

World Jewish Population

THERE ARE NO PRECISE DATA on Jewish population in the various countries. The figures presented below represent the best possible estimates for 1979. They are based on local censuses, communal registration figures, and data obtained from a special inquiry conducted in spring 1980. Fifty-eight questionnaires were sent to major Jewish bodies in selected countries requesting information on: a) the number of Jews in the country, including nationals and refugees; b) the figures for principal cities; c) the source of the data and the method used in arriving at the estimate. Responses were received from 20 countries.¹

The figures are of varying degrees of accuracy, and are subject to substantial margins of error. They will be revised when more accurate data become available. In the tables below, figures obtained from 1980 inquiry are indicated by an "x".

DISTRIBUTION BY CONTINENTS

The estimated world Jewish population at the end of 1979 was 14,527,150. Of the total number, about 6,800,000 (47 per cent) lived in the Americas, some 4,102,000 (29 per cent) in Europe, including the Asian parts of Turkey and the USSR, and over 3,330,000 (22 per cent) in Asia. Only about 173,000 (1.5 per cent) remained in Africa, and 72,000 (0.5 per cent) were in Australia and New Zealand.

¹Australia: Executive Council of Australian Jewry; Bolivia: Circulo Israelita; Canada: Council of Jewish Federations; Chile: Comite Representativo de la Colectividad Israelita de Chile; Finland: The Jewish Community of Helsinki; Gibraltar: Managing Board of the Jewish Community; Honduras: Comunidad Hebrea de Tegucigalpa; Ireland: Jewish Representative Council of Ireland; Jamaica: The United Congregation of Israelites; Kenya: Nairobi Hebrew Congregation; Netherlands: Netherlands-Israelitisch Kerkgenootschap; Norway: Det Mosaiska Trossamfund; Singapore: Jewish Welfare Board; Spain: Jewish Community of Spain; Sweden: Judiska församlingen; Turkey: Chief Rabbinate of Turkey; United Kingdom: The Board of Deputies of British Jews; Uruguay: Comite Central Israelita del Uruguay; Yugoslavia: Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia; Zimbabwe: Central African Jewish Board of Deputies.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF JEWISH POPULATION BY CONTINENTS, 1979

<i>Continent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
Europe (including Asiatic USSR and Turkey)	4,102,350	29.0
America (North, Central, and South)	6,839,560	47.0
Asia	3,339,810	22.0
Africa	173,430	1.5
Australia and New Zealand	72,000	0.5
TOTAL	14,527,150*	100.0

*Because sources and dates were not always identical, there may be discrepancies between figures given in the tables below and those in other sections of this volume.

Various estimates have been put forward for the Jewish population of the Soviet Union, the United States, Argentina, and France. If the lower estimate were accepted in each case, the total world Jewish population would be smaller by about one million than the estimate offered here.

Europe

Of the approximately 4,102,000 Jews in Europe, some 2,790,000 were in the Communist area, including 80,000 in Hungary, some 45,000 in Rumania, about 12,000 in Czechoslovakia, and 6,000 in Poland. Students of Jewish population disagreed on the number of Jews in the USSR (see the article on the Soviet Union in this volume). About 1,300,000 Jews lived in non-Communist countries. France, with some 650,000, was the largest Jewish community in Western Europe. (Other sources estimated the French Jewish population as being 550,000.) Great Britain had 410,000; Belgium, 41,000; Italy, 41,000; and Germany (including both East and West Germany), 38,000.

TABLE 2. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION IN EUROPE, BY COUNTRIES, 1979

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total Population^a</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>
Albania	2,670,000	300
Austria	7,510,000	13,000
Belgium	9,850,000	41,000
Bulgaria	8,810,000	7,000
Czechoslovakia	15,250,000	12,000
Denmark	5,120,000	7,500
Finland	4,750,000	1,000 ^a
France	53,480,000	650,000
Germany	78,800,000	38,000 ^b
Gibraltar	30,000	600 ^a
Great Britain	55,820,000	410,000 ^a

Greece	9,440,000	6,000
Hungary	10,700,000	80,000
Ireland	3,370,000	1,900 ^a
Italy	56,910,000	41,000
Luxembourg	360,000	1,000
Malta	350,000	50
Netherlands	14,030,000	30,000 ^a
Norway	4,070,000	900 ^a
Poland	35,440,000	6,000
Portugal	9,870,000	600
Rumania	22,070,000	45,000
Spain	37,180,000	12,000 ^a
Sweden	8,290,000	17,000 ^a
Switzerland	6,330,000	21,000
Turkey	44,310,000	24,000 ^{a,c}
USSR	264,110,000	2,630,000 ^e
Yugoslavia	22,160,000	5,500 ^a
TOTAL		4,102,350

^aUnited Nations Statistical Office, Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, and other sources, including local publications.

^bIncludes West Germany, East Germany, and both sectors of Berlin.

^cIncludes Asian regions of the USSR and Turkey.

^eReply to 1980 inquiry.

North, Central, and South America

The number of Jews in the United States, including all persons living in Jewish households, was estimated at about 5,920,000 (see the article "Jewish Population in the United States" in this volume). Some demographers disagreed with this figure and suggested an estimate one quarter million smaller. Canada had about 305,000 Jews, and Central and South America some 575,000. The Jewish population in Argentina was estimated to be 300,000, but some local observers considered this figure as too low.

TABLE 3. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION IN NORTH, CENTRAL, AND SOUTH AMERICA AND THE WEST INDIES, BY COUNTRIES, 1979

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total Population^a</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>
Canada	23,690,000	305,000 ^a
Mexico	69,380,000	37,500
United States	220,100,000	5,920,890
Total North America		6,263,390
Barbados	270,000	70
Costa Rica	2,190,000	2,500

Cuba	9,850,000	1,500
Curacao	150,000	700
Dominican Republic	5,280,000	200
El Salvador	4,350,000	350
Guatemala	6,620,000	2,000
Haiti	4,920,000	150
Honduras	3,560,000	200*
Jamaica	2,160,000	350*
Nicaragua	2,640,000	200
Panama	1,880,000	2,000
Trinidad	1,130,000	300
Total Central America and West Indies		10,520
Argentina	26,730,000	300,000
Bolivia	5,430,000	750*
Brazil	118,650,000	150,000
Chile	10,920,000	30,000*
Colombia	26,360,000	12,000
Ecuador	8,080,000	1,000
Paraguay	2,970,000	1,200
Peru	17,290,000	5,200
Surinam	380,000	500
Uruguay	2,910,000	50,000*
Venezuela	13,520,000	15,000
Total South America		565,650
TOTAL		6,839,560

*See Table 2, note^a.

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Asia, Australia, and New Zealand

The Jewish population of Asia was over 3,330,000. Of this figure, 3,254,000, or approximately 97 per cent, were in Israel, the second largest Jewish population center in the world. There were 70,000 Jews in Iran and 8,000 in India. It was difficult to ascertain the precise impact of events in Iran and Lebanon on the number of Jews in these countries as well as in Syria.

The Jewish population of Australia was estimated at about 67,000, and that of New Zealand at 5,000.

TABLE 4. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION IN ASIA, BY COUNTRIES, 1979

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total Population^a</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>
Afghanistan	15,490,000	200
Burma	32,910,000	50*

China	945,020,000	30
Cyprus	620,000	30
Hong Kong	4,710,000	250
India	650,980,000	8,000
Indonesia	148,470,000	100
Iran	35,510,000	70,000
Iraq	12,330,000	450
Israel	3,867,000	3,254,000
Japan	115,870,000	400
Lebanon	3,090,000	400
Pakistan	76,770,000	250
Philippines	47,720,000	200
Singapore	2,360,000	450*
Syria	8,350,000	4,500
Yemen	5,790,000	500
TOTAL		3,339,810

*See Table 2, note^a.

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TABLE 5. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, 1979

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total Population^a</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>
Australia	14,420,000	67,000 ^a
New Zealand	3,110,000	5,000
TOTAL		72,000

*See Table 2, note^a.

*See Table 2, note^a.

Africa

The Jewish population of Africa stood at about 173,000, including some 118,000 in South Africa. Events in Zimbabwe had a substantial impact on the number of Jews there, bringing it down to some 1,960. An estimated 22,000 were in Ethiopia. The Jewish communities of the Maghreb were very small—some 22,000 in Morocco, 7,000 in Tunisia, and about 1,000 in Algeria. Egypt had 400 Jews and Libya 20.

TABLE 6. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION IN AFRICA, BY COUNTRIES, 1979

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total Population^a</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>
Algeria	19,130,000	1,000
Egypt	40,980,000	400

Ethiopia	30,420,000	22,000
Kenya	15,320,000	450
Libya	2,860,000	20
Morocco	19,470,000	22,000
Republic of South Africa	26,130,000	118,000
Zimbabwe	7,140,000	1,960 ^a
Tunisia	6,200,000	7,000
Zaire	27,940,000	200
Zambia	5,650,000	400
TOTAL		173,430

^aSee Table 2, note^a.

^aSee Table 2, note^a.

COMMUNITIES WITH LARGEST JEWISH POPULATION

The largest Jewish community was in the United States, followed by Israel and the Soviet Union. Together they accounted for some 82 per cent of the world Jewish population. France, Great Britain, Canada, and Argentina had Jewish communities of 300,000 or over. Brazil had a Jewish population of 150,000, while that of South Africa stood at 118,000. The balance of the countries had Jewish communities of less than 100,000 each.

TABLE 7. COUNTRIES WITH LARGEST JEWISH POPULATION

<i>Country</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>
United States	5,920,000
Israel	3,254,000
Soviet Union	2,630,000
France	650,000
Great Britain	410,000
Canada	305,000
Argentina	300,000

TABLE 8. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION, SELECTED CITIES

<i>City</i>	<i>Jewish Population</i>
Adelaide	1,600
Amsterdam	15,000 ^a
Ankara	500 ^a
Antwerp	13,000

Athens	2,800
Auckland	1,500
Barcelona	3,000*
Basel	2,300
Belgrade	1,500*
Berlin (both sectors)	6,000
Bern	800
Birmingham	6,000*
Bogota	5,500
Bombay (and district)	6,970
Bordeaux	6,400
Brisbane	1,200*
Brussels	24,500
Bucharest	40,000
Budapest	65,000
Calcutta	300
Cape Town	25,650
Cochin	500
Copenhagen	7,000
Durban	5,990
Florence	1,400
Geneva	3,250
Glasgow	13,000
Goteborg	1,600*
Guatemala City	1,500
Haifa	210,000
Helsinki	800*
Istanbul	20,000*
Izmir	2,500
Jerusalem	290,000
Johannesburg	57,500
Kiev	170,000
Kobe	80
La Paz	500*
Leeds	18,000
Leningrad	165,000
Lima	5,000
Lisbon	550
Liverpool	6,500
London (greater)	260,000*
Luxembourg	850
Lyons	20,000

Madrid	3,000 ^a
Malaga	1,500 ^a
Malmö	1,930 ^a
Manchester (greater)	35,000
Manila	300
Marseilles	65,000
Melbourne	32,000 ^a
Mexico, D.F.	32,500
Milan	9,000
Montevideo	48,000
Montreal	100,000 ^a
Moscow	285,000
Nice	20,000
Oslo	675
Ottawa	8,500 ^a
Paris	300,000
Perth	3,200
Plovdiv	1,000
Porto Alegre	12,000
Prague	3,000
Rabat	2,500
Recife	3,000
Rio de Janeiro	55,000
Rome	10,000
Salisbury	1,100 ^a
Salonika	1,300
San Jose	2,500
Santiago	28,000 ^a
Sao Paulo	75,000
Sarajevo	1,090 ^a
Sofia	4,000
Stockholm	5,000 ^a
Strasbourg	12,000
Subotica	220 ^a
Sydney	26,500 ^a
Teheran	50,000
Tel Aviv-Jaffa	394,000
Tokyo	320
Toronto	120,000 ^a
Toulouse	18,000
Trieste	1,200
Vancouver	14,000 ^a

Valparaiso	4,000
Vienna	9,000
Wellington	1,500
Warsaw	4,500
Winnipeg	18,000 ^a
Zagreb	1,030 ^a
Zurich	6,150

*For cities in the United States, see Table 3 of section, "Jewish Population in the United States" in this volume.

^aSee Table 2, note^a.

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