



Jerusalem Letter

Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs
המרכז הירושלמי לענייני ציבור ומדינה (ע"ר)

No. 434 13 Tamuz 5760 / 16 July 2000

A SPECIAL REPORT

RELIGION AND THE PUBLIC SQUARE: ATTITUDES OF AMERICAN JEWS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE — PART ONE

Steven M. Cohen

The Historical Context / "Separationism" vs. "Religious Accommodation" / Is Jewish Separationism Waning? / Questions for Research / Measures of Jewish Involvement / Religion in the Schools

[Editor's Note: This *Jerusalem Letter* is the first in a two-part special report on an extensive survey commissioned for the "Jews and the American Public Square" project being conducted by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs' American affiliate, the Center for Jewish Community Studies. The project was initiated by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The published version of the complete study will soon be available.]

The Historical Context

Since its beginnings, American society has struggled with defining the boundary, and setting the proper distance, between church and state. Several concerns and impulses underlie this struggle. One concern has been to provide for freedom of religion for the individual and for official neutrality toward alternate churches and denominations. The objective has been to avoid a situation in which the state or its in-

struments lend more support or legitimacy to some churches than to others, or for that matter to prefer religion to non-religion. Another concern, at least until recently, has been to promote a generalized religious sentiment and involvement in the American population.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution embodied these clearly competing impulses. Its language prohibited Congress from legislating the establishment of religion. At the same time, it also prohibited interference with the free exercise of religion. Balancing these two principles has been an ongoing subject of contention in the society, the political arena, the legislative process, and the courts.

Although contention over these issues is long-standing, it was only in the 1940s that a string of court decisions moved the United States more decisively in the direction of separation of church and state. During this period, the Supreme Court extended First Amendment

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provisions to state and local governments. It then went on to assure that schools, and other government-sponsored arenas, would not appear to favor one religion over another. Its decisions even have precluded favoring the religiously minded over those with no religious interests whatsoever, a position apparently dating back at least half a century. Citing numerous previous court decisions, a friend of the court brief by Jewish communal agencies in 1961 asserted (approvingly) that the court has held that the government is obligated to exercise “neutrality not merely between competing sects and faiths, but also as between religion and non-religion.”

The wall of separation between church and state in the United States is arguably about as high as that found in any Western democracy, except possibly Mexico and France which are influenced by unusual anti-clerical traditions.

“Separationism” vs. “Religious Accommodation”

Not surprisingly, American Jews, in their struggle to win and assure their full acceptance in the larger society, have long placed church-state issues near the top of their political and community relations agenda. How America defines the place of religion and how it understands the status of Christianity and other faiths has obvious direct bearing on how Jews and Judaism fare in the larger society.

Jews’ long-standing passion for strict separationism, as the position is sometimes known, is well documented. (The terms “separationism” and “religious accommodation” are used here as antonyms to signify one or the other pole in the church-state dimension. Those favoring separationism prefer a higher barrier between church and state; those favoring religious accommodation prefer a lower barrier.) Certainly since the late 1940s, Jewish organizations and lobbyists have fought vigorously, with minor exceptions, to erect and preserve a large degree of church-state separation. The guiding premise for organized Jewry’s thinking on the matter has revolved around concerns about the influence wielded by religiously committed Protestants and, to a lesser extent, by the Catholic Church as well. Absent the protections afforded by church-state separation, many Jews feared that Christian church leaders, in the context of a large Christian majority in the American population, would promote an explicitly Christian character to the American state and its institutions.

However, the classic Jewish support for separationism did not always characterize the stance of American Jewry. Indeed, before the last third of the nineteenth century, Jews were distinguished both by their political impotence and by their desire to be treated “on equal footing” with other legitimate religious groups. As a numerically very small group of relatively recent arrivals, they could hardly aspire to influence significantly the political process, although they did manage to advance the removal of some barriers to Jewish participation in the larger society. Opposed to the views and objectives of atheists and “free-thinkers,” nineteenth century American Jews sought merely to assure that Jews and Judaism were accorded the same standing and privileges as Christians and Christianity.

According to Jonathan Sarna, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, leading Christian influentials sought to declare America a Christian nation (the view was even included in an 1892 Supreme Court decision). These efforts drove Jews into an alliance with more secular, non-religious elements in American society who were long seeking a more thorough and clear disentanglement of church and state. The public schools were the principal arena for the political, legislative, and judicial struggles in this area. Jews, in particular, were concerned that the schools not be used to indoctrinate their children in the culture and tenets of Christianity, or that their children be made to feel unwelcome or unequal in a predominantly Christian environment.

Protecting the religious neutrality of the schools and other public spaces emerged as a central doctrine of the Jewish defense establishment. It enjoyed broad public support by mid-century among second- and third-generation Jews. Recently arrived both in the upper middle class and in the suburbs, these Jews were still socially segregated (in terms of family, friends, neighbors, and even workplace). As such, they were still understandably unsure of their social acceptability to other Americans. Hence, the fight to maintain a high wall of church-state separation stemmed directly from deeply felt identities and insecurities.

Of course, not all Jews — even Jews in recent times — have been enthusiastic about strict separationism. The initial hesitations of Orthodoxy, in particular, grew and emerged into institutionalized opposition to the conventional communal stance. Orthodox attorneys, rabbis, and other spokespeople have regularly taken issue with the rest of organized

Jewry. In contrast with the positions of most Jewish communal agencies, they have supported efforts to extend government aid to parochial schools, and to permit the display of religious symbols on public property. They have sought to move public policy on abortion and related matters in directions more in keeping with traditional Christian and Jewish religious beliefs. Indeed, the division among Jews (and others) around these issues has been so sharp that one analyst sees a realignment of American society along cultural rather than religious divisions.

In James Hunter's view (in *Culture Wars*), the historic divisions of Protestant-Catholic-Jew have given way to a new axis of social differentiation dividing society into culturally conservative and liberal camps. These new divisions cross once-important religious boundaries, with Orthodox Jews generally lining up with Christian fundamentalists and the Catholic hierarchy, and all the other Jews joined with liberal Protestants, Catholics, and militantly secular Americans. With this said, the Orthodox aside, organized American Jewry, until quite recently, has supported maintaining a high wall of separation between church and state.

The long-standing support for separationism on the part of non-Orthodox American Jews may be linked to three related larger sentiments or identities: minority status insecurity, liberalism, and secularity. Of course, in the minds of most Jewish supporters of separationism, church-state separationism promotes a more tolerant America and, possibly, a more religious America as well. However, since many others with a less strictly separationist stance also, presumably, value tolerance and religiosity, the question becomes, why are Jews more predisposed to perceive the benefits of separationism.

First, as a religious minority group with a historical consciousness of having been subject to centuries of persecution, American Jews have been eager to secure their integration into American society. Separation of church and state is but a part of a strategy on the part of modernizing Jews to establish a religious "neutral zone" where religious and ethnic tolerance is a supreme value.

Second, Jews' support for separationism is also connected with their liberal worldview and identification with the liberal camp, a segment of the American political spectrum highly supportive of separationism. Jews in the United States have been liberal in part because of their minority status concerns and because of the friendliness of Democrats

and liberals to Jews and Jewish inclusion. The historic Jewish position comported well with their more generalized passion for liberalism and their identification with the Democratic party and other liberal institutions and movements. For many Jews, being a good Jew meant being a good liberal; and being a good Jew and a good liberal also meant being a vigilant separationist. One of the major tenets of the liberal camp is support for separationism and an adversarial relationship with conservatives who are seen as supported by many church leaders. Hence, in this circular world, Jews are separationist in part because they identify so strongly as liberals, and they are liberals in part because they are separationists.

Last, also fueling Jews' separationism is their relative secularity, at least when measured in terms of the frequency of religious service attendance, with probably the lowest attendance rate of any major religious group in the United States. (They are also less likely than other Americans to say they are religious.) In simple terms, the less religious (Americans) are more separationist; the more religious are more accommodationist. On average, recognizing the problematics of applying such measures to Jews, Jews score lower than other Americans on conventional measures of pure religiosity. Hence, they have one less impetus to support religious accommodationism.

Is Jewish Separationism Waning?

Some Jewish Federation leaders have argued for a relaxation of Jews' opposition to government support for parochial school students, perhaps reflecting their immediate concerns with their increasing obligations to fund Jewish day schools. Their position is but a specific instance of a much broader critique of the historic Jewish support for separationism. This critique sees Jews faring better in a somewhat more religious society, or at least one characterized by a more moderate degree of separationism. In fact, changes along the three dimensions noted above (minority status, liberalism, and secularity) may well incline today's Jews to move toward a less vigorously separationist position, at least in theory.

By almost any measure, Jews are more socially accepted, more successful, and less subject to the insecurities of minority status than they were in mid-century. In theory, at least, they ought to be less anxious about acceptance and commensurately

more relaxed about expressions of religious sentiment in the schools and in public life in general.

With respect to their identification as liberals, several signs point to a weakening Jewish attachment. First and foremost, the liberal coalition is certainly more fragmented, less energetic, and less influential than it was at mid-century. Second, Jews may be behaving like many other Americans who have undergone a political de-alignment, moving away from partisan and ideological attachment toward disengagement, neutrality, indifference, independence, and new constellations of public opinions. A third consideration flows from the work of Robert Putnam (of *Bowling Alone* fame) and others who portray a decline in "social capital," civic activity, and community bonds. Jews, for their part, seem less concerned not only with politics, but also with all aspects of public life. They are less engaged in politics, philanthropy, volunteering, social justice, and communal organizations, be they of a Jewish or non-sectarian variety.

More pointedly, according to a relatively recent review of years of survey evidence covering 1972-1994 conducted by Charles Liebman and this author, the liberalism of Jews' political views is specific to certain domains. It certainly embraces identification as a liberal (or Democrat for electoral purposes), support for taxing and social spending, liberal views on sexually related matters, and church-state separation (at least as represented by a few available survey questions). However, when compared with Americans of similar education and residential distribution, Jews emerged as no more liberal with respect to sympathy for African-Americans, capital punishment, foreign affairs, civil liberties, and a variety of economic issues.

The third plane concerns the Jewish identity spectrum. As hypothesized, the more religious should seek more accommodationist policies, so as to bring about a society more influenced by religious values. Recent trends in Jewish demography and identity suggest a growth in more religiously oriented Jews (and, therefore, concomitant declines in Jewish support for separationism). In particular, the Orthodox are probably growing as a share of the young adult population, as are committed Conservative Jews. Moreover, the rise in day school enrollment among the non-Orthodox is also noteworthy. It signifies that growing numbers of American Jews are less anxious about their place in American society and more willing to engage in behavior that

might have appeared too segregationist, parochial, or overtly religious to their parents' generation. The readiness to send their children to day schools necessarily means that parents are willing to eschew the public schools. In so doing, they are rejecting an institution that has long held great symbolic value for American Jews as a channel of integration and a force for democracy. Theoretically, these larger trends may promote not only greater openness toward government support for day schools, but also greater interest in more religious expression in the public square.

At the same time, at the other end of the Jewish identity spectrum, the substantial rates of intermarriage are linked with growth in the number of marginally identifying Jews among the spouses and their children. More broadly, several measures of Jewish ethnic connectedness seem to be in decline. Insofar as support for separationism is a distinctively Jewish ethnic trait, the weakening of Jewish ethnic ties should reduce separationist attitudes among increasingly integrated and less ethnically distinctive American Jews. A similar phenomenon has been noted with respect to the relationship between liberal political identity and Jewish group involvement. The most religious were the least liberal. As religiosity or ethnic involvement declined, liberalism grew. But for Jews whose religious and ethnic involvement were so insignificant that they maintained very few in-group ties, their political views came to more closely resemble the societal center; that is, they were less liberal than many who were at least somewhat Jewishly engaged. Assimilation, or near-assimilation, reduces the chances of exhibiting distinctive ethnic characteristics, be it liberalism in the earlier study or, perhaps, separationism in this study.

Oddly, the opposing tendencies of a growing religious minority and a less ethnically distinctive majority may both be contributing to a decline in separationism.

Questions for Research

The trends outlined above certainly raise questions about American Jews' current orientations toward church-state issues:

1. In light of the putative changes in Jews' minority insecurity, liberal identification, religiosity and ethnicity, are American Jews still widely supportive of separationism?

2. To what extent, and in what ways, do they depart from separationism? Surely their views must vary by issue — what do the variations tell us about their fundamental concerns?
3. In what manner are Jews' attitudes in this realm linked to the factors of minority status, liberal identity, and Jewish identity?

Attitudes toward church-state separation, though, are only one dimension of the larger issue of religion in the public square. Just as the First Amendment contains two principal clauses, one regarding the establishment of a church and the other regarding the free exercise of religion, so too may we conceive of attitudes in this realm consisting of two dimensions. One relates to the separationist-accommodationist debate. The other relates to the profile and influence of religious values, discourse, leaders, and institutions in American public life. To what extent should these elements inform public debate? To what extent should religious symbols and references adorn America's public life, be it in courtrooms, in Congress, at presidential inaugurations, or on legal tender?

To discover the answers to these questions, parallel surveys were conducted of three sample populations — a national sample of American Jews, taken from a mail-back questionnaire completed by 1,002 U.S. Jewish respondents in January-February 2000; a national sample of 684 American non-Jews, constructed to approximate the Jewish sample in terms of education and region; and a sample of 111 participants in the annual national conference of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA; formerly the National Jewish Community Relations Council — NJCRAC), a highly respected and prominent Jewish communal defense agency that has been

very active for decades in promoting a separationist agenda, among other issues of concern to American Jewry.

Measures of Jewish Involvement

One important distinction between the Jewish public and JCPA leaders concerns several measures of Jewish involvement (Tables 1, 2, and 3). [Note: "JCPA" in this article refers to the Jewish Council for Public Affairs in the U.S. and *not* the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.] These include self-evaluations of the importance of being Jewish or being religious, synagogue attendance and ritual observance, and association with other Jews, whether as friends or in organized contexts. In all available measures, JCPA leaders outscore the Jewish public. For example, more than twice as many leaders than members of the public claimed that religion was very important to them (50 percent versus 20 percent), replicating similar results with respect to the importance of being Jewish (89 percent versus 38 percent). More than three times as many leaders as rank-and-file American Jews had visited Israel in their youth (47 percent versus 13 percent) or taken a university course in Jewish studies (46 percent versus 15 percent). Just 24 percent of the public claimed to have Sabbath candles lit in their home (an important bellwether ritual) as contrasted with nearly three times as many leaders (68 percent). In short, not only are the leaders much more involved in organized Jewish life, the JCPA leaders are also more Jewishly educated, more ritually active, and more committed to being Jewish (by their own testimony) than are members of the American Jewish public.

Table 1
JEWISH IDENTITY INDICATORS
(in percent)

	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders	Jews 1988	Jews 1997	1990 NJPS*
Religion is very important in life	20	50	26		
Being Jewish is very important in life	38	89	48		50
Attend synagogue monthly or more	24	61		26	27
Closest friends are Jewish	46	91	71	46	49
Spouse is Jewish	73	96		80	81
Spouse of youngest married child is Jewish	48	77		54	

* National Jewish Population Study: Sub-sample of adult Jews who identify as Jewish by religion.

Table 2
JEWISH BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS
(in percent)

	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders	Jews 1988	Jews 1997	1990 NJPS
Attended a full-time Jewish school (day school or yeshiva)	8	13	6	7	8
Attended a part-time Jewish school that met 2 or more times a week	38	41	51	48	39
Attended a Sunday school or other one-day-a-week Jewish school (but not day school or part-time)	28	31	21	22	21
Participated in a Jewish youth group as a teenager	49	66			
Visited Israel by the age of 26	13	47			
Took a course in Jewish Studies while at college	15	46			
Have a Christmas tree (sometimes or more often)	24	4	16	21	23
Usually attend a Seder	85	98	79	87	73
Fast on Yom Kippur	61	88	59	64	63
Have been to Israel	35	93	36	36	33
Usually light candles on Friday night	24	68		28	22
Member of a synagogue	44	89		48	44
Member of a Jewish Community Center (JCC)	12	44		14	
Participated in a program at a JCC within the past year	29	74		27	30
Belong to a Jewish organization	27	93		32	34
In the past 2 years served on a board or committee of a Jewish organization or synagogue	17	31		18	
Contributed to the UJA/Federation	46			42	
Subscribe to a Jewish newspaper or magazine	49				

Table 3
DENOMINATIONAL IDENTIFICATION
(in percent)

	Jewish Public ^b	JCPA Leaders	Jews 1988	Jews 1997	1990 NJPS
Orthodox ^a	3	7	10	7	7
Conservative ^a	34	45	31	34	39
Reform ^a	35	35	25	38	41
Reconstructionist ^a	7	6		2	1
Other	25	7	33	22	13

^a Includes both synagogue and non-synagogue members. Within any denomination, members and non-members differ considerably.

^b The sample of the Jewish public, taken from a national consumer research panel, may under-represent the Orthodox.

Religion in the Schools

The major findings of this study emerge clearly in the questions on policies toward religious accommodation (Table 4). Notwithstanding all the appearance of change and ferment in Jewish attitudes with the growth in Jewish religious day school enrollment and the seeming decline in at-

tachment to historic American liberalism, Jews remain far more separationist (or less accommodationist) than other Americans, even those with similar regional and educational distributions. Moreover, their leaders (specifically, activists at the JCPA conference) are even more strictly separationist than American Jews generally.

Table 4
SUPPORT FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION IN THE SCHOOLS
(percent who favor selected policies)

	Non-Jewish Public	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders	Jews 1988
Allowing public schools to display the Ten Commandments	65	38	5	
Allowing public school students to say non-sectarian prayers at sporting events	69	28	5	
Allowing non-denominational prayers to be read in the classroom	59	20	2	
Allowing public schools to set aside a moment of silence each day for students to pray if they want to	84	48	19	
Allowing public schools to teach Christmas carols, as long as they also teach Hanukkah songs	77	56	13	
Teaching creationism in public schools along with evolution when teaching about the origin of man	63	39	7	
Making public school classrooms available to student religious groups to hold voluntary meetings, when classes are not in session	77	53	42	51
Allowing public schools to share their computers with local religious schools	59	39	33	
Providing government aid (vouchers) to families for tuition in private, non-religious schools	40	24	14	
Providing government aid (vouchers) to families for tuition in private schools, including religious schools	43	22	11	19
Index of Religious Accommodation	81	53	26	

To elaborate on all school-related items in the survey, non-Jews outscored the Jewish public in support for accommodation, and the Jewish public, in turn, outscored Jewish leaders. This generalization applies to items as diverse as prayer in schools, posting the Ten Commandments, providing vouchers for private or religious school tuition, and sharing facilities with religious schools or student religious groups. A few telling examples illustrate this observation: the display of the Ten Commandments in public schools found favor among 65 percent of the non-Jews (others were unsure or opposed), 38 percent of the Jewish public, and just 5 percent of the leaders. With respect to setting aside a moment of silence for school pupils to pray if they want to, 84 percent of the non-Jews were in favor, as contrasted with 48 percent of the Jews, and only 19 percent of the leaders. The results for the other items were similar.

The issue of school vouchers is probably the most hotly contested contemporary issue in the survey. Support for vouchers is almost twice as high among non-Jews as among Jews, and about twice as high among the Jewish public as among the leaders.

For non-Jews, providing vouchers for religious schools elicits more support than for private, non-religious schools (43 percent versus 40 percent), while for the Jewish public the situation is reversed (22 percent versus 24 percent), as it is for the leaders (11 percent versus 14 percent). Many of those Jews who oppose school vouchers see their introduction as a grave danger to the public school system.

In the two instances where we have available direct comparisons with the survey conducted twelve years ago, Jewish support for accommodation then was almost, but not quite, the same as it is now. For making classrooms available to student religious groups, 51 percent of the 1988 respondents were in favor as compared with 53 percent now. For providing vouchers for families with children in religious schools, 19 percent were in favor then, and 22 percent today. The movement toward accommodation is too small to be seen as a sign of real change, but it takes on greater meaning when combined with small changes in the same direction reported below for all other available items.

While American Jews are uniformly more separationist than non-Jews on all issues, the varying extent to which Jews accept (or reject) alternative accommodationist proposals provides some insight into their concerns and into the logic that underlies their specific views. In particular, the Jewish public is especially reticent to endorse prayers in the school or school vouchers. The fear of Christian religious indoctrination in the schools has long been a major concern of Jewish parents. The voucher issue touches directly upon a concern for the public schools, long seen as an arena for social integration and education for democracy and tolerance.

In contrast, almost half (48 percent) of the Jewish public favors a moment of silence for voluntary prayer. Most (53 percent), in fact, favor allowing the use of classrooms by student religious groups (even 42 percent of the JCPA leaders favor this idea). Even more (56 percent) endorse the teaching of Christmas carols as long as schools also teach Hanukkah songs.

Why do these proposals win more support than others? One consideration is that Jews adapt to current policy and practice. They more readily accept those breaches of the wall of separation that the courts already have sanctioned. They also more readily resist proposed changes such as prayer (that has been judicially rejected), or vouchers (which at the moment is being hotly debated but not widely instituted).

The moment of silence proposal contains less of a threat of forcible indoctrination than do calls for prayer in schools. Every child would be free to pray, or not, and can utter a silent prayer from his or her own tradition. (Perhaps Jews find some sense of familiarity here in that many Jewish prayers are uttered silently.) The use of classrooms also seems to presuppose a voluntary basis. The use would occur after hours by groups that would want them, consisting of youngsters who would voluntarily choose to participate in the groups — or not. The Jewish public is not as sensitive as are elite figures to the implications of such a policy for abstract judicial concepts such as “entanglement.”

Against this background, the widespread acceptance of teaching Christmas carols seems paradoxical. After all, participation is not at all voluntary,

and some carols explicitly celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. However, several ameliorating factors may be at play to make the proposal, as worded, more palatable. First, teaching Christmas carols is a long-standing tradition in American schools, one which many of the respondents themselves experienced and for which they may have developed some tolerance. Second, the schools, among others, have argued that Christmas carols (if not the holiday itself) can be seen as a seasonal, civic activity and not a religious celebration. (One wonders whether public schools avoid teaching the most overtly religious carols.) Third, the survey question included a phrase about also teaching Hanukkah songs. In so doing, it may have evoked in some respondents’ minds a notion of putting Judaism and Christianity on equal footing. The equal footing objective has, as noted, served as an alternative to the religiously neutral society as a way of assuring Jewish social acceptance in the United States. Fourth, carols are carols, not prayers. Jews may be more sensitive to outright Christian religious indoctrination and prayers than they are to singing popular, seasonally oriented songs.

* * *

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This study was prepared with the assistance of Judith Schor, CUNY Graduate Center, and the Florence G. Heller/JCCA Research Center. The author gratefully acknowledges the extensive comments of Charles Liebman on earlier versions of this report, and also thanks Leonard Fein, Alan Mittleman, and Jonathan Sarna for their helpful comments.



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RELIGION AND THE PUBLIC SQUARE: ATTITUDES OF AMERICAN JEWS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE — PART TWO

Steven M. Cohen

Expression of Religion in Public Life / Organized Religion and Politics / Issues Related to Sexuality / Conservative versus Liberal / Perceptions of Antisemitism / Jewish Leaders versus the Jewish Public

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Expression of Religion in Public Life

Attitudes toward separation-accommodation are related to support for (or opposition to) the expression of religion in public life. Within each of the three samples, church-state separationists were more likely than accommodationists to oppose expanded religious influence in society and the involvement of churches and church leaders in political affairs. Table 5 contains several relevant questions in this domain.

For six out of nine items, the pattern of responses follows that found with respect to accommodationism in the schools: the non-Jewish public's support for religious influence exceeds that of the Jewish public, followed by the Jewish leaders. Answers to the questions on public display of religious symbols (Christmas mangers and Hanukkah candles) are prime examples. We find support for such display by the vast majority of non-Jews, a large minority of the Jewish public, and hardly any of the Jewish leaders.

Compared with twelve years ago, Jewish support for public display has increased by a small extent, moving from 36 percent approving a manger scene in 1988 to 43 percent now, and, with respect to Hanukkah candles, from 37 percent in 1988 to 46 percent today. These changes, coupled with those reported earlier, suggest a small but noticeable shift toward more accommodationism within the Jewish public.

Dore Gold and Manfred Gerstenfeld, Co-Publishers; Zvi R. Marom, Editor; Mark Ami-El, Managing Editor. The Jerusalem Letter was founded in 1978 by Daniel J. Elazar. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (Registered Amuta), 13 Tel-Hai St., Jerusalem, Israel; Tel. 972-2-5619281, Fax. 972-2-5619112, Email: jcpa@netvision.net.il. In U.S.A.: Center for Jewish Community Studies, 1515 Locust St., Suite 703, Philadelphia, PA 19102-3726; Tel. (215) 772-0564, Fax. (215) 772-0566. Website: www.jcpa.org. © Copyright. ISSN: 0334-4096.

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Table 5
 SUPPORT FOR EXPRESSION OF RELIGION IN PUBLIC LIFE
 (percent who favor selected policies or agree with selected attitudes)

	Non-Jewish Public	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders	Jews 1988
Democracy in the U.S. works better if Americans are religious.	42	11	19	
We need more laws governing our moral behavior.	45	28	3	
I am pleased when political leaders publicly affirm their belief in God.	70	30	22	
It is good for Congress to start sessions with a public prayer.	71	28	15	
Belonging to a church or synagogue makes one a more aware and engaged citizen.	56	48	55	
Religion should play an important role in shaping American values.	76	51	54	
The influence of religion in American life should increase.	65	30	20	
It is okay for a city government to put up a manger scene on government property at Christmas.	80	43	5	36
It is okay for a city government to put up candles on government property for the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah.	79	46	7	37
Index of Support for Religious Expression in Public Life	64	41	33	

Non-Jews, the Jewish public, and Jewish leaders are also sharply differentiated along by now familiar lines with respect to whether “we need more laws governing our moral behavior” (45 percent versus 28 percent versus 3 percent respectively). Behind this question are two views of the state that may be called “visionary” and “instrumental.” The visionary state, a view held more often by conservatives than liberals, bears responsibility for shaping the moral character of its citizenry. As such, the state is obliged to pass laws to prevent immoral conduct and to educate citizens on proper behavior. The instrumental notion of the state, a view held more by liberals than conservatives, sees the state as avoiding moral judgments. In this view, the state is responsible for helping individuals realize the good as they determine it, so long as such pursuits cause no harm to others.

Previous research has demonstrated that Jews are less inclined to support laws governing moral behavior in part because they do not attach moral judgment (or as much moral judgment) to certain issues. For example, from the survey we learn (again) that Jews take a less critical view of homosexuality, abortion, birth control, and pornography than do non-Jews. In each case, Jewish leaders are even more tolerant than the Jewish public.

Jewish attitudes toward such matters are not merely more relaxed or tolerant. The responses to the question on moral laws suggest that Jews are

less inclined to believe that government ought to legislate what they regard as personal morality, a zone that should be free from government interference. Perhaps they hold a more suspicious view of government, one bred by centuries of living under governments that were not their own.

In still other ways, the Jewish public is generally less enthusiastic about the role of religion in American public life than are non-Jews. When asked about their preferences for the growth or decline of the influence of religion in American society, twice as many non-Jews as Jews preferred that it increase (65 percent versus 30 percent, and just 20 percent for Jewish leaders).

Of some interest is that in this area, Jewish leaders’ views are not very different from those of the Jewish public. In contrast with their greater separationism, Jewish leaders expressed marginally more support than the public on the following questions (paraphrased):

- Democracy works better if Americans are religious.
- Belonging to a church or synagogue makes one a more engaged citizen.
- Religion should play an important role in shaping American values.

It is in the context of the gaps in separationism reported above that these findings are surprising. With the leaders so much more strictly separationist than the public, and in light of the correlation be-

tween separationism and attitudes toward religion in public life, one might have expected the leaders to substantially trail the public in support for religious influence in society. That the leaders' attitudes even resemble those of the Jewish public in this area, let alone surpass the Jewish public in a few instances, is remarkable. Accordingly, although proportionally many more JCPA leaders adopt a strict separationist position, it does not appear to be a consequence of a greater antipathy toward the role of religion in public life. [Note: As explained in Part One of this special report, "JCPA" in this article refers to the Jewish Council for Public Affairs in the U.S. and *not* the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.]

Organized Religion and Politics

We also see signs of similar complexity with respect to the participation of churches and clergy in politics (Table 6). Non-Jews, the Jewish public, and Jewish leaders provide very mixed patterns of responses to questions on whether churches, the clergy, and organized religion should be active in the political arena. Jews (both the public and the leaders) are far more inclined than non-Jews to want organized religion to stay out of politics. Similarly, a large gap separates the Jewish public from the non-Jewish public with respect to the appropriateness of the Right to Life movement using religion (42 percent of non-Jews approve versus 15 percent of Jews). A small gap in the same direction emerges in the question on churches and synagogues keeping out of political matters (36 percent of non-Jews and 44 percent of Jews favor this statement). However, on whether the clergy can

discuss political matters and candidates from the pulpit, the Jewish public is actually more accepting (30 percent for non-Jews and 35 percent for the Jews).

The JCPA leaders, on these last three questions, endorse organized religion's political involvement far more than the Jewish public and even far more than non-Jews. For example, 73 percent of the leaders approve the discussion of politics by clergy from the pulpit, as opposed to only about a third of the non-Jewish and Jewish publics. On another question, as many as 80 percent of the leaders said that churches and synagogues should express their views on social and political questions, almost twice as many as among the non-Jewish and Jewish public samples.

Among the public (be it Jewish or non-Jewish), separationist policy stances are associated with opposition to church involvement in political life. The JCPA leaders seem to break this association by strongly supporting separationism and also strongly supporting clerical and church involvement in politics.

To be sure, internally, the sample of JCPA leaders evinces the same sort of relationship between the two attitudes. That is, within the sample of leaders, separationism correlates with opposition to churches' political involvement. However, in the aggregate, the leaders are more separationist than the Jewish public, but also are more inclined to legitimate church involvement in political affairs. Accordingly, in this macro context, their strong support for churches' political involvement contrasts with their strong support for separationism.

Table 6
ATTITUDES TOWARD CHURCH AND CLERICAL INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS
(Percent who favor selected policies or agree with selected attitudes)

	Non-Jewish Public	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders
Organized religion should stay out of politics.	56	88	83
It is okay for the Right to Life movement to use religion in the debate on abortion.	42	15	50
Clergymen can discuss political candidates or issues from the pulpit.	30	35	73
Churches and synagogues should keep out of political matters.	36	44	14
Index of Support for Church Involvement in Politics	49	46	80

With all this said, further inspection of the data reveals still further anomalies. The JCPA leaders trail the Jewish public with respect to these items:

- I am pleased when political leaders publicly affirm their belief in God (for the public 31 percent agree, versus 22 percent for leaders).
- It is good for Congress to start sessions with a public prayer (28 percent versus 15 percent)
- Would like to see the influence of religion in American life increase (30 percent versus 20 percent).

In all three instances, approximately 70 percent of the non-Jewish public agreed, constituting a very sharp gap with the Jews, be they the public or JCPA leaders.

These results flesh out the seemingly anomalous stance of the leaders toward religion in public life. They are, indeed, more committed than the Jewish public to *the right* of religious institutions and leaders to engage in public life and discourse. However, like the Jewish public, JCPA leaders are unhappy with the actual exercise of that right (in fact, as a group, the leaders are marginally less pleased than the Jewish public over religious expression in the public square).

Issues Related to Sexuality

The role of religion in public life has figured prominently in issues related to sexuality. Abortion

may be the most contentious issue, followed closely by homosexuality and, to a lesser extent, the availability of pornography. Most outspoken religious leaders, or so it probably seems to the public, adopt a “conservative” position on these issues. Any exploration of attitudes toward religion in the public square needs to take into account attitudes toward these issues.

Indeed, on every sexually-oriented public policy item listed in Table 7, we find the same ordering of the three samples’ responses seen earlier with respect to separationism. The non-Jewish public is the most conservative, the Jewish public is more liberal, and the Jewish leadership is more liberal still. For example, with respect to whether homosexuality is wrong, almost half (48 percent) of the non-Jews agree, as contrasted with less than a quarter (23 percent) of the Jews, and just 7 percent of the leaders. Support for the general availability of abortion reaches 56 percent among non-Jews, 88 percent of Jews, and almost all (96 percent) of Jewish leaders. (Recall that adjusting the non-Jewish sample for education and residence produced a more liberal sample than the unadjusted national norm. Hence, these results also understate the Jewish/non-Jewish gap with regard to sexually-oriented issues.)

Table 7
ATTITUDES TOWARD SEXUALLY-ORIENTED ISSUES
 (“Social Liberalism/Conservatism”)
 (percent who favor selected policies)

	Non-Jewish Public	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders
It is wrong for adults of the same sex to have sexual relations.	48	23	7
School boards ought to have the right to fire teachers who are known homosexuals.	24	6	4
Abortion should be generally available to those who want it.	58	88	96
Abortions should be more difficult to obtain than they are now.	41	10	5
Public schools should be allowed to provide students with information on birth control methods.	74	87	93
Lesbians and homosexuals who have publicly declared their sexual orientation should be allowed to teach in public schools.	48	75	91
Gays and lesbians should be allowed to marry legally.	32	52	56
The public sale and display of pornography should be banned.	69	56	21
Where and how pornography may be exhibited should be regulated.	84	80	69

Conservative versus Liberal

The question of church-state relations has been one hotly debated by conservatives and liberals, with the former taking the accommodationist position and the latter supporting a separationist posture. Jews have a deserved reputation for liberalism, based in large part upon their historic support for the Democratic party and upon their identification as liberals, as opposed to moderates or conservatives.

Consistent with this imagery, the extent of liberalism in the respondents' present or family past (i.e., their parents) follows a by now familiar pattern (Table 8). The non-Jewish public (even this highly educated and relatively non-Southern adjusted sample) least often identifies as liberals, surpassed in turn by Jews and Jewish leaders (19 percent, 32 percent, and 74 percent respectively). We

find the same ordering with respect to Democratic party identification (31 percent, 59 percent, and 81 percent). In comparison with surveys of the Jewish public conducted in 1988 and 1997, we find a slight movement in a less liberal direction, one that is not statistically significant but may be substantively meaningful.

Further (and perhaps more compelling) evidence for Jews' widespread identification with the liberal camp is found in answers to questions on the impression of selected liberal and conservative groups and movements (Table 9). Favorable impressions for liberal groups are highest among the Jewish leaders, lowest among the non-Jewish public, and intermediary among the Jewish public. For example, for the ACLU, favorable ratings range from 34 percent for non-Jews, to 61 percent for Jews, and 92 percent for the JCPA leaders.

Table 8
LIBERAL ATTITUDES AND BACKGROUND
(in percent)

	Non-Jewish Public	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders	Jews 1988	Jews 1997
Takes a liberal stand on political issues	19	32	74	33	35
Thinks of self as a Democrat	31	59	81	61	64
Father's usual stand on politics was liberal	10	25	35	23	
Mother's usual stand on politics was liberal	15	26	55	26	

Table 9
FAVORABLE ATTITUDES TOWARD LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE ACTIVIST GROUPS
(in percent)

	Non-Jewish Public	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders	Jews 1988
Pro-choice movement	61	86	95	78
National Organization for Women	59	77	86	51
NAACP	58	75	93	49
Americans United for Separation of Church and State	19	36	74	
ACLU	34	61	92	33
National Rifle Association	42	19	18	
Right to Life movement	41	13	18	
Christian Coalition	35	9	2	
Index of Liberal Orientations toward Political Activists*	58	70	79	

* Index includes: pro-choice movement (+), NOW (+), NAACP (+), ACLU (+), NRA (-), and the Right to Life movement (-), and takes into account the full range of responses from very favorable to very unfavorable.

Conversely, far more non-Jews than Jews have a favorable impression of politically conservative groups. For example, 42 percent of non-Jews think favorably of the NRA as opposed to 19 percent of the Jewish public and 18 percent of Jewish leaders. The overall index of sympathy for liberal-conservative groups places the Jewish public (with a score of 70) somewhere between the non-Jewish public (58) and the JCPA leaders (79), though clearly closer to the JCPA leaders than to the non-Jewish public. The leaders, in short, see themselves squarely as member of the liberal camp in American politics, while the Jewish public leans more hesitantly in that direction.

Perceptions of Antisemitism

The Jewish public more readily perceives antisemitism in American society than do the leaders (Table 10). Just 9 percent of the public could agree that, "antisemitism is currently not a serious problem for American Jews," as contrasted with 45 percent of the leaders. Just 31 percent of the public agreed that almost "all positions of influence...are open to Jews," as contrasted with more than twice as many leaders (70 percent). Compared with 1988, both figures for the public point in the direction of increased concern with antisemitism. In this regard, we need to recall that several shootings of Jews by lone gunmen had taken place shortly before the fielding of the survey, and these undoubtedly fueled Jewish concerns over antisemitism.

Table 10
VIEWS ON ANTISEMITISM IN AMERICAN SOCIETY
(percent who agree)

	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders	Jews 1988
Antisemitism is currently not a serious problem for American Jews.	9	45	14
Virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews.	31	70	25

Further insight into Jewish thinking on antisemitism may be gleaned from perceptions of the extent to which certain religious, ethnic, political, and economic groups in American society are antisemitic (Table 11). With respect to a list of twelve such groups, greater proportions of the Jewish public viewed "many" or "most" of the members of these groups as antisemitic as contrasted with the more relaxed views of JCPA leaders. Some of the contrasts are quite striking. For example, 30 percent of the public see many or most Catholics as antisemitic as compared with just 4 percent of the leaders; for mainstream Protestants the results are similar (23 percent versus 4 percent). Large gaps also emerge with respect to Republicans, big business, Hispanics, and union leaders where about a quarter to a fifth of the public perceives substantial antisemitism as compared with just small handfuls of the leaders.

The gaps between leaders and rank-and-file Jews narrow considerably with respect to groups at both ends of the perceived antisemitism spectrum.

Of note, hardly any members of the public or leadership regard liberals or Democrats as highly antisemitic. At the same time, four groups concern both the public and the leaders. Most worrisome to both samples are fundamentalist Protestants, followed by Southern Baptists, blacks, and conservatives. (For the public, the Catholics run a close fifth in perceived antisemitism.)

The results largely replicate those found among the Jewish public in 1988. Both in 1988 and in 2000, conservative-oriented groups fared "worse" than did the more liberal-oriented. Groups seen as religious and minority ethnic groups evoked high levels of concern among the Jewish public. However, the perceptions of antisemitism for almost all groups replicated declined from 1988 to 2000. For example, in 1988, 46 percent thought that many or most blacks were antisemitic as contrasted with 36 percent in the year 2000. The two exceptions to these trends entail conservatives and Republicans; for both these right-of-center groups, perceptions of antisemitism by Jews became more widespread.

Table 11
 PERCEPTIONS OF ANTISEMITISM AMONG SELECTED GROUPS
 (percent who think most or many members of the group are antisemitic)

	Jewish Public	JCPA Leaders	Jews 1988
Southern Baptists	47	42	
Fundamentalist Protestants	59	52	59
Blacks	36	23	46
Conservatives	31	25	23
Catholics	30	4	38
Republicans	25	12	20
Mainstream Protestants	23	4	34
Big business	22	6	35
Hispanics	21	6	30
Union leaders	20	2	28
Liberals	7	3	9
Democrats	6	2	7
Index of Perceived Antisemitism	55	33	

The ordering of the groups (with more conservative groups seen as more antisemitic), the liberal political leanings of the respondents (Jewish public and Jewish leaders), and their stances on separationism are all related. For Jews, a more liberal worldview is associated with greater faith in liberals as friendly to Jews and more support for separationism as a protection against potentially antisemitic, conservative, Christian influences in society. The more conservative worldview is associated with more perceptions of hostility among liberals, relatively less among conservatives, and a more accommodationist position.

In general, among the Jewish public and JCPA leaders, perceptions of antisemitism are linked to support for church-state separation and a diminished presence of religion in society. But the specific groups associated with antisemitism is an important part of this story. The analysis distinguished four sorts of groups (or groups of groups), listed here in declining order of perceived hostility to Jews:

- 1) Religious groups (Southern Baptists, Protestant fundamentalists, mainstream Protestants, Catholics).
- 2) Ethnic groups (blacks, Hispanics).
- 3) Conservative groups (conservatives, Republicans, big business).
- 4) Liberal groups (liberals, Democrats, unions).

Among the Jewish public, only variations in perceptions of antisemitism among the religious groups and the ethnic groups correlate ($r =$ about .25) with separationism or attitudes toward religious influence in public life. For the JCPA leaders, the same relationships were limited to attitudes toward religious groups. In other words, concern with the potential hostility of religious groups (among the Jewish public and leaders), as well as ethnic groups (among the public), is associated with support for separationism and opposition to religious influence in society.

Jewish Leaders versus the Jewish Public

The JCPA leaders differ from the Jewish public in their more vigorous support for separationism. The gap between leaders (at least these leaders, from an agency known for its long and vigorous advocacy of a high wall of separation between church and state) and their public is especially pronounced. If the Jewish public is separationist, the JCPA leaders are profoundly and almost uniformly separationist. At the same time, we must recall that separationism grows with Jewish involvement. Clearly, it is most pronounced in the public among those who are most Jewishly involved. The JCPA leaders are an even more ethnically involved group than the Jewish public at large. Their views on separationism reflect their significantly higher levels of Jewish involvement.

Compared with the Jewish public, one that is wary of religious involvement in public life, JCPA leaders more readily endorse the legitimacy of religious involvement in politics. At the same time, even more than the Jewish public, JCPA leaders are displeased by the actual expression of certain religious symbols and behavior in public (e.g., opening congressional sessions with a prayer).

JCPA leaders, as compared with the Jewish public, are much more religious, more decidedly in the liberal camp, less concerned about antisemitism, and rather outspoken in their support for the legitimacy of religious influence and participation in the public square. They come to a strong support for separationism *despite* their personal religiosity, despite their principled support for religiously informed discourse, despite their endorsement in theory of church and clerical involvement in politics, and despite their relaxed attitude toward American antisemitism. Why the JCPA leaders remain committed to church-state separation as a deeply held principle demands explanation.

From individual interviews with Jewish leaders, we learned that there is sympathy, if not commitment, for the influence of religion in and upon public discourse. All see religious institutions as fragile structures which could be perverted or undermined by overly close connections with the state. All see a diminished impact of religion upon the state were religious institutions to accept state largesse, or, more generally, were the separation of church and state to be weakened or narrowed.

In fact, Jewish separationists have long regarded support for separation and for the expression of religion as not at all contradictory, but rather as mutually supportive phenomena. At least since 1947, Jewish communal leaders engaged in struggles over church-state issues emphasized the establishment clause of the First Amendment, rather than the free exercise clause, as the best guarantor of religious freedom and religious equality. They assumed that the two clauses were "two sides of the same coin," expressing the unitary principle "that freedom requires separation."

Apparently, leaders of the JCPA (and other agencies with similar positions) have long held a set of related propositions, derived from their reading of the First Amendment, that sees separationism as in harmony with strong Jewish commitments (in line with the patterns in the Jewish public) and with support for the free exercise of religion in American public life. On another plane, as we have seen, the most religiously and ethnically involved members of the Jewish public are, at the same time, the most separationist and the most accepting of clerical involvement in politics. That JCPA leaders also adopt these positions, in light of their own high levels of Jewish involvement, is not at all that surprising.

Elites are clearly capable of producing and maintaining logical connections that are absent in their publics. Moreover, those who are recruited to leadership in these agencies arrive with the understanding of the agencies' historic positions. Presumably, leaders self-select. After many years of involvement, they also learn to adopt the logic that connects support for religious involvement in public life with separationism in church-state policy.

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This study was prepared with the assistance of Judith Schor, CUNY Graduate Center, and the Florence G. Heller/JCCA Research Center. The author gratefully acknowledges the extensive comments of Charles Liebman on earlier versions of this report, and also thanks Leonard Fein, Alan Mittleman, and Jonathan Sarna for their helpful comments.