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The attachment of British Jews to Israel

For all who want to influence the future relationship between British Jews and Israel, an understanding of where that relationship now stands and where trends suggest it might be going is essential.

Overall it was found that 43 per cent of the sample felt a strong attachment to Israel. Yet, if current trends prevail, attachment to Zionism and to the Jewish state could become the concern of only a minority with a mostly Traditional or Orthodox religious outlook.

Barry Kosmin, Antony Lerman and Jacqueline Goldberg

The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)**, an independent think-tank, informs and influences policy, opinion and decision-making on issues affecting Jewish life worldwide by conducting and commissioning research, developing and disseminating policy proposals and promoting public debate.

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Contents

Summary of findings

The findings in this report are based on a 1995 postal survey of a sample of 2,194 British Jews.

- Overall it was found that 43 per cent of the sample felt a strong attachment to Israel, 38 per cent were moderately attached, 16 per cent expressed no special attachment, while 3 per cent had negative feelings towards Israel.

British versus Jewish group identity

- When respondents selected one of the following ways of self-identification, 18 per cent replied that they felt 'more British than Jewish', 54 per cent that they felt 'equally British and Jewish' and 26 per cent that they felt 'more Jewish than British'. Only 2 per cent were unsure.

- When these group identifications were analyzed according to age group, the percentage of those identifying themselves as more Jewish was highest among the youngest respondents and decreased with age. There was a concomitant increase with age in feeling equally British and Jewish.

- There is a significant relationship between feeling strongly attached to Israel and self-identification as primarily Jewish. In fact 73 per cent of those who identified themselves as feeling more Jewish express a strong attachment to Israel while very few of those who feel more British (12 per cent) have an equivalent attachment.

- When examining the role of youth movement participation in the creation of group identities among British Jews, exposure to Zionism in youth is not particularly significant in forming pro-Israel opinions in later life. The experience is no more influential than other forms of adolescent Jewish socialization and memberships.

General ties to Israel

- Although group identity is a logical predictor, other factors such as demography and ideology play an important role in determining attitudes towards Israel.

- Statistically significant differences are found by sex (women are more strongly attached than men), age (older age groups are more strongly attached than the young) and region.

- The findings also demonstrated a strikingly clear pattern of strengthening attachment to Israel as the degree of commitment to traditional Judaism rises.

- Twenty-two per cent of the sample had never visited Israel while a further 12 per cent had not been since 1985. The remaining 66 per cent of the sample had therefore visited Israel at least once in the previous ten years with many making multiple visits. Almost 7 out of 10 (69 per cent) British Jews said they have close friends or family in Israel, a sign of increased social connections as compared with earlier surveys.

The age factor

- A significantly higher percentage of the over 50s felt strongly attached to Israel than under 50s.

- Between 45 and 60 per cent of each age group which have friends or relatives in Israel were strongly attached, with a slight tendency for more of the older respondents to express this attitude. However, while 34 per cent of those aged between 70 and 79 who do not have friends in Israel are strongly attached, very few of the 18-49 year olds who lack tangible social ties with Israelis have this kind of emotional attachment.

- In the older age groups, large proportions of those who have visited Israel are strongly attached, but this declines somewhat in the younger age groups. In contrast, while 34 per cent of the oldest group who have never visited Israel are still strongly attached, only 3 per cent of the 18-29 year olds without personal experience of Israel feel the same.

- The findings point to the significance of experiencing Israel for younger people. The young have a psychological and emotional deficit that has to be compensated for by visiting Israel.

- An essential feature of classic Zionist ideology is the belief that only in the sovereign Jewish state is there a secure long-term future for Jews. While 61 per cent of the total sample rejected this classic view there was a significant difference by age group: the 18 to 39 year olds overwhelmingly reject this view while the older age groups were less inclined to disagree. Furthermore, the stronger an individual's attachment to Israel, the more likely she or he is to agree with the above statement.

- When examining attitudes towards aliya (immigration to Israel) in comparison with the 1978 Redbridge study, 34 per cent of the JPR sample had thought about living in Israel compared with only 17 per cent of the Redbridge sample. Clearly more people had also given aliya a try, but the fact that the percentage

of those who say they are actually making preparations to go is so similar in both surveys suggests that there remains a big gap between thought and action.

- Given the overall degree of attachment expressed in the survey, only 12 per cent of those who made a choice between Israeli causes, UK Jewish causes, overseas aid for the poor and general British charities chose Israel as their first priority charitable cause. When this is analyzed further by age group, there is a marked generational decline which does not reflect the finding that 85 per cent of younger Jews give to charity.

The religious factor

- There is a highly significant relationship between religious outlook and attachment to Israel: over the past 10 years the average number of visits for the Secular, Just Jewish and Progressive groupings is approximately 2, for the Traditional 4, and for the Strictly Orthodox just over 8 visits.

- Closeness towards Israel among the Orthodox does not imply support for the Oslo peace process nor for the principle of land for peace.

- Examining attitudes towards aliya showed that traditionalist religious-based attachment to Israel extends to considerations about aliya: only 5 per cent of the Strictly Orthodox have never considered going on aliya.

Key variables influencing attachment to Israel

- A multiple regression analysis showed that religious outlook and group identity were the key explanatory variables for individuals' levels of attachment to Israel. It is crucial to note that these characteristics are acquired, not fixed, and so are theoretically open to change and influence.

1 Introduction

Israel is widely regarded by Diaspora communal leaders and many ordinary Jews as being of crucial importance to Jewish life. It is seen as a focus of consensus in the Jewish community, the central aim of fundraising activity, as well as a force for cohesion and enhancement of the status and security of British and other Diaspora Jews.

However, the extent to which this pivotal institutional role can be taken for granted in the lives of ordinary Jews has not been determined. Given the emphasis placed on Israel's role in maintaining and strengthening Jewish identity, it is critical to delineate this relationship of the Jewish public towards Israel not only for all of the many organizations involved in activities related to Israel, but also for the issue of Jewish continuity. For all who want to influence the future relationship between British Jews and Israel, an understanding of where that relationship now stands and where trends suggest it might be going is essential.

The report on the Redbridge Jewish community in 1978 observed that 'The place of Israel within the framework of the life and ideas of British Jews has never been investigated in any real depth. Considering the apparently tremendous emotional and practical investment of Jews in Israel and the long years since the Zionist "capture" of the community's institutions in the 1940s, this situation is quite surprising'.[1] The JPR Survey of the Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews begins to address this problem and the results presented in this report provide some of the answers to the critical questions which arise. We hope the findings will stimulate debate within the community and will help to develop informed policies on Israel-Diaspora relations.

Since the JPR survey was the first of its kind, there is no comprehensive earlier survey data with which comparisons can be made, but it is still necessary to set the JPR data in their historical context: how did relations between British Jews and Israel develop and how did things stand in the years prior to the JPR survey?

Historical context

It is easy to forget that Zionism and the possibility of a sovereign Jewish state were once deeply divisive issues in Jewish life in this country. The transition from Zionism as a minority interest to Israel as a point of consensus for the British Jewish community was not easy, certainly not in the years prior to the establishment of the state. As one of the historians of British Zionism, Gideon Shimoni, wrote: 'Zionism raised issues more divisive and enduring than any other in the post-emancipation experience of Anglo-Jewry. Thus . . . the leadership echelons of Anglo-Jewry engaged in a chronic ideological controversy about the Zionist idea itself.'[2]

The early supporters of Zionism were a small and rather secular group. Many in the main religious organizations were opposed to Herzl's political Zionism because it envisaged the creation of a Jewish state without any divine intervention, and was therefore against fundamental religious tenets. 'Before the First World War Zionism could claim—on the E[nglish] Z[ionist] F[ederation]'s own figures—the support of fewer than six per cent of the Jewish population of Great Britain.'[3]

Nevertheless, the small group of Jewish Zionists, supported by some prominent Gentile Zionists and led by Chaim Weizmann, eventually secured the issuing of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, even though this was bitterly opposed by many in the Anglo-Jewish establishment.

Despite their fierce opposition to political Zionism, many in the establishment were prepared, especially after the Balfour Declaration, to give pragmatic support to Jewish settlement activity in Palestine. But they refused to accept the idea of a Jewish state and continued to fight against this notion right up to the end. The Declaration did not signal a sudden and rapid rise in the fortunes of British Zionism. If anything, it entered a period of decline and failed, at that time, to become a mass movement. But the organized Zionists, who were increasing in number, began a kind of long march through the Anglo-Jewish institutions, finally capturing the Board of Deputies of British Jews in 1939 and installing Professor Selig Brodetsky, a popular and deeply committed Zionist, as president.

Events in the 1930s conspired to shift matters the Zionists' way: the Palestinian Arab riots, the increasingly negative approach of the British government as expressed in the 1929 Passfield White Paper and the 1939 White Paper; the rise of Nazism; and the perceived inadequate response to British fascism—all made Jews more responsive to the Zionist message. 'The cumulative effect of the "Zionization" of the Board of Deputies (and the energetic activities of the World Jewish Congress) was to generate an

1 Barry Kosmin and Caren Levy, *Jewish Identity in an Anglo-Jewish Community* (London: Research Unit, Board of Deputies of British Jews 1983), p. 25.

2 Gideon Shimoni, 'From Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism in Anglo-Jewry 1917-1937', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 28(1), 1986, 19-48, p. 19.

3 Joseph Finklestone, 'Zionism and British Jews' in *The Jewish Year Book* (London: Vallentine Mitchel, 1997), p. xxii.

overwhelmingly Zionist consensus among the Jews of Britain for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.'[4] Zionism thereby achieved a dramatic ascendancy in the Jewish community.

By the time the state was established in 1948, Zionism had indeed become a mass movement among British Jews and arguably the most powerful single force within Anglo-Jewry. In time, practically all the individuals and organizations—secular and religious—that had opposed Zionism and the idea of a Jewish state were won over. Organizations like British WIZO, Mizrachi, Emunah, the Jewish National Fund (JNF), all the Zionist youth organisations and the Zionist political groups, became absolutely central to Jewish life, exercising educational, cultural and organizational influence. The Zionist Federation in effect became the most dynamic and powerful force in the organized life of British Jews. As Chaim Bermant put it, the Zionists saw themselves as 'the ginger group of Jewish life . . . alert against anything that might threaten the continuity of Jewish existence'.[5] After the establishment of the state, the Joint Palestine Appeal became the main fundraising body for Israel, changing its name to the Joint Israel Appeal in 1974. Many other fundraising bodies for Israel were established, including those raising money for Israeli universities. Moreover, in many organizations not directly concerned with Israel, the dominant lay and professional personnel were very often motivated by their Zionism. Practically speaking, Zionism and support for Israel became all-pervasive.

But in the ultimate success of organized British Zionism were sown the seeds of its decline. As Israel became more established and its needs were increasingly defined in terms of immigration and financial support, the ideological and political structures of Zionism in the Diaspora diminished in importance, rapidly becoming shadows of their former selves, though they continued to exist. With relatively few British Jews ready to turn their Zionist commitment into active aliya, it was the fundraising side which came to absorb the prodigious energies of key communal figures. By the 1970s, the JIA had established itself as the pre-eminent and most powerful single organization in the community. This was reflected in, among other things, the funds it raised.

Israel had certainly become a focus of consensus, a strong unifying factor, and 'a means of Jewish identification for those who [lack] religious belief'[6] for what was always an argumentative and fractious community. Jewish anti-Zionism—at times able to deploy powerful and persuasive arguments before 1945—had practically ceased to exist. But since the 1967 Six-Day War and more specifically with the coming to power of Likud Party governments after 1997, a number of developments have clearly had an impact on the relationship between British Jews and Israel.

The 1982 Lebanon War and the Israeli government's response to the Intifada (1987-92) brought to the surface differences over Israeli government policy, marking the beginning of a public and continuing airing of contrary views within the community. The opening of negotiations with the Palestinians and the other results of the peace process were widely welcomed in Britain but they also caused confusion. Yasser Arafat, implicitly and sometimes explicitly likened to Hitler in Israel fundraising material suddenly became a partner for peace. The JIA and many other organizations had spent years using a demonized image of Arafat to galvanize support for Israel. At a stroke, this tool ceased to be available. Some expected the beginning of negotiations with the Palestinians to bring an end to differences over Israeli government policy, but the opposite happened, with those British Jews who opposed the actions of the Rabin government choosing to take their opposition onto the streets outside the Israeli embassy.

After 1989, the collapse of the Soviet bloc—which had orchestrated, together with the Arab states, the worldwide anti-Zionism campaign—coupled with the peace process led to the end of Israel's isolation in the international community. The embattled, vulnerable state no longer seemed embattled and vulnerable. At the same time Israel's economic prospects were being transformed. Growing self-sufficiency increasingly threw into doubt the need for Diaspora Jewish fundraising. In the last few years this fact surfaced in statements by some Israeli leaders, most memorably by the former Deputy Foreign Minister, Yossi Beilin, who explicitly told a 1994 WIZO gathering that Israel no longer needed charity from Diaspora Jews.

The character of the state evolved, both in terms of national ideals and ethnic make-up. The socialist-Zionist ethos, epitomized by the kibbutz movement and looked on favourably and benignly by many Jews in the West who were not in the least socialist, has been eclipsed as Israel has

4 Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press 1980), p. 154.

5 Chaim Bermant, *Troubled Eden: An Anatomy of British Jewry* (London: Vallentine Mitchell 1969), p. 118.

6 Stephen Brook, *The Club: The Jews of Modern Britain* (London: Constable 1989).

become a more normal consumerist society.

The huge influx of Jews from the former Soviet Union after 1979, which followed a period in which the earlier Sephardi immigration produced a new ethnic balance (1948-67), resulted in the country becoming increasingly less Western and Central European in outlook.

Since 1967 messianic religious Zionism and the ultra-orthodox elements have become increasingly prominent in the state. Orthodox religious parties, especially since the 1996 general election, are seen to have a growing influence on government and, through government acquiescence in their demands, on the lives of ordinary Israelis.

Finally, in recent years in Israel some intellectuals have spoken of 'post-Zionism'. They argue that Israel has moved into a phase beyond Zionism, since the aims of Zionism have been achieved. The implications of this are that Zionism would cease to be the country's unifying national ideology.

All of these developments must, at the very least, make the relationship between British Jews and Israel more complicated. Some of them already have.

The JPR Survey of the Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews came at a critical moment in Israel-Diaspora relations. The survey was conducted in the summer of 1995. At the time of its planning Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat had already shaken hands on the lawn outside the White House. This event in itself promoted widespread interest in British Jews' feelings about particular recommendations of the Oslo Agreement. On the other hand, the fieldwork was completed well before the assassination of Rabin in November 1995. Responses to survey questions on Israel will therefore have been influenced by the former event but remain unaffected by the latter. In effect the findings reported here reflect how the community felt during the early optimistic stages of the Peace Process.

The survey data

The questionnaire included a number of items concerning Israel and the answers give an indication of the relationship between respondents and Israel. Although the results of the survey are interesting in themselves, they would become much more interesting if they could be compared with the answers to similar questions asked at an earlier point in time—in order to measure trends and change. Unfortunately, because the JPR survey was the first of its kind there is very little that its results can be compared with as far as the British Jewish population is concerned. The survey replicated some questions from a major ongoing general survey of the British population—the British Social Attitudes survey—and some comparisons can be made with that. But these questions do not relate to Jewish issues, and certainly not to the question of British Jews' relations with Israel. However, as we shall see later, there are a few fascinating points of comparison that can be made with two earlier surveys of Jewish populations in the UK: the 1968 Edgware survey and the 1978 Redbridge study. Where appropriate, comparisons have also been drawn with data collected in the same months as the JPR survey for the American Jewish Committee's (AJC) Public-Opinion Survey (1995) on attitudes toward Israel and the peace process.

These findings are based on 2,194 self-completed questionnaires obtained through a postal survey of British Jews between July and October 1995. The methodology was designed to generate a random sample of self-identifying Jews using three sampling strategies.

- The first strategy was implemented in areas of high Jewish population density—where the Jewish population constitutes more than 15 per cent of the general population—and involved sending questionnaires to approximately every thirtieth household, anticipating that a given proportion would reach Jewish households.

- In areas of low Jewish population density—less than 15 per cent of the general population—households were randomly targeted based on a selection of some 400 distinctive Jewish names on the electoral register.

- The third strategy was designed to compensate for the fact that the second strategy would tend to overlook intermarried Jewish women: a snowball sample was implemented in the low Jewish population density areas and aimed at intermarried Jewish women. Respondents found by adverts in newspapers and by personal contact were invited to suggest others in the same situation and all were sent a questionnaire.

The overall response rate was approximately 60 per cent which compares well with other questionnaire-based surveys. This represents the largest and most representative sample yet obtained of the British Jewish community and it was the first nationwide survey of its kind not based on synagogue or organizational lists.

There are, however, problems which arise because the Jewish population cannot be easily reached in its entirety, and whilst the sample was representative in most ways, it had to be

weighted for age and sex on the basis of the known demographic profile of the British Jewish population published by the Board of Deputies of British Jews' Community Research Unit.[7] The analyses presented in this report therefore reflect findings from the weighted sample.

Statistical tests

Various techniques have been used to analyze the data in this study in order to determine their statistical significance. If a finding is statistically significant then it is unlikely that it is a chance occurrence. In other words, as the statistical significance of a finding rises, it becomes more improbable that it is due to chance. For example, if a finding that suggests a discrepancy between respondents with different religious outlooks on a particular issue concerning Israel has a 'p' value of 0.05, then there is only a 5 per cent (or 5 in 100) likelihood that it is a chance occurrence. If the 'p' value is 0.0001, the likelihood of it being a chance occurrence is 0.01 per cent (or 1 in 10,000). Such a finding has a very high statistical significance. Another indication of statistical significance is an F value. As the F value rises, so does its statistical significance.

The following symbols have been used in this report to indicate the degree of statistical significance of findings: $p<0.05$ (*), $p<0.01$ (**), $p<0.001$ (***). Further details of the techniques employed to analyze the data are available on request.[8] Section 6 develops the analyses further and is provided for those readers who are interested in more technical explanations.

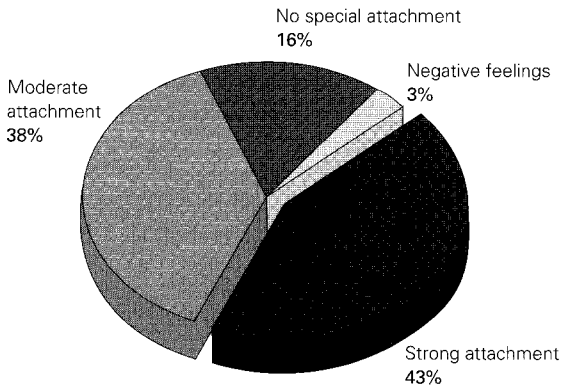
When examining the percentages tabulated in this report it is important to take into account what is known as the confidence level which is based on the size of the sample. Calculations show that we can be 95 per cent certain that the true sample proportion is within 2 to 3 per cent in either direction of the figure we report. For example, if we report that 43 per cent of the sample felt a strong attachment to Israel, we can be 95 per cent confident that the true proportion is between 40 and 46 per cent of the sample.

General degree of attachment to Israel

A general overview of British Jews' present attachment to Israel is supplied by respondents' answers to the question 'Can you say whether you have any special feelings of attachment (or otherwise) towards Israel?'.

Four choices were given: strong attachment, moderate attachment, no special attachment and negative feelings. Figure 1 shows that overall, 43 per cent felt a strong attachment and 38 per cent felt a moderate attachment to Israel. Thus while over 80 per cent of respondents expressed special feelings of attachment to Israel, only 3 per cent expressed negative feelings. US figures on a similar survey question revealed that 67 per cent felt either 'very close' or 'fairly close' to Israel, while 6 per cent reported themselves to be 'very distant' (AJC, 1995).

Figure 1: Attachment to Israel



British Jews are a well educated population with an above average interest in world affairs and a tendency to read the broadsheets rather than the tabloid press. In this context, another interesting indicator of a general feeling of solidarity with Israel was the finding that a majority of the sample felt that there was a consistent pattern of unfairness or bias in the media representation of news about Israel: 15 per cent felt that the media was 'always' biased, 39 per cent thought it was 'often' biased and an additional 36 per cent thought it was 'sometimes' biased. In contrast only 9 per cent felt that the British media was 'rarely or never' biased.

These initial findings of the respondents' feelings of loyalty and attachment to Israel seem fairly positive. This report is concerned with examining the picture in more depth in order to discover trends and to understand the forces which produce such attitudes. Three key explanatory variables are utilized: identity, age and religious outlook. These are each presented in separate sections of the report.

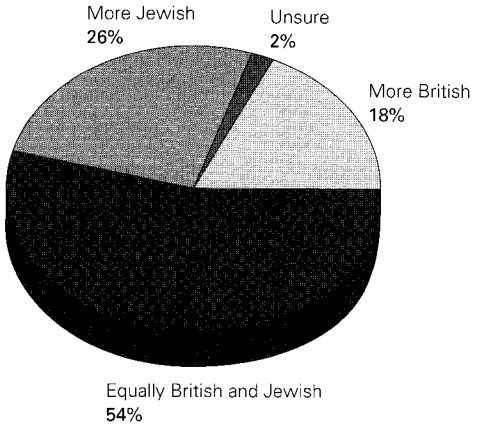
7 Stephen Haberman and Marlena Schmool, *'Estimates of the British Jewish Population 1984-1988', Journal of the Royal Statistical Society,* Series A, Vol. 158(3), 1995, pp. 547-62.

8 The techniques used include Chi-square analyses (χ^2) and Analyses of Variance (ANOVA). The report will generally indicate the outcome of such analyses without referring to the specific methods used. One final technique used is the post hoc Scheffe analysis which is helpful for discovering the relative statistical differences between different subsets of data or, in this case, groups of people. It is used, for example, to find out whether Traditional Jews are closer to the Strictly Orthodox in their expressed attachment to Israel or to the Progressive Jews.

2 British versus Jewish group identity

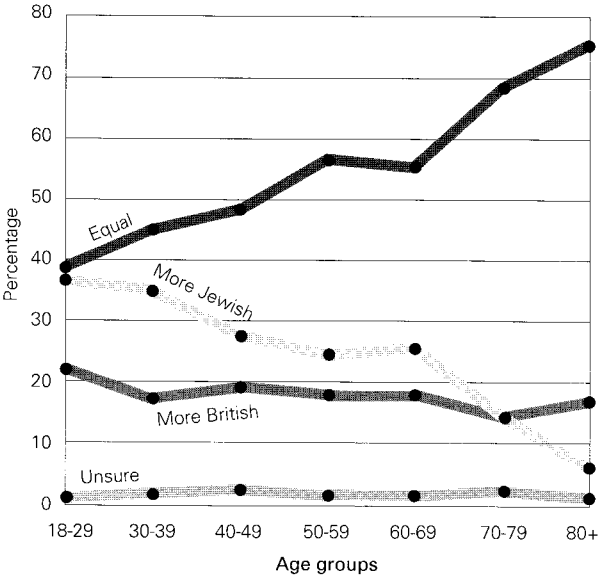
The State of Israel is the creation of the Zionist movement which regards itself as the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. Zionism thus defines Jews as a nation or people and not just as a religious group. It is logical therefore to expect individual Jews' feelings and attitudes towards Israel to vary according to their own self-identity: how far they perceive themselves primarily as 'Englishmen of the Jewish faith' or primarily as 'Jewish ethnics'. As part of the study respondents were asked directly, 'Would you say you feel more British than Jewish or vice versa?' in order to discover the range of identifications. Figure 2 shows that 18 per cent replied that they felt 'more British than Jewish', 54 per cent that they felt 'equally British and Jewish' and 26 per cent that they felt 'more Jewish than British'. Only 2 per cent were unsure.

Figure 2: British vs Jewish group identity



These replies reflect the European Jewish historical experience and have strong ideological implications. At first sight they suggest a population that should be moderately pro-Zionist. In fact the overall pattern of attachment to Israel reflects this prediction. If we assume historical events have affected perceptions of Jewish self-identity, then we need to investigate differences between older and younger British Jews. When the distinction drawn by respondents between feeling more British, more Jewish, or equally British and Jewish was analyzed further according to age group an interesting pattern was revealed as illustrated in Figure 3. While the percentage feeling more British remained fairly constant across all age groups, the percentage of those identifying themselves as more Jewish was highest among the youngest respondents and decreased with age. There was a concomitant increase in feeling equally British and Jewish as age rose. This finding was statistically significant (***).

Figure 3: British vs. Jewish group identity by age



However, it is important to note that Figure 3 is a cross-sectional viewpoint, a snapshot. Therefore we cannot preclude the possibility of an age rather than cohort effect so that an individual in their twenties will be likely over time to develop progressively equal feelings of being both British and Jewish. Nevertheless, when the graph is set in a historical or cohort context, then those in their sixties or older would have been at least ten years old at the end of the Second World War; we believe this experience undoubtedly played a role in forming both British and Jewish identities.

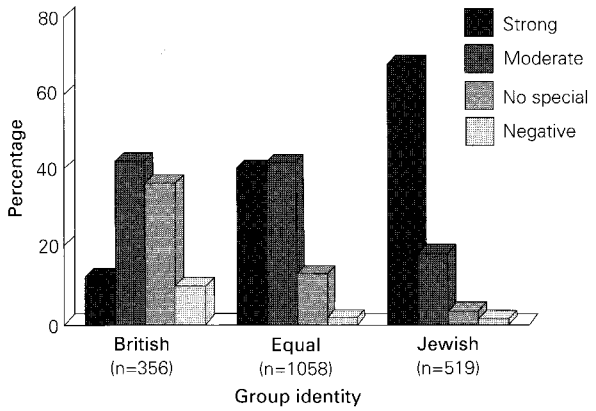
The relationship between the British vs. Jewish identity issue and the level of attachment to Israel becomes clear when the two variables are cross-tabulated in Table 1 (***). This table shows the percentage of respondents with strong, moderate, weak and negative attachment to Israel who identify themselves as feeling more British, more Jewish or equally British and Jewish. The table shows that while only 5 per cent of those who feel strongly attached to Israel identify themselves as more British, this rises to 21 per cent of those with a moderate attachment, 43 per cent of those with no special attachment and 44 per cent of those with a negative attitude. Interestingly, 19 per cent of those who express a negative attitude and 7 per cent of those with no special attachment towards Israel identify themselves as feeling more Jewish, thereby revealing a separation of Jewish identity and attachment to the Jewish state. This group, which accounts for 2 per cent of the total sample, equates with the extreme ultra-Orthodox position of religious anti-Zionism.

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of British/Jewish identification with attachment to Israel (percentages)

Attachment to Israel (n = 1978)	More British	Equal	More Jewish	Unsure / Other	Total
Strong (n = 865)	5	50	44	1	100
Moderate (n = 747)	21	62	15	2	100
No special (n = 313)	43	46	7	4	100
Negative attitude (n = 53)	44	24	19	13	100

This relationship between attachment and group preference is illustrated in a different way in Figure 4 which shows the degree of attachment to Israel according to the various group identities (***). The histogram clearly reveals that the majority of those who identify themselves as feeling more Jewish (73 per cent) express a strong attachment to Israel while very few of those who feel more British (12 per cent) have an equivalent attachment. Those who identify themselves as equally British and Jewish clearly lie between the other two identity positions. This produces the clear linear relationship that we originally predicted based on the ideological roots of such opinions. Thus we can observe that attitudes towards Israel among contemporary British Jews are materially influenced by ideology and group identity.

Figure 4: Degree of attachment to Israel by respondent's group identity



Youth movements

The formative influences in the creation of group identities among British Jews are relevant areas of inquiry. Whether people feel more Jewish or British could be due to a number of causes beyond those already mentioned. Some might suggest that formal Jewish education is a factor. Undoubtedly it has some influence but the fact that most adults fall into one category —supplementary education in synagogue classes—makes analysis superficial. In addition, Jewish education is largely a childhood experience and reflects parental more than student aspirations.

However, the Zionist movement has operated a number of youth movements in Britain for most of this century, and one-third of the sample had been members at some time. These movements operate a system of informal education about Israel and often attract teenage membership so they should be more reflective of respondents' autonomous attitudes and peer influences than of formal education in childhood. Therefore, the sample was divided into three groups: those who had attended one of five Zionist youth movements (Habonim Dror, FZY, Hanoar-Hatzioni, Hashomer-Hatzair and B'nei Akiva), those who had attended only other non-Zionist youth groups under Jewish auspices (e.g. local youth clubs, sports and uniformed groups) and finally those who had attended no Jewish youth groups. The three groups were roughly equivalent in size.

We might expect the category associated with 'Zionist youth movement' to match the 'more Jewish' group, the 'non-Zionist youth groups' category to match the equally Jewish and British category, and for the 'no Jewish youth group' category to match the primarily British identifying category. In fact we found that Zionist youth movement membership was no more highly correlated with Jewish group identity than non-Zionist youth group (Table 2). However, having no

Table 2: Youth group membership by group identity and attachment to Israel (percentages)

	Zionist youth movement (n=643)	Non-Zionist youth groups (n=553)	No Jewish youth group (n=613)
Group identity			
More Jewish	33	32	19
Equally both	54	55	53
More British	13	13	28
Total	100	100	100
Attachment to Israel			
Strong attachment	49	47	36
Moderate attachment	37	36	40
No special attachment	12	15	20
Negative feelings	2	2	4
Total	100	100	100

Jewish youth group connections was associated with more British attachment, i.e. assimilated attitudes.

Table 2 shows that the pattern of youth group memberships follows the same binary model as regards their correlation with degree of attachment to Israel. Non-members, as we might expect given their pattern of group identity, are less enthusiastic about Israel than those who were members of a youth group.

Our finding is that exposure to Zionism in youth is not particularly significant in forming pro-Israel opinions in later life, or rather the experience is no more influential than other forms of adolescent Jewish socialization and memberships. Of course, these data could be interpreted to mean that Zionism is a consensus opinion among the mainstream of British Jews. It also has to be remembered that a small minority who went on permanent aliya to Israel are therefore out of the sample population.

3 General ties to Israel

The demographic pattern of attachment to Israel

Although group identity is a logical predictor, other factors also come into play when differentiating between groups of people according to their attitudes in this area. Table 3 shows the weighted percentages of degrees of attachment to Israel by sex, age, region, synagogue membership and religious outlook in order to give an overview of patterns of attachment.

Somewhat surprisingly, statistically significant differences are found by sex, age and region. Women are more strongly attached than men. In fact this gendered pattern of 'Jewish loyalty' is a common pattern in Jewish sociology. In a previous JPR report on unmarried young Jews (No. 4, June 1997), we discovered that young women were more likely to have visited Israel.

The age pattern seems to contradict the earlier findings on group identity. We discover that overall, the young are less attached than the old. However, we can also observe that there is slightly more polarization among the young.

The regional differences probably reflect the age pattern of the inhabitants more than real cultural differences between the various regions of Britain, though we would expect areas of low Jewish density to attract more assimilated Jews.

The findings concerning synagogue membership and religious (self-identified) outlook strongly confirm each other. They demonstrate a strikingly clear pattern of strengthening attachment to Israel as the degree of commitment to traditional Judaism rises. These findings illustrate that demography and ideology play an important role in determining attitudes towards Israel. The remainder of this report will focus on how these two factors play out across a range of tangible forms of attachment to Israel.

Table 3: Degree of attachment to Israel (percentages)

Category	Number	Strong attachment	Moderate attachment	No special attachment	Negative feelings	Total
All respondents	2,035	43	38	16	3	100
Sex (***)						
Men	908	39	39	18	4	100
Women	1,127	47	36	15	2	100
Age group (***)						
under 30 years	387	38	40	18	4	100
30-49 years	671	39	38	19	4	100
50-69 years	544	48	36	14	2	100
70 years plus	434	48	36	13	3	100
Region (**)						
Inner London	730	46	36	14	4	100
Outer London	404	44	37	17	2	100
Rest of South & South East	220	34	43	20	3	100
South West & West	52	31	42	19	8	100
North West incl. Manchester	261	45	37	16	2	100
North and North East	20	74	21	5	–	100
East and West Ridings	65	54	33	13	–	100
Midlands and East Anglia	114	35	38	23	4	100
Scotland	44	31	49	18	2	100
Member of (***)						
Orthodox synagogue	957	60	31	8	1	100
Progressive[9] synagogue	353	33	48	17	2	100
None	679	26	40	28	6	100
Religious outlook (***)						
Secular	465	19	41	33	7	100
Just Jewish	394	29	49	20	2	100
Progressive	305	36	45	16	3	100
Traditional	644	58	33	8	1	100
Strictly Orthodox	208	86	12	1	1	100

The * notation has been used to indicate where there are significant group differences in attachment to Israel: e.g. between men and women.

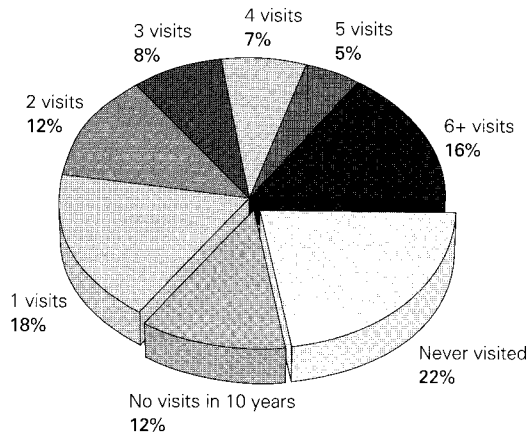
9 Non-Orthodox synagogue—Masorti, Reform and Liberal.

Visits to Israel

The majority of respondents, 78 per cent, have visited Israel at least once. For comparison, in the United States 37 per cent of Jews have visited Israel but of course greater distance, expense and other factors play a part in reducing ease of access (AJC, 1995). This question has been asked in two previous surveys of Jews in Britain: that of Jews in Edgware in 1968[10] and Jews in Redbridge in 1978. The figure for Edgware was 16 per cent having visited Israel and for Redbridge 26 per cent, so there is clear evidence of increased travel to Israel over the past few decades.

However, when we look again at those who have visited Israel we see a slightly different picture (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Number of visits in the past 10 years



Respondents were asked how many visits they had made to Israel in the past ten years. Figure 5 shows that while 22 per cent had never visited Israel, a further 12 per cent of the sample had not been to Israel since 1985. Thus 66 per cent of the sample had visited Israel at least once in the ten years prior to participating in the survey. The significance of this figure is open to interpretation. Should this level of visiting be placed in the context of international tourism, seen in terms of solidarity or viewed in some other way? Obviously variables such as discretionary income and leisure patterns of this population need to be factored into the equation before a judgement can be made.

Relatives and friends in Israel

In 1972 the number of British born Jews living in Israel (olim) numbered 5,500.[11] In the 1978 Redbridge Survey when a question was asked about relatives living in Israel, almost three-quarters of the sample had no relatives living there. By 1983 the number of British-born Jews living in Israel had risen to 13,350 which was equal to 4 per cent of British Jewry at that time. Between 1989 and 1993 a further 2,500 British Jews went on aliya. Given this increase in emigration, and as we have previously seen in tourism, we should expect increased social connections with Israel now as compared with 1978. In fact this is borne out by our data. The rates of both tourism and aliya are higher in the UK than in the US; in 1995 almost 7 out of 10 (69 per cent) British Jews said they have close friends or family in Israel as compared with 40 per cent of American Jews (AJC, 1995).

10 Ernest Krausz, 'The Edgware Survey: Demographic Results', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. X, No. 1, 1968, pp. 83-100.

11 Stanley Waterman and Barry A Kosmin, *British Jewry in the Eighties* (London: Board of Deputies of British Jews 1986).

4 The age factor

Degree of attachment to Israel by gender and age group

Without a time series for the relationship of British Jews to Israel, we have to use age cohort as a surrogate variable. This approach assumes that variations between people of different ages or sex reflect not only their life experiences but also the continuation into the present of the ideas and opinions they formed at critical historical junctures. We can therefore assume that there are specific historical experiences which influence opinions and determine attitudes and thus are unique to specific generations of people.

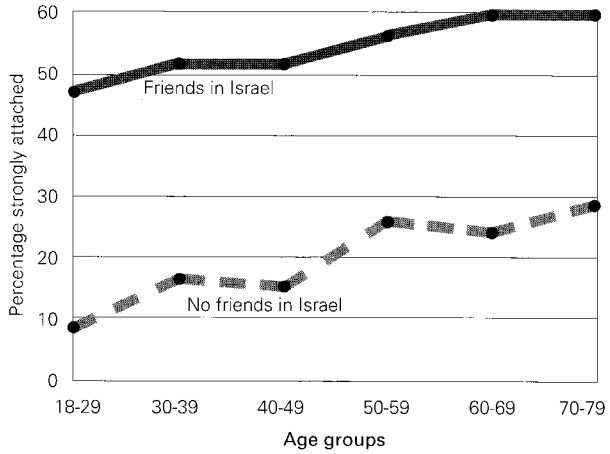
The variables of attachment, visits and close friends or relatives in Israel were examined by sex and by age group. As we saw earlier, women are more strongly attached to Israel than men (***) and there was a slightly higher percentage of over 50s (49 per cent) who felt strongly attached than under 50s (38 per cent). Again this difference was statistically significant (**). However, when the number of visits by respondents was broken down by age, the average number of visits for each age group was found to be similar. In addition, there was no significant difference when looked at by sex. And finally, among those who say they have close friends or relatives in Israel, again there was no significant difference across the age ranges, although the youngest respondents—those in the 18-29 age group—tended to have more connections with Israel than respondents aged over 30. This finding is surprising given that there is a greater opportunity for older respondents to have friends in Israel due to greater exposure over the years, and also to have more relatives in Israel as a result of their offspring having made aliya.

Tangible ties to Israel and age effects

A deeper analysis poses further questions as to the processes which produce these patterns. Figure 6 looks at the various age groups which expressed a strong attachment to Israel according to whether they have close friends in Israel or not: the top line represents those who have friends and relatives in Israel and the bottom line, those who do not. In the oldest two age groups, a large proportion (60 per cent) of those with friends and relatives in Israel are strongly attached and this declines among the younger age groups: between 45 and 50 per cent of those who have friends in Israel are strongly attached. There is a difference but it is a relatively gentle slope.

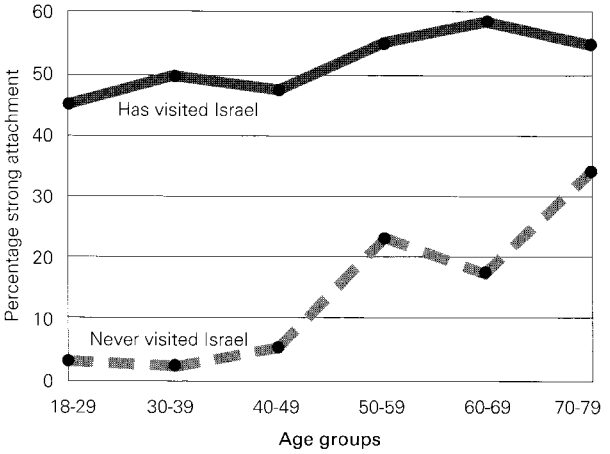
However, the bottom line shows something very different: 29 per cent of the oldest group have no family or friends in Israel, yet are still strongly attached. This rate declines sharply as we move to the younger age groups, so that only 8 per cent of 18-29 year olds who have no friends in Israel are strongly attached. Thus, though more than one-third of these 70-79 year olds have no friends or relatives in Israel, they still feel strongly attached—evidence of a connection with Israel based on ideology and emotion rather than experience. But very few of the 18-29, or even 18-49 year olds who lack tangible social ties with Israelis have this kind of emotional attachment.

Figure 6: The proportion of those both with and without friends and relatives in Israel that express a strong attachment by age



When it comes to visiting Israel we see a very similar pattern in Figure 7. This shows the percentage of those who have or have not visited Israel who expressed a strong attachment according to their age group. The top line represents the percentage of respondents who have visited Israel and are strongly attached; the

Figure 7: The proportion of respondents that have or have not visited Israel that express a strong attachment by age



bottom line represents those who have never visited Israel yet also have a strong attachment. Again, in the older age groups, large proportions of those who have visited Israel are strongly attached, but this declines somewhat in the younger age groups: 45 to 50 per cent of the 18 to 49 year olds who have visited Israel are strongly attached.

But again the bottom line shows something very different: 34 per cent of the oldest group who have not visited Israel are still strongly attached. This declines very sharply as we move to the younger age groups, so that only 3 per cent of 18-29 year olds who have not visited Israel are strongly attached.

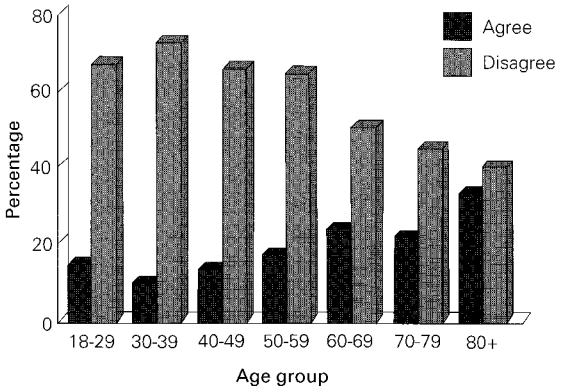
Returning to the bottom line we see even more dramatically that a substantial proportion of older people who have never been to Israel feel strongly attached. In contrast only a tiny proportion of younger people without personal experience of Israel have this level of attachment. The difference between the proportions of older people who have or have not visited and are strongly attached is relatively narrow; but there is a huge gap between the proportions of younger people who have or have not visited and express strong attachment—which points very strongly to the significance of experiencing Israel for younger people. It is interesting to note that despite the clear link between visiting and attachment for the young, the proportion who have visited Israel and are attached—45 per cent—is not that much higher than the proportion of older people who have never been yet are attached. This is surely a stark indicator of the powerful role of ideology, emotion, sentiment and psychology among the older generations and the equivalent role of experience and physical contact for the young.

It would appear then that, after all, the more visceral attachment to Israel upon which the relationship between British Jews and Israel has always been based, is very much age-related and in apparent decline. For young people to develop a close attachment to Israel, they need to see the land and meet the people—but even then, that experience only outpaces the attachment of the older generation who have not been there by a relatively small margin. In that sense, the young have a psychological and emotional deficit that has to be compensated for by the physical connection. An Israel experience just stops the cracks from widening; it does not reverse the trend of growing distance between young Jews and Israel. Moreover these data also reveal that compared with the wider consensus on Israel among older respondents, there is a greater polarization of opinion among the young.

The Jewish future in Israel

An essential feature of classic Zionist ideology is the belief that only in a sovereign Jewish state is there a secure long-term future for Jews. Therefore some important conclusions can be drawn about the state of more ideologically-based attachment to Israel from the responses to the following statement: the only long-term future for Jews is in Israel. Respondents could tick one of five boxes: strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree and strongly disagree. Of the total sample, 61 per cent rejected the classic Zionist view. Figure 8 looks at the respondents by age, aggregating the 'strongly agree' / 'agree' and the 'strongly disagree' / 'disagree' responses while omitting the 'unsures'. Figure 8 shows that there is a significant difference between the age groups on this issue (***): 18 to 39 year olds overwhelmingly reject this view. The older age groups, particularly the 80 plus group, were less inclined to disagree.

Figure 8: The only long term-future for Jews is in Israel



As might be expected, level of attachment to Israel is positively correlated with the belief that 'the only long-term future for Jews is in Israel' (***). In other words, the stronger an individual's attachment to Israel, the more likely she or he is to agree with the above statement. Of those who feel strongly attached, only a minority, 46 per cent, disagree that the only long-term future for Jews is in Israel.

Attitudes towards aliya in 1978 and 1995

Even allowing for differences in sampling and methodology, when we compare attitudes in the 1978 Redbridge study and in the 1995 JPR survey, we can observe a fascinating change in attitudes over 17 years.

The overall trends serve to complicate the picture further (Table 4). Whatever people's ultimate opinion about the long-term viability of the Jewish Diaspora, on the personal level Israel has entered

into the equation as a place to live. In the 1995 JPR survey, much higher percentages had thought about living in Israel than in 1978—33.5 to 16.6 per cent—or say they may go one day in the future—21.9 to 9.3 per cent; while a much reduced proportion have never thought about it—46.6 to 71.2 per cent. As a result more have been on aliya and returned—5.7 to 1.3 per cent. But as for those making preparations or going soon, the figures are remarkably similar for both years—1.8 in 1995 and 1.5 per cent in 1978.

Table 4: Attitudes towards aliya in 1978 and 1995 (percentages)

	Redbridge 1978	JPR 1995
Made preparations	1.5	1.8
Thought about it	16.6	33.5
Maybe in the future	9.3	21.9
Have been but returned	1.3	5.7
Never thought about it	71.2	46.6

What accounts for these differences? International migration reflects both push and pull factors. On the one hand, the higher percentages in the JPR survey could reflect increasing awareness of and engagement with Israel during this time: Israel has loomed larger in people's lives in a positive way. Many more have been there and are now in a position to develop a realistic appreciation of the country. On the other hand, it could also reflect something quite different: it may tell us more about attitudes to Britain than it does about attitudes to Israel since the period between the surveys experienced two recessions, growing unemployment, the lowering of public expectations of increasing standards of living. In short, it probably reflects dissatisfaction with life in Britain as much as it does a positive appreciation of the possibilities of living in Israel.

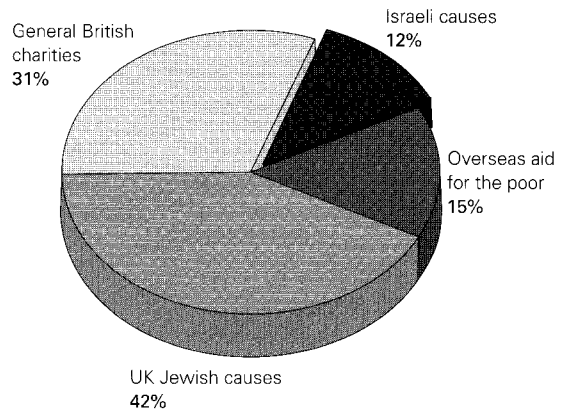
Clearly more people have given aliya a try but the fact that the percentage of those who say they are actually making preparations to go is so similar in both surveys suggests that there remains a big gap between thought and action.

Giving to Israel charities

As we discussed earlier, for many British Jews in the past the most potent token of their solidarity with Israel was charitable donations, particularly to the JIA. In order to appraise the current position on charitable giving, the questionnaire asked people: 'Irrespective of what you did in the past year, do you feel you have a greater responsibility to support some types of charity than others? Which of the following, if any, do you feel should be given the highest priority: general British charities, overseas aid for the poor, Jewish causes in Britain, Israeli causes?'

Support for Israel charities may be regarded as a good indicator of practical attachment to Israel. But as Figure 9 shows, only 12 per cent (less than one in eight) of those who answered say that their highest charitable cause is an Israeli one. This is not as high as one might have expected from the overall pattern of degree of attachment expressed in the survey and the attention given to Israel by the organized Jewish community.

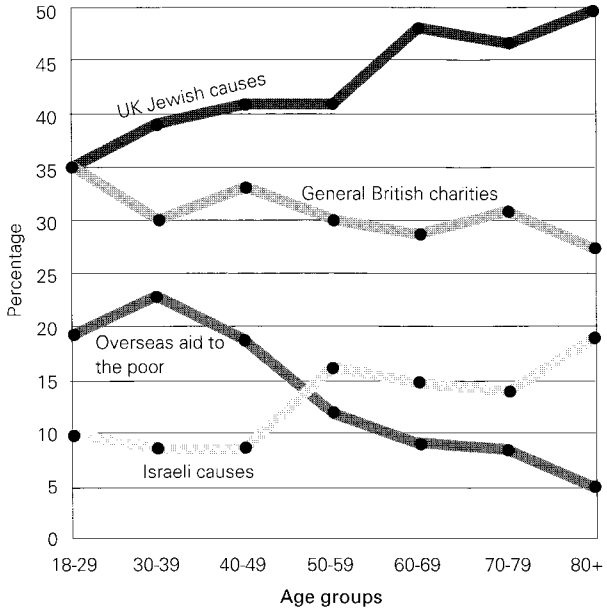
Figure 9: Highest priority charitable cause



The data on highest charitable priority does not tell us the proportion of all respondents who donate to Israel related charities. However, from another question we know this to be 26 per cent. This rate can be compared with the 1978 Redbridge survey when 87 per cent of respondents said that they gave to an Israeli charity, or with a 1980 estimate which put the figure at between 40 and 70 per cent of the Jewish population contributing to Israel. Undoubtedly, British Jews are increasingly less inclined to support Israel-oriented charities.

Moreover, if we turn again to analyze the pattern by age group, we see a marked generational decline. In Figure 10 each line represents one of the four priority charitable causes and the mark on each line shows the percentage of each age group saying that they prioritized that cause. The Israeli causes line shows that approximately 15 to 20 per cent of those 50 years old and over have an Israeli cause as their highest charitable choice, but only 10 per cent or less of 18 to 49 year olds say their highest charitable cause is an Israel one. This is not explained by lack of philanthropy in this age group since 85 per cent of younger Jews give to charities.

Figure 10: Highest priority charitable cause by age group



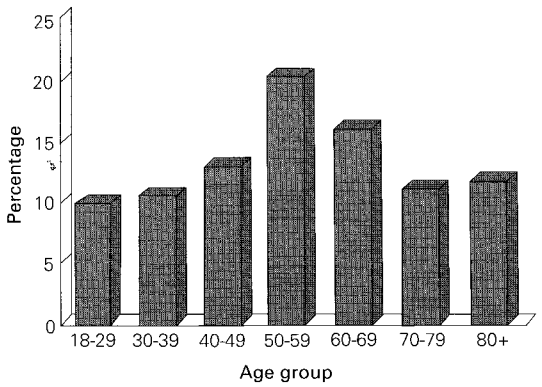
It is also interesting to note that both Israel and UK Jewish causes decline as priority choices across the generations, while the choice of general British charities and overseas aid for the poor becomes increasingly favoured.

Whereas these figures indicate the percentage of the Jewish population prioritizing Israel causes, they tell us nothing about the total amount raised in the community for Israel, nor do they say anything about the proportion of total giving which goes to Israel-oriented charities. A report produced in the early 1980s, which was the subject of much controversy, showed that about 60 per cent of charitable moneys was going to Israel.[12] The proportions must have changed since then, and almost certainly more stays in the UK than before. Yet it seems highly unlikely that the total amount raised for Israel causes, as compared with local Jewish causes, is as low as the 12 per cent figure of those who choose Israel as their highest charitable cause suggests. Of course, the proportion of communal money going to various causes is not a matter of democratic decision—after all it is private money—but these data suggest that if it was, a much greater proportion of the total would stay at home and much less would go to Israel.

Support for the Joint Israel Appeal (JIA)

Looking specifically at support for the JIA—the largest Israel-oriented charity—the data reveal that only 13 per cent of the sample claim to support it. Figure 11 breaks down this support by age, showing that there is a clear variation (**). The highest level of support for the JIA comes from 50-59 year olds, 21 per cent of whom support the JIA, but only 10 per cent of 18-29 year olds support the JIA. This could perhaps be explained by JIA's historical methods of fundraising through synagogues.

Figure 11: Proportion of JIA supporters by age group



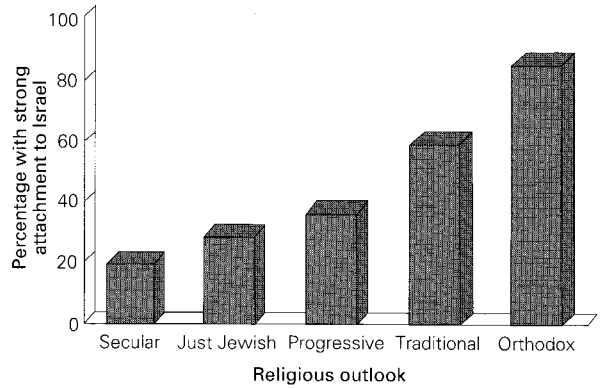
12 Bernard Garbacz and Associates, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (London: Hamish Hamilton 1984).

5 The religious factor

The relationship between religious outlook and attachment to Israel

We have already noted in Table 3 that a strong degree of attachment to Israel is much more common among those who declare themselves to be Traditional or Strictly Orthodox than those with a more liberal outlook. Figure 12 shows that 86 per cent of the Orthodox are strongly attached, declining evenly to 19 per cent for the Secular. There is a highly significant relationship (***) between religious outlook and attachment to Israel, each religious outlook group from the Secular to Strictly Orthodox expressing progressively and significantly stronger attachments to Israel. Thus Strictly Orthodox Jews, as shown by Figure 12, are

Figure 12: Strong attachment to Israel by religious outlook

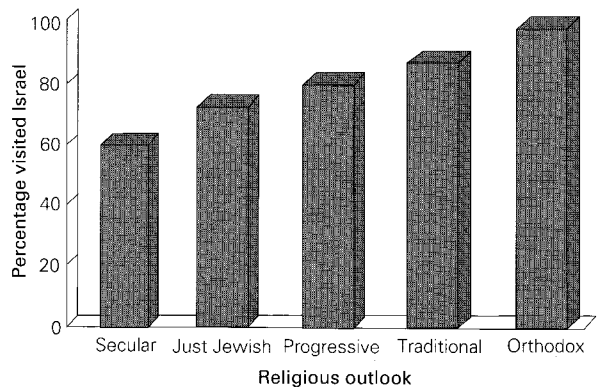


four times as likely to express strong attachment to Israel than Jews who declare themselves as Just Jewish. These findings are reflected in the significant relationship between synagogue membership and attachment (***). In particular, the unaffiliated expressed a more moderate or weaker attachment to Israel than those affiliated to synagogues.

Visits to Israel

Looking then at those who have visited Israel by religious outlook, Figure 13 shows a similar linear

Figure 13: Respondents who have visited Israel by religious outlook



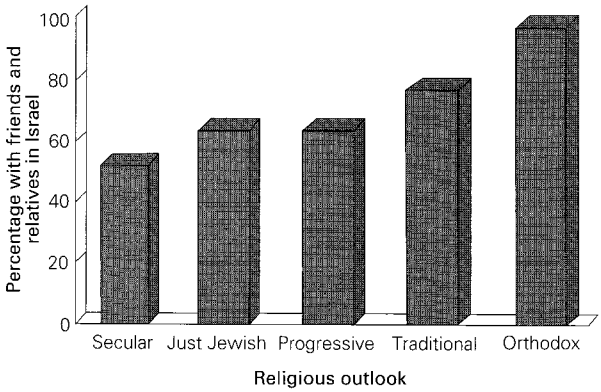
pattern although the differential declines less steeply, since clearly even 60 per cent of Jews who regard themselves as Secular have visited Israel at least once.

The actual number of visits paid by respondents to Israel over the past ten years is an indication of the intensity of the tie. This line again follows a clear slope: the average number of visits for the Secular, Just Jewish and Progressive groupings over the past ten years is approximately 2; for the Traditional 4; and for the Strictly Orthodox—a little over 8 visits.

Friends and relatives in Israel

Looking at those with friends and relatives in Israel by religious outlook, Figure 14 shows a very high percentage of the Orthodox with friends and relatives in Israel and much smaller percentages of the Secular, Just Jewish and Progressive being in a similar position. This demonstrates a highly significant relationship between religious outlook and having friends and relatives in Israel (***).

Figure 14: Friends and relatives in Israel by religious outlook



Israeli charitable causes

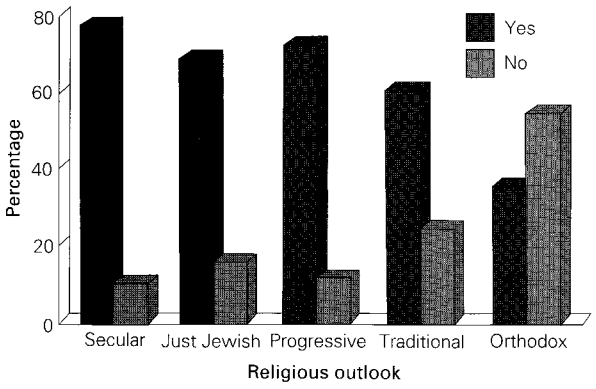
Turning now to the priority of charitable causes, a slightly different pattern emerges. When the choice of Israeli charities was examined according to religious outlook, the results showed that it is Traditional Jews who are most likely to name Israeli causes as their first priority (19 per cent), and they are more likely to do so than the Strictly Orthodox (13 per cent). Yet again these two groups are ahead of the Progressive group (8 per cent), the Just Jewish (10 per cent) and the Secular Jews (5 per cent) in prioritizing Israeli causes. However, Israeli causes are much less of a priority than UK Jewish charities: 60 per cent of the Traditional and 80 per cent of the Strictly Orthodox give UK Jewish charities as their highest priority. The Strictly Orthodox position here could firstly reflect anti-Zionism and secondly be caused by a perceived need to look after their own.

These findings are reflected in the figures representing support for the JIA. We have already seen that only 13 per cent of the total sample support the JIA, but analysis of these supporters by religious outlook shows that there is a strong connection with religious outlook (***). Two-thirds of those who support the JIA fall into the Traditional or Strictly Orthodox categories.

The peace process

Religious ideology impinges on attitudes towards the Middle East settlement. Religious Zionism is particularly concerned with the actual boundaries of Israel and the biblical case for Jewish sovereignty over Judea and Samaria. Looking at the responses to the question: 'Do you feel that Israel should give up some territory in exchange for credible guarantees of peace?', according to religious outlook (Figure 15), we can see that closeness to Israel among the Orthodox does not imply support for the Oslo peace process or for the principle of land for peace.

Figure 15: Support for 'land for peace' by religious outlook



Clearly, the religious significance of the territories dictates Orthodox opinions. Overall, Traditional Jews are less inclined to agree with the land for peace principle than Progressive, Just Jewish and Secular Jews. Whilst 69 per cent of the sample as a whole agreed that Israel should give up some territory in exchange for credible guarantees of peace, 55 per cent of the Strictly Orthodox and 24 per cent of Traditional Jews were opposed. Respondents were also asked whether they supported the then Israeli Labour government's peace policy—whilst over 56 per cent of the total sample said yes, Orthodox Jews were four times as likely to be against the policy than anyone else.

The Jewish future and Israel

The responses to the question of the only long-term future for Jews being in Israel were also analyzed further in terms of religious outlook. A strongly significant relationship was found for agreement (along a scale of strongly agreeing to strongly disagreeing) by religious outlook (***). The results showed that respondents who declared themselves to be Secular, Just Jewish or Progressive in their religious outlook were significantly more in disagreement or were uncertain about their attitude towards the statement than those with a Traditional outlook, while the Strictly Orthodox group were further along the scale towards being in agreement.

Aliya by religious outlook

Until 1967 Socialist Zionism was dominant among the British Zionist youth movements which encouraged aliya. Those who went on aliya were largely motivated to cultivate the land and to pioneer the collective agricultural settlements. Kibbutzim such as Kfar Hanassi and Kfar Blum were founded by British olim; the religious Kibbutz, Lavi, also had a large British contingent. The swing of the political pendulum to the right altered this pattern. In recent decades, aliya from the West has largely been religiously motivated and composed of Orthodox Jews who settle in Jerusalem and urban centres. Our results clearly reflect this trend. Figures 16 and 17 show that traditionalist religious-based attachment to Israel extends into considerations about aliya. It is highly significant that only 5 per cent of the Strictly Orthodox have never considered going on aliya.

Figure 16: Have considered aliya in the past

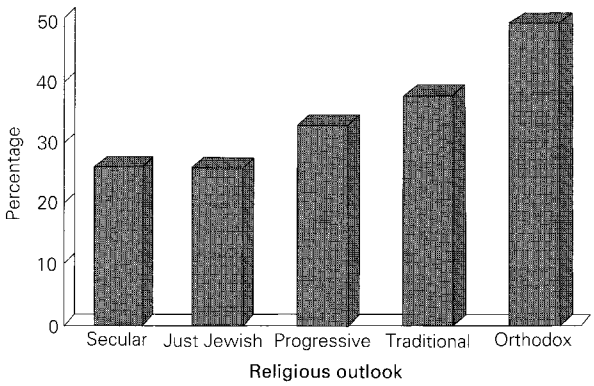
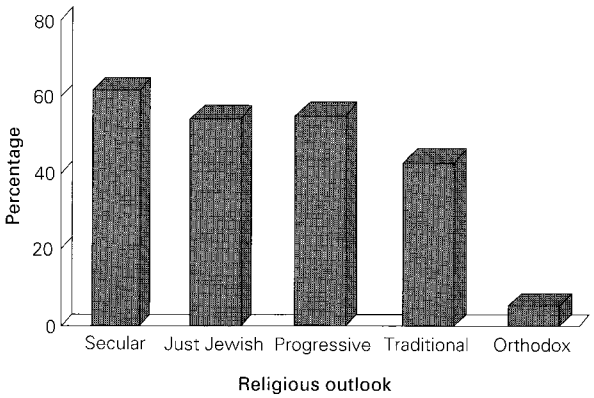


Figure 17: Never considered going on aliya



6 Statistical explanations of strength of attachment to Israel

All the previous tables attempted to show the relationship of some key demographic or attitudinal characteristics (i.e. independent variables such as age and group identity) to the Israel attachments of our sample (i.e. dependent variables such as degree of attachment and charitable priorities). However, each of these tables treated the relationships in aggregate categories. Moreover, the results only showed the relationships of two or three independent variables to the dependent variables at a time, with no simultaneous control for any additional variables which might have an effect (i.e. interactions).

We now try to calculate the relative influence of any one factor in predicting any individual British Jew's attachment to Israel. Fortunately, complicated and lengthy statistical analyses can be accomplished easily with computers. The methods we have chosen to use are called Multiple Regression analyses.[13] Our aim is to calculate the real significance of all the variables we have discussed and then place them in order of importance for explaining the range of responses known as the variance in the continuum of attachment to Israel from negative to very strong. It also calculates the combined explanatory power of all the inputs in explaining the degree of variance. This is known as the adjusted R^2.

Altogether nine variables were utilized in the calculations: the respondent's age, sex and region (London vs. elsewhere), their group identity, religious outlook, religious upbringing, number of visits to Israel in the last ten years, as well as whether or not they have close friends and relatives in Israel and whether or not they had been members of a Jewish youth group (including Zionist groups).[14] The dependent variable, i.e. the factor we are seeking to explain, is the degree of attachment to Israel.

The results can be seen in Table 5 which shows that five of the nine variables selected were highly significant (***). Four variables—sex, region, religious upbringing and youth club membership —were not significant at all. The five significant variables were positively related to attachment to Israel: e.g. older age groups are associated with stronger attachment. Altogether, in aggregate, the five significant variables explained 33.8 per cent of the variance. Being able to explain one-third of the variance in individual opinions is regarded as a high level of explanatory power in social science.

Table 5: Results of multiple regression analysis to explain attachment to Israel

Variable	Relationship	Significance
Sex	–	ns
Age	positive	***
Religious outlook	positive	***
Jewish youth club membership	–	ns
Religious upbringing	–	ns
Friends/relatives in Israel	positive	***
Visits to Israel	positive	***
British vs. Jewish identity	positive	***
Region	–	ns

(ns = not significant)

Obviously some individual attributes are closely inter-linked and the regression analyses underlined these relationships. A stepwise regression showed that either of the variables of religious outlook and group identity alone could explain approximately 20 per cent of the variance. The two variables in combination can explain 25.6 per cent or a quarter of all the variance. This indicates they have great predictive value since the other three significant variables add only 8.2 per cent of explanatory power. The cumulative explanatory powers of each of the variables can be seen in Table 6 (the variables of sex, region, Jewish youth group membership and religious upbringing were not entered into the equation).

Table 6: Results of stepwise multiple regression to explain attachment to Israel

Step	Variable	Cumulative percentage explained
1	Religious outlook	20.2
2	British vs. Jewish identity	25.6
3	Visits to Israel	29.8
4	Friends/relatives in Israel	31.9
5	Age	33.8

These results show that the sample's religious outlook and group self identity along the continuum from Secular to Strictly Orthodox and from British to Jewish are the key to understanding much about their degree of attachment to Israel. This means that self-perception is crucial and is the foundation for a significant proportion of the emotion and behaviour which we currently observe in relation

13 This is the procedure required for a mixture of dichotomous and continuous variables.

14 Full documentation of the procedure and the regression coefficients is available upon request.

to Israel. However, we must remember that the religious outlook and group identity of adult British Jews is neither a given nor necessarily a permanent individual attribute. It is associated with the wider social and political context within which these attitudes operate. In addition, unlike demographic attributes such as sex or age cohort, acquired characteristics such as attitudes and opinions are open to change in a number of possible directions.

7 Conclusion

Recent developments and trends

The data in the JPR survey suggest that marked changes have taken place in the nature of the relationship between British Jews and Israel in recent years. To summarize the changes and highlight the trends, Table 7 indicates the direction in which matters look as if they are going, unless something changes or something is done to bring about change in the interim. In other words, these are probable trends, they are not inevitable.

Table 7: Israel

The Past	The Future?
Appeals to all denominations	Greater appeal to Traditional and Orthodox Jews
Attachment based on ideology and emotion	Attachment based on experience
Primary focus of communal fundraising	Declining support for Israel charities
Zionism most widely held ideology	Zionism ideologically irrelevant
A medium for the expression of Jewish ethnic identity	Jewish ethnic identity more broadly based
A focus for Jewish communal consensus and strong unifying factor	A source of communal division
Central in Jewish life	Diminishing centrality

Those who are closest to Israel are far more likely to be Orthodox by synagogue affiliation or by religious outlook. It is the Traditional and Orthodox who are more likely to have friends in Israel, to visit more often, to have thought about aliya, and to consider going on aliya in the future. They are more likely to support Israel causes than other kinds of Jews, and they adopt a more hawkish approach to the peace process, being far less likely to want to give land for peace than other kinds of Jews. This suggests a narrowing, in religious terms, of the base of attachment to Israel in the British community. Although we do not have definitive social survey data from the past on this, the thrust of the evidence in the Redbridge survey indicates a much more broadly-based attachment to Israel in 1978. We would argue that this is borne out by experience and accounts of the history of British Jewry during this period.

Younger Jews are more polarized on Israel but in the aggregate they are less likely to give to an Israel charity, and more likely to disagree with the view that 'the only long-term future for Jews is in Israel'. Their attachment to Israel is much more dependent on actual experience of the country and its people—having friends and relatives there, and making visits—than the attachment of older people.

What seems to be happening then is a radical shift from a period of community-wide consensus concerning attachment to Israel, which was probably as secular in character as it was religious, and which grew out of ideological and emotional feelings, to a more narrowly-based attachment linked to religiosity on the one hand and to experience on the other. It is after all the national-religious trend in Israel which has been ideologically and politically dominant in the last two decades, despite the advances in the peace process. As stated above, the socialist-Zionist ethos is in eclipse. If anything challenges the national-religious camp it is Israel's secularism and consumerism, and that hardly offers itself as a point of positive identification for liberal or secular Diaspora Jews. Whether one agrees with their point of view or not, it is the national religious camp which has conveyed a more certain, more coherent view of what Israel is, and is to be, in the future. Whereas Israel once appealed to radicals and later to all denominations in the community, as time passes it looks as if increasingly it will appeal more to Traditional and Orthodox Jews than to others.

This pattern applies to the new episodic connections between British Jews and Israel that have arisen in recent years. Many British Jews have invested in vacation and retirement properties in Israel. Business travel and business links have developed. Teenage trips to Israel have become almost a rite of passage for young British Jews. Yet as any casual observer of airline travellers to Israel can observe, the Orthodox are over-represented. While Secular and Progressive Jewish teenagers who visit Israel tend to spend a few weeks of their summer vacation there, Orthodox youngsters are more likely to spend a year at a religious yeshiva or seminary.

Israel has been a powerful mobilizing force in British Jewry, especially at times of crisis, such as the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War. That force has been employed, with phenomenal success, for fundraising. For years it was taken for granted that Israel was the primary focus of communal fundraising, in terms both of priority, and of the amount of money raised. It is probably still the case that a high proportion of charitable funds from Jews go to support Israel in one form or another. However, the JPR survey clearly shows that that must come from a shrinking group among whom are a number of elderly

people and individuals with large foundations who give substantial donations. Not only is the proportion of the Jewish population supporting Israel relatively small—26 per cent—but younger people are showing even less interest. Israel used to be the primary focus of communal fundraising, but there is now declining support for Israel-oriented charities.

Zionism in the Diaspora was never simply an ideological machine for producing olim—immigrants. It became a cultural and educational force—one only has to look at the role of the Zionist Federation in establishing Jewish day schools. Through the creation of that Zionist space within British Jewry, Israel came to be an essential component and a medium of expression of Jewish ethnic identity. But as elements of Israeli culture became part of the fabric of Jewish life, Zionism as an ideology began to lose its resonance. It was simply unnecessary to have to buy into all the theory which made up the Zionist idea in order to have a close relationship with the reality of Israel. JPR survey data show that most Jews in Britain see themselves as firmly rooted in British society and not as a Diaspora waiting to return. They do not see the only long-term future for Jews in Israel, and if they are contemplating aliya, they are most likely to be Traditional or Orthodox Jews, but even then only a very small minority say they are actively making preparations to go. Zionism was once seen as the most widely-held communal ideology, but in the future it looks as if Zionism will become increasingly irrelevant, or the tool of one communal faction. An erosion of the centre and the end of consensus politics is not just a British Jewish phenomenon but a global trend as religious fundamentalism and local nationalisms grow.

Other JPR survey data have indicated that British Jews are becoming more like an ethnic community, but that the components of that ethnicity are becoming more broadly based and complex. As we noted, a rise in Jewish group identity among the young has not translated into increased Zionist feeling. Israel is part of Jewish ethnicity, but by no means as important to it as is generally assumed. Certainly, to call Israel the 'central focus of Anglo-Jewish identity'[15] is not justified by the JPR data. Some talk of Zionism Mark II, or of a renewal of Zionism, and it is not mere coincidence that they do so in this anniversary year. But this flies in the face of reality. The trend for Zionism is towards ideological irrelevance; and for Israel to be very much present in, but diffused throughout, the increasingly complex mosaic that makes up contemporary Jewish identity.

Zionism and Israel have ideological meaning for post-1967 religious Zionists who saw in the Six-Day War the beginning of the fulfilment of the messianic hope. But most Jews—indicative of polarization in the Jewish world—are far removed from that. Israel has certainly been a unifying factor for British Jews. Even when arguing over the policies of the Israeli government, Jews overwhelmingly cherish the existence of the state. Of course it was far easier to express solidarity with Israel and for it to be a source of unity when its existence was under threat.

With eyes now focused on the issues that were always held in abeyance—the future of Jerusalem, Israel's final borders, the possible creation of a Palestinian state, the status of Palestinian refugees, the very nature of the Jewish state—disagreements between Jews have become much sharper. The JPR survey data reflect this in the division over such issues as land for peace between Orthodox Jews and some Traditional Jews on the one hand, and the rest of the Traditional, Progressive, Just Jewish and Secular Jews on the other. The survey data relate to the situation in late 1995 and we can be assured that the Rabin assassination and the election of the Netanyahu government mean that today, far from being a source of cohesion and consensus, in some respects Israel is becoming a source of communal division.

Implications for policy development

Such developments and trends must have an impact on the centrality of Israel in Jewish life. Diaspora Jews do not see themselves as living in exile. They have freely chosen to live where they are, and if they want to do that Jewishly in any sense they are increasingly giving priority to problems internal to their communities and related to the maintenance of Jewish distinctiveness. They can see that the state of Israel and the Israeli population are managing quite nicely without their perpetual concern. Thus fewer feel the need to give charitable support to Israel. Many see no relevance in Zionism. Those that are actively attached to Israel are drawn more and more from one sector of the community. And the incipient struggle over the crucial issues facing Israel's future, including the power of the Orthodox religious parties to determine who is a Jew, is likely to make Israel less a focus of consensus and more a source of division and alienation for liberally minded Jews. In this light—and if Israel is integrated more into the Middle East—can Israel's centrality hold for all Jews?

15 Joseph Finklestone, 'Zionism and British Jews' in *The Jewish Year Book* (London: Vallentine Mitchel 1997), pp. ix-xxx.

If these trends prevail, and if nothing happens or is done in the interim to change them, we could be seeing a turning of the circle in British Jewry's attachment to Zionism, and to the idea and the reality of the Jewish state: it began as the concern of a mostly secular minority, grew to embrace the entire community, and could be in the process of returning to be the concern of a minority, although now a minority with a mostly Traditional or Orthodox religious outlook.

This situation can be viewed as a natural process and a product of the success of the Zionist project. Israel has grown up, it does not require the support of Diaspora Jews as it once did since it is no longer under immediate threat. If there is to be a relationship with British Jews, why shouldn't it be based on practical and personal connections—visits, friends and so on—or on some kind of religious imperative? And meanwhile, British Jews turn increasingly to the problems of their own community or the world. This may be the normal position and those whose primary concern is Israel may simply have to adjust to this new reality.

On the other hand, this new situation could be seen as a huge problem, a major crisis given the role that Israel once played in fostering contemporary Jewish identity and in keeping Jews broadly united around a central issue. Given the link between experience of Israel and attachment to Israel among younger Jews, it suggests that enormous resources would need to be poured into giving young Jews that experience, only to prevent any further erosion of attachment to Israel.

The challenge for policy makers is therefore considerable: to let matters take their course, the implications of which may well be as outlined in the summary Table 7; or to gear up Israel-oriented charities and organizations to prevent further erosion, the implications of which could be the taking of even more money out of British Jewry for Israel-oriented activity.

The onus could also fall on Israel to take the initiative. Since ideology plays such an important role in Diaspora Jews' attachment, Israelis have to decide if it is in their interests to modify their policies and how they present them in order to appeal to a wider spectrum of Diaspora Jews. They could also consider the way in which the intermediary role played by the media in portraying Israel's government and society impacts upon the attitudes and feelings of many Diaspora Jews.

As the twentieth century ends, time and historical processes seem to accelerate. So even as we commemorate the triumphs of Zionism, the centennial of the First Zionist Congress in 1897 and approach the jubilee celebrations of the establishment of the state, paradoxically one thing is clear: the attachment of British Jews to Israel can no longer be taken for granted.

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