance).

His publication monitors the treatment and living conditions and standards among Israeli Arabs. We have all heard the statistics used to prove that this group of Arabs lives better than the average Arabs in the rest of the Middle East. Hareven is not concerned with comparing them to the "rest" of the Arabs, but rather to their fellow Israeli citizens. He believes that this group chose Israel as its state, and deserves the same treatment as their Jewish counterparts. He summarizes their political dilemma as "Their State (Israel) is at odds with their Nation (the Palestinian People)."

Israeli Arabs are becoming an important part of Israeli society. Few (less than 3%) commit any serious crimes. They have in large part joined the political process (they now hold 9 seats in Knesset) and most (90%) would opt to keep their Israeli citizenship over carrying Palestinian passports. Over the last four years, the government - often using *Sikkui's* statistics as ammunition - has done much to improve the equality of life for these Israeli Arabs. Much money has been invested in the infrastructure of Israeli Arab towns and villages to improve health care, roads, electricity, water systems, and education.

As the Israeli Arab's plight improves, what is the concern of *Sikkui*? Dr. Hareven, who has dedicated much of his life to building better roads and hospitals, now seems to be concerned more with building better citizens. Israeli Arabs are not required to do army service (although they may volunteer and, after thorough investigation, several hundred per year are admitted) so the majority of them are not exposed to the State's number one citizen-building experience. They join a growing number of Jewish Israelis who do not serve in the IDF, as it has now become easier to opt out of service for religious, medical or even conscientious reasons. One-third of the young people in Israel who reach the age of eighteen do not serve in the army. And the subject of citizenship is given little or no time in the schools. Dr. Hareven firmly believes that alternate national service should be made mandatory for all of Israel's citizens, Arab and Jew alike.

Our visit to East Jerusalem was its own experience. Our Israeli cab driver dropped us off on the wrong street, forcing us to take a "Palestinian" taxi to the correct address. We were then misquoted prices, given bad information, and, in general, treated *very* much like the typical Israeli cab driver treats tourists.

Our host, Jamil Rabah, greeted us warmly, accompanied by a second Palestinian who never said anything. (I was reminded of meetings in which I would have a third party present in case I was misquoted.) His message was simple and straight-forward: the Palestinian people are

the victims of history. Their current occupier (Israel) has committed hundreds of violations of the Oslo accords. The Palestinian people will not be happy until they have a sovereign nation made up of Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. By sovereign he means "Israeli troops not on both sides of the border." When we asked if he didn't mean "East Jerusalem," he said that it is the Israelis who insist that there is only one Jerusalem, and therefore when the Oslo accords refer to the need to discuss Jerusalem, all of the Holy City is open to discussion.

He continued that his people are forced to suffer greatly. When one crazy commits a crime, all the territories are closed and thousands lose their income. "So why didn't Arafat stop the bombings?" I asked. "If Israel, the great occupier, couldn't stop them, how could Arafat?" he retorted. "But didn't he stop them when he wanted to?" I prodded. There was no answer. Rather he continued that most of the Palestinians (98.3%) were against the bombing of innocent civilians. Perhaps that number has dropped now because of the frustrations with the peace process, but even most of *Hammam* was against the bombings. "Will you ever trust the Israelis?" I asked. "Which Israelis?" he answered. "I suppose that means no." I said. "Look," he explained, "I am a humanist. I believe in the human being. There is a saying in Arabic, 'If a person is killed in a forest, that is a crime which cannot be forgiven. But the killing of a nation should be considered.'" We asked for no further clarification, thanked our host, and left.

In the late 1960s Yehoshafat Harkabi, then head of military intelligence for the State of Israel and an avowed hawk, first exposed the Palestinian Covenant. In it, he claimed, the Palestinian people vowed to never cease hostility until the Jews are forced into the sea. Harkabi defined a policy of phases in which the Arabs would say whatever they needed to, compromise as much as necessary, and appear in any form consistent with the moment. But once a Palestinian state was formed, through a concerted and clear policy of television, radio and other propaganda, the momentum of history would be reversed, leading to the eventual overthrow of the Israeli State as we know it. Perhaps the Jewish State could become no more than a city-state (e.g., Hong Kong) centered around the Jewish capital of Tel Aviv. (During our interview with Jamil Rabah he called this merely Jewish paranoia.) Later in his life, Harkabi became a dove (he died in 1994). He never denied his earlier theory, but rather developed the theory of the web of peace. He grew to believe that despite the ultimate and clearly defined goal of the Palestinian people, a peace process would catch them in a web from which *they* could not escape.

Which position is correct? After seventeen years of peace between Israel and Egypt, Egyptian children still study maps of the middle East which do not include Israel. Is this peace or merely an extended non-belligerence? Who can we trust in the Arab world? Who will be in power in three years or even three months? The lines in the Israeli political community are drawn. After careful examination, it is clear that only time will tell who is correct.

The Israeli Economy: The Impact of Mass Immigration and the Peace Process

Adolpho Cheistweir

The excellent performance of the Israeli economy for the first half of the 1990s is a consequence of three factors: mass immigration of new immigrants, the peace process, and the technological revolution. If these factors remain equal, the economy of Israel will prosper and grow.

The Impact of Immigration

In the last five years, approximately 700,000 immigrants arrived, mostly from the former Soviet Union. They are considered the most educated and the least Jewishly knowledgeable *aliyah* in the history of the State of Israel. This *aliyah* increased the population of Israel by 12% and had an even greater impact on the labor rate, due to the higher participation of women immigrants in the labor force. The citizens of the former Soviet Union doubled the proportion of university post graduates, making the Israeli labor force one of the most highly skilled in the world. Half of the new immigrants arrived during 1990 and 1991, after which the flow of immigration became a constant stream of approximately 75,000 new immigrants a year. The immediate impact of this immigration was felt in the residential construction sector, which became the locomotive for the economy for almost three years. The number of housing developments begun in 1990 was double that of the previous year, and in 1991 the number doubled again. The wave of immigration also brought about a dramatic expansion of road construction, water and sewage works, electric and telecommunication facilities among others. The establishment of new households resulted in a significant increase in the consumption of food, clothing, furniture, appliances and services of all kinds. This large *aliyah* reduced the

pressure on wages, allowing business to hire more workers and to increase their profits.

At the present time approximately 70% of immigrants from the former Soviet Union are employed (although a large number not working in their profession). Seventy percent own apartments and cars. In Kiryat Shmona we saw a new complex of 3,000 apartments, of which 2,000 were designated for *olim*. This *aliyah* improved dramatically the level of education in Kiryat Shmona. Anton Nossik, a physician by profession who currently works for the Russian-language newspaper *Izvesti*, observed that eighth grade immigrant students are at the twelfth grade level in math and physics in Israeli schools.

The Impact of the Peace Process

The dramatic elements in the political life of Israel, such as the signing of the declaration of principles between Israel and the PLO in September 1993 and the peace treaty with Jordan in October 1994, have already opened new doors and opportunities for businesses. Economic activity has expanded on three levels: first, with Israel's immediate neighbors; second, with the rest of the world; and third, in joint cooperative projects on a regional scale. Israel's foreign economic relations continue to extend to more countries. Israel's political stability has substantially increased foreign investment, resulting in an economic boom. The Middle East as a location for a factory or other facility, which used to be seen as a liability for international businesses, could now be considered an asset.

Israel's Economy Compared to Other Countries

Israel is ranked among the developed countries at approximately the same level as Spain and Ireland. Despite its small population, Israel's economic development dominates that of its immediate neighbors with a gross domestic product per capita 10 to 15 times higher. The GDP for 1995 reached \$15,600. This figure is approximately one third the level recorded in Switzerland and Japan and approximately half that of the United States and the richer European countries. The rate of economic growth for the years 1990 - 1995 was the highest in the world. Israel's triple digit inflation of the early 1980s has dropped to around 12% since 1992.

Peace Dividends for Israel

- Ⓔ A potential substantial reduction in the defense budget
- Ⓔ Increased international trade
- Ⓔ Establishment as a regional resource for economic and technological advancement
- Ⓔ A steady increase in the number of tourists
- * Development of a cooperative plan for regional water management
- Ⓔ Providing an outlet into the Mediterranean Sea for Jordan and oil-producing nations

With this expansion of trade and tourism between Israel and its neighboring countries, the construction of new railways and roads will be essential.

Conclusion

The peace achieved to date has been considerable for both Israel and the Palestinians. There is anticipation that the peace process will continue and that terrorist attacks will stop. The future dividends will depend on the general health of the economy. Just as a more stable security situation in recent years contributed to Israel's economic growth, the opposite will have an adverse effect on growth by causing a decrease in immigration, tourism, private consumption and investment.

Youth and Identity: A Viable Program Solution

Barton R. Schachter

Created in part by the Israel Fellows Tutorial Group 1996:

Dan Bernstein, Ann Eisen, Jess Levy, Jay Roth, Barton R. Schachter

The subject of youth and identity has perplexed society for generations. To attempt to understand this state of being called adolescence would fill volumes and certainly lead to animated debates. We shall simply define the period as age 12 to 18 and characterize it as a general period which is exemplified by great apathy, extreme energy, flashes of lethargy, followed by acts of brilliance, moments of despair growing to sheer exhilaration, anomie, doubt; and certainty. Although generally a confusing period, there are traits which are common, such as the period of significant physical growth, desired experimentation, role testing, great questioning, and character development.

Amy Sales of Brandeis University recently conducted a series of surveys in which she identified important characteristics that establish a series of contradictions that relate to teenage development and Judaism. She states, "Teens want independence but seek connections. They want adults and peers that they can talk to and to explore the myriad issues that arise for teens. Teens are universalistic and seek experimentation. They want hanging out time but seek higher education. They want to be with others and seek Jewish identity and values. The confusion not only lies with the youth but also with the organizations that try to service youth. Jewish organizations say that youth are a priority, yet they really do not want teens around. They say that youth are the future of the Jewish people, but they find them noisy, disruptive and disrespectful of people and property." Sales tells us that Jewish organizations often put teens in spaces in either the attic or the basement, out of central areas, away from other members or guests of an organization. The space itself and the way it is equipped often gives a message that teens are not very important. Most adults are afraid to talk to teens. The culture conveys a message that there is a generation gap and adults do not know how to talk to teens. Today we see programs in most communities moving toward intergenerational and family programming, with strong emphasis on Jewish

family. Teens, however, still desire to be with friends and not to be overly associated with their parents or families. Sales concludes that teens can be active contributors to a Jewish community. They could sit on boards, contribute time, have expertise, share insight, energy and connections to a larger population - either of teens or the whole community. They could be treated like young adults and others who give and not just take.

Demographic studies indicate that the population of younger children, say under age six, is expected to continue dropping for the next ten years. However, during this same time period, the population of teenagers will increase dramatically. Understanding this important trend, and taking into consideration the valid points that Sales makes, our group of JCCA Israeli Fellows came to conclude that Jewish Community Centers and the JCCA must enter into a period of significant introspection and develop a model of program for teenagers.

On our recent trip to Israel, our Israel Fellows group had an opportunity to see several programs that gave us important insights into our theme. We saw a program taking place in Petah Tikva that is based on youth modeling where teens help develop program and services and at the same time develop their own skills, act as appropriate role models, and emphasize the act of giving back to their communities. We saw the *Mifgashim* program, a values-based program going on at a youth camping site. We interacted with an Israeli Defense Forces program that focuses on training misguided recruits through the process of peer counseling. Seeing these programs was extremely important to us, as they highlighted the potential that is innate in youth and the positive effects of values clarification and peer modeling.

A crucial element in youth programming is the staff that work with this population. Agencies and the JCCA must commit themselves to developing staff who see this work as a long-term career opportunity. Youth workers

must understand that undertaking this challenge will lead to positive results for the client, as well as personal gratification and professional career enhancement. Working with youth must be seen as a team effort by the staff, the volunteers, and the leadership. We must always remember that youth do not remain youth, but grow and become, hopefully, productive members of our society. We should not be fearful of youth, nor should we treat them as non-communicative subjects. We were all, once upon a time, youth.

Barry Chazan, a scholar for the Israel Fellows Program and JCCA staff member, says "Jewish identity is about support for the Jewish people in contribution to its struggle to survive." Jewish identity begins at birth. To a great extent, it is dependent upon the nurturing it receives from the family and from the child's participation in parenting and early childhood programs often provided by Jewish Community Centers. In recognition of the importance of these early crucial years and the need for quality Judaic content and programming, the JCC network has become the largest preschool service system in North America and JCCA has hired an early childhood consultant to assist Centers in fulfilling their missions in this area.

Research indicates that "the teen years are the critical years for intervention in terms of Jewish identity formation." Adolescence is a complex topic. Identity is extremely complex. Choosing Jewish has become an option and we have to provide opportunities which encourage the Jewish choice. Practitioners in the field have to be more proactive and therefore we have to change the attitudes of those in the field. We must develop a passion for our work. "Passion is authenticity," says Ruth Calderon, an innovative Israeli educator with whom we met. Informal education is needed to enhance formal education and make it work. We need to create a total environment where formal and informal education are tied together.

The JCC movement is well over 100 years old. It has seen society deal with wars, technological changes, advancements in education, depressions, recessions, the creation of the State of Israel, hunger, famine, space exploration, and world-wide growth. The constant that remains is our subject of adolescence. Teens today face the same rites of passage that their parents, and their parents' parents, before them faced during this difficult period of growth and excitement.

Youth face constant conflicts in their growing years. In North America Jews are now openly welcomed into society. Parents are more tolerant. Children are disbursed

throughout the community in a variety of schools. There is complete openness between the sexes. There are greater risks from crime, substance abuse, and diseases. There is a constant search for the meaning of life, Children today live in new family models, including intermarriages, same-sex marriages, single-parent households. Mass media has had a tremendous effect on the lives of our youth. The influx of New Americans to our society brings a new influence to our adolescent population. Also significant are the changing roles of men and women. Israel constitutes a further factor, with its changing sense of Judaism focused on pluralism, nationalism, and a secular universalism. Israel, however, continues to be a major source of Jewish identity for many North American Jewish teens.

The Jewish Community Center is the perfect place to develop a program that will reach the largest number of youth with the greatest impact. JCCs are generally pluralistic, with broad-based memberships inclusive of all denominations and secular Jews. *They* provide creative opportunities without restriction, allowing for experimentation by all age groups. They have a strong commitment to Jewish values. They have well-trained staffs of group workers and educators. They have the support of a national organization, with more than 250 different Centers supporting each other, and the effect of a movement. They have strong lay leadership. They have the ability to reach out. And, above all, they offer a non-threatening, welcoming environment for youth.

Over the next several years, it is incumbent upon the JCCA and JCCs to conduct more research into the question of youth services and Judaic identity. The results will call for greater development of experimental programs, more funding, increased staffing, and the cultivation of lay, professional, and peer programming.

It is important that we focus not only on JCC members but on the larger community of youth as well. We must be aware of the socio-economic backgrounds and the diversification of our youth and their families. In developing programs, we must recognize the existing knowledge base and skills that our youth and staff bring to the environment. Staff involvement is an essential ingredient. We must invest energies to insure the retention of staff. The JCC field must strive to reverse the short life span of youth workers and create a greater sense of youth work as a career. In managing this process, JCCA must intensify and enhance the services that it provides in order to help JCCs reach a higher level of achievement and rate of success. The format needs imagination. It needs to allow people at all levels - the teens, the adults, the board, the fenders - to play creative roles in develop-

ing important models for the future. Actualization in each community will be based upon individual community standards. What makes sense in one community may not make sense in another community. JCCs will have to adjust the program models to make them appropriate.

We feel that it is important to begin to focus on youth by developing a series of programs that encourage opportunities versus requirements. A rule of thumb is to approach teens where they are, and offer them positive modeling and opportunities which enhance positive values. Teens have diverse interests. We cannot be one dimensional in trying to reach them. JCCs have the tools to provide diverse and significant programming that will reach out to the complex population of adolescents and provide experiences and memories that will affect identity.

We have identified eight models of programs which we see as means to create and enhance Jewish identity through informal Jewish education at Jewish Community Centers. Although each of these suggestions may be undertaken independently of the others, it is our intent to emphasize a comprehensive approach to teen programs which will enhance Jewish identity.

1. Camping. Most communities sponsor some form of day camp, whether it be travel, sports, or special interest, and some communities run resident camps. As microcosms of a functioning community, camps provide a total environment for experimentation in role modeling and group involvement. The Jewish study, peer group reactions, and role enhancement that take place at camp provide teens with an opportunity to learn about themselves and others. Identity is explored at every moment of the day through close introspection and observation. *Communities without these programs should find means to establish camping services or to work with neighboring communities to forge into these arenas.*

2. Maccabi and Sports. The JCC Maccabi Youth Games presently involves close to 5,000 children each summer, but its extraordinary potential to develop into a year-round program has yet to be realized. The Games offer unparalleled opportunities for Jewish teens to network with other Jewish teens, and for JCCs to build Jewish educational and cultural components using the value of competition and sportsmanship. Showcasing teens in this positive environment creates role models for peers and younger children. *Communities that participate in the JCC Maccabi Youth Games should enhance their program by developing year-round formats, and com-*

munities that have not yet entered into the summer experience should see it as a vehicle to further enhance their work with youth.

- 3. Youth Groups.** JCCs have always been a place where youth groups gather. Whether they are local, nationally affiliated, or special-interest groups, the JCC is an ideal location for these groups to conduct activities which development leadership, test roles, enhance peer relations, and contribute to charitable causes. *Models such as BBYO can be well utilized by our movement. Even a JCCA national youth movement is within reason.*
- 4. Cultural Arts.** Many JCCs have active cultural arts programs dealing in Jewish learning, history, values, language, dance, music, drama, and literature as vehicles for teaching Jewish values and skills. Our children are more sophisticated than the generation that grew up before them. *Enhancing that sophistication through cultural arts programming can only lead to more productive Jewish identity.*
- 5. Mitzvah Corps.** This unique program has been established to teach Jewish values and to stress *tikkun olam*, a way to help correct society and make it whole. Teens learn the value of helping others who are less fortunate by facilitating programs and services for underprivileged, disabled, and elderly populations. opportunities. Teens are recruited from synagogues, youth groups, and JCCs, and assignments are carried out in groups or as individuals. Adults work with the teens in modeling the specific programs. *A complete description of this program is attached for further reference.*
- 6. Israel Travel and Exchange Programs.** A real must. In a recent study, Gary Tobin concludes that the two most formidable experiences that youth have in promoting Jewish identity are resident camping and visiting Israel with a peer group. Experience with Israelis broadens Jewish life and provides teens with a sense of Jewish peoplehood. Travel to foreign countries and seeking association with other Jewish societies is highly encouraged in order to understand one's own Jewish community better as well as the centrality of Jewish life throughout the world. JCC Association has developed the *Etgar* program, a unique Israel experience for JCC teens and JCC camps, which emphasizes the themes of community and leadership as well as Jewish history and spirituality. *Etgar is one of the wonderful ways to create Jewish identity by traveling to Israel.*
- 7. Wellness.** Concern for one's body, mind, and spiritual self is a significant issue in today's society. Substance abuse, health, diet, sexual conduct, and moral behavior

impact teens' ability to make choices. It is essential that we help our youth work through this *very* difficult period. JCCs, with their physical fitness facilities and wellness programs, are the perfect environment to work with the general milieu of youth. Earning money to take care of personal needs has also become important to youth. The JCCs are also significant employers of teenagers. Training can be initiated with teen employees to help them sort through some of the issues they face. *A comprehensive wellness program should include training and counseling relationships with sister agencies, e.g., JF&CS, schools, camps, synagogues.*

8. Leadership Development. Essential to proper development of our Jewish communities is the cultivation of our youth as potential leaders, and the teenage period is a wonderful time to reach them. We can create systems for recruiting youth into leadership roles in our local communities and developing their interests in the national and international Jewish community. We can also expand teen involvement by facilitating peer training and governance. The JCCA is the perfect network to establish a national JCC Teen Leadership Initiative. This program has been described by others recently and can serve as a wonderful model for Jewish identity. A national model for JCC Teen Leadership Initiative is described as follows:

This program is not intended to create another national youth group but to develop a sound leadership program. It would include upwards of ten teens selected from each community. Six regions could be developed of 250 youth in each region, Training and coordination would be through the JCCA. A full-time professional would be assigned to develop and directly implement this program. Special training would be conducted for youth staff and teen representatives to cultivate curriculum and program design. Each year, one regional and one national and a series of ongoing local events would be stimulants to this leadership development program. The emphasis would be on Jewish issues and values. Funding for regional, national, and Israel experience programs would also be cultivated. There would be a teen page in the JCC On-line for communications with Israel and North American counterparts. A teen newspaper would be developed as an important communication item for teens in every community. A recommended curriculum would enable each community to develop the program that fits their community. There would be a strong emphasis on the Israel partnership component, tying together teen leadership with the Mishgashiv program in Israel. The program would culminate with a specially designed trip to Israel for a smaller number of

the participants of the teen leadership initiative.

Conclusion

Many communities are having immense problems in cultivating programs for teenagers. We believe that by emphasizing the areas we have cited communities will be more successful in achieving a greater sense of Jewish identity among their youth. Adopting this eight-step approach will enrich youth work in JCCs.

There is no sure cure for the complexity of adolescent Jewish identity. Again we remind you that infants become children and those children become teens who then become adults. This continuum has a beginning and a series of opportunities from which intervention can be effected. If not enthusiastically approached, we will continue to see more and more of our youth stepping further from the core of Judaism, from our communities, and from our Jewish family lifestyles. These programs will serve as an insurance policy on our future. It is incumbent upon all of us to insure that our youth receive every opportunity for a fuller and richer Jewish life. In doing so, we will insure the future of the Jewish people. The time is now. The challenge is great. We have the team and the tools. Let us work together to develop our response to this significant, growing problem. Let us view this as a dynamic opportunity to enhance the lives of our Jewish youth.

Addendum 1

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF PITISBURGH JEWISH IDENTITY QUIZ

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF JEWISH IDENTITY?

DIRECTIONS:

- Write 1 "extremely" next to the items that are extremely important
- Write 2 "very" next to the items that are very important
- Write 3 "sort of" next to the items that are sort of important
- Write 4 "not very" next to the items that are not very important
- Write 5 "not at all" next to the items that are not at all important

- Keeping a kosher home
- Belonging to a synagogue
- Giving money to tzedaka (charity)
- Marrying a Jew
- Living in Israel
- Having a Jewish mother
- Practicing Jewish holidays and rituals
- The same issues concern Jewish youth and adults from all corners of the world
- Belief in God
- Ability to speak Hebrew
- Supporting Israel financially (donations)
- Membership in a Jewish youth movement
- Attending synagogue on Yom Kippur/High Holidays
- Attending a Passover Seder
- Remembering the Holocaust
- Pursuing a Jewish education
- Visiting Israel
- Being ready to help Jews all over the world
- Listening to Jewish/Israeli music
- Seeking out Jewish friends
- Working on volunteering in a Jewish agency
- Working on volunteering in a humanitarian agency

Addendum 2

TIDE MITZVAH CORPS A YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Mitzvah Corps places middle and high school students in team volunteer opportunities. The program contributes to the civic development of young people and provides important services unique to each community. During an intensive summer session and select days throughout the school year, teams of young people led by trained team leaders engage in carefully structured service projects coordinated by the JCC.

The Corps' youth volunteers are ages 12-18 and can reflect the geographic, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the area. This rich mix of participants adds depth to each young person's service experience and enhances his/her understanding of the community.

Service projects are selected in cooperation with local public and private agencies. Projects include tutoring, coaching, renovation, community awareness skits, and working with the elderly and disabled.

Overview of Mitzvah Corps

The Jewish component of the program will enable students that are currently involved in religious education and/or youth activities to further their understanding of Jewish morals and values through hands-on experiences in the community. There will be opportunities available for the students to work in the Jewish communal agencies as well as in organizations throughout Allegheny County. The opportunities will include both Jewish only groups and groups that represent the diversity of the county. The Mitzvah Corps will encompass the following:

One-Day Service Project (Specifically for the Jewish Community): Projects will take place in both Jewish and secular social-service agencies. All projects will incorporate an educational component. There will be approximately ten Mitzvah Corps projects a year that will be open to any other member of the corps and thus each project will have volunteers from the varied Jewish stream: Orthodox, Conservative and Reform.

Congregational and School Support: The Mitzvah Corps will provide services to any congregation, school, or youth group that is interested in doing their own social action project. The services will include finding the appropriate not-for-profit and setting up the project, and

providing orientation and reflection.

Individual Volunteering: The Mitzvah Corps will form a list of acceptable individual volunteer placements and make the list available to the membership. The corps will work with those agencies to track volunteer hours and conduct evaluations.

The Mitzvah Corps will also offer the youth an opportunity to meet other Jewish teenagers that they would not ordinarily come in contact with. At this moment there are very few organizations that encourage youth from the different streams (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform) to come together to work for the betterment of the community. Often, when an organization does exist, the synagogues and schools do not support it because it is seen as a threat to their own membership. The advantage to the Mitzvah Corps is that they will be representing their school or synagogue on the Corps and will be going back to their host organizations to discuss their experiences. The Mitzvah Corps will not be competing with existing programs, but will be complementing them by helping them complete their mission of tzedakah and social action.

Outcome of Project

Five hundred students, grades 7 - 12, will participate in at least one volunteer project each year. All of the volunteers will participate in a training and career education program.

Administration

The Jewish Community Center will administer the program. A project coordinator will be hired who will be responsible for coordinating with the Jewish community. A steering committee made up of lay and professional members of the community will be formed to oversee the Jewish educational components of the program.

The steering committee will be composed of the following:

- e Rabbi and/or Educator from the Reform community
- ® Rabbi and/or Educator from the Conservative community
- ® Rabbi and/or Educator from the Orthodox community
- e Representative from BBYO
- ® Staff member from JF&CS
- ® Director of Volunteers RCJS
- ® Representatives from NCJW
- ® Representatives from JEI
- ® Youth representatives

Management

The JCC Youth Volunteer Director will oversee all areas of volunteer program management including recruitment, orientation, training, and recognition.

Membership

The students can become a member through their day school, religious school, or youth group. The students can also sign up on an individual level. There will be a \$5.00 fee for each student to become a member. For congregations or schools that take advantage of the congregational support component of the corps there will be an organization membership fee of \$150.00.

Recruitment

The recruitment of youth will be the responsibility of the individual schools and youth groups that enrolled in the corps. A recruitment presentation package will be put together by the project coordinator and distributed to the schools and congregations. The project coordinator will also make recruitment presentations other places where Jewish students congregate such as the Jewish Community Center.

Once students are enrolled in the program, they will receive monthly newsletters detailing upcoming projects. The newsletter will be distributed through the schools and congregations. It will be the responsibility of the individual students to call and sign up for a project. Reinforcement will be provided through the schools. The school principals and/or youth group advisors can also call and get an entire group signed up for a project.

Students wishing to volunteer individually, will be given a list of approved agencies during orientation and will be responsible for contacting the agency on their own.

During the first *year*, a video would be created discussing the program that could be used for recruitment in the following years.

Educational Component

The educational component of the program will consist of six parts: Orientation, Reflection, Community Needs Assessing, Skill Training, Career Education and Teacher Training. In all aspects of the educational component, the staff of the JCC will supply the generic training and members of the steering committee will conduct the religious orientation.

Orientation

All members of the corps will be required to attend a one-half day orientation program. The program will discuss community needs, how and why teenagers volunteer, and Jewish issues that relate to volunteering. The orientation day will be offered multiple times throughout the fall in order to accommodate the students' varied schedules.

Reflection

All research surrounding service demonstrates that youth do not learn from their service merely by doing it; they must formally reflect on the service. Therefore, the Mitzvah Corps will set up a series of times for the members to discuss their experiences. The students will keep journals on their volunteering. They will also participate in formal evaluations of projects and the program. End-of-the-year wrap-ups would be available to any school requesting one.

Community Needs Assessing

The students will learn about specific community problems in depth. Each newsletter will address a different issue, defining it and offering relevant facts. At each service project, there will be a training session that will introduce the students to the agency and the issue the agency addresses. Follow up activities will be supplied to the schools and congregations.

Skill Training

The Mitzvah Corps will offer, with the assistance of the Jewish Community Center and Riverview Center for Jewish Seniors, specific courses that will enable the students to do their volunteer work more effectively. Courses will include CPR training, simple first aid, and baby-sitting.

Career Education

At all projects as part of the orientation to the agency, the students will be introduced to the staff at the agencies. The staff will discuss with the volunteers about their job, what it entails, what schooling is necessary, etc. Examples of staff that would be involved: music therapists at Council Care, nutritionist at the food bank, physical therapist at Riverview, occupational therapist at a hospital, social worker at the Jewish Community Center.

Teacher Training

The Corps will offer yearly in-service training to teachers and youth group advisors. The training on service learning will include reflection and how the program can complement their Judaic education.

Project/Agency Selection

The individual synagogues and schools will have the option to select from this list those projects/agencies that they feel fit their needs and criteria. A system will be developed in order for the youth to do volunteer work for individuals that need help, i.e., baby-sitting for large families or tutoring New Americans.

Team projects for the Jewish community will be developed on a monthly basis. Individual team projects are held twice a month. This will give the youth at least three opportunities a month to participate in team activities. All Mitzvah Corps projects will take place on Sundays or on weekdays after school. Because many of the organizations that need volunteers are closed on Sunday, projects will be developed so the group would make or do things outside of the agency. For instance, cooking a meal for a homeless shelter that could be delivered later in the week. The Jewish Community Center will be available to house some of these projects as well as having projects they need completing on Sundays.

The Mitzvah Corps will also coordinate projects where each school would have a certain responsibility; for example, a senior prom at Riverview, where one group could be in charge of refreshments, one in charge of decorations, etc. Then everyone could come together for the final event. The possibility also exists for a group of teens from the Mitzvah Corps to come together to plan aspects of the Salute to Israel Parade.

Supervision

Supervisors will be found for all team projects utilizing college students, staff people or volunteers. If the project was designed for a specific school or youth group, that organization would be responsible for finding supervision.

The agencies that are accepting the individual placement will be responsible for supervising those individual students.

Tracking Volunteers

The Jewish Community Center will set up a system to track volunteer hours. The hours that each volunteer donates will be reported to their synagogue, school, and youth group on a quarterly basis. The hours will also be sent to the student's public school, if appropriate. Hours will be kept so that students needing the information for scholarship or college could have easy access.

Recognition

The Mitzvah Corps will host a large recognition event each year. The event would include parents, community leaders and agency personnel. Students will be recognized if they participated in any project throughout the year, but students who donated higher number of hours will receive additional materials such as service pins or other gifts. In the future, money would be located so that the individual with the most hours donated during their high school career would receive a scholarship.

Letters of recommendation will be supplied for the youth upon request, along with any verification of volunteer hours. Press coverage will be worked so that all participating organizational members would get recognized.

Public Relations

A public relations packet and/or brochure will be created by the project coordinator and a small group of teens. The packet will be used to increase awareness of the program and to recruit. A relationship will be worked out with the Jewish Chronicle so that articles about the Corps will be printed on a regular basis. Articles will be sent to all schools where Corps members attend for publication in school district, school, synagogue, JCC newsletters.

Youth Voice

The success of programs like this is dependent on the students having input in the program and specific projects. To ensure that this happens, there will be youth on the steering committee, youth committees will be formed to plan projects like a "senior prom," and all youth will evaluate projects to determine whether they should be done again in the future.

Time Line

A project coordinator will be hired. During the summer, the coordinator will meet with school administrators, youth advisors and rabbis to facilitate the membership drive. The project coordinator will spend time during the summer being trained in all aspects of service learning and group facilitation. Also during the summer, the steering committee will meet to determine the education component. Orientation and training will take place in August and September. Throughout the remainder of the year there will be one service project a month and ongoing technical assistance to the schools. The recognition event will take place in May.

SAMPLE PROJECTS

Volunteers will:

- Work with Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force and learn to be peer educators.
- Work with the staff of Council Care to develop exercise programs that the seniors and youth would do together.
- Fulfill the commandment of bikkur cholim at local hospitals and senior centers.
- Play sports with the special needs youth at the Jewish Community Center.
- Repack food at the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.
- Plan and implement a "senior prom" for the seniors at Riverview.
- Cook meals for people in shelters.
- Disseminate information on issues such as immunization, breast cancer, lead poisoning, prenatal care, etc.
- Celebrate holidays with the adults living at Jewish

Residential Services.

Addendum 3

Wellness Program Ideas:

- Weight Training
- Karate
- Child-Parent Dialogue
- Diet Workshop
- Muscle Pain
- Breast Health
- Women's Issues
- Homeopathic Approaches
- Healthy Cooking
- Addiction/Chemical Dependency/Substance Abuse
- Smoking Cessation
- Depression Treatment
- Insights into Allergies
- Sports-Related Injuries
- Domestic Violence
- Stress Management
- Sports Introductions:
- Use of Lifetime Training Techniques
- Lap Swimming
- Water Exercise
- Walking/Jogging/Running
- Development of Peer Counselors
- Cooperative Programs with Counseling Organizations

Appendix

Israel as a Laboratory for Professional Development

Barry Chazan and Richard Juran

Introduction

The JCC Jewish Revolution

As the Jewish Community Center movement of North America approaches the twenty-first century, it is in the throes of a revolution whose seeds were planted decades ago, and which came to fruition in the 1980s. The essence of the revolution is the self-consciousness and self-definition of Centers as agencies of Jewish education. In principle, the seeds of this "sense of self" were always part of the Center movement: a look at the documents of the JWB and the JCC Association over the years reveals an ongoing verbal affirmation of the Jewish commitments of the agency.¹ However, in the 1980s that leitmotif became policy and practice. Inspired by a unique combination of lay interest and initiative, and executive expertise and receptivity, the Center movement definitively asserted Jewish educational effectiveness as one of its defining factors.¹ Once this mission (which was the task of the Center world in the 1980s) had been clearly affirmed, the ensuing challenge became the implementation of that vision in operational policy and practice.

Jewish Literacy and the JCC Staff

Many potential areas of implementation were examined and delineated, among them curriculum, programming, and lay leadership development. Ultimately, the Center world chose staff development as the arena for attempting to implement its the vision. With the belief that Centers are "people" agencies (of, by and for the people), the leaders of the Center world determined that the most powerful way to implement a new vision would be through influencing and changing the Jewish dimensions of the professionals - from senior leadership to line workers - who inhabit and lead local Centers across

North America. The decision to move in this direction reflected the belief that changing people would enable institutional change within the agency.

The underlying Jewish vision was that all JCC Jewish staff should be Jewishly literate, and this was perceived as the path to total transformation of JCCs. The emphasis would be on developing a generation of Center professionals comfortable and intelligible in the building blocks of Jewish civilization. This effort resulted in a series of Jewish training programs over the past decade, including the Executive Fellows program in 1988-1990, and the Israel Fellows program in 1994-1996, the Mandel Executive Education Program for the professional and Jewish educational training of the next generation of Center executives, and Staff Training Seminars in Israel. All of these were aimed at enriching diverse professional groups in a broad range of Jewish subject areas.

Background

The Wexner Foundation

From the late 1980s, several members of the JCC Association national staff began to wrestle with the possibility of a new model of staff development which would reflect a sophisticated notion of Judaism and a state-of-the-art approach to professional staff development. This group of Jewish educators and professional staff trainers proposed a model of in-service learning which would incorporate the best thinking about end-of-century professional training, a systematic curriculum and program of Jewish learning, and a sustained (rather than sporadic) study experience. These initial thoughts led to a Program of Continuing Jewish Education for Center Executives and Camp Directors,¹ based on seven underlying principles:

1. The Idea of Jewish Literacy

The professional leaders of North American JCCs should be Jewishly literate; they should have a basic awareness and understanding of the main cultural foundations of classical and contemporary Jewish civilization.

2. The Efficacy of Jewish Literacy

In order to create a culture and a legacy of Centers as serious Jewish agencies it is essential to develop a generation of executives with solid Jewish knowledge.

This literacy does not require immediate translation into programs or Center policy; rather, it is reflected in the Jewish personality, character, and understanding essential to leading a Jewish agency. While the tasks of Center executives are not the same as rabbis or Jewish educators, the Center executive needs to be as Jewishly literate as his/her colleagues.

3. A Scientific Approach to Jewish Knowledge

If Center executives are going to set out on the path of Jewish literacy, they deserve a very sophisticated, reflective, and intelligent approach to Jewish subjects. They do not need preaching, but teaching. They need not only myths, but a good, reflective confrontation with the richness of Jewish civilization.

4. The Curricularization of Jewish Knowledge

In order to render entry into the vast world of Jewish civilization understandable, it is necessary to develop a curriculum of Jewish subjects. This "road map" must present the vast wealth of facts in subject matter areas and categories which can be understood and absorbed by an executive.

5. Where the Learner Is

Many of today's Center executives are well educated and sophisticated in terms of general knowledge and/or the skills of social work and education, but they often are much more limited in their Jewish knowledge. Hence there may be great gaps - and embarrassment - about their level of Jewish literacy. Jewish study for Center executives has to begin where the learners are.

6. Group and Individualized Learning

In developing a process of Jewish study for Center executives, the model must take into account their busy professional lives, as well as their particular learning profiles and styles. This suggests that the best approach to Jewish learning for executives must combine (a) individualized learning tailored to personal needs and settings; and (b) highly interactive and collaborative group learning.

7. The Teacher of Adults

The unique nature of the goals and population of this group requires a special kind of teacher who may differ from some of the kinds of "Jewish teaching" that have heretofore prevailed. The desired teacher of JCC executives should reflect: (a) great wisdom and expertise in the subject area; (b) the ability to teach sophisticated adults with uneven Jewish backgrounds in part-time academic settings; (c) a positive attitude and sensitivity to the Jewish Community Center and its ethos.

From Principle to Practice

On the basis of these seven principles a two-year program in continuing Jewish education was developed. The program was conceived and co-directed by the JCC Association's staff development professional (Steven Rod) and by Jewish educational consultant (Dr. Barry Chazan). These two professionals, both comfortable and literate in each other's worlds, set out to develop an organic model of Jewish learning rooted in the best principles of staff development *and* Jewish education.

The first step in the planning process was the creation of an advisory committee made up of academics, executives, and other professionals. The purpose of the committee was: (a) to help guide the structure and contents of the Jewish studies; and (b) to determine the educational structure for the two-year learning process. One combined committee was created' so as to enable rich cross-fertilization of Jewish content with methodological issues.

The committee dealt with the following specific questions: (a) What subjects should we teach? (b) What kinds of texts should be used? (c) How should the individualized study operate? (d) What can we expect the participants to achieve? (e) What are some of the particular complexities of teaching such professionals?

The Program

The Wexner Program in Continuing Jewish Education was initiated sequentially in three regions of the United States beginning in 1991, 1992, and 1993. The study program was comprised of two components: a group study program and individualized personal study.

The group study program encompassed four courses in Jewish civilization taught in sequence over two years: Year One included History of the Jewish People and

Great Jewish Texts; and Year Two offered Great Jewish Ideas and Contemporary Jewry.' The courses were taught by outstanding university scholars and teachers with interest and skill in the teaching of Jewish studies to Jewish practitioners. (The faculty included Professor Robert Chazan of NYU, Professor Barry Holtz of ITS, Professor Charles Raffel of Stern College, Professor Deborah Lipstadt of Emory University, Professor Elliot Dorff of the University of Judaism, and Professor David Ellenson of UCLA and Hebrew Union College.) These courses were taught at a series of two day retreats conducted at residential settings (camp sites or hotels usually located near airports for simple and efficient logistical coordination). Students were provided with a series of background texts' which enabled them to prepare for each retreat. Classes at the retreats utilized the study of a selection of primary sources as a way of dealing with major ideas and themes related to the course. The retreat model provided for a combination of four class sessions and one evening discussion over the two day period, as well as group meals, runs, strolls, and informal talks with faculty who were in residence throughout all the retreats.'

The individual tutorial encompassed a private, bi-weekly study session' in each participant's community. These tutors were selected by the program staff in consultation with the students and they included renowned academics, talented teachers, and outstanding local rabbis. Topics for individual tutorials were agreed upon by teacher and student and were rooted in the regular study of texts and sources. The program staff consulted periodically with students and tutors to monitor progress and locate problems.

Impact

What impact did this experience have? The program was monitored and evaluated in two ways: periodic formative evaluation and ongoing anecdotal data. Faculty debriefings were held after each retreat and students' feedback was made available to faculty. The experience of previous regional seminars was made available to new regional faculty and tutors. The following conclusions emerged from the data:

1. Very busy executives with full calendars continued to study for more than two years. The attrition rate in this program was minimal, and generally attributable to extenuating circumstances. The experience of study ignited participants to continue attending sessions. This group of professionals is known to vote with its

feet; if a program does not meet their needs, they end their participation. This group persevered.

2. After the end of the two-year sequence, the California group continued a third *year* with the same faculty at the group's own expense. The New York group met to attempt to continue the program, and did have a few sessions sponsored by CLAL (Center for Leadership and Learning).
3. Several of the participants continued their individual study programs beyond the required parameters of the program. In several instances, local professionals studying together led to new relationships and understandings. The executive of one east coast Center studied with a senior rabbi in the community and this havruta became a vehicle for new relationships between the Center and the synagogue.
4. One participant in the program decided that she wanted to have the bat mitzvah she had never had as a child. She spent two years studying Hebrew, learning the basics of the Shabbat service, and the *haftarah*. Her two-year sequence concluded with a bat mitzvah on Shabbat in her local synagogue, and was attended by the program directors and many of the students.
5. The program subsidy was not able to cover travel and expenses for all participants; several executives participated at their own expense.
6. Each of the three groups independently expressed the need to continue the study process with an additional subject and in a new venue: they requested a course on Israel and Contemporary Jewry. They felt that this topic was a critical dimension of their basic literacy and professional growth; they wanted to continue to study together; and they felt that the only way to study such a subject was in Israel.
7. At the retreats, numerous participants presented case studies (speeches, *divrei torah*, minutes of board meetings) from their local Centers, reflecting direct application of subjects, themes, and ideas which they had studied in seminars. It was important to them - and to their lay leaders - to feel that the program also had some direct, immediate impact.
8. The program became a statement and "calling card" about the new Jewish educational seriousness of the Center movement. Academic faculty shared with their colleagues the sense of seriousness that they experienced in these classes. Several of the faculty were invited to speak and teach in local Centers. Local tutors

began to see the Center movement in a different light and in several cases this led to new working relationships in local communities.

9. Meetings and sessions of this group were held at annual gatherings of JCC executives. Reports were made to the JCC Association National Board, to JCC professional staff, and to other forums in the JCC world. The fact that 45 JCC executives were regularly studying Judaica became a significant message in the JCC world.

Problems

The program also gave rise to certain issues and problems:

- ⑧ Heterogeneity: How does one teach Judaica on a sophisticated level to a group of adults with significantly different backgrounds (some executives were *yeshivah* graduates, while others did not know *aleph-bet*)?
- How does one develop a part-time program that systematically provides Jewish learning for full-time executives over two years? How does one sustain continuity and flow?
- What kinds of teachers are most suitable for such a group?
- ⑧ What are the national resources needed for effective management and administration of such a complicated program?
- ⑧ How can one guarantee a balance between commitment to a sophisticated approach to Jewish literacy, with pressing practical Jewish programming needs?

From New York, California, and Florida to Jerusalem

By the end of 1993, a process had been set in motion. Forty-five executives had embarked on a process of Jewish study characterized by limited but intensive group study, and ongoing, individualized study and initiative. The scene was set and the time was ripe for a new kind of study seminar in Israel. Building on the special momentum that was sensed as the study cycles in each of the three geographic regions were completed, participants and staff began to explore the possibility of a concluding curricular unit about Israel, which would not

only introduce new subject matter, but bring the entire group of program participants from across the continent together for a unique Israel experience. The Wexner Foundation expressed its willingness to participate in this novel experiment in advanced, continuing education for executives in the Jewish Community Center world. Fortunately, the WZO's Joint Authority for Jewish-Zionist Education also agreed to be a partner in this initiative.

In agreeing to collaborate on an extension of the original project, the Foundation and the project staff weighed a number of objectives: (a) a complementary study unit about Israel, to round out the two years of Teaming in North America; (b) an opportunity to bring participants in the different regional groups together in Israel, for an advanced educational learning experience; and (c) the opportunity to pilot for the broad field of Jewish communal service a new model of advanced professional training - i.e., a more academic, sophisticated Israel experience for those with more than a beginner's level of Jewish literacy, and with some prior Israel experience.

Shaping the Israel Course

The project staff divided their responsibilities based on operations in North America and in Israel: Steven Rod, based at the JCC Association in North America, communicated with graduates of the three regional groupings, recruited and oriented prospective participants in the Israel program, and arranged meetings, gatherings, and retreats which took place periodically, either as part of other conferences of North American Center executive directors, or as additional preparatory programs for traveling to Israel. Dr. Barry Chazan, based in the JCC Association Israel Office, assembled a support team from members of the Israel Office staff, and convened two consultative committees - one academic and one professional - to benefit from a broad range of views in developing the new format.

As the committees' deliberations progressed, Dr. Zeev Mankowitz of the Hebrew University's Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora agreed to assume a central role in planning and implementing the Israel Course. The general concept included two main components: a group academic seminar with elements of past (ideational foundations of a Zionist State), present (the contrast of original mythic structures in Jewish-Israeli society with those prevailing almost fifty years after statehood), and future (an attempt to look at the protean relationship between Israeli, North American, and other Diaspora Jewish communities in an era of "post-

Zionism"); and a parallel set of group tutorials in which participants would explore a particular aspect of contemporary Israeli society, with the guidance of a tutor who would provide them with background bibliographic material and suggestions for meetings and experiences. There was a feeling that this unique confluence of circumstances - participants' extensive preparation and the particular design of their Israel experience - would enable them to accomplish what is generally considered to be impossible: to enter deep inside the reality of Jewish life in Israel, within the framework of a short-term training/learning experience in Israel.

The Retreat

A retreat in New Jersey at the end of August 1995 emerged as a pivotal connection between the two years of study in regional groupings, and the single continental grouping of "Wexner graduates" who would participate in the Israel Course. At the retreat the staff sought to establish a substantive bridge, a sense of continuity between the subject matter of the first four units of study in North America and the fifth unit in Israel. And because some key professionals in the Center field had wondered aloud whether the Center field was ready for such an advanced, academic level of study, particularly in the context of a two week seminar in Israel which Center professionals tend to construe in rather experiential terms, it was imperative to test the waters with the kind of study in which the group would engage in Israel, and to consult the participants about their desire and ability to sustain such a format for two full weeks.

Approximately two thirds of the participants participated in the retreat. The program included open discussions about the proposed curriculum and several study sessions. Considerable time was devoted to identifying and then exploring possible aspects of contemporary Jewish life in Israel, so that participants could determine which focus was of most interest and relevance. The participants successfully rose to the challenge presented by the sophisticated academic subject matter; not only did they fully engage in the material, but they clearly enjoyed it and were eager to continue their learning during the Israel Course. Furthermore, they showed considerable excitement and responsibility vis-a-vis the notion of serious, independent group tutorials, and pushed the staff to guarantee large blocks of time and great logistical flexibility, to ensure that they would be able to delve into diverse areas of Israeli society, and in as serious a fashion as time would permit. They readily agreed to prepare written presentations within the two-week program in

Israel, and also asked to receive the extensive bibliographic background readings prior to the course itself, so that they could be properly prepared for each session. The essence of the preparatory retreat was a highly visible synergy of enthusiasm, commitment, and determination to create and be part of an Israel experience that would be novel in its ambitious and serious goals as an advanced educational training program for Jewish Community Center and JCC resident camp executive directors.

Following the retreat, participants received three installments of bibliographic materials, all noting the relevant Israel Course sessions, and accompanied by guiding questions, which they had requested to help focus their reading on Israel Course themes and content. There were also many other group and individual communiques regarding logistical arrangements and special requests, as well as exchanges of letters between tutors and tutorial group participants toward determining areas of research and program activities while in Israel.

The Israel Course

The actual course, which ran from 27 November - 11 December 1995, operated simultaneously in at least four dimensions. The academic curriculum included a series of graduate level presentations about the topics described above, incorporating varying amounts of group discussion and reference to the bibliographic readings. The settings for these sessions varied greatly, from the Melton Centre at the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus, to one of Jerusalem's early neighborhoods, from the pioneers' cemetery at Kvutsat Kinneret and the roof of a kibbutz guest house on the shores of the Kinneret, to an avant-garde movie theatre in the heart of Tel Aviv. In general, this academic course provided a conceptual language and underpinning which enabled all other dimensions to operate concurrently.

The tutorial groups, which in effect were six simultaneous mini-courses, entailed extensive discussion with the respective tutors, to define the subject matter, create a common language, and sharpen the participants' understanding of the topics at hand. Participants subsequently engaged in a series of meetings, interviews and experiences, either with their tutor or on their own, as they fleshed out more and more aspects of their area of research. Tutors continued to meet regularly with their group members, to analyze the different experiences, draw interim conclusions, and prepare for the next round of activities. After analyzing, synthesizing and articulat-

ing the essence of what they had learned, two full mornings were devoted to the six tutorial group presentations, during which extensive written materials (both drafts of the presentation and other illustrations of the groups' research findings) were distributed. When the groups later prepared a final draft of their paper, they incorporated the group discussion which followed their presentations.

A full complement of personal and sub-group activities became a third dimension of activity: Some participants arrived early to go to Jordan, to do tour Israel (for a first-time visitor) or to participate in the World Conference of Jewish Community Centers. Toward the end of the seminar, a group of nine participants flew to Eilat and spent the second free Shabbat together in a hotel there. Another spent the free Shabbat in Tel Aviv and explored additional cultural opportunities. All these unplanned experiences became an integral part of the overall group experience, as participants came back and reported to the group on their individual adventures, and offered commentary on how they afforded additional insights into the subject matter of the Israel Course.

The fourth dimension of the experience, which in many ways served to organize and contextualize all other aspects of the course, was the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin only three weeks prior to the group's arrival in Israel, and the complex public debate about its implications and its meaning for Israel and for world Jewry. Many of those who taught segments of the academic program, from among the finest and most articulate of Israeli intellectuals, chose to redefine their topic in light of the assassination; some stretched their assigned topic to incorporate thoughts about the assassination, and others simply announced that in Israel of November 1995, the only topic worthy of serious discussion was the assassination and its aftermath. While this presented some challenges to the flow of content, it also provided an acute sense of immediacy and relevance, and the learning process successfully maintained a sense of continuity and perspective. Perhaps the very subject matter of the preparatory studies and reading, coupled with the very content of the Israel Course itself, primed the participants to grapple with the fundamental issues raised by the assassination and the ensuing debate, thereby facilitating ongoing rounds of interim synthesis of all that was learned and experienced.

It is quite a challenge to capture the interplay among these different dimensions of activity - the academic program, the tutorial groups, personal experiences, and the shadow of the Rabin assassination. All who participated in, taught or observed it, however, shared a sense of a

bubbling cauldron, whether in the classroom, at a nightclub listening to Israeli music, on a casual walk or at *Kabbalat Shabbat*. And indeed, somehow it all seemed to combine into a means of bringing these eager, talented, and committed Center executives and camp directors into the inner world of Israeli society.

Follow-Up

A number of post-Israel projects were planned, beginning with a study session at the Executive Seminars in Florida in February 1996. In consultation with the participants at their concluding discussion in Jerusalem, the staff also undertook to seek funding for opportunities to continue the learning of these Center executive directors, whether in North America or Israel.

During the third year of the project, JCCA project staff worked with tutorial group participants to refine original research papers and prepare them for publication. In addition, JCCA Israel Office staff adapted the successful model of this Israel Course for the final three weeks of the Israel Fellows program in July 1996. This constituted an equally successfully second pilot of the Israel Course method for advanced education and training of senior personnel. The Israel Fellows tutorial groups also produced written works, which were edited and included in this anthology. The bulk of the year was spent preparing this publication.

As part of the original grant proposal, the JCC Association undertook to compile and publish this volume, in order to make the benefits of this pilot project accessible throughout the field of Jewish communal service. The anthology therefore contains this outline of the rationale and process by which the project was developed and implemented, from the two-year study period in North America to the Wexner Israel Course itself. It also includes edited versions of the six papers prepared by the original tutorial groups and the three papers prepared by the Israel Fellows during the following year. These serve as a means of understanding the learning process of the participants, in addition to the insights they offer about aspects of Israel and Contemporary Jewry. Finally, the publication provides updated bibliographic material for a course on "Israel and Contemporary Jewry." Each article is presented with brief background explanations and a series of follow-up questions for discussion, which may be used as post-Israel experience study material in North America, or as a text book for other Israel-oriented educational programs.

Summary

Principles Of Jewish Professional Development for the Center World

It has been a full and intensive journey from the first JCC Wexner Seminars in New York City until the closing dinner of the JCC Wexner Israel Seminar at Mishkenot Shaananim in December 1995, and from then through the preparation of this anthology. During this time, many Center and camp executives, comprising a very significant portion of the executive leadership of North American JCCs, have participated in adult Jewish enrichment studies. What have we learned about the Jewish enrichment of senior professionals in the Center field at the end of the twentieth century in general, and about the role of Israel in particular?

1. Personal empowerment is a key to Jewish professional development.
Center professionals are mature, sophisticated professionals and the key to their growth is in taking them seriously, and enabling them to feel some partnership in the planning and implementation of their own Jewish development.
2. JCC professionals are at many different places on the "Jewish spectrum," and we must reach out to them wherever they are.
JCC professionals come to Jewish enrichment from many different places and levels of Jewish knowledge and commitment, and we must treat each of them with loving care and individual concern, reaching out to them wherever they are.
3. Jewish learning is a need and a desire of JCC professionals.
Most JCC professionals are at a point in life at which they have Jewish needs (for personal or professional reasons). First and foremost, they want serious Jewish learning, which in some way ultimately relates to personal meaning.
4. The teachers of JCC professionals must combine very sophisticated Jewish knowledge with well-developed and authentic "people" skills.
JCC professionals need a special kind of teacher: someone who is very Jewishly knowledgeable, with an educational approach that is interactive and personable, so that s/he is able to assist in the translation of ideas into personal meaning.

5. The use of small groups is a valuable technique for the professional growth of JCC staff.
The use of tutorials and small learning groups has proven to be an effective pedagogic technique in the professional development and Jewish studies of Center staff.
6. Being able to spend time in Israel in a total Jewish environment **is a major asset in** the professional growth of JCC staff.
The Israel experience is important for many reasons, among them as possible respite from work and a total immersion in an exciting Jewish environment.
7. Israel offers the ideal fusion of quality teaching with intense personal experiences which concretize the teaching.
The Israel experience is an ideal learning setting for Center executives because it can provide a kind of learning encompassing quality teaching and doing which meet the learning needs of Center professionals.
8. The presentation of Jewish knowledge in general, and Israel in particular, is best effected via well-defined and reflective categorization.
In teaching JCC professionals it is desirable to move away from general talking about "Judaism" or "Israel" and rather to focus on well defined, conceptual frames and issues so as to enable a greater degree of sophistication and understanding.
9. It is important to aim continually for an ongoing learning structure for JCC professionals.
It is essential to develop continuous learning programs for JCC professionals, to insure that Jewish growth will become part of the essence of professional life in the Center movement in the coming decades.

Conclusion

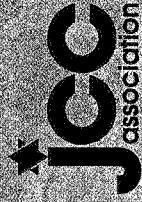
Since the 1980s the Center movement has made a major commitment to the enrichment of the Jewish dimensions of Center life. An important aspect of that process has been the Jewish development of Center staff. The Wexner Foundation, together with the WZO's Joint Authority for Jewish-Zionist Education and Joint Program for Jewish Education, have been major forces in enabling serious advances in executive staff development in the Center movement. In that sense, *they* have all contributed significantly to the Jewish educational revolution in the world of North American Jewish Community Centers at the end of the twentieth century.

Endnotes

- ¹ This message was affirmed at several moments throughout the history of the Center world in the 1920s-30s under the influence of Mordecai Kaplan; in the late 1940s as exemplified in *The JWB Survey* by Oscar I. Janowksy (New York: The Dial Press, 1948); and in the 1960s in a series of unpublished documents and reports. Moreover individual Centers and executives throughout the years affirmed the Jewish role and responsibility of the Center as an agency.
- ² See the JWB report, "Maximizing Jewish Educational Effectiveness of Jewish Community Centers" (September 1984).
- ³ The JCC Association approached the Wexner Foundation about participating in the funding of this novel project.
- ⁴ See minutes of first advisory committee meeting: 13 December 1994 at the JCCA Israel Office, Jerusalem.
- ⁵ This curriculum was based on a course of Jewish learning for the Center field developed in JWB's *Guide to Jewish Knowledge for the Center Professional* by Barry Chazan and Yehiel Poupko (May 1989).
- ⁶ *Great Ideas and Ages of the Jewish People*, writings by Rabbi Irving Greenberg and Elliot Dorff.
- ⁷ After an initial experiment with a one-day group study session in New York City, the model shifted to four two-day study retreats at a residential camp site.
- ⁸ In one instance there was triad study.

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