

# A Community of Communities

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Report of the Commission on Representation  
of the Interests  
of the British Jewish Community

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The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)** is an independent think-tank which informs and influences opinion and decision-making on social, political and cultural issues affecting Jewish life.

The **Commission on Representation of the Interests of the British Jewish Community** was established as an independent working party in 1998 by JPR, which provided the secretariat and a home for the Commission. Members were drawn on an *ad personam* basis from a cross-section of British Jewry in terms of gender, region and religious outlook. The Commission's task was to examine how the interests of the British Jewish community are represented at various levels—within the community, to Jewish communities abroad and in the wider UK society. The Commission was also asked to make recommendations on how the representation of these interests can best be organized for the twenty-first century. JPR pledged to publish the report of the Commission

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## Summary

### Setting the stage: reasons for the Commission's establishment

Over the past 300 years British Jews have established well-developed representative structures. However, there is an increasing recognition that we are in a period of rapid change. The pace of this change has placed considerable strain on the historic central representative structures: the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Chief Rabbinate. Vocal and variegated interest groups, ranging from the strictly Orthodox to the progressive, claim that the current modes of representation fail to include them or speak for their interests.

Questions have been raised as to why Jewish representative institutions have been unable to defuse tensions and resolve disputes that frequently surface in the public sphere. In addition, new organizations are continually emerging to address the wider society on matters of Jewish interest.

Finally, many individuals—particularly women, the younger generation and the unaffiliated—feel disenfranchised. Aware that decisions taken by others affect them, they do not believe that they have the means of influencing those decisions. They also do not feel the present representational structures meet their needs.

### Changing British Jewry

The Commission asked: 'For what sort of British Jewry is representation being undertaken?' The answer was: a community in transition.

In terms of demography, there has been a significant decline in the estimated Jewish population, which now numbers under 300,000 people. Despite the fact that today approximately 70 per cent of the population, of UK Jews are formally linked to a synagogue, approximately one third of the population is religiously unaffiliated.

Moreover, those British Jews who are affiliated to a synagogue are increasingly diverse and are segmented across the following groupings:

- 60.7 per cent belong to central Orthodox synagogues (Ashkenazi and Sephardi);
- 28.8 per cent belong to progressive synagogues (Reform, Liberal and Masorti);
- 10.5 per cent belong to strictly Orthodox (Haredi) synagogues, which have shown the greatest

degree of growth in the last decade.

Recent studies on issues of Jewish identity have shown a trend towards non-synagogal modes of affiliation and a rising number of marriages with non-Jews. Yet, paradoxically, at the same time there is greater confidence among the strictly Orthodox, a huge investment and expansion in Jewish education and a stronger sense of British Jewish identity.

Finally, British Jews increasingly regard themselves in ethnic terms. Alongside religion, culture and language, their ethnicity includes feelings of kinship and belonging, and a desire for group continuity. In practice, however, most British Jews presently regard the synagogue as the only practicable way open to them to identify with and belong to something Jewish.

### Changing Britain

In what kind of Britain, then, is representation taking place?

Britain has become more diverse in terms of religion, ethnic origin, culture and lifestyle. It is now often referred to as a multicultural society. Ethnic, regional and other differences are increasingly portrayed as requiring not merely toleration, but also acknowledgement, respect, resources and representation.

The most significant changes are structural, affecting the various tiers of government to which Jews have traditionally made representations. The changes under way that are already affecting Britain's central political institutions promise to alter significantly the pattern of power, leading to new challenges and opportunities for representational activity. They include reform of the House of Lords, devolution and regionalization, changes in local government, including a London mayor and Greater London Authority, and closer integration into the European Union.

### Mapping current representation

The Commission identified those Jewish communal organizations that carry out representation, together with their main target audiences: government and Parliament, local authorities, international and European organizations, foreign governments, international Jewish organizations, Israel, Diaspora communities, European Jewish organizations, other-faith minority groups, the voluntary sector, the media and other opinion formers.

This information is discussed in Section 4 and has been produced in diagrammatic form. The organizational map served as the starting point for analysing Jewish representation, revealing in stark relief its multi-faceted, diverse and complex nature.

### Gathering ideas: the consultation exercise

For more than eighteen months the Commission carried out its research and deliberations on a variety of levels. It canvassed as many people as possible within the Jewish community, together with those in the wider society who are the main target audiences of Jewish representation.

A detailed questionnaire on the scope, subject matter and comprehensiveness of Jewish representation was compiled, and copies were sent to more than 2,000 Jewish organizations and individuals. Advertisements were placed in the national and Jewish press inviting people to request a questionnaire, and a special web-site was established to allow respondents to submit their answers on-line.

Seven 'town meetings' were held in Central London, Redbridge, Golders Green, Brighton, Manchester, Glasgow and Leeds. Smaller focus groups and discussions were also held. Finally, the Commission conducted in-depth interviews with more than seventy key informants, both inside and outside the British Jewish community.

During the Commission's evidence-gathering, certain recurring themes emerged: questions of leadership, consultation, professionalism, networking and coordination, reaching the unaffiliated, internal, informal and religious

representation, representation abroad and internal Jewish divisions.

Among the key questions surrounding the current state of representational activity, the following emerged:

- Do the multiple layers of special interest and representation constitute needless duplication or strength through diversity?
- Should there be one or many voices?
- What is the role of religious representation?
- Do the Jewish media have a role in representation?
- What is the place of informal representation?
- How is the Jewish community regarded by the targets of representation—as a religious or an ethnic group?
- When is collective representation necessary?

Through the Commission's wide-ranging consultations with every sector of the Jewish community an overriding *leitmotif* began to emerge: a growing realization that a means of representation regarded as effective in the past or even today may not be adequate in the future.

The Commission observed that, while people were quick to express their concerns and extensive criticisms of existing representative structures, they were less willing, initially, to posit solutions. Nevertheless, a number of solutions were put forward and subsequently served as a basis for the Commission's recommendations, which follow.

## Recommendations

The following section is in two parts: ‘Principles for action’ and ‘Implementation of principles’. Both grew out of a consideration of the evidence, ideas and suggestions expressed during the consultative process. Together they constitute a strategic direction that we believe will meet the current and emerging representational needs of the British Jewish community.

### Principles for action

#### **1 For the purposes of representation we should adopt an *inclusive definition* of the Jewish people and present ourselves as an ethnic minority.**

Jews believe in, or are conscious of having, a common origin and destiny. Historically, for more than three centuries Jews in Britain were regarded as a religious minority. However, in recent decades, Jewish ethnicity has been officially recognized under the Race Relations Act of 1976. A government report stated in 1995:

It is a fundamental objective of the UK government to enable members of ethnic minorities to participate freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation, with all the benefits and responsibilities which that entails, while still being able to maintain their own culture, traditions, language and values.<sup>1</sup>

We believe that for the purposes and benefits of representation the Jewish community needs to see itself in these terms: namely, as an ethnic group. It is this policy which offers the community the public space and the social and political climate in which it can pursue its efforts at representing itself.

#### **2 We affirm the continuing relevance of the ‘emancipation contract’.**

The British Jewish community today still operates and exists on the basis of the emancipation contract: Jews have full legal and political equality with all other citizens before the law; they are free to form their own associations or to choose not to single themselves out as Jews in any way at all.

#### **3 We are a community of communities.**

We accept the analysis of a former president of the Board of Deputies, Israel Feinstein, that ‘to speak of one community is misleading. British Jewry has always consisted of “communities”— distinguished geographically, religiously, socio-economically, ideologically, historically and by personality’.<sup>2</sup>

In adopting the principle of ‘a community of communities’, we also accept the principle of subsidiarity in representational activities. That is, we believe that groupings within the Jewish community should take and retain responsibility for representational activities that can be dealt with effectively at their own level.

**4 Representation of the community must be seen as multi-faceted. There is no one best way, nor is one overarching organization or leader able, to speak on behalf of the entire community.**

It follows from our understanding of contemporary Jewry in Britain that different sections of the community will make different demands on the government or express their interests in a different manner to various third parties.

We noted the growth of a 'free market' in representation, with a corresponding increase in the number of specialist and single-interest bodies. Like similar organizations in the wider society, they are generally a flexible, responsive and effective means of representing interests.

In view of the variety of issues to be represented, the range of effective voices available and our understanding of ourselves as a community of communities, we believe it is not possible, nor has it been possible of late, for any single organization or leader—religious or secular—to attempt to provide all British Jewry's representational activities or speak on behalf of the entire community.

We believe that this principle of multiple representation also lends itself to cooperation, coordination and even agreement to speak with one voice on certain issues when the need arises. In these circumstances it seems that collective representation can currently be carried out only on a non-ecclesiastical, non-rabbinical basis.

What should drive this process is (a) the nature of the representation that needs to be undertaken, (b) the ability to be proactive and make effective representation and (c) accountability, with the last constituting an essential component of credibility within the Jewish community. Such representation may involve, but is not necessarily associated with, democratic organizational structures. In the words of one of our interviewees: 'The extent to which you are considered representative is the extent to which you have consulted well.'

**5 Effective representation needs to take into account the structural changes and changing tiers of government at local, regional, national and European levels.**

As the internal and external structure of the UK is in the process of transition we need to realign our representational activities to address:

- constitutional change, including the reform of the House of Lords, proportional representation, and devolution and regionalization;
- changes in local government, including the emergence of the Greater London Authority and proposed changes in other metropolitan authorities, changes in local authority boundaries, changing roles of local government and the 'modernization' agenda;
- closer integration into the European Union, including the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into British law.

**6 In order to carry out representation we need to take into account current and future trends and developments in the political, social and economic environment of the UK.**

The withdrawal of the state from many areas of social and economic activity has put increased pressure on communities to provide for themselves. In particular, the retreat of the state from welfare provision puts pressure on voluntary organizations to provide more social, educational and housing services.

Because British Jewish communities are essentially clusters of voluntary organizations, the above trends offer new opportunities for forging creative partnerships with the broader voluntary sector in general and with governmental agencies, including the newly devolved regional and European institutions.

The dramatic expansion of information/communication technology (ICT), including the Internet, creates still more opportunities for various sectors of British Jewry to share knowledge and interact, both with each other and with Jewish communities in other countries.

**7 British Jews are members of a global Jewish people and have responsibilities to represent Jewish interests wherever the need arises.**

We affirm this principle particularly now, when our links with Israel and other Diaspora communities are subject to ongoing and rapid change due to social, political and economic developments world-wide.

It follows from this principle that effective representation of Jewish interests beyond Europe needs to take into account the changing dynamic of the relationships between Israel and the Diaspora, as well as among Diaspora communities themselves.

**8 There is a clear need for reform in representation.**

The accelerating rate of change in multiple sectors of British government and society precludes a piecemeal approach to reforming the method and means by which we carry out our representational interests. If our own response to that change is not implemented in a deliberate and strategic manner, we will be put at a disadvantage precisely at a time when our community's future is so closely linked with developments in the wider society. Jews in the UK therefore need to devise a systematic and proactive response in order to ensure that both the *multiple voices of our community and the voice of our multiple communities* are effectively heard.

**9 There are viable models for community-wide cooperation on representational matters.**

In contrast to the internal issues which can serve as a bar to dialogue and cooperation, we believe that a range of external concerns exists which relate to and affect British Jews as a whole. It is external issues such as these—the prime subject matter of representation—which provide us with an opportunity to respond in a coherent and focused way. Such concerns may range from the civic/secular, such as antisemitism and security, to the religious, such as circumcision and *shechita* (kosher slaughter of animals).

On specific religious matters, each grouping tends to organize its own representation. We have found that, depending on the need, religious

groupings within the community will accept people beyond their communities to represent their interests; what is important for them is the manner in which representatives speak for them and the sensitivity shown to their beliefs and needs. It is therefore feasible to envisage a situation in which, without any religious group abandoning or compromising any of its principles, alliances can be formed on a pragmatic basis, in order to pursue certain issues.

### **10 The development of our human resources is a prerequisite for effective communal representation.**

Effective representation requires informed leaders of high calibre. Given the diversity that prevails, quality leadership is needed in both governance and staffing. Talented individuals, irrespective of age and gender, must be able and encouraged to move through the system to the top. It is imperative that those who seek to represent the community be appropriately trained and informed.

## **Implementation of principles**

### **1 A coordinating structure**

The range of issues which organizations and individuals pursue in the wider society is considerable. Because they operate in what amounts to a free-market system, we do not propose to prescribe or proscribe issues that require representation. We are also keenly aware of the difficulty of direct communication and public consultation between some religious groups.

We therefore recommend the creation of an independent, cross-communal coordinating structure. This structure will serve as a network of organizations and will involve the senior lay and professional leaders concerned with representation.

The structure will require a small but highly professional and well-qualified staff. It will have no independent, executive function and no ecclesiastical or rabbinic authority. Rather than being empowered to speak on anyone's behalf, its primary role will be as a facilitator and catalyst. Working groups or committees could be established on an ad hoc or ongoing basis. Its aim will be to be flexible and outcome-oriented.

In the event that a unified communal response is required to any issue that arises, the structure will operate on a networking basis, assembling a group of appropriate voices, groups and interests within the community in order to discuss a collective response in an appropriate timescale. This response will then be disseminated by the network as a representative communal position.

The structure's remit will be to:

- *operate according to the above principles;*
- *monitor and disseminate information* on issues involving representation of the interests of the British Jewish communities;
- *identify emerging issues* by virtue of the network's knowledge base and stemming from its interaction with all the elements of the community;



- *react to external issues* when they emerge, if necessary facilitating targeted coalitions of Jewish organizations and agencies in order to formulate a strategic response;
- *respond to requests* from Jewish agencies and communal organizations throughout the UK for representation and for advice and consultation on how to carry out representation as the need arises;
- *create and facilitate a forum for communal organizations* to discuss and develop strategies on how to advance the representative agenda. Such a forum could range in format and include group meetings, formal assembly, mediated sessions and an electronic bulletin board in 'real time'. This could be launched via an annual agenda-setting conference for the purpose of establishing priorities and creating long- and short-term strategies.

## **2 A development programme for future leaders**

A change in the culture of communal organizations is necessary before new leaders will come forward. We believe this can happen through discussion and implementation of the recommended reforms and a systematic adoption of the principles we have set out. If the result is seen to be effective and efficient, and the key issues which are raised for discussion and action are recognized as directly affecting the future of the community, we believe that high-calibre leaders will come forward to fill formal leadership positions. Despite much lip service to similar recommendations in the past, the above aspiration has not been put into practice. This, too, must change.

To ensure a desirable level of knowledge and competence in the field of representation, we recommend the introduction of a high-quality training and development programme for professional and lay leaders. This programme should be designed to build a systematic body of knowledge about the effective conduct of representation that can be transmitted to potential leaders throughout their communal careers.

Part of this training should involve the creation of a syllabus which will help ensure that those involved in representation are well informed about the processes and methodology of representation. In general, based on our research, such a syllabus would include a knowledge of:

- *the changing landscape of communal and governmental bodies* on the local, regional, national and European levels as they relate to targets of representation;
- *a working familiarity with the religious and ethnic composition, social structure and demography* of the Jewish population in the UK and the corresponding range of views that exists in our community of communities;
- *an awareness of the history of British Jewry* as it relates to its governance and formal status as a 'dissenting religious minority' in the UK and in its relationship to the European and international community;
- *Jewish thought and practice* relevant to issues of representation.

## **3 An independent mass media and resource office**

We are keenly aware of the role which the mass media play in acting as a window on the Jewish community, through both their coverage of formal

representation and their reporting of cultural events and communal controversies, as well as religious, ethical and social issues. Jewish views on a wide range of issues are publicly aired as a result of the media seeking out people to comment on newsworthy events, appear in documentaries, participate in discussion programmes and provide quotes for newspaper articles. Since the media are free agents and can approach whomsoever they wish, they possess a great deal of control over how Jews, Judaism, the community and the issues it faces are portrayed.

To facilitate the expression of more informed, developed and educated views, we recommend the establishment of an independent mass media and resource office which would act as a clearing house for putting the mass media into contact with leaders, rabbis, experts and commentators on an impartial basis. One way that the office would achieve this impartiality would be by always (wherever possible) offering the media the opportunity of speaking to more than one person or organization. It should also supply briefings to individuals who are asked to present their views on issues of Jewish concern.

Those running the office would need a comprehensive and sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the range of issues and problems which do and might interest the media.

### The way forward

We urgently recommend full discussion of this report in the community. It is the hope of the Commission that British Jewry will incorporate the three recommendations we have outlined into the work of representation on the basis of the ten principles for action we have outlined above. In addition, an appropriate funding structure should be put into place to enable the establishment and continuing effective operation of the bodies specified in Recommendations 1, 2 and 3. We acknowledge that the linkages between all three bodies, both formal and informal, also need to be addressed.

Finally, clear initiatives need to be taken in order to report on, stimulate and lead this communal discussion, as well as to monitor progress towards the implementation of the above recommendations. The challenge to existing leaders and organizations therefore is this: to assume responsibility for such initiatives and to commit to carrying them out.

### Notes

1 Home Office, *13th UK Periodic Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Relating to the Period up to 31 July 1994* (London 1995).

2 Israel Finestein, 'A community of paradox: office, authority and ideas in the changing governance of Anglo-Jewry', in S. Ilan Troen (ed.), *Jewish Centers and Peripheries: Europe between America and Israel 50 Years after World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1999), p 268.

# 1 Introduction

## A Terms of reference

The Commission on Representation of the Interests of the British Jewish Community was established as an independent deliberative working party by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research in 1998. Its task was to examine how the interests of the British Jewish community are represented on various levels—within the community, among Jewish communities elsewhere and in the wider society—and to make recommendations as to how the representation of those interests can best be, or indeed need to be, organized for the twenty-first century.

## Method and aims

The bulk of our work has concentrated on the representation of Jewish interests to the wider society, the main object of the Commission. Representation within the community has been considered in so far as it relates to how the community represents its interests more widely. Representing British Jewish interests among Jewish communities elsewhere is considered specifically in relation to Europe.

Our first step was to embark on a consultation exercise. We set out to listen to as many people as possible within the Jewish community, and those in the wider society who are the main target audiences of Jewish representation, in order to establish what people think, what their concerns are, whether they think that current representation is effective, and what changes they would like to see in the organization and implementation of representation. This was done by inviting people to complete a questionnaire. Copies were sent to more than 2,000 Jewish organizations and individuals, adverts were placed in the national and Jewish press inviting people to request a questionnaire and a Commission web-site was established whereby people could submit their answers on-line. Finally, seven 'town meetings' were held, in Central London, Redbridge, Golders Green and Brighton in the South, and in Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow in the North. In addition, more than seventy personal interviews were conducted with a cross-section of individuals and organizations both inside and outside the British Jewish community, and an Inquiry Day was held, at which Commissioners sought the views of experts (see Appendix 4).

Second, we considered all the evidence generated by the consultation exercise. We also commissioned a number of papers to help inform our thinking.

One of these is included as Appendix 2.

It is important to stress that we did not conduct an evaluation or a detailed critique of all the institutions currently involved in representation. We decided to approach the issue by establishing what we believe to be the key features of British Jewry and British society which representation has to take into account to be effective today. We sought to develop an understanding of how representation currently operates, examining the evidence from the consultation exercise on key points of concern. On the basis of information and analysis, we drew conclusions and established principles and recommendations for action.

We believe that the issues at stake have direct implications for the future of British Jewry as a whole, a future which will be determined by the interaction between the community and the wider society.

We saw our core task as beginning a process, establishing the terms of debate about the issue of representation and sharing with the community our assessment and understanding. We have set out to provide others with knowledge and ideas which they can consider, evaluate and use as engines for change. We have aimed to outline the challenges facing the community; to identify, wherever possible, future trends and issues that the community needs to take into account in order to thrive within an increasingly multicultural Britain while maintaining its distinctive identity.

## Reasons for the Commission's establishment

British Jews have a well-developed representative structure. Over the years the Board of Deputies of British Jews has evolved to represent their interests to the outside world, loosely imitating the House of Commons. By the same token, the Chief Rabbinate came to be regarded as analogous to the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Other minority faiths have often remarked on the advantages of such a coherent and well-organized structure that enables a Jewish voice to be heard on issues that affect the community at large.

The world, however, has changed. British Jews now find themselves in a society which is questioning the idea of a common culture. Pluralism is the order of the day, with interest groups competing against each other for influence in a market-place of values. The political landscape is likewise undergoing a series of potentially seismic shifts. Devolution in

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland\* has called into question the very idea of 'national identity' and threatens to let what some regard as the genie of English nationalism out of the bottle. The Runnymede Trust, with the blessing of the government, has set up the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, which is asking, among other questions, whether 'our democratic institutions belong equally to all citizens'.

Far-reaching structural changes in government are also under way. Hereditary peers have been largely removed from the House of Lords, while the Wakeham Commission report has called for significant changes in the structure of the second chamber, including state-appointed leaders from religious communities. The direct election of city mayors is about to transform local government, as is the potential creation of regional assemblies. Incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into the law of England and Wales will increase the power of the judiciary. Meanwhile, whether or not Britain abandons the pound for the euro, the European Union is likely to play an increasing role in the lives of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom.

Against this background of profound cultural and political transformation, the British Jewish community has also experienced significant changes over the last few decades. These developments were reflected in the work of the Community Research Unit of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and analysed in the JPR survey of social and political attitudes of British Jews.<sup>1</sup> There is growing religious diversity, an increasing trend towards non-synagogal modes of affiliation and a rising number of marriages and partnerships with non-Jews. At the same time, there is growing confidence among the strictly Orthodox, a huge investment in Jewish education and a greater confidence in a British Jewish identity.

These changes have prompted many communal institutions to review their objectives and reform their structures and modes of operation. This is most apparent within the Jewish voluntary sector, where large 'super' organizations have emerged, commanding multi-million-pound budgets and able to exert great influence in communal fund-raising, welfare and education, while working within international structures.

\*Information with regard to Northern Ireland was accurate at time of going to press.

It is quite clear that this new social profile the Jewish community has adopted to meet the changes in the social and political landscape has also placed considerable strain on its central representative structures, which were established in a very different climate. Arguments within the community have been the subject of unprecedented public attention in recent years, giving rise to the question why its representative institutions have been unable to defuse such tensions and resolve disputes.

There has been a persistent and increasing grumble of complaint that the Chief Rabbinate and the Board of Deputies are unrepresentative and ineffectual. These institutions are being buffeted by the winds of pluralism. Vocal and variegated interest groups ranging from the strictly Orthodox to the Progressive claim either that the Chief Rabbinate fails to speak for them or that it fails to bridge divisions between communal factions. Many in the middle ground are exasperated that diverse religious groups within the Jewish family refuse even to talk to each other on a public platform. In addition, new bodies have emerged, and are still emerging, which believe that they too should be able to address the wider society on issues of Jewish interest.

It was concerns such as these that prompted the present attempt to re-examine how the Jewish community pursues its interests in the wider world through its representational activity. However, the Commission has been mindful of the limitations on such an exercise. In particular, it would not be appropriate for it to address, nor could it hope to resolve, the fundamental divisions between different sections of the community, to say nothing of the current lack of dialogue between them. Instead, the Commission has wrestled with the core conundrum: how can a community with so many variegated and sometimes disputatious interest groups support its representative structures?

### How we understand representation

In addressing these questions, the Commission recognized an important distinction that needs to be made between internal and external representation, which are commonly confused. Internal representation refers to the way in which the views and opinions of Jewish individuals and groups on matters affecting the well-being of the community are expressed and taken into account by communal institutions. External representation refers to the activity carried out by institutions or individuals when bringing issues of Jewish and

communal concern to British or international bodies, or when presenting Jewish views in other ways.

The importance of internal representation is directly linked to external representation. People need to feel that their views are taken into account when lobbying activity occurs. The mechanisms for aggregating views need to work effectively. Some Jews no doubt feel disenfranchised—that is, they know that decisions being taken by others affect them but they do not feel that they have the means of influencing those decisions. Should ways then be found to canvass the views of Jews who are not affiliated with Jewish organizations? We found strong feelings on the above points. There was a deep underlying concern about whether the individuals and organizations who speak on behalf of the community actually know what Jews want. There were further anxieties about whether there are opportunities for dissenting views to be expressed, or whether ways are found to suppress ‘awkward’ views.

The problem can be expressed in another way: it may be that a particular body is seen by the wider society as effectively *representing* us, but that many people in the community feel that that particular body is not representative *of* us. We took external representation to be our priority, with internal representation an area of concern only in so far as it informs and affects the former.

### Jews in Britain

Jews in Britain manifest their Jewishness in a variety of ways. Some Jews attend synagogue at all the prescribed times, keep strictly to the laws of *kasbrut*, wear distinctive garb and live in very close proximity to others of the same persuasion. Other Jews go to synagogue occasionally or not at all, attend Jewish life-cycle events from time to time, go to some Jewish-related arts programmes or make a point of watching programmes of Jewish interest on television. Between these two descriptions, and beyond them, are a wide range and mix of forms of Jewish identification. For British Jews to be able to express freely the Jewish element of their identity—whatever that identity comprises—and to play a full and equal part in British society, certain basic social, political and legal conditions are necessary.

These conditions did not come about automatically. They were achieved in large measure by challenges mounted to the status quo by concerned individuals, organizations and groups. Over the centuries, Jews have played their part in this

process, defending their right to practise their religion, striving for social and political equality, and pursuing their interests and concerns with the relevant authorities. They have done this through organizations set up (though not exclusively) for this purpose, or through prominent individuals who could secure attention or had influence with the relevant bodies. This activity went hand in hand with gaining acceptance in British society through education, Anglicization, acculturation and social mobility.

It is common for an immigrant group to organize itself to pursue certain collective interests in the society where it has settled. Clearly, groups that have come to Britain in the decades since the war have faced a different society from seventeenth-century England, and even from England at the beginning of the twentieth century, when there was a large influx of Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia. As one expert told us, tensions invariably surface as to who represents the community, what interests are being served by particular organizations that are created, whether to pursue the community’s concerns by becoming involved in local politics or to try to influence politics at a national level, and what kind of organizations should be created. For all communities and groups, the process of working out how to organize themselves and how to represent their interests to the institutions of British society has been an organic one. There is no template which suits all groups, although newer groups of immigrants have looked at the experience of others for guidance as to how to achieve what they want for their communities.

Over time, the basic rights of Jews were secured. Jews could stand for Parliament, and with the passage of the Religious Disabilities Act in 1846 their schools, places of worship, education and charitable purposes, and the property held with them, were made subject to the same laws as Protestant dissenters from the Church of England—the only formal, legal reference to the status of the Jewish community in English law (see Appendix 3). All formal restrictions on Jews participating in British society and occupying whatever professions they wished were lifted. However, since Jews continued to constitute a unique group and wished to preserve their traditions, new interests and concerns developed which Jews pursued within the institutions of British society. In recent decades these have included the plight of oppressed Jews, the welfare of the state of Israel, antisemitism, terrorist acts, the

prosecution of Nazi war criminals, state support for Jewish schools and *shechita* (kosher slaughter of animals).

### Representational activity

The reasons why organizations and individuals take up these issues are varied: to pursue them is integral to the maintenance of Jewish identity; to express concern for fellow Jews in other countries; to defend the community against external threat; to fulfil the prophetic role of Judaism; to fulfil the imperatives of *halacha* (Jewish law); to attain certain political objectives which are deemed to be beneficial to the community; and to maintain the institutions—particularly social welfare and educational—of the community.

Whatever the reasons, an enormous amount of representational activity takes place, as will be described below. As to who it affects, or on whose behalf it is being done, we have taken a broad view. We recognize that there are disagreements as to what constitutes a 'community'. For the purpose of our deliberations we have taken the Jewish community to refer to all Jews, whether members of organizations or not, who, if asked, would identify themselves as Jews. Not only does representational activity affect Jews who are not necessarily affiliated to any organization, but some of this activity (Jewish defence work, for example) is specifically designed to encompass the needs of Jews who may not formally see themselves as part of the community. What this means is that, for the purposes of representation (and for other purposes too), the boundaries of communal identity, like those of one's personal identity, can be both permeable and fluctuating.

The form of representational activity which most people would probably recognize is when representatives of the community express their concerns to, or seek action from, a government minister on an issue deemed important to the community. This can be done through such means as face-to-face meetings, letters or by presenting a memorandum. But this is only one of many ways in which representation can take place. It can be directed at various tiers of the government, civil servants, local government politicians, local government officials, and at services financed by government, such as the National Health Service. It can also be directed, for example, at television companies, newspapers, radio stations,

multinational companies, other faiths, international organizations and the embassies of foreign governments.

After surveying the range of activity that exists, we concluded that representation can broadly be divided into two forms: (a) advocacy or pressure-group representation, where specific aims are to be achieved, such as a change in the law on racial incitement or a shift in government policy on the Middle East; (b) education or information, where aspects of Jewish life are presented—either deliberately or as a by-product of some other activity—to the wider society through the media (Jewish and general), the arts, exhibitions and museums, or by clergy, academics and politicians.

Representation can also be subdivided in terms of target audiences. Broadly speaking, there are those directing their activity at British institutions, such as the government, Parliament, the civil service, the media or local authorities; and those whose targets are non-British institutions, such as the European Union, the United Nations, the Israeli government or international Jewish organizations.<sup>2</sup>

It is a perfectly legitimate part of the social and political fabric for groups to take up their collective concerns with the institutions of British society. Moreover, successive governments have moved further and further towards positively encouraging such activity. As an official government report stated in 1995:

It is a fundamental objective of the UK government to enable members of ethnic minorities to participate freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation, with all the benefits and responsibilities which that entails, while still being able to maintain their own culture, traditions, language and values.<sup>3</sup>

### Notes

- 1 Stephen Miller, Marlena Schmool and Antony Lerman, *Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews: Some Key Findings of the JPR Survey* (London 1996).
- 2 For a more detailed breakdown, see Appendix 1.
- 3 Home Office, *13th UK Periodic Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination Relating to the Period up to 31 July 1994* (London 1995): '1. Jews are legally defined as an ethnic group.'

## 2 For What Sort of British Jewry Is Representation Being Undertaken?

### Overview

What is the British Jewish community for which representation is being undertaken? What aspects of British Jewry impinge most closely on the representational activities as they are carried out?

The last few decades have witnessed unprecedented change for British Jewry, parallel to the changes in British society as a whole. Not the least of these have been demographic changes. Statistics compiled by the Community Research Unit of the Board of Deputies of British Jews indicate that there has been a significant decline in the estimated Jewish population from the peak it reached immediately after the war, 430,000, to the estimate for 1996, 283,000.<sup>1</sup> Jews currently make up less than 0.5 per cent of the UK population.

In order to determine who is affected by organizations and individuals seeking to represent the interests of British Jewry, we have taken a broad view. Such a definition, we believe, needs to include all who self-identify as Jews—a group that is potentially affected by, for example, representations to government seeking changes in the laws against incitement to racial hatred. Furthermore, the number of people who would be counted as Jewish from the point of view of Jewish defence and security—as in the case where someone devoid of Jewish identity and affiliation has a ‘Jewish’ name and becomes the target of an antisemitic incident—is almost certainly far larger than the Board of Deputies’ population estimate.

### Synagogue affiliation

As the central institution of British Jewish life, the synagogue and its membership offer key data in providing an overview of the Jewish community. According to the Board of Deputies, whereas approximately 70 per cent of the population of 283,000 Jews are formally linked to a synagogue, through either personal or family membership, 30 per cent of the population are religiously unaffiliated.<sup>2</sup>

### Denominational patterns

Recent research shows that religious life today is more diverse than it was during the first half of the twentieth century. At that time the central Orthodox (i.e. predominantly United Synagogue) dominated the synagogue world: 98.6 per cent of marriages were solemnized in their synagogues between 1921 and 1940. In terms of current

membership, British Jews who are affiliated to a synagogue are currently distributed across the following groupings:

- 60.7 per cent belong to central Orthodox synagogues (Ashkenazi and Sephardi);
- 27.3 per cent belong to the Progressive sector of Reform and Liberal synagogues;
- 10.5 per cent belong to strictly Orthodox (Haredi) synagogues;
- 1.5 per cent belong to Masorti (Conservative) synagogues.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years the strictly Orthodox or Haredi community has shown the greatest degree of growth. In 1998 more than 21 per cent of synagogue marriages were under strictly Orthodox auspices—a rise that is set against a backdrop of an overall decline in synagogue marriages in the UK.

### Jewish identity

Synagogue membership is not necessarily a precise indicator of religious lifestyle. Overall, one in every three British Jewish adults (31 per cent) think of themselves as ‘traditional Jews’. Another 26 per cent consider themselves to be ‘secular’, 18 per cent ‘just Jewish’, 15 per cent Progressive and 9 per cent are strictly Orthodox.<sup>4</sup>

Three out of five (60 per cent) of central Orthodox synagogue members consider themselves ‘traditional’ (with the rest ranging from strictly Orthodox to ‘secular’), while of those not affiliated to a synagogue, 40 per cent consider themselves ‘secular’ Jews and 32 per cent feel ‘just Jewish’.<sup>5</sup>

Yet even uninvolved, religiously unaffiliated Jews are by no means negative about the Jewish community or about their Jewish origins: 60 per cent feel they have been influenced by their Jewish background, nearly always positively. An overwhelming 81 per cent believe that it is important that Jews survive as a people and 55 per cent have a moderate or strong attachment to Israel.

Finally, while the intermarriage rate in Great Britain is 44 per cent—a phenomenon associated with less intense levels of Jewish identity—some of those who have married non-Jews are actively involved in Jewish life and strongly identify as Jews. In fact, 55 per cent rate themselves ‘extremely conscious of being Jewish’ or ‘quite strongly Jewish’, compared with 84 per cent of single and Jewishly married respondents.

### Ethnic character

A distinguishing characteristic of British Jewry is the tenuous relationship between ritual observance and religious faith. In study after study, this discrepancy shows up in data relating to congregational affiliation, self-identification and actual levels of religious practice.

The reason for this phenomenon, according to Stephen Miller,<sup>6</sup> lies in the fact that British Jews identify on an ethnic level—with an ethnic group understood as distinguished, on the one hand, by religion, culture, language and physical appearance, and, on the other, by a 'subjective feeling of belonging, of kinship, of a desire for group continuity and a sense of corporate entity'.<sup>7</sup> In practice, most British Jews regard the synagogue as the only practicable way open to them to identify with and belong to something Jewish.

### Geography

Jews live in all areas of the UK, from Aberdeen to Cornwall and from Belfast to Norwich. However, the main Jewish population centre is Greater London and the contiguous Home Counties—an area that accounts for 73 per cent of British Jewry, or 208,000 Jews. Greater Manchester and its adjacent areas, with 28,000 Jews, comprises just under 10 per cent of the total British Jewish population. Other significant Jewish populations can be found in Leeds (10,000), Glasgow (5,600), Brighton and Hove (5,300), Birmingham (4,000) and Liverpool (3,800).<sup>8</sup>

The key facts on population distribution are:

- Jews account for approximately 3 per cent of the total Greater London population;
- the north-west London boroughs of Camden, Barnet, Brent and Harrow together make up just under half the London Jewish population and slightly less than one third of all Britain's Jews;
- Barnet has the largest Jewish population among the London boroughs (50,000): one in four of all London Jews live there and approximately 17 per cent (one in six) of all Barnet residents are Jewish;
- in Hackney, 10 per cent of the borough's population (18,000) is Jewish;
- the London Borough of Redbridge in east London has 16,000 Jewish residents.<sup>9</sup>

### Demography

The overall demographic picture of Jews in the UK is one characterized by a declining population in

which deaths exceed births by 1,000 per year, and in which there is a net emigration to Israel and North America.

The Jewish community is relatively more aged than the general population. Some 23 per cent of British Jewry are sixty-five and over, compared with 16 per cent of the total population. Towards the other end of the age spectrum, some 41 per cent of British Jews are under thirty-five, compared with 48 per cent of the overall population of England and Wales. Because of the age distribution of the Jewish population, more than half (55 per cent) are female.<sup>10</sup>

### Socio-economic status

British Jews have above-average socio-economic status, primarily because they are a well-educated population, with a high proportion of university graduates. In fact, more than half—54 per cent of working men and 50 per cent of working women—are in professional occupations. This compares with the approximately 10 per cent of men and 8 per cent of women in the general population who have such work. In addition, among those Jews aged eighteen to sixty-four who are economically active, a further 25 per cent of men and 16 per cent of women are in managerial posts. In terms of industries, some 16 per cent of the British Jewish working population are employed in education and 10 per cent are in the medical field.<sup>11</sup>

### Notes

1 Marlena Schmool and Frances Cohen, *A Profile of British Jewry: Patterns and Trends at the Turn of the Century* (Board of Deputies of British Jews 1998).

2 *Ibid.*, p 3.

3 *Ibid.*, pp 3ff.

4 Stephen Miller, Marlena Schmool and Antony Lerman, *Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews: Some Key Findings of the JPR Survey* (London 1996).

5 *Ibid.*, p 16.

6 Stephen Miller, 'Religious practice and Jewish identity in a sample of London Jews', in Jonathan Webber (ed.), *Jewish Communities in Western Europe* (Oxford Centre 1996), pp 193–204.

7 *Ibid.*, p 199.

8 Schmool and Cohen, *A Profile of British Jewry*, pp 4ff.

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*



### 3 In What Kind of Britain Is Representation Taking Place?

#### A diverse society

The impact of economic and social change in Britain has been especially rapid since the Second World War. Ways of life and communities have been subjected to disruptive internal and external forces.

Britain has become a diverse society in terms of religion, ethnic origin, culture and lifestyles. It is a multicultural society. Ethnic, regional and other differences are increasingly presented as requiring not merely toleration but also acknowledgement, respect, resources and representation. Where once assimilation was seen as the way to achieve social cohesion, that same social cohesion is now seen as dependent on allowing people to value and maintain difference.

For the purposes of representation, the most significant changes are structural, affecting the various tiers and layers of government to which Jews have traditionally sought to make representations. The changes already under way that are affecting Britain's central political institutions promise to alter significantly the pattern of power, leading to new challenges and opportunities for representational activity.

#### Reform of the House of Lords

Hereditary peers who historically supported Jewish interests but who no longer have seats in the House of Lords have been one source of change in the representational landscape. Further reform of that chamber could alter the composition of its life-peer members, among whom are many friends of the Jewish community who speak up for Jewish concerns. Consideration must therefore be given to the consequences of these reforms for representation of the interests of the British Jews.

The Royal Commission, headed by Lord Wakeham, has proposed the appointment of representatives of faith groups other than those of the established Church to sit in a reformed second chamber.<sup>1</sup> The proposal may be regarded as the first step on the road to multiple state-sanctioned religious establishments. These changes also present the possibility of having state-appointed Jewish religious representatives who will sit in the House and speak for the Jewish community. Regarded by various sectors, including the Board of Deputies, as likely to increase tensions within British Jewry, the move is also seen as potentially leading to rivalries within and between other minority groups vying for seats

in the newly reformed chamber. Thus the implications of the House of Lords reform for the representation of Jewish interests require careful consideration.

#### Proportional representation in UK general elections

The 1998 *Report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System*, chaired by Lord Jenkins, recommended proportional representation in the UK electoral system.<sup>2</sup> Similar changes have already taken place in Scotland, in national assembly elections in Wales and Northern Ireland, and for the European Parliament. If adopted for the UK Parliament, proportional representation will change the balance of parties, forcing them to review the way in which they relate to potential and actual groups of supporters to gain parliamentary seats. Such a system could open the doors for neo-fascist and other extremist parties. At the very least, these changes would force the Jewish community to consider whether it should organize itself differently on the political level in order to safeguard its interests.

#### Devolution and regionalization

Devolved legislatures are now operating in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.\* There is also some likelihood of further levels of devolution that may provide England with an assembly and/or regional assemblies. Government offices have already been established in the designated English regions, run by civil servants and focusing on matters of economic regeneration.

The devolution of legislative and governmental authority in the UK means that the new bodies now deal with issues affecting ethnic and religious groups, such as equal opportunities and race relations. It also means that interest groups in those jurisdictions are being challenged to develop new forms and methods of local representational activity.

Some analysts believe that devolution may lead to a heightened nationalism or narrow localism in the devolved areas, including England, should it be felt that English identity is not being given its full weight in the new devolved arrangements. Others argue that devolution will release tensions which are better managed within federal frameworks and that a broader concept of citizenship will need to be developed together with pluralist attitudes.

\*Information with regard to Northern Ireland was accurate at time of going to press.

A Scottish Council of Jewish Communities has already been created to act as a coherent voice and channel to the new parliament in Edinburgh. The Glasgow Representative Council, which took the lead role in setting up the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, acknowledged that this will result in a radical change in their relationship with the Board of Deputies. Similar developments are under way in the wake of the establishment of the Welsh Assembly.

### Changes in local government

Changes in local authority boundaries and in the roles of local government are expected to create other new challenges for representational activity.

According to the Local Government Bill, as outlined in a White Paper published in March 1999 by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and disseminated in a publication called *Local Leadership, Local Choice*, the structure of local government throughout England will change.<sup>3</sup> The committee structure will be replaced by open structures chosen by municipalities and districts themselves. Through a consultation process and/or referendum, citizens will have three basic local governance models from which to choose:

- a directly elected mayor with a cabinet;
- a cabinet with a leader;
- a directly elected mayor and council manager.

The new structures are designed to 'modernize' local government throughout England by creating greater participation and accountability of elected officials and increased involvement of the business and the voluntary sectors, in addition to greater transparency and efficiency overall. While the number of councillors currently existing in a given borough or town will remain the same, the way in which various committees are set up will be subject to major change. They will no longer be made up exclusively of councillors. Instead, greater participation by the public at large will be possible, with community members being able to volunteer or asked to sit on committees. This in itself is designed to increase representation on behalf of those sectors of the community that are, as of now, most under-represented: women and ethnic/religious minorities.

### London mayor and Greater London Authority

Major change will occur in London with the forthcoming creation of the Greater London

Authority (GLA), incorporating a directly elected all-London mayor and a twenty-five-member assembly for London elected by proportional representation. The GLA will have four functioning bodies: Transport for London (TfL), the London Development Agency (LDA), the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA). There may also be departments for areas such as culture which will have special significance for minority groups. Given that the vast majority of British Jews live in London, making preparations for pursuing Jewish interests with the mayor's office and the assembly is vital. Similar changes are likely to affect Jewish communities in other metropolitan areas as well.

### Closer integration into the European Union

Over the last few decades successive governments have signed up to closer integration of Britain in Europe, thereby making the country subject to Europe-wide laws and regulations that have to be adopted for Britain, as well as laws which take precedence over domestic legislation. Even now, on a whole variety of issues, British interest groups have to take their cases to Europe to lobby commissioners and members of the European Parliament. This applies to matters such as the slaughter of animals, combating racism and the free movement of goods and people.

In the short term, the impact of the EU on the lives of people living in Britain will intensify. No group will be able to ignore decisions made by the EU and the need to make representations in Brussels and Strasbourg. A majority of Britons recognize this growing European influence. According to a recent MORI poll, 44 per cent of the population think that the European Parliament and European Union will have the most power over their lives in twenty years (compared to 22 per cent who chose Westminster).<sup>4</sup>

The power of the European Union will increase, with several likely results. First, since parties with similar outlooks from different countries tend to band together as political and voting blocs, British interests are expected to become increasingly subject to the ebb and flow of political manoeuvring, compromise, concession and manipulation. Second, the appointment of the EU commissioner with responsibility for external affairs may also result in more concerted policy-making in areas of concern to British Jews, such as the Middle East. Finally, enlargement of the EU will result in the need to be more aware of political and other

developments in countries in Central and Eastern Europe, where, even in the last few decades, the treatment of minorities has been less than exemplary. Given this constellation of factors, there is an urgent need for Jews in the UK, as the second largest Jewish community in the EU, to establish, together with other European communities, effective representation at the EU level.

### **The Human Rights Act of 1998**

The Human Rights Act incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into British law and will take effect from 2 October 2000. It may have an impact on the existing law against incitement to racial hatred and on any future legislation that may be proposed to deal with racism and antisemitism.

The Act will expand to the public realm the provisions of Convention Articles 9 and 14, which protect 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion', as well as seek to prevent their restriction. As a result, the Home Office has initiated a project exploring the possibility of introducing legislation criminalizing incitement to religious hatred and discrimination on religious grounds. Because the Human Rights Act will have direct application to both individuals and private organizations operating in the public sphere, preparation by the Jewish community for its incorporation into British law is imperative.

### **Enhanced role for voluntary organizations**

During the 1970s and 1980s, the political consensus on the welfare state began to break down. It was argued that there was a need to involve the voluntary and commercial sectors in human service provision because of the inflexibility of government bureaucracies. Broad support came from all parts of the political spectrum and a climate was created in which the voluntary sector was expected to have a much increased role in responding to human needs.

The withdrawal of the state from many areas of social and economic activity has put increased pressure on communities to provide for themselves or to develop coherent policies of partnership with new state structures. Additional movement towards privatizing those services once provided by the welfare state puts pressure on the voluntary sector to engage in the direct provision of essential welfare, educational and housing services previously funded by government agencies.

The voluntary sector has also come to be seen as a

means of strengthening civil society—groupings of like-minded people meeting needs and obligations in a 'public space' dominated by neither the state nor the market. The sector's organizational entities are seen as central to civil society and the functions which the sector appears to perform especially well are increasingly valued: building 'social capital', integrating individuals into the wider society, nurturing trusting relationships, providing opportunities for self-expression and encouraging volunteering.

Because the UK's Jewish communities have many voluntary organizations, these trends offer unique opportunities for forging creative partnerships with the voluntary sector in general and with government agencies.

### **The information revolution and the knowledge society**

The use of the Internet and the dramatic expansion of information/communication technology (ICT) pose challenges and opportunities for dispersed transnational communities. These developments create multiple opportunities for British Jewish communities to share knowledge and interact, both with each other and within the Jewish world.

- On the one hand, the new technology has transformed the way members of groups and communities can communicate with each other; how they make knowledge about their culture or religion available to members of the group (and others) and even how they maintain a sense of community. On the other, extremists and antisemites are using the Internet to disseminate their ideas and to facilitate violent acts. Thus the same malleability of the Net which makes it a creative medium for transnational groups can be turned to potentially harmful purposes which are difficult to control. If the British government has no power to act in this area because offensive web-sites may be located in other countries, it raises the question of how interest groups can monitor, respond and make representations on the problem. In addition, as the Internet has increasingly become a means through which representations are made generally, the Jewish community will need to weigh the implication of this development for the representation of its own interests.

In terms of information dissemination, education and public awareness, it is clear from the way that Jewish groups, organizations and individuals have

already embraced the Internet that many are keenly aware of its potential.

#### Notes

1 *A House for the Future*, Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords, Lord Wakeham, January 2000.

2 *Report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System*, The Rt. Hon. Lord Jenkins of

Hillhead, OM, chairman, October 1998.

3 *Local Leadership, Local Choice*, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, John Prescott, 25 March 1999. See also *The Shape of Things to Come? The Initial Organization of the Greater London Authority: A Consultation Paper*, August 1999.

4 *The Economist*, 6 November 1999, pp 1–18.

## 4 The Current Pattern of Representation

### Constructing the map

In order to understand the current pattern of representation and how the interests and concerns of the community are represented today, we identified those organizations that carry out representation, together with their main 'target' audiences. This information was produced in diagrammatic form, as shown overleaf. We also sought and received confirmation from the organizations themselves as to whether our understanding of what they do matches their own definition. (The list of organizations, their aims and objectives, and the areas of interest that they cover can also be found in Appendix 1.) We have endeavoured to be as comprehensive as possible but may have inadvertently omitted organizations who regard themselves as being involved in representation.

### Explaining the map

The discussion in this section takes as its starting point the diagram of organizational representation. It illustrates in stark relief a multi-faceted, diverse and complex pattern of representational activity.

The diagram includes organizations which qualify as being involved in representation according to our two previous definitions (see p 12) in one of the two senses: those which take on an advocacy or pressure-group role and aim specifically to represent Jewish interests via direct lobbying of some kind; and those which represent Jewish interests by aiming to inform, educate, influence opinion or simply maintain a presence in the public space.

On the perimeter of the circle are the targets of representation, the 'consumers'. The general targets—government, local authorities, the mass media, international organizations, foreign governments—are placed on the top half of the perimeter. The Jewish targets—Israel (political, Israel–Diaspora relations, philanthropic), international Jewish organizations, European Jewish organizations, other Diaspora communities—are placed on the bottom half of the perimeter. Some of these Jewish targets of representation are bodies through which British Jewish interests are brought together with the interests of other national communities and of Israel, and which then represent Jewish interests to certain organizations. For example, the Board of Deputies is the British constituent of the World Jewish Congress, which

acts in the name of its affiliated Jewish communities world-wide. Some of these international or European Jewish organizations seek to lobby or influence the British government.

The organizations involved in representation are listed next to their target audiences. Provincial representative councils also have multiple targets, but on the local level. Organizations with more than one target are listed again under that target. Some organizations appear on only one list; others appear on many lists. The Board of Deputies and the Chief Rabbinate appear on many lists, reflecting the role that they seek to play in representing Jewish interests.

Some organizations are not Jewish organizations as such, but play a very important role working for Jewish interests. For instance, the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel groups and the Council of Christians and Jews.

Representation can range from the very formal—the Board of Deputies and the Chief Rabbinate—to the very informal, as a by-product of other activities—cultural festivals, educational outreach, museums. This by-product representation, which operates in what we might broadly call the 'public space', is clustered separately.

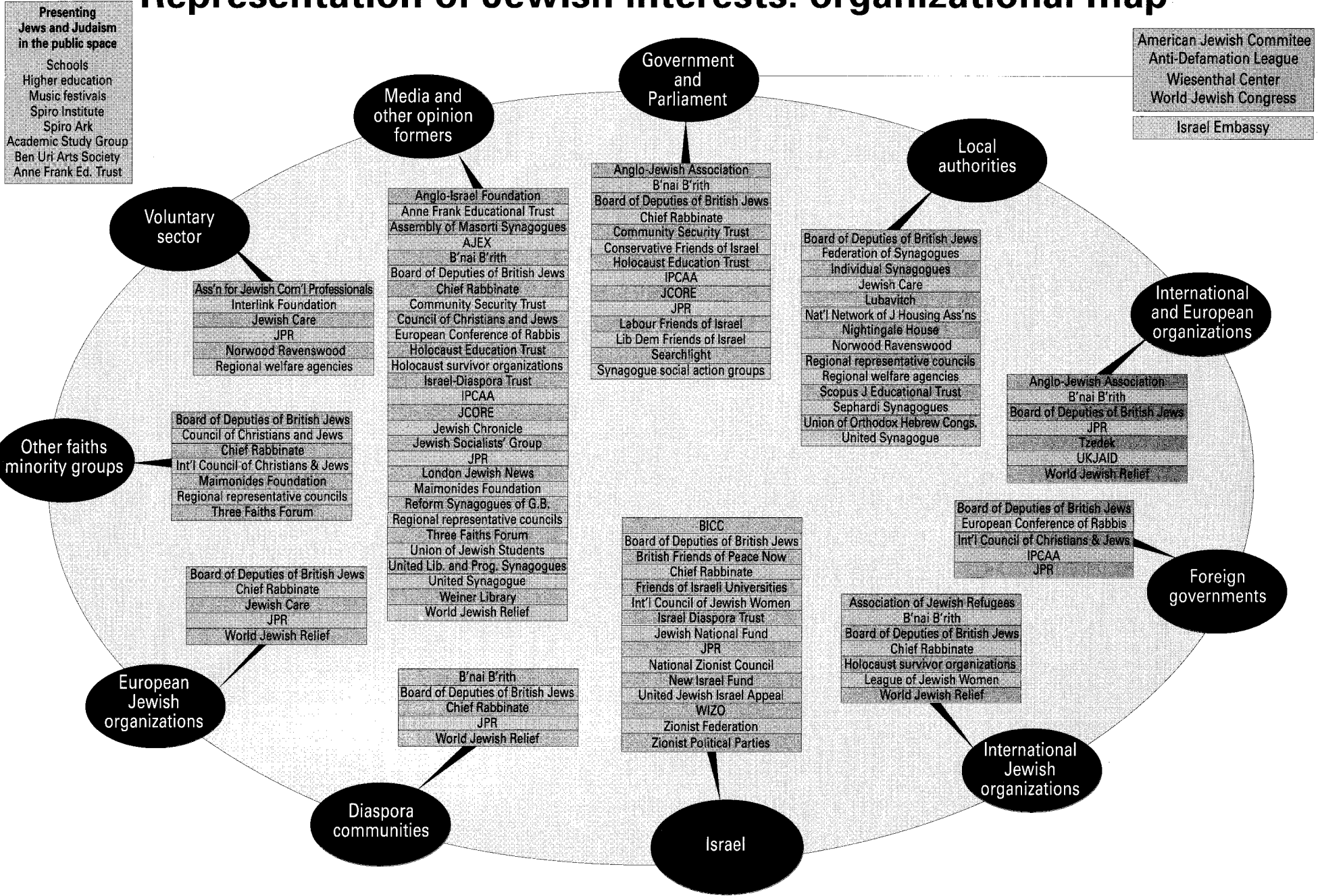
In addition, placed outside of the ellipse are three American Jewish organizations which, from time to time, seek to present Jewish interests to government and the mass media in Britain: the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee and the Simon Wiesenthal Center. When these bodies decide to take such action it is usually on matters relating to antisemitism, Israel or international terrorism.

The flow of information is not always one way, *from* Jewish source *to* external target. Some of the bodies are consulted by the target audiences for their views on the interests of the Jewish community in relation to specific subjects. The general media seek out a range of Jews who are asked (sometimes openly, sometimes by implication) to speak on behalf of Jews in Britain.

### Board of Deputies of British Jews

The Board's origins date back to 1760; the current name dates from 1913. A description based on documentation provided by the current Board can be found in Appendix 1. A short information leaflet published by the Board states: 'The Board of Deputies protects, supports and defends the

# Representation of Jewish interests: organizational map



interests, religious rights and customs of Jews and the Jewish community in the United Kingdom and promotes the development of the British Jewish community.'

In the eyes of many (both inside and outside of the Jewish community), the Board is seen as the principal (or even by some as the only) organization undertaking representative functions in respect of the British Jewish community. The present pattern of representation is far more complex and multi-faceted, involving many organizations in addition to the Board. Significantly, several of these carry out their own representative activities 'as principals' while at the same time being represented by deputies on the Board.

### Observations

Formal representational bodies are not alone in addressing their targets. Around each target is clustered a group of organizations seeking to make their voices heard, not necessarily in conflict with the central representative bodies. One of their great strengths is their ability to specialize and call upon a certain depth of expertise in their chosen field. Many specialized organizations are not required to consult democratically with all of their members, if they have any. Some membership organizations do not necessarily have to consult their members before taking action.

A significant number of the key organizations presenting Jewish interests to the wider society are either new or reformed versions of older bodies. The Board of Deputies, the Community Security Trust, the UJIA (formerly JIA plus Jewish Continuity), Jewish Care, JCORE, JPR, WJR and the Wiener Library—all have restructured, relaunched or changed direction in recent years. New organizations include the Maimonides Foundation, the Three Faiths Forum, the Association for Jewish Communal Professionals, the Anne Frank Educational Trust, the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Inter-Parliamentary Council Against Antisemitism, Scopus, Tzedek and UKJAID. Naturally, this process has had a significant impact on the older umbrella organizations like the Board of Deputies, since their voices have to compete with those of others.

In addition, many of the key new or reformed bodies do not have memberships or constituencies to speak of. Some organizations speak directly to government ministers and senior civil servants and are in turn sought out by them. As entirely private

bodies with independent charitable status, they require no democratically granted mandate.

The situation was summed up by Israel Finestein in his analysis of the evolving governance of Anglo-Jewry.<sup>1</sup> He saw the current pattern of Jewish organizations, which can be viewed as a dramatic dilution of what was previously regarded as a central, exclusive representative role played by the Board of Deputies, as being a function of the increasing exercise of influence:

There is now a series of standing *de facto* power structures, each with its own sphere of authority, public recognition and specialization...The whole process is marked by enhanced professionalism in high-profile specialized areas of communal life, where major private funding and fund-raising are engaged in by the respective independent initiators. In such enterprises, 'parliamentary' procedures and the elected representative character of the Board are not at a premium.<sup>2</sup>

Our research has also shown that there are no legal rights or constraints external to the constitutions of the Board of Deputies and the United Synagogue which define, mandate or restrict the scope of the general representative activity of the Board of Deputies or the Chief Rabbinate (whether exclusive or otherwise). In essence then, similar to other organizations, they are free to define their own roles at any point in time in the sense of determining their own aspirations, objectives and method of operation for their own internal domestic purposes.

The proliferation of other Jewish representative organizations, the relative ascendance of some of them, the individual representative structures that they have developed, and the spheres of influence and authority that they have established are, therefore, not in any sense contraventions of, or in conflict with, any legally sanctioned status quo. These realities underlie much of the evidence which we received in our consultation exercise, to which detailed reference is made in Section 5.

The most prominent organization undertaking its own representative functions is Jewish Care, the largest body responsible for the welfare services of the community. Jewish Care deals with society at large without any intermediary.

The central organizations concerned with British Jewry's relationship with Israel occupy a similar position. While the UJIA does not seek or appear to need a representational role, organizations

clustered around it have effectively constituted a pro-Israel lobby and have mobilized for this purpose. Apart from the UJIA, there are other organizations which seek to influence the Israeli government and Israeli society in various ways, or which direct their attention to the British government or non-British political institutions such as the United Nations. Ad hoc British Jewish communal involvement with the Centre Européen Juif d'Information in Brussels is intended partly to raise matters relating to Israel in the EU.

### Additional layers of representation

While most of the main bodies referred to so far can claim to speak for sizeable constituencies within the community, there are also numerous independent, specialist and single-issue bodies which are routinely approached for their views by the wider society. Many cooperate with the more formal representational institutions, but some do not. All have grown in importance in the last ten to fifteen years.

Finally, beyond the organizational field there exists a range of individuals—many of whom do not hold formal positions with any Jewish organization—who seek to represent Jewish interests either privately or in ad hoc association with other groups or organizations. This range includes members of both Houses of Parliament, businessmen, leading academics, clergy, the media and show-business personalities. By its very nature, such informal representational activity is impossible to map precisely, even as it is important to note in any description of Jewish representational activity in Britain.

### Europe

One target area which appears to attract relatively little attention is Europe, even as the decision-making processes in the European Union for Jewish communities continue to grow in significance. In

this context it should be noted that the Board of Deputies is affiliated to the European Jewish Congress (EJC), which represents its affiliated national Jewish communities' political interests in Europe, although the EJC has no formal presence in Brussels.

### The societal context

The organizational map illustrates a cross-section of communal representation. It does not, however, show how things have changed. For example, the organizations that exist today have emerged through a process of accretion and addition. New issues have come to the fore, frequently spawning representational efforts. Yet, judging by the range of organizations that currently exists, few issues seem to be deleted from the communal agenda. It is easier to create new organizations than to dismantle old ones which may no longer have a purpose.

One analysis that was offered to us views this structure as part of a living social dynamic; it reflects developments in society generally and is not peculiar to the Jewish community. Life is becoming more specialized, more compartmentalized. The individual can no longer obtain all the information needed to pursue a career, care for family and manage personal finances from a single source. The increasing specialization in representation reflects this social reality—it is a response to the increasing complexity of Jewish life which is lived in an increasingly complex society.

### Notes

1 Israel Finestein, 'A community of paradox: office, authority and ideas in the changing governance of Anglo-Jewry', in S. Ilan Troen (ed.), *Jewish Centers and Peripheries: Europe between America and Israel 50 Years after World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1999), p 277.

2 Ibid.



## 5 Gathering Ideas: The Consultation Exercise

### The method of consultation

The extensive and comprehensive consultation exercise outlined in Section 1 produced a large quantity of evidence, which we have carefully examined and considered. Its purpose was to enable as wide a spectrum as possible of British Jewry to express their views on the subject of representation. We trawled for concepts, responses and reactions. We sought a range of perspectives and perceptions, together with the opinions of individuals and organizations whose particular experience, expertise and ideas we believed would help contribute to our endeavour.

Questionnaire respondents, participants at town meetings and interviewees had a great deal to say about the current situation. Some were fiercely protective of existing institutions; others were highly critical of them. Yet throughout this phase of our investigation, we discerned certain recurring questions, themes and concerns, which served as guides for our further inquiries. We listened to ideas for the reform of the existing representational structures—ideas that touched on the concepts of leadership, consultation, professionalism, networking and coordination, reaching the unaffiliated, internal, informal and religious representation, representation abroad and internal Jewish divisions.

### A deliberative process

During more than eighteen months' existence, the Commission gained unprecedented entry into virtually every sector of the community—across the range of religious, ideological, specialist and regional bodies. In the course of our deliberations, we discovered two things. First, the contentiousness we often heard about in the public sphere was conspicuously absent from the consultative process in which we engaged within the community. With few exceptions, interviews and discussions were held in a constructive atmosphere. Interviewees and participants conducted themselves with dignity, *derech eretz* (respect) and a willingness to engage in dialogue in order to achieve communal ends. Our observations are all the more noteworthy because the parties we spoke to had next to no particular knowledge of the conduct of the other individuals and organizations with whom the Commission interacted during its inquiry.

Second, even as participants in town meetings or respondents to the questionnaires openly voiced

their strongly held opinions and expressed their extensive and occasionally biting critiques of the current state of representation, we detected a collective willingness and an overarching desire—sometimes with detailed solutions—to remedy communal ills and to do a better job of having our separate and collective interests addressed. Thus the Commission's work was conducted in a positive and optimistic framework.

### The key questions

#### 1 Multiple layers of representation: needless duplication or strength through diversity?

The explanation and analysis in Section 4 revealed the complex, multi-layered structure of communal representation, with many organizations and individuals pursuing the same or similar targets.

Most of those who attended the Commission's town meetings affirmed that Jews present their concerns to different bodies for different purposes and in different ways. The need for representation, they said, frequently originates with a wider society seeking 'a' or 'the' Jewish view. In this connection it was recognized that representation is not restricted to direct lobbying on certain issues or raising particular concerns with national and local institutions. Schools, Jewish radio, Jewish cinema, museums, exhibitions and Jewish periodicals all play different roles in representing Jews and Judaism to a wider society that many feel is increasingly receptive to things Jewish.

Those who answered the questionnaires on behalf of organizations noted how diverse the British Jewish community has become. They also observed that this diversity is not reflected in current representational arrangements. Wider representation is necessary, they said, to meet the growing needs of a changing British Jewry.

Individual respondents tended to accept the idea that different groups conduct their own representation, reasoning that any person or entity that purports to speak on all of British Jewry's behalf will only be able to speak, at best, for a majority. Many say that representation should be conducted by a whole range of individuals and special organizations, and not just by one body. They should be 'bridge-building', coordinate with others, conform to high professional standards, be clear about whom they are representing, be accountable and judged by their effectiveness.

A picture of diversified representation was further

confirmed in comments from representatives of organizations actually involved in representation, many of whom accepted the growing trend towards specialization by organizations such as Jewish Care, the Union of Jewish Students, the Community Security Trust (CST) and the Haredi or strictly Orthodox community. This multi-faceted portrait was seen as reflecting the growing trend towards single-interest-group politics in British society and the wider world. ‘Separate specialist organizations arise in order to meet the needs that an unwieldy central body cannot meet’ was a typical comment.

Many see the wide mix of representation as a positive development. As one prominent businessman put it: ‘[Representation] is all being done effectively on the local level or by people coming together in ad hoc ways. Small is good. You get people to chip in if they can identify with what you’re doing. Duplication? Mao said: “Let a thousand flowers bloom.” The market forces say those who are weak will fail.’ And another head of a charity concerned with Israel said: ‘The issue is not how many representative organizations exist, but if the overall job of representation is done well.’

## 2 Should there be one or many voices?

We noted with interest the number of times the following argument was articulated: ‘There are simply too many voices in the Jewish community to create anything resembling uniformity.’ Others feel that because Jews are not a homogeneous ethnic group, there is no need for one institution to speak on their behalf.

Despite the obvious drawbacks, such views are often held side by side with a desire for some kind of collective lobbying. ‘I think it would be wonderful to have one voice representing the community, but I think it is unobtainable because of developments in the community over the last fifty years,’ said one organizational head.

Others maintained that there was no need for centralized representation as long as British Jews can come together on an issue-by-issue basis—a *modus operandi* particularly suited to work at the regional and local level. One community activist clearly articulated this idea as an expression of the general principle of subsidiarity: ‘There isn’t any need for central representation, because it is all being done effectively on the local level or by people coming together in ad hoc ways. You organize yourselves under common interests and specific issues, forming common policies on government, on health care, on government aid

and the like.’

One local government official went so far as to advise: ‘Resist the temptation to shoehorn the representation of your concerns into a single body. Jews have a variety of interests. There should be a plurality of influential bodies that can legitimately speak to the interests of the community. I would prefer to see a consensual coordinating body. The reason is simple. Jews share a variety of interests... There should be a plurality of influential bodies that can legitimately speak to the interests of the community.’

Experts from outside the Jewish community put this situation in perspective. One senior figure in a race relations body said: ‘The more diversity you have, the harder it becomes for any group to represent their community’s interests.’

A race relations academic who has looked at the way communities organize themselves told us: ‘There are...tensions around who represents which community and who should represent particular communities.’ Explaining this further, he said: ‘[within] particular communities there are political institutions or community institutions that have developed over the years that can usually be seen as playing some kind of role. But I think the question is not to see those organizations as representing the whole community. They represent a particular interest, and particular ideas that have come about over a period of time.’ Nor, he said, does this situation put an ethnic or religious community at a disadvantage: ‘I would tend towards the view that it’s not easy to make sure that there is just one voice for a particular community. There are bound to be different voices and different organizations. It doesn’t mean that communities are unable to exercise any influence on politics—particularly if they have sufficient forms of political organizations within political parties.’

A leading official in one of the major political parties put a particularly positive gloss on the existence of a variety of Jewish representation: ‘If an interesting idea comes out of a Jewish organization, it will simply mean that people will be more ready to look to Jewish organizations in general for good ideas. It’s understandable being protective of funds, but otherwise competition is a good thing...It isn’t like competitive businesses. We should celebrate the success of Jewish organizations.’

The demands of the times in which we live loomed large in arguments we heard in favour of diverse

representation. An interviewee involved in Jewish defence matters said: 'There needs to be representation by different organizations on different issues. It would be unhealthy for the community to have itself represented by one body on all issues.' A representative of a membership organization with links abroad argued: 'There can be a collective voice on core issues, but then there need to be many organizations which specialize.' An interviewee from the Jewish media said: 'Competition is a healthy thing. [We] would like to see openness, accountability and maximum transparency.' Finally, from still another perspective, we were told: 'In the culture field, as elsewhere, we don't need rigid or static structures; we must allow for new organizations.'

When reservations about diverse representation were expressed they often echoed the view expressed by one interviewee active in the area of informal education: 'There should be different voices for different areas, but if there are too many voices on one topic this could be detrimental.' However, those who commented on this question from the point of view of how this diversity is seen from the outside saw no dangers.

An interfaith professional was unequivocal about special-interest representation: 'I see no danger in the Jewish community presenting different voices to the outside world. It is important for the outside world to acknowledge the plurality within faiths.' A journalist on a broadsheet newspaper told us: 'I'd always try to consult a variety of sources. Not just the Chief Rabbi or the Board of Deputies. But sometimes it can be difficult.' A former Home Office official turned academic also saw some difficulty: 'Where a fragmented community has to be consulted by government, by the Home Office, it is a problem both for the community and for the department.' But he informed us that 'open consultation' has become increasingly the norm.

#### *Religious representation*

The difficulties associated with religious representation were frequently voiced. One professional head of a religious institution said: 'It is neither desirable nor possible to have one religious voice. There needs to be a reconstituted, non-ecclesiastical Board of Deputies which should act in politically astute manner—even on religious—issues to support other parts of the community.'

The strictly Orthodox groups were satisfied with diverse representation. One official told us: 'We don't need the Board of Deputies to have our voice

more legitimately or effectively heard. When we need to, we can have the ear of the government without any intermediary.' A leading activist involved in local government said: 'I can tell you, as principal officer and head of the external affairs committee [of our organization], we have contact with the government and with other Jewish organizations, and, where appropriate, with organizations beyond the Jewish community.' And a prominent mainstream Orthodox religious leader well respected by the Haredi community summed the situation up this way: 'I don't think you can have one single, unitarian, formal organization to cover the entire scope of communal interests. We have now a diverse community, with diverse organizational interests, with different social and religious outlooks.'

We noted the weight of the argument that sees great value in the diversity of voices, notwithstanding the fact that it can sometimes cause problems. Hardly anyone expressed this view without also arguing for substantial reform of some kind.

Representatives of the Board of Deputies, on the other hand, argued that there is a desire for 'a representative body, a single address, with which to communicate [with government ministers and officials] and which they know will provide a comprehensive response on behalf of the community'.

Others also defended, sometimes fiercely, the status quo. A prominent mainstream Orthodox religious leader said: 'I must say that when it comes to the defence of Jewish interests, I think [the Board of Deputies] is a remarkably time-weathered and impressive organization which does its work very well. It accounts for the fact that the Jewish community has influence far beyond its numbers.' This view was echoed by a senior community figure involved in representation for many years: 'Rich, poor, clever, not clever—it is the voice of the community. Therefore it has to be sustained, supported and helped irrespective of who is running it.' And yet, he said: 'They cut their own funding, they cut their own voice, they cut their own power. They've almost become marginalized.'

Critiques and recommendations abounded. Many organizational respondents suggested that a central representative body must be 'more broadly representative', 'more accountable', 'truly consultative', 'better financed', 'more professional' or 'democratically run'.

Still others maintained that no central representative body was needed. They argued that Jewish interests can be equally well served by ‘any intelligent person with a sense of history, well briefed and having good PR skills’, or that issues can be handled on an ‘interest-by-interest, organization-by-organization basis’.

### 3 Do the Jewish media have a role in representation?

Many segments of the community were concerned about the place and role of the Jewish media in representation, an opinion that was often linked to calls for greater diversity and more of a free-market approach to the dissemination of Jewish views and information.

In general, respondents acknowledged that the Jewish media play a significant part in representing a comprehensive range of Jewish affairs to the wider world. They are also seen as providing a forum for discussion and an explanation of issues that are or need to be pursued with bodies inside and outside the Jewish community. This was confirmed by journalists from the national media, one of whom told us: ‘Of all the Jewish organizations the *Jewish Chronicle* is by far the most prolific, in PR terms. Every Thursday I’m faxed a copy of the front page, with the main stories of the week.’

For these reasons, a wide range of individuals and organizations in the community, while fiercely advocating the principle of a free press, nevertheless believe that the Jewish media should address their representational role. Given their ability to bring the concerns of British Jewry to the wider world, many feel that the Jewish media should be as informed about what representation involves—and means—as the Jewish lay leaders, professionals and individuals who carry it out on a formal basis.

### 4 What is the place of informal representation?

Some respondents were critical of individuals who, by virtue of their personal connections, wealth and establishment position, can represent Jewish interests privately. Criticism was often indirect, as in this comment from a leading figure in one of the religious organizations: ‘When it comes to collective representation we are not good. It is not healthy that the philanthropic organizations and their leaders also try to represent the community politically. There should be representation for the entire community. Two approaches to [representing the] community are not enough—money and synagogue affiliation.’

On the positive side, one professional working on Holocaust issues said: ‘We should find ways of bringing the influential individuals into the mainstream by speaking to them. They are doing a valuable job.’

Some argued that the community simply did not make enough use of people in positions of influence, or that ‘more could be done with people who do have the ear of people in power’. A similar view was put by a leading local authority figure: ‘The Jewish community and Jewish organizations don’t make effective or wise use of Jews in public authority.’ And another professional who works with politicians said: ‘The community shouldn’t lose sight of the importance of individuals of influence and access. The leadership of [my political party] expects me to be able to give them views on anything—from Islamic fundamentalism to *shechita*. In this sense I am representing Jewish interests to my own party.’

### 5 How is Jewish representation received by its target audiences?

#### *A multi-faceted community*

Those who are outside the Jewish community but work with it, as well as those who are the targets of representation, also point to the plurality of representational structures. One professional involved in interfaith work said: ‘I would consult with a whole range of people in the Jewish community, depending on the issue. The Board would not be my first port of call necessarily.’ The BBC told us: ‘Notwithstanding the BBC’s regard for the Chief Rabbi, it does not restrict itself to quoting one or two mainstream sources on a given issue. It attempts to ensure that there are appropriate Jewish perspectives on relevant stories. We seek a cross-sampling of references, what we call a “portrayal”, to give a mix of views and perspectives and to make sure that what we put on the airwaves gives an accurate picture of what is going on.’

#### *A religious or ethnic group?*

Central government is also aware of the Jewish community’s diversity and multi-dimensionality. One government department told us: ‘The simple truth is that from our point of view, to distinguish Jews as an ethnic group from Jews as a religious group just doesn’t make sense. We will deal with Jewish organizations on whatever issue you want to raise—in other words, on your terms. Our response will be determined on how you regard a matter, whether as a religious issue or as an ethnic one.’ The Home Office, for example, said they hear Jewish views through a number of channels,

including the Interfaith Network, the Race Relations Board, the Board of Deputies and a wide spectrum of voices from the religious and organizational community. This approach was adopted for such issues as the recent proposed Holocaust Remembrance Day and the exploration of attitudes towards legislation against religious discrimination and incitement to religious hatred in the UK.

‘On the religious front,’ said one government official, ‘we know that if you deal with the Chief Rabbi, you must consult with the Reform and Liberals as well. We are sensitive to that. We also recognize that there isn’t one definitive authoritative voice in these matters.’

#### 6 When is collective representation necessary?

One representative of a membership organization with links abroad characterized the issue this way: ‘On core issues there can be a collective voice. But then there need to be many organizations which specialize.’

When, then, is collective representation warranted? One magazine editor elaborated: ‘The only issues which require formal representation are security and antisemitism. On most other issues it would be an illusion to expect a unified voice *vis-à-vis* the media. The media are sophisticated enough to seek views from all sides of a debate.’

Arguments were also advanced for the need to have one communal view on certain matters. A leading figure in the welfare field said: ‘There are times when a collective response to government white papers—something approximating to a “central Jewish view”—may be called for, as the experience with the 1998 Royal Commission on Long-Term Care for the Elderly demonstrated.’ Another communal professional told us that the community needs one voice on issues of security.

Even sectors of the community that tend to rely on their own channels of representation took a practical approach to collective representation. ‘Do I feel that I need to have an organization represent me?’ asked one Haredi activist who deals with the government on a regular basis. ‘No. But on the other hand, we do need some kind of basis so Jewish organizations can come together. The community is so polarized now. If it is the Board of Deputies that can bring us together on certain issues, that’s fine. I’m totally pragmatic and unfussy.’

What people appeared to want, therefore, on certain critical issues at least, is a central *view*, not

necessarily a *central unitary body*. Moreover, as it became clear, in this connection there was widespread dissatisfaction with current arrangements. Very few people thought that present central structures matched up to their views of how representation should ideally be conducted.

#### 7 Is there a need for more leadership?

The recruitment of leaders was widely considered a key weakness that needs to be remedied if the Jewish community is to keep up with the changing world of representational needs. Some argued that better leaders could be found by introducing more democratic means into the ‘leadership election’ process. They were also concerned by the narrow demographic profile of the current leadership: largely older, male and wealthy.

Many people advocated lay leaders, professionals and policy heads who are elected to represent the collective interests of British Jewry. However, many considered that credibility, not the process of selection, was the issue.

That point was made by another interviewee in relation to the wider society: ‘The person [most non-Jews] accept who represents Judaism will be the person who is seen as doing that—not necessarily the person occupying a formal position. If an organization has at its head a strong, identifiable, media-friendly, articulate leader—someone who is there for a reasonable period of time, able to command respect among other Jews and able to talk confidently to other leaders and have a media profile—it will be taken very seriously.’

#### The impetus for reform: ten suggested approaches and solutions

In examining the issue of representation and through our consultation with professionals, lay leaders, community heads, political activists, professionals in the wider voluntary sector and various levels of government, an overriding theme began to emerge. There is a feeling of nagging concern for the future. To be sure, that concern cannot be portrayed as a fear of imminent loss of the hard-earned gains that have been won over the centuries, or as escalating concern for security or even for the gradual erosion of privileges as a religious minority. Nevertheless, there was a particular uncertainty born out of an awareness of the rapid pace of change taking place in the shape of society and the structure of government, with few clues as to the new reality that may emerge. The result is a growing realization that the means of

representation regarded as effective today may not be adequate in the near future.

We also observed that while people were quick to express their concerns and their sometimes extensive criticisms of existing representative structures, they were less willing, initially, to suggest means, processes, structures and strategies which might be employed to explore solutions for the future. What the following portion of the evidence section of our report seeks to do, therefore, is to reflect some of the concerns we heard, along with some of the solutions that were offered—information that helped inform our own deliberations.

### **1 More and better consultation**

We frequently heard from organizations that central representative bodies should more adequately consult, particularly on educational and religious issues. The most frequent call was for gathering ‘more cross-cultural, political and religious views’. Organizations in the regions expressed their dissatisfaction with the London-centred nature of decision-making and consultation.

As an antidote, some respondents generally recommended ‘more democracy’ without entering into specifics. One historian we interviewed explained: ‘The democratic deficit in the Jewish communities of the British Isles is so great, there can be little surprise that Jews display apathy towards communal issues and generally feel excluded and demoralized.’ Yet a leading figure in the wider voluntary sector cautioned that clear lines of accountability are ultimately more important than the method of decision-making: ‘It isn’t the structure, but the governance that makes a difference—who you consult with, on what issues and how often. There is an art to building consensus—through meetings, e-mail, telephone—and you have to be seen to be doing that. The extent to which you are considered representative,’ he emphasized, ‘is the extent to which you have consulted well.’

### **2 More networking and coordination**

More extensive networking and coordination of representation were also held up as desirable. As one interviewer involved in Holocaust remembrance put it: ‘In today’s world we need quick reactions and decisions. The way forward is for closer cooperation between organizations.’ A Jewish magazine editor told us: ‘We are not looking for an efficient system of government. We are looking for a degree of coordination, which may

be important at the European level when competing for funds. In fact, we need a structure to facilitate coordination, where desirable, on specific issues...Specialist groups/institutions should act on the basis of their knowledge and by forming alliances with other bodies on specific concerns which they share.’

On the networking theme, another communal professional explained: ‘Representation is about creating a web of communications.’ Similarly, the head of a Haredi welfare body told us: ‘We do a lot of networking. We joined a consortium, with five other housing associations, including an Irish one and an African one, covering all of London...You can’t live in a tunnel.’

Another strictly Orthodox communal professional seemed to confirm a readiness to join with others to achieve common goals: ‘You have to work with other people. And you have to be seen doing it. You’re living in England, after all, and you’re taking the taxpayers’ money. We are part of the larger community.’

Some respondents addressed coordination in the overall context of representation. One Progressive rabbi wrote: ‘The representational structure of the community—and no less the mentality which has both produced it and been nurtured by it—has been anachronistic, anomalous and inadequate throughout all of the past fifty years or more, and has become increasingly so. What I find sadly lacking are communal self-understanding and self-respect, especially the pretence that we are a monolithic rather than a pluralist community, and that we must above all things present a united front to the outside world. We urgently need a structure which honestly reflects the diversified nature of our community. However, the emphasis should be not only on representing the interests of the community—which is essentially a defensive concept—but also on making a positive and constructive Jewish contribution to British society.’

### **3 More professionalism and strategic planning**

Many respondents and interviewees expressed a demand for a more professional approach to representation. Good representation was felt to be not so much about who or what you claim to represent, but how you elect to carry it out. As a former MP put it: ‘The power of [the Jewish community’s] lobby comes from whether we know what we are talking about—knowledge and effectiveness. If that happens then we are listened to.’

The head of an Israel charity stressed the importance of professional planning: 'We have learned from experience the power of a good piece of planning—one that is put forward with strong local support, with prestige-fronting and in a way that meets capital or revenue demands—all of which can be turned into national leverage. The more coherent and comprehensive our plan is, the more favourably it will be looked on by the various governing agencies.' He added that while individual initiatives, or 'entrepreneurship', is to be welcomed, it is not enough: 'It might be necessary to have something like a planning unit which would sit opposite the [appropriate government] department. You will maximize your leverage more systematically and efficiently if you make sure it operates through carefully understood and coherent channels.'

Haredi groups which conduct their own representation told us of a similar need for a professional approach. To illustrate this point, one interviewee who had recently returned from a meeting of the European Conference of Rabbis, cited seminars covering computer and management skills, communications, public relations, negotiation, community and educational development (including how to deal with local authorities). Another London-based Haredi leader explained it this way: 'We're all professionals, we memo each other on a regular basis and we meet on an issue-by-issue, as-needs basis.'

One lobbyist described a need for professional advocacy, what he called 'strategic, policy-directed public relations: making the best possible case for a given position to the individuals who are closest to the shaping of policy and/or lawmaking—and doing so at the right echelons at the right time'. Such components might include, he said, monitoring and intelligence gathering as well as focusing on parliamentary procedure. There are pieces of legislation, he suggested, both in the EU and at Westminster, like the Human Rights Act, the Asylum Act and the Holocaust Remembrance Day proposal, that are entirely legitimate for the Jewish community to be involved in. 'On these and many other issues we have information to offer, points to make, and experiences to add—all of which are in our best self-interest,' he said. Moreover: 'There is a real need for doing a policy audit on a regular basis—to see what bills are coming out, what issues have cropped up the last time around, and to uncover new directives, such as on *shechita*, antisemitism or Israel.' In so doing, he said, you create 'a kind of early warning system, so you can

more effectively formulate a response or pre-empt another response'.

#### 4 More representation of the 'unaffiliated'

Some respondents felt that those who do not belong to a Jewish group or organization have no right to complain about the outcome of a process from which they have opted out. Many felt ways should be found to somehow represent the interests of the entire Jewish community—affiliated and unaffiliated. This position was bolstered by a number of individuals who feel that the unaffiliated are excluded from the community on financial grounds.

While most organizations acknowledge the challenge of canvassing the views of this segment of the community, some concrete suggestions were tracking opinions in letters to the editor of Jewish publications, polling at events which attract people outside the traditional affiliation mainstream, using the Internet. Other suggestions included allocating places for individuals on the representative bodies, holding regular public meetings of such bodies and establishing a Jewish Community Relations Council, which would include the unaffiliated.

#### 5 Accounting for informal representation

Many interviewees believe informal representation has its advantages as well as disadvantages. On the positive side, it can add value to representation through the activity of individuals who might not otherwise be in a position to act formally on behalf of the community but in fact are in a position to do so and to have their voices heard. It is also important at a time when more formal channels of representation are achieving little. On the negative side, the influence of private individuals may undermine communal consensus, or give the impression that leadership in the Jewish community is purely a matter of wealth, status and access.

It is also widely held that individuals who work privately and in an ad hoc fashion representing the interests of the community clearly form an important part of the representational structure.

Moreover, many organizational leaders believe that it would benefit the entire community if those who conduct informal representation were part of an ongoing dialogue with the organizations officially undertaking this work. This would not limit anyone but would rather ensure that they request briefings and are better informed about what representation on major issues is already taking place, thereby avoiding duplication.

Furthermore, it was suggested that a more effective, reformed structure would make it possible for a dialogue to develop between the organizations and the individuals involved in such informal representation because the general image and the culture of *formal* representation will improve.

Finally, it was posited that those who are involved in this activity and continue to represent Jewish interests informally should be encouraged to receive some kind of leadership development in order to inform themselves as to the agreed priorities of the community and the agreed policies where they exist.

## 6 More attention to new layers of representation

### *Local and regional tiers*

A top official emphasized a growing need for a new expertise in identifying new targets of representation: 'The present Jewish communal leadership does not comprehend the processes that exist between the layers of government—from the planning process all the way down to the details of how legislation works. This is even more important when you look at the restructuring that is going to take place on the local, regional and London levels in the coming months.' An additional issue to be faced, said the official, is that 'locally and in the South-East and London area, there is no mechanism available on the borough or county level to represent the Jewish community or to make the needs of Jewish communities felt. There is no coherent way for Jews to communicate with their local authorities.'

### *Europe*

Many see positive challenges for British Jews arising from developments within the European Union, especially in connection with other Jewish communities in Europe. 'What we have to do is start looking at the overall picture instead of what appear to be these piecemeal efforts designed to benefit one party or the other', said one organizational leader active in Europe. 'The question is, how do you rebuild Europe? What will have a long-term effect on Jewish life? What takes priority, the renovation of cemeteries or the building of Jewish schools?' He added: 'The Jewish community in UK has always played a major civic role. We have leading members in the House of Lords, in Parliament—more so than any other European community. For these and other reasons we are well placed to take a lead in the new Europe. Unfortunately, the Jewish lay leaders in this country

have not quite woken up to this reality. They are at heart very British and tend to take on all the attributes that go hand in hand with living on an island. The feeling of responsibility for Europe has never quite sunk in.'

Others, however, see the need for paying attention to Europe because it is a source of potential problems for Jews. As one prominent businessman told us: 'Once you enter into the European market you have a democratically deficient process, where it will be much harder to have our voices heard or where other voices are antagonistic to us. The danger with Europe is this: what if the Jewish voice dissipates and in ten years is replaced by voices that are not sympathetic to our pleadings? Interests that are dominated by environmental concerns, welfare rights, ecological rights. Jewish interests will be seen as subversive or at least unsympathetic to these larger universalistic trends. About *shechita* they will say: "You shouldn't be killing animals in this way." And then there is circumcision. In a single market, our individual, cultural needs will be challenged. You have nowhere near the democratic process you have here. In the UK we have an effective Jewish lobby on *shechita*. In Europe, we don't have anything.'

### Representation abroad

As for representation to targets abroad, at town meetings there was an understanding of the need to represent British Jewish interests to international Jewish organizations on such issues as restitution of Jewish property and other assets. While individual respondents feel that British Jewry does and should represent such interests, they also recognize that this activity is being carried out by a variety of specialist organizations, groups and individuals. Many creative proposals were put forward about how views could be presented: at international conferences, via regular reports to international bodies, through the international media. In terms of overall coordination, a number of interviewees argued that this function was already carried out by the Board of Deputies. Suggestions in this area were variations on the theme of 'one central body doing international representation' or 'very few bodies in cooperation'.

### *Israel–Diaspora relations*

On Israel, the question of representation took two forms, stemming from the following questions posed by the Commission in the course of its inquiries: 'Should British Jewish interests be presented to Israel in relation to its general policies?' and 'Should British Jewish interests be



presented to Israel in relation to Israel–Diaspora relations?’

While an overwhelming majority of respondents answered ‘yes’ to both queries, the topics for representation were varied. For example, there was no great appetite for British Jewish representative bodies to take political positions *vis-à-vis* Israeli government policies, from either an ideological or a geopolitical perspective. Some felt that single-issue groups should be free to do as they wished in representing their views on Israel through a variety of means; others felt that there should be no public criticism of the government of Israel—an argument which has been made repeatedly for many years in the community. However, in the event that issues of concern did arise, it was felt that the proper channel of communication should be through the Israel Embassy via a ‘central body’ such as the Board of Deputies, or by means of special-interest bodies and Zionist organizations, which would then communicate their concerns via corresponding channels in Israel.

As a corollary, with the recognition of Israel’s success in advancing its own interests in the international arena, a majority felt that it is the role of the embassy or the foreign ministry to handle matters of national concern. As a result, extremely few respondents felt that British Jewry should regularly make representations to the British government on Israel’s behalf. A consequence of this tendency was the phasing out of the British Israel Public Affairs Committee (or BIPAC) in 1999.

Regarding ‘intra-Jewish’ issues as they affect Diaspora Jewry—issues such as ‘who is a Jew’, conversion or immigration and the Law of Return—the existence of conflicting opinions was recognized. It was widely felt that single-issue interest groups should be free to do as they wish in representing their views on such deeply felt Jewish concerns by a variety of means to the Israelis directly.

### 7 Taking internal divisions into account

Interspersed with the areas of external representation that interviewees and respondents described as prime candidates for reform, there were the problems of internal division. By and large, however, to the outside targets of representation, those divisions are unimportant and are viewed in their context. One former BBC producer told us: ‘The community’s problems are internal and do not generally affect its representative effectiveness.’

However, some organizational respondents maintained that internal divisions and arguments hamper the presentation of Jewish views to the wider society: ‘it dissipates our communal energies’ and leads to a ‘lack of credibility’; it ‘provides an excuse for the interests of the Jewish community to be ignored’; ‘unless we speak with one voice as a community, we may become marginalized’. But even some of those expressing such views did not feel it had to be that way as long as in-house debates are kept in-house: they should not undermine the Jewish community’s standing in the wider world. And others felt that fractiousness need not be a deterrent for ‘getting the job done’ on issues of mutual concern. Multiple voices, it was argued, are merely a reflection of those that exist in the cultural matrix that characterizes the British community at large.

### 8 Changing roles for religious authorities

Many affirmed that the Chief Rabbi has a high media profile and is seen by most outsiders as the face of the community. The broadcast media and religion correspondents from the broadsheets confirmed this view when they told us: ‘He is regarded as a primary news source and spokesperson on issues and affairs relating to British Jewry. [He] is a known entity, especially for the media, and what happens to him is of news interest.’ But individual correspondents generally said that he represents only part of British Jewry.

One Haredi official pointed to the pitfalls of having others speak for his community’s interests—particularly since they are not represented in the Board of Deputies. ‘Most of those in the secular world do not have any real familiarity with the Haredi community. Because of that, they end up misrepresenting our interests. That is why we have formed our own representative structures.’ Another said: ‘There is this idea that Jews need a lever and a representative to speak for them. But how can I have someone speak for me if they don’t speak in the manner I want them to speak? The right wing has its own *sbechita*, its own burial societies. For the most part, we work around the Chief Rabbi’s Office and the Board of Deputies, where possible. On the issue of *sbechita* and the efforts of the European Community to ban it, for example, we work more closely with the Antwerp Jewish community than anyone else.’

Regarding the Board of Deputies, one prominent lay leader said: ‘All of us in the non-Orthodox sector are delegitimized by having only two ecclesiastical

authorities [the Sephardi Haham and the Chief Rabbi]. The solution? Give the Board the constitutional authority to consult with each religious group, putting all the religious communities on the same footing. Even so, an overarching structure such as the Board should not be the exclusive means of representing Liberal Jewish interests.'

Progressives were not alone in expressing doubts about the links between the Board of Deputies and certain religious authorities. One Haredi leader told us: 'When it comes to the subject of *shechita*, we also have a representative on the National Council of Shechita Boards. Where there is a shared ideology or where there are common interests, we don't mind working together. The problem is, we don't want to have official relations with an official Reform representative or with someone from the Reform clergy.' He continued: 'In these and other matters, it is certain that we wouldn't go to the Board of Deputies to represent our interests. In each case we prefer to do it on our own. If the Board were a totally secular organization, yes, that would be a separate matter. If everyone from the community sent lay representatives, we could sit around the same table. As it is structured now, we cannot. But even in that case, we would have to be absolutely certain that our interests were being heard.'

### 9 Employing new ideas, new thinking

Some of the most stimulating parts of our inquiry came with the diversity of thinking that emerged in the pursuit of new solutions to issues of representation. For a sizeable cross-section of respondents and interviewees, some kind of new instrumentality or process was needed to meet what many saw as a need for better leadership, more coordination and a more professional approach to representation. In addition, they posited, this new structure (for lack of a better term) would also be better equipped to respond to the new issues and new ideas appearing on the horizon.

Said one professional lobbyist: 'There needs to be some apparatus in the Jewish community that can assess the issues on a policy level and see what needs to be taken on board proactively—something which the British Jewish community, for reasons that are perhaps psychological and historical, is not in the habit of doing. As a Jewish community we need to be employing the tools of the trade in order to get our message across and, ultimately, to best protect our interests.'

### *Communal self-definitions: UK Jews as a religious or an ethnic group?*

There was substantial consensus regarding the targets of representation: international, national, local and voluntary-sector institutions and organizations. More varied comments related to how these targets should be addressed, and on what basis the Jewish community speaks to them. As one respondent wrote: 'Governmental and non-governmental organizations are now viewing groups in ethnic terms—in order to determine allocation of resources, including time, space and representation. We are a demographic group that needs representation in order to compete for ever-dwindling resources. We need to reassess our self-description as an "ethnic group" for government funding purposes and for realistic purposes. Shrinking community means shrinking funds, and currently we are footing the bill for the lion's share of social services.'

This was also the view of one executive at the BBC, who noted that 'as a multicultural society, religious and ethnic considerations have become increasingly important. That means we must seek to do a good job on issues that matter to people—and that includes Jews, because the BBC sees Jews as both a religious and an ethnic community.'

Should we then be addressing government and other bodies as an ethnic group? This question became particularly salient when we consulted constitutional experts who believe that if the version of proportional representation proposed by the Jenkins Commission<sup>1</sup> is introduced, some ethnic groups will acquire increased representation in Parliament.

Noteworthy too was the observation that significant sectors of the Haredi community see no problem with adopting this description. As the head of a strictly Orthodox welfare organization told us: 'At some point there was the issue of meeting criteria as an ethnic minority in the eyes of the housing corporation. According to the Housing Act you are an ethnic group if you have your own language, your own culture, your own distinctive clothing and are easily definable by those characteristics. For us there was no discussion.' At the other end of the religious spectrum, another interviewee, involved in informal education, said: 'Younger Jews are happier seeing themselves ethnically. We are part of multi-ethnic Britain and see things differently because of it.'

Several individual respondents argued in favour of

the ethnic designation in connection with the reality of the UK as a multi-ethnic, multicultural society. Since being Jewish means being different from the rest of society, they said, and with Britain's growing diversity and acceptance of minorities, it is more important than ever for the Jewish view to be heard. An interviewee who works with MPs said: 'We ought to play a larger role in the wider society if we expect to be a part of it. Our current organizations are not structured to look after the broader things, but are inevitably structured to look after individual issues.'

Our consultations with governmental third parties confirmed some of the above trends. Several key targets, for example, are ready to see Jews as part of the multi-ethnic context. The NHS, for one, has become increasingly aware of the needs of ethnic communities, and especially how they may serve them in an unbiased manner. In the past, Jewish interests as they relate to the NHS have not emerged as an area in particular need of attention. However, the NHS's New Electronic Library of Health currently being compiled may help to ensure more awareness about the needs of Jews in relation to such issues as pregnancy, old age, genetic testing and circumcision.

The central element of these ideas and issues is that they are future-oriented. They call for the community's representative structures to be able to think and plan ahead. One interviewee said: 'The community needs to think seriously about planning for the future in a similar way to that of local authorities—less emphasis on buildings, more emphasis on professional personnel, a concerted effort invested in planning data.'

### 10 Considering radical proposals for overall reform

In looking at ways respondents and interviewees believed that representation should be carried out, we were open to ideas for radical, far-reaching proposals for overall reform.

While some wanted only reform of existing institutions, others were ready to propose creating something entirely new. Other ideas were a national annual issues conference, a national Jewish Community Relations Council, and the creation of a Jewish civil service with a salary structure and career ladder.

What many of the broader reform proposals had in

common was a desire for a new framework of some kind in which the many organizations involved in representation could come together to coordinate and cooperate where appropriate. For example, a key figure in Jewish defence work said: 'What's needed is some sort of council that would unite some of the agencies, the Board and various religious groupings, without too much bureaucracy underneath it.' Another proposal, from a Jewish media person, argued for a 'talking shop which is smaller and more representative which could channel communication and then larger meetings with institutes and a community-wide agenda'. From the Progressive community came the idea of a central address, 'a single, effective and neutral place for contact and consultation'.

A Haredi leader offered his own example: 'I'm convinced that the same kind of organization could work for the entire community—from strictly Orthodox to Reform, on common interests such as antisemitism, *shechita*, bio-ethical issues, whether we should take a lead on Kosovo. The fact of life is, you need people to come together on critical issues when the occasion warrants it.'

A leading lay leader in social welfare proposed two possible models. First: 'Hold an annual convention that would draw in representatives from around the country and at which you would elect various committees, like at a party conference.' And second, he suggested an alternative model: 'The president, one of the great and the good, would preside over an organization made up of leading communal heads. This body would meet a few times a year with the people who actually run the communal organizations, to consult on strategies and common interests and concerns. It would be a much more consultative, professional and representative body.'

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations is similar to this latter proposal. A leading rabbi from the Sephardi community suggested that, since we have a lot to learn from the vibrancy of the American Jewish community, such a model might be appropriate for the UK.

### Notes

1 *Report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System*, The Rt. Hon. Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, OM, chairman, October 1998.

## Appendix 1: Jewish Communal Organizations Engaged in Representation

### A descriptive overview

This is a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, list of organizations involved in varying degrees of representation of Jewish interests to the British government, local and educational authorities, health and social services, and other agencies, as well as to the wider society. The areas of representation contained in this list are based on the information supplied by the organizations themselves in written consultation with the Commission. They have been drawn from submissions by individuals and organizations who responded to the Commission's written questionnaire or who participated in the town meetings.

The descriptions are also based on the listings in the 1999 edition of *The Jewish Year Book* (by permission of the publishers, Vallentine Mitchell, in association with the *Jewish Chronicle*). The sections are listed thematically. Organizations are listed in alphabetical order.

### Representative organizations

#### Central

The **Board of Deputies of British Jews** is the elected representative body of the British Jewish community which conveys the views of the community to government and other public bodies on political and legislative matters which affect British Jewry, and provides information about the Jewish community and Israel to the non-Jewish world. The Board examines legislative proposals in Britain and the European Union which may affect Jews, and ensures the political defence of the community. It collects statistical and demographic information and undertakes research on and for the community. It counters bias in the media and ensures that Jews enjoy the full rights of all British citizens.

The Board plays a coordinating role in key issues affecting the Jewish community and promotes cooperation among different groups within the community. The basis of the Board's representation is primarily synagogal, although the body itself has no religious affiliations. All properly constituted synagogues in Great Britain are entitled to representation, as are other significant communal organizations, such as the Regional Representative Councils, youth organizations and other communal bodies, including major charities.

#### Regional

**Berkshire Jewish Representative Council**  
**Bournemouth Jewish Representative Council**  
**Brighton and Hove Jewish Representative Council**  
**Bristol Jewish Liaison Committee**  
**Cardiff Jewish Representative Council**  
**Glasgow Representative Council\***  
**Hull Jewish Representative Council\***  
**Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester and Region\***  
**Leeds Jewish Representative Council\***  
**Merseyside Jewish Representative Council\***  
**Nottingham Representative Council**  
**Redbridge and District Jewish Community Council**  
**Representative Council of Birmingham and Midland Jewry**  
**Representative Council of North East Jewry\***  
**Scottish Council of Jewish Communities\***  
**Sheffield Jewish Representative Council\***  
**Southend and District Jewish Representative Council**  
**Southport Jewish Representative Council\***

The role of the Representative Councils is to represent the Jewish communities locally on any matters on which a Jewish view is sought or by which the community is affected. The Councils also play a coordinating role and provide a forum for Jewish groups and organizations in the region. The Representative Councils that are members of the Board of Deputies (\*) represent their communities there. The Scottish and the Cardiff Councils have become the sole representatives of their communities to the devolved legislative bodies of Scotland and Wales respectively.

While the activities of local Representative Councils vary, broadly they include combating antisemitism, communal security, support for social welfare programmes, participation in interfaith committees and involvement in local authority work related to Jewish concerns. The range of issues with which the Representative Councils concern themselves on a local level includes religion, education, social welfare, politics, justice and civil rights.

### Religious organizations

The **Chief Rabbinate** has developed historically from the post of the Rabbi of the Ashkenazi Great Synagogue in London. The official designation is the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth.

The Chief Rabbi has the responsibility, in all

congregations accepting his jurisdiction, for authorizing marriages and for the certification of rabbis, ministers and officiants. He authorizes the certification of *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws) and the licensing of caterers. He holds titular responsibility for the work of the committee granting certificates for *mohelim* (ritual circumcisers). The Chief Rabbi is the Head (*Av Beth Din*) of the London Beth Din and an ecclesiastical authority of the Board of Deputies. He is the Chairman of the Rabbinical Commission for the Licensing of Shochetim (established in accordance with the Welfare of Animals Regulations 1995). He is also a president of the Council of Christians and Jews and several interfaith organizations.

The range of issues with which the Chief Rabbinate concerns itself includes religion, education, social welfare, politics, justice and civil rights.

The **Assembly of Masorti Synagogues** comprises twelve congregations throughout the UK. Masorti ideology is a synthesis of traditional practice and contemporary, critical-minded thinking. Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs is the spiritual guide of the Masorti movement. The movement's concerns include Jewish literacy and a critical/historical approach to Jewish life; inter-communal harmony in Anglo-Jewry; community representation.

The **Federation of Synagogues** comprises fourteen constituent synagogues and twenty affiliated congregations situated in most parts of Greater London. The Federation aims to provide the services of Orthodox rabbis, ministers and *dayanim* (*halachic* judges); the services of a burial society; to assist synagogues in the erection, reconstruction or refurbishing of their houses of worship; to assist in the maintenance of Orthodox religious instruction in Talmud Torahs and Yeshivot; to obtain and maintain *kashrut*; to support charitable and philanthropic works and to further the progress of Israel.

The **Reform Synagogues of Great Britain (RSGB)** have seventeen constituent synagogues in the Greater London area and twenty-four in the provinces. Their aims are to promote a living Judaism, to interpret the Torah in accordance with the spirit and needs of the present generation and, through a positive, constructive and progressive view of Jewish tradition, to raise and maintain a high standard of Jewish religious life throughout the country.

The **Sephardi community** is composed of the

Spanish and Portuguese congregations and other Sephardi communities originating primarily in the Middle East and North Africa. The two components have a *modus vivendi* but no formal association. The Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation has three constituent synagogues in the London area and one in Ramsgate, and it enjoys close links with other Sephardi synagogues in London and Manchester. The total number of Sephardi congregations is approximately fifteen.

Sephardi institutions in the UK include the **Sephardi Beth Din**, the **Burial Society**, the **Welfare Board**, **Sephardi Kashrut Authority** and the **Sephardi Centre**.

The **Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues (ULPS)** was founded for the advancement of Liberal Judaism and to establish congregations, groups and religious schools based on Liberal Jewish principles. There are fourteen constituent synagogues listed within the Greater London area and a further nineteen in the UK, Ireland and Luxembourg.

The ULPS concerns include civil rights issues in Israel, women's rights, world emergencies, economic justice and world debt elimination.

The **Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (UOHC)** was established as an independent community to protect traditional Haredi Judaism. There are presently sixty affiliated synagogues, Ashkenazi and Sephardi, representing approximately 7,000 members.

The UOHC concerns itself with all religious issues, private or communal, from birth to burial—conversion, marriage, divorce, *shechita* and education—including pre-school and adult education. It operates Kedassia, which is an internationally recognized *kashrut* supervisory organization. It supports and represents its member organizations and institutions at local and government levels on issues of education and social welfare, including special needs provision, elderly care, health, disability and family support.

The **United Synagogue (US)** is the mainstream Orthodox body and the largest synagogal grouping in the UK: there are forty-two constituents of the US and twenty-four affiliated synagogues. The work of the US is carried out by three divisions: Religious Affairs, Community Services and Central Services. Its activities include the Youth and Community Service Committee and the Visitation Committee, which

arranges visitation of Jewish inmates of hospitals, prisons and other public institutions. The US bears financial responsibility for the Beth Din Court of the Chief Rabbinate and plays a part in the work of the Jewish Committee for HM Forces. It deals with a wide range of issues through the Office of the Chief Rabbi.

The range of issues with which synagogal bodies concern themselves includes religion, education, social welfare, politics, justice and civil rights.

### Other religious bodies

#### The **National Council of Shechita Boards**

centralizes information on all matters relating to the performance and administration of kosher slaughter and acts as a liaison between all *shechita* boards and the various ministries and organizations affecting *shechita* and the kosher meat and poultry industry throughout the UK and abroad.

### Welfare organizations

#### The **Association of Jewish Communal Professionals (AJCP)**

aims to enhance the standing of the communal professionals, representing their needs and interests, improving professional practice and providing a forum for professionals to discuss common issues and a resource for relevant information.

#### The **Association of Jewish Refugees of Great Britain (AJR Charitable Trust)**

aims to assist Jewish refugees from Nazi oppression and their primarily Central European families by providing regular support for the needy, weekly advice sessions, a day centre, sheltered accommodation, financial aid for a number of residential homes for the aged, meals-on-wheels and services of a team of social workers and volunteers.

**Birmingham Jewish Community Care** provides residential and nursing services, sheltered housing, a day centre, meals-on-wheels, and general welfare and social services for the community.

Holocaust survivors' groups such as the **45 Aid Society**, consist of survivors who came to Britain in 1945 and others who immigrated subsequently. They help members as well as others in need, and concern themselves with furthering Holocaust education and awareness in the wider society.

The **Interlink Foundation** provides support, information, training and representation for the Orthodox Jewish voluntary sector. Based in Stamford Hill, London, the organization works

closely with the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations and the Commission on the Voluntary Sector to represent the needs of the strictly Orthodox Jewish community.

**Jewish Care** is the largest Jewish social services organization in the UK. With over fifty centres spread throughout London and south-east England, it offers care through an extensive network of services for elderly, mentally ill, physically disabled and visually impaired people, as well as for those who are unemployed and survivors of the Holocaust.

Services are provided for over 6,000 individuals and/or their families. Resources include residential and nursing homes, mental after-care hostels and group homes, community centres, special day-care centres, home care and social work teams, and kosher meals-on-wheels. Jewish Care employs over 1,200 people and works in partnership with nearly 3,000 volunteers in areas such as social service issues primarily relating to old age, health, disability, family support and youth services.

**Jewish Care Scotland** in partnership with East Renfrewshire Council, provides social work services to vulnerable individuals and families within the Jewish community. Services include dementia- and day-care, lunch clubs, meals-on-wheels, welfare rights advice, counselling and befriending.

There are other Jewish welfare organizations in Scotland such as **Cosgrove Care**, which cares for people with learning disabilities, and the **Jewish Blind Society**, which cares for the blind, partially sighted and physically disabled.

The **Jewish Welfare Board, Nottingham**, works in collaboration with the **Women's Benevolent Society** and the **Nottingham Jewish Housing Association** to provide a wide range of care for the elderly, the disabled and the needy.

The **Jewish Welfare Council, Liverpool**, aims to relieve poverty and deprivation in the Merseyside Jewish community. It provides administrative services to local communal organizations, and welfare and social services to individuals, families and groups, such as meals-on-wheels and support for carers and for people with mental health problems or disabilities.

**Leeds Jewish Welfare Board** provides a comprehensive range of social services, aiming to ensure that the needs of the Leeds Jewish

community are met through core services, such as residential care for learning-disabled people transferred from Meanwood Park Hospital, home care for the elderly, child-care for children at risk and social services for people suffering from mental health problems.

**Manchester Jewish Community Care** provides a day centre and social work services for visually and physically handicapped and isolated elderly people. The organization liaises with the local authority on funding, the social services department on provision of services and the benefit agency to help ensure that people under its care get the benefits due to them.

**Manchester Jewish Federation** seeks to provide and facilitate social welfare services which ensure that all sections of the Jewish community of Greater Manchester have access to religiously and culturally sensitive support. The organizations' services are recognized and approved by way of contracts funded by the local authorities and health services. They include carers' support, both group and one-to-one support, with a twenty-four-hour information line and special events for carers; Project Smile, a home-based respite service for parents with a child who has a disability; social work, community care assessment and support to adults and children; a community centre for people with mental health needs; volunteers/befriending for elderly and isolated individuals; luncheon clubs, a day centre where people can meet and enjoy a hot meal; financial and material assistance.

The **National Network of Jewish Housing Associations** is an umbrella organization for Jewish professionals in the housing sector which acts as an information exchange, provides training and encourages good practice.

**Nightingale** is a dual-registered home for the elderly, providing both residential and nursing care. It also manages sheltered housing for elderly Jewish members of the community on a neighbouring site. Nightingale offers care to older people from anywhere in the UK. This ranges from sheltered housing and short-term respite care through to specialized dementia and Alzheimer's care.

**North-East Jewish Community Services, Newcastle**, integrates all community services for the elderly, for people with mobility problems and for those with other care needs in the area.

**Norwood Ravenswood** is the largest Jewish child

and family service in the UK, working with over 6,000 people every year. Services include counselling and support to children and their families. Also community services for people with learning disabilities and their families. Residential services including an adolescent unit, semi-independent bed-sits, a respite care house, a network of community homes and Ravenswood Village. Day services and respite care are also provided, as well as special educational needs service, Binoh and an activity-based service for young Jewish deaf people.

**Norwood Ravenswood** concerns itself with special-needs education and social service issues, including care for the elderly, health, disability, family support and youth services.

**Outreach Community and Residential Services, Manchester**, provide individualized residential and community services for Jewish and non-Jewish adults with learning disabilities, and/or long-term mental health problems. In conjunction with other social care providers, they offer in-home support, personal care and development of educational and social skills support, and as such deal with health authorities, the private sector, social services and welfare providers, such as community nurses and carers and funding agencies.

#### Defence organizations

The **Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (AJEX)** has thirty branches in the London area and sixteen in the provinces. It assists in maintaining AJEX House, a block of flats providing sheltered accommodation for ex-servicemen and women and their dependants, and also maintains a military museum and archives. AJEX's principal activities are remembrance of those who fought and died and served the Crown over 300 years, welfare support for ex-servicemen and women including cash grants, advice and other forms of assistance, and by educational projects, knowledge of and pride in Jewish heritage.

The **Community Security Trust (CST)** employs researchers to monitor antisemitism and security personnel to assist organizations in the community to maintain a high level of security where Jews gather or hold meetings. Issues with which the CST concerns itself include discrimination, antisemitism, security, resurgent Nazism, Holocaust denial, campus antisemitism, civil rights issues in Israel, and religious fundamentalism/fanaticism.

The **Inter-Parliamentary Council Against**

**Antisemitism (IPCAA)** is an umbrella body of parliamentary groups throughout the world that oppose antisemitism and make representations to their governments about antisemitic incidents and developments.

### Israel/Zionist organizations

The range of issues with which the organizations listed in this section concern themselves includes the centrality of Israel in Jewish life, problems of Israeli society, including religious and civil rights, Israel–Diaspora relations, the Middle East and the peace process, media coverage of Israel and Jewish life.

The **Academic Study Group on Israel and the Middle East** is an academic organization which aims to forge and expand contact between academics in this country and their colleagues in Israel, and to develop and enlarge research collaboration between scholars.

The **Anglo-Israel Association (AIA)** exists to inform and educate the British public about Israel's achievements. The AIA promotes Israel by organizing lectures, meetings, study tours of Israel and Anglo-Israel colloquia, by publishing and commissioning literature about Israel, and by awarding scholarships and grants.

**British Friends of Peace Now** mobilizes support for the Israeli peace movement and the peace process, focusing on the Oslo Accords, among British Jews and the wider community. It presents its views to the Israeli government, the British government and the European Parliament. Activities include public meetings with prominent Israeli politicians, petitions to Israeli prime ministers, demonstrations and advertisements in the Jewish press.

**British WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization)** is the British branch of **World WIZO**, which maintains 800 institutions and services for women and children in Israel. British WIZO is a constituent of the Zionist Federation. It is non-party and apolitical. It has almost 200 affiliated societies with 14,000 members.

The **Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI)** is committed to the Conservative Party and to the welfare of the state of Israel and is dedicated to establishing close links between Britain and Israel. The CFI distributes balanced and accurate information on events in the Middle East and, through visits to Israel, gives MPs and candidates a

greater understanding and insight into the Middle East.

The **Israel Information Centre, Birmingham**, provides information on Israel, Judaism and Jewish life. It runs cultural and educational projects which involve the local authorities.

The **Israel Information Centre, Cardiff**, and the **Israel Information Centre, Manchester**, provide information on all aspects of Israel. They run cultural events such as film screenings and art, photography and other exhibitions. Their work involves dealing with schools, the British–Israel Chamber of Commerce and the wider society.

The **Jewish National Fund (JNF) UK** is committed to helping Israel's human and ecological life in numerous ways. JNF UK is also committed to educating children, youth and adults about Israel, as well as fostering loyalty towards the country.

The **Labour Friends of Israel (LFI)** aims to present the facts of the Middle East situation, to build bridges of understanding between the British and Israeli Labour movements, to encourage study groups and visits to Israel, to welcome Israeli Labour representatives to the UK and to forge strong links between the Jewish community and the British Labour Party.

The **Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel (LDFI)** is open to all supporters of the Liberal Democrats in the UK who recognize the right of Israel to a free, independent, permanent and prosperous existence as a member state of the United Nations. The LDFI exists to foster good relations and understanding between Britain and the state of Israel.

The **Likud-Herut Movement of Great Britain** aims to promote the Zionist ideology as conceived by Ze'ev Jabotinsky.

**Meretz UK for a Progressive Israel** seeks to promote Progressive Judaism, the peace process, the unity of the Jewish people, *aliya* (emigration to Israel), social justice, Jewish education and culture. It believes in equality for all Israeli citizens, with religion left to the conscience of each individual. Its concerns include a just and comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbours, human and civil rights, ecology and a safe environment.

The **Mizrachi-Hapoel Hamizrachi Federation** is the movement of religious Zionists in the UK which endeavours to create a link between Anglo-Jewry



and Israel. It encourages its members (young and old) to make *aliya* and to build there a country based on religious values and social justice. In Britain, it is engaged in supporting Israel politically and economically. It contributes funds for educational and cultural institutions, promotes civil rights in Israel and develops Israel–Diaspora relations.

The **National Zionist Council (NZC)** is a representative body for all Zionist organizations and individuals in Great Britain and Ireland who subscribe to Zionist aims as defined in the Jerusalem Programme. NZC works in the fields of *aliya*, public relations, information and economic activities.

The **New Israel Fund (NIF)** aims to strengthen democracy and social justice in Israel. It supports charitable projects in Israel in the areas of civil and human rights, improving the status of women, Jewish–Arab coexistence, religious pluralism and tolerance, bridging social and economic justice and assisting citizens' efforts to protect the environment.

The **Poale Zion-Labour Zionist Movement** is the British section of the World Labour Zionist Movement and the sister party of the Israel Labour Party. It encourages *aliya* and demands effective international guarantees for the civil and political rights of Jews in the Diaspora.

**Pro-Zion: Progressive Religious Zionists** works for full legal and religious rights for Progressive Jews in Israel and to affirm the centrality of the state of Israel in Jewish life.

The **United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA)** is designed to aid the world-wide effort to rescue Jews in need and absorb them into Israel, renew Jewish life in Britain through education and strengthen ties between communities in Britain and Israel. The UJIA's chief representative concerns are state funding for Jewish education, evaluation and assessment of Jewish educational standards, state funding for youth work, Jewish student activity, international Jewish emergencies and Israeli absorption policies.

The **United Zionists of Great Britain and Ireland** are the British and Irish constituents of the World Confederation of United Zionists, which is not affiliated to or associated with any Israeli political party.

The **Zionist Federation (ZF)** is an umbrella

organization with a membership of over 125 Zionist organizations and over 50,000 individuals in the country and, as such, represents the Zionist movement in the UK. Its function is to support, coordinate and facilitate the work of all its affiliates nation-wide. The ZF aims to encourage the participation of Jews in Zionist activities, including education, culture and Hebrew language.

### Political/campaigning organizations

The **Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA)** aims to run public events in order to provide an arena in which representatives of all elements of British Jewry can discuss matters of interest on the same platform, to encourage knowledge within the community about cultural and humanitarian issues, to promote discussion within the community about Jewish topics and about matters which affect the Jewish community as an element in the general population, and to promote goodwill towards Israel and an understanding of Israel's position and policies within the community and the country. The AJA is a member of the Claims Conference and has NGO status at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, and participates in the meetings of those bodies.

Issues with which the AJA has concerned itself include tolerance, the position of women in the community, the appeal of Judaism today, the policy of the Israeli government towards the peace process, racism and resurgent Nazism.

The **Association of Jewish Women's Organizations in the UK** aims to further communal understanding and to promote the achievement of unity among Jewish women of differing shades of opinion and belonging to autonomous organizations with different aims.

**B'nai B'rith District 15 of Great Britain and Ireland** aims to bring Jews together to work in friendship, to improve communal harmony, to strengthen the Jewish community, to combat racial and religious intolerance and to help the less fortunate.

The core objectives of B'nai B'rith in Great Britain and Ireland are to foster friendship through social, cultural and recreational programmes, to support the state of Israel and world Jewry, to work for charitable endeavours, to initiate and develop community projects and to strengthen B'nai B'rith links across Europe. B'nai B'rith in Great Britain and Ireland and B'nai B'rith Continental Europe are working to create a unified structure to strengthen

the Jewish voice in Europe. The head office in Brussels will act as a centre for European activities and as the voice of B'nai B'rith in the EU.

The **Holocaust Educational Trust (HET)** was established to promote research into the Holocaust, to collect archival materials and artefacts of the Holocaust period and to produce written and audio-visual materials. It assists in the teaching of the Holocaust in schools and assists individuals and organizations involved in Holocaust education. The Trust is also heavily involved in the campaign for the restitution of and compensation for Jewish property stolen by the Nazis or their allies.

The **Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE)** aims to improve race relations in Britain and to encourage awareness in the Jewish community of the responsibilities of a multiracial society. Issues with which JCORE concerns itself include race relations, equality of opportunity, discrimination, racism, antisemitism, refugee policies and Black-Jewish dialogue.

The **League of Jewish Women** is a voluntary organization which unites Jewish women of all opinions in the UK. It aims to intensify both their Jewish consciousness and their sense of responsibility towards the Jewish community. It also hopes to stimulate women's sense of civic duty and to increase their service to the country. The League of Jewish Women works with disabled and able-bodied people irrespective of race, colour or religion, helping people in their homes, schools, baby clinics, hospitals, hospices, friendship clubs and day centres.

**Searchlight** is principally an anti-fascist monthly magazine with links to the media, but also an educational trust which works to train people in anti-fascist activity. Issues with which *Searchlight* concerns itself include race relations, discrimination, racism, antisemitism, campus antisemitism, security, resurgent Nazism, Holocaust denial, Holocaust awareness and education, survivors' aid, restitution of Jewish property, refugee policies and religious fundamentalism.

The **Union of Jewish Students (UJS)** aims to coordinate and assist the Jewish and Israel societies in the various further and higher education colleges of the UK and Ireland, to enhance the Jewish identity of students by promoting the study and understanding of Judaism, Zionism, Jewish and Israeli culture and history, to unite Jewish students and coordinate common efforts to encourage

education, to fight assimilation and protect their rights on campus, to further and protect its members' interests and to ensure adequate representation of its members' opinions in all vital matters. The UJS also publishes articles and papers of interest to its members and maintains links with the Hillel Foundation, the National Jewish Chaplaincy Board and the RSGB Chaplaincy.

### International organizations

The **European Conference of Rabbis (ECR)** was established in 1957 to provide a medium for cooperation on matters of common concern to rabbis of European communities.

The **European Jewish Congress (EJC)** coordinates the initiatives of thirty-seven national Jewish communities in Europe and acts as their spokesperson. The EJC has consultative status with the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

The **International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW)** consists of fifty-two Jewish women's organizations in forty-seven countries. The services they offer to the community constitute the main focus of their work. The core purpose of the ICJW is to bring together women from all walks of life in order to create a driving force for social justice for all races and creeds. The ICJW makes representations on Jewish concerns to the National Commission on Women. It has consultative status with the United Nations and is represented on many international organizations.

The **Simon Wiesenthal Center** is an independent American organization with international outreach and offices in Paris and London. Its aims are to monitor, combat and educate against antisemitism, racism and prejudice. While it is not a representative institution, it has made representations to the British government on issues concerning the Jewish community in the UK.

The **World Jewish Congress (WJC)** aims to coordinate the efforts of its affiliated organizations in respect of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural problems of the Jewish people. The WJC represents and acts on behalf of its affiliates before governmental, inter-governmental and other international authorities. The Board of Deputies is the British constituent of the World Jewish Congress and of the European Jewish Congress. There have been occasions when the WJC and the EJC have made representations directly to the British government.

### Relief organizations

**Tzedek (Jewish Action for a Just World)** was established to provide direct support to the developing world by working towards the relief and elimination of poverty regardless of race or religion and to educate people, particularly in the Jewish community, as to the causes and effects of poverty and the Jewish obligation to respond. Among issues with which Tzedek concerns itself are immigration rights, refugee policies, world emergencies, including refugee relief, and economic justice, including world-debt elimination.

**UKJAID (United Kingdom Jewish Aid and International Development)** is a Jewish humanitarian organization which responds to international disasters and promotes sustainable development aimed at reducing deprivation and suffering, irrespective of ethnicity, gender or religion. UKJAID concerns itself with world emergencies, refugee relief and sustainable projects in the developing world.

**World Jewish Relief (WJR)** is the overseas (non-Israel) aid arm of the Jewish community in the UK. WJR provides welfare and community development services to the Jewish communities in Eastern and Central Europe. It also advises and assists Jewish refugees in the UK who have fled from racial and religious persecution in any part of the world. WJR liaises with the Home Office and local authorities, and concerns itself with immigration rights, refugee policies, world emergencies and relief.

### Interfaith organizations

The **Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ)** promotes good relations between Christian and Jewish communities. It has over sixty branches throughout the UK. The CCJ brings together the Christian and the Jewish communities in a common effort to right the evils of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination between people of different religions, races and colours, and to work for the betterment of human relations based on mutual respect, understanding and goodwill. It is neither a missionary nor a political organization.

The key work of the group is educational. The CCJ concerns itself with a wide range of issues relating to interfaith relations, religious education, race relations, discrimination, racism, antisemitism, resurgent Nazism, Holocaust denial, Holocaust awareness and education.

The **Maimonides Foundation** was established to foster understanding and promote dialogue and

cooperation between Jews and peoples of different faiths—especially between Jews and Muslims—to build alliances and to strengthen the cultural, spiritual and intellectual ties between them. The Foundation concerns itself with a range of issues relating to interfaith relations and ethnic issues, race relations, discrimination, racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, Israel and the Middle East, including the peace process.

The **Three Faiths Forum** encourages goodwill and understanding among people of the three monotheistic faiths in the UK and elsewhere (Islam, Christianity and Judaism). The Forum concerns itself with a range of issues relating to interfaith relations, Islamophobia, antisemitism, racism, discrimination, Holocaust denial, Holocaust education and awareness.

### Educational organizations

The **Agency for Jewish Education** is a United Synagogue body which deals with training, resourcing and servicing the full- and part-time education community in Britain. It has links to central government, local educational authorities and, increasingly, the European Union. The Agency works with the Department for Education and Employment on teacher training, the provision of school places, school building projects and governor training for Jewish day schools. It also trains inspectors for Jewish studies in all English voluntary-aided schools.

The **Anne Frank Educational Trust** aims to combat bigotry and racism by providing touring exhibitions and educational resources on Anne Frank and the Holocaust for a mass audience, including primary and secondary schools, youth organizations, universities and the general public. The Anne Frank Educational Trust concerns itself with Holocaust education, Holocaust denial, prejudice, racism, antisemitism and social responsibility issues.

The **British Association for Jewish Studies** aims to promote and defend the scholarly study of Jewish culture in all its aspects, to organize conferences, and to initiate and support research and publication.

The **Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations** is an independent centre dedicated to the study and teaching of all aspects of the Jewish-Christian encounter through the ages.

The **Centre for Jewish Education** provides

educational services for the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues and the Leo Baeck College.

The **Centre for Jewish Studies, SOAS** (School of Oriental and African Studies), Near and Middle East Department, offers a BA in Hebrew and Israeli studies and degrees combining Hebrew with law, economics, management, Arabic and many other subjects. A Yiddish language and literature programme is designed for both degree and occasional students. There is also a one-year diploma in Jewish studies catering for postgraduates from around the world.

The **Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University College, London**, is the largest university department in the UK and Europe for obtaining honours degrees in Hebrew, medieval and modern Jewish history, biblical Hebrew and ancient Egyptian.

The **Institute of Contemporary History and Wiener Library** is a research library and institute on contemporary European and Jewish history, especially the rise and fall of the Third Reich; survival and revival of Nazi and fascist movements; antisemitism; racism; the Middle East; and post-war Germany. It holds Britain's largest collection of documents, testimonies, books and videos on the Holocaust. Issues with which the Institute concerns itself include education, promoting multi-culturalism, race relations, racism, resurgent Nazism, antisemitism, campus antisemitism, Holocaust denial, and Holocaust awareness and education.

The **Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London**, is funded by the private sector. Its activities are dedicated to the academic study of all branches of Jewish history and civilization.

The **Jewish Education Bureau, Leeds**, provides a variety of educational programmes and promotes the study of Judaism as part of multi-faith religious education in county schools and colleges.

The **Lubavitch Foundation** aims to further Jewish religious education, identity and commitment. There are separate departments for adult education, summer and day camps, youth clubs and training, university counsellors, publications, welfare and organizations concerned with Israel.

The **Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies** is one of Europe's leading teaching and

research institutions in the area of Hebrew and Jewish studies. Its work includes Jewish history and literature (ancient, medieval and modern); Talmudic studies; Jewish/Islamic and Jewish/Christian relationships at all periods; Hebrew and Yiddish language; anthropology; sociology; law; and theology. Issues with which the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies concerns itself include the teaching of Jewish culture at university level as part of the wider educational curriculum.

The **Scopus Jewish Education Trust** aims to promote academic excellence in Jewish and secular education, to develop the teaching of Hebrew as a living language and to inspire a love of Israel within a learning environment based on traditional Jewish values. Scopus is the largest group of Jewish day schools in the United Kingdom, with fifteen schools nation-wide.

The **Sephardi Centre** aims to promote Sephardi culture. Courses focus on religion, history, music, art and cuisine.

The **Spiro Ark** was established to meet the problems facing Jews in the twenty-first century by using innovative teaching methods in order to encourage a learning community. Hebrew and Yiddish are taught at all levels, together with Jewish history and other related subjects. The Spiro Ark also regularly holds cultural events.

The **Spiro Institute for Study of Jewish History and Culture** promotes Jewish identity and self-awareness. The Institute engages in widespread teaching of Jewish history and culture, including literature, films, art, drama and Hebrew for adults classes; Holocaust education in schools and for LEAs, including teaching packs and video; preparation for GCSE and A-level in modern Hebrew. Issues with which the Spiro Institute concerns itself include the teaching of religion in the national curriculum and state funding for Jewish education, Holocaust awareness and education, Jewish cultural programming, civil rights issues in Israel and antisemitism.

Other centres, institutes and universities also play a role in representing Judaism to the wider society. They include the Centre for German Jewish Studies, University of Sussex; the Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Leeds; the Centre for Modern Hebrew Studies, University of Cambridge; the Department of Jewish Studies, Manchester University; the Oxford Institute for Yiddish Studies; the Parkes Centre, University of Southampton; and the Queen

Mary and Westfield Programme for Yiddish and Ashkenazic Studies, University of London.

### Cultural organizations

The **Ben Uri Art Society** holds the Ben Uri Heritage Collection of nearly 900 works by Jewish artists, with particular emphasis on British Jewish artists. It regularly loans and exhibits these works, as well as exhibiting work by contemporary Jewish artists.

The **Jewish Book Council** aims to stimulate and encourage the reading of books on Judaism, Jewish thought, life, history and literature.

The **Jewish Community Theatre** aims to advance, develop and maintain public education and awareness of the history of British Jews by the representation at theatres and other venues of plays reflecting the cultural identity of Anglo-Jewry.

The **Jewish Film Foundation** is an educational charity whose aim is to promote the exhibition, distribution, production and study of Jewish cinema, television and video programmes.

The **Jewish Music Heritage Trust** promotes the study and performance of Jewish music to preserve the heritage and teach it to successive generations.

The **Jewish Museum—London's Museum of Jewish Life** seeks to recover, preserve and exhibit material relating to the roots and heritage of Jewish people in Britain, and to illustrate and explain Jewish religious practice with objects of rarity and beauty. Issues with which the Jewish Museum concerns itself include the arts, Jewish cultural/ethnic programmes, education, Holocaust education, Jewish heritage and preservation.

The **Manchester Jewish Museum** hosts a

programme of events including exhibitions, demonstrations, concerts, talks and educational visits for schools and adult groups on Judaism and Jewish life.

### Jewish media

The *Jewish Chronicle* is an independent Jewish weekly newspaper with a nation-wide distribution and an extensive coverage of Jewish affairs in the UK. It plays an important role in conveying Jewish issues to the wider society by marketing its lead articles to the British press and the world media.

Other Jewish media, including the *Birmingham Jewish Recorder*, the *Edinburgh Star*, *Hamodia*, the *Jewish Quarterly*, *Jewish Spectrum Radio*, the *Jewish Telegraph*, the *Jewish Tribune*, *The Jewish Year Book*, *Judaism Today* and the *London Jewish News*, also play a role in representing Jewish concerns.

### Think-tanks/discussion forums

The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)** is an independent think-tank which informs and influences policy, opinion and decision-making on social, political and cultural issues affecting Jewish life. JPR's policy work is organized around four programmes: civil society; planning for Jewish communities; Jewish culture: arts, media and heritage; Israel: impact, society and identity. Issues with which JPR concerns itself include education, social welfare, politics, justice and civil rights.

The **Israel-Diaspora Trust (IDT)** organizes discussions on issues of social welfare, politics justice and civil rights.

The **New Jewish Initiative for Social Justice** acts as a think-tank on social justice issues and aims to influence policy and debate on these issues in the Jewish community and beyond.

## Appendix 2: Representation in Five Jewish Communities—France, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada and the USA

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The second generation of world Jewry since the end of the Second World War is now at its height. The first generation, which lasted more or less from the end of the war to the late 1970s, witnessed the reconstitution of Jewish communities throughout the world. This reconstitution had to take place because of the ravages of war, the impact of the establishment of the state of Israel and the changes which had affected communities in the new worlds as a result of Jewish migration from the old.

That process essentially involved a series of modifications of the five patterns of Jewish communal organization developed during the modern epoch to take cognizance of the realities of the opening of a new, then as yet unrecognized, postmodern age. These five patterns emerged between the convening of the Napoleonic Sanhedrin in 1807 and the First World War. They were:

1 The 'consistorial' pattern, pioneered in France, whereby all those who identified as Jews were officially organized into hierarchical synagogue-centred bodies called *consistoires* or some similar term, and, one way or another, all Jewish activities had to be subsumed within the consistorial framework.

2 The *Kultusgemeinde* pattern pioneered in Germany and found, *inter alia*, in the Netherlands in which territorial organizations of Jewish communities based on, but stretching beyond, the synagogue were governed by communal boards officially recognized and empowered by host governments and government-supported through their revenue-raising and distribution powers.

3 Boards of Deputies pioneered in Great Britain, and found in Australia and in a modified version in Canada, government-recognized bodies in which all the various activities in the Jewish community were represented and which served as a central address for the Jewish community

but engaged primarily in external relations on behalf of the community. These were supported by Jewish resources exclusively or almost so.

4 Congregational communities, developed in smaller countries, which embraced the Jewish community as a whole. Normally these were not state-recognized and relied upon voluntary affiliation and support.

5 Communities with no formal or official central address or framing body, no formal government recognition, and no general government support (although some functions might receive government aid), pioneered in the United States.

These models persisted more or less in their original form until the Second World War. Most were restored to some extent after the war, with modifications based upon changing times, changing situations, reconceptualization of what a Jewish community should be and how individual Jews could identify with it, and changing patterns of government recognition and support. The central thrust of these changes was the withdrawal of formal government support and, often, recognition, as well as the broadening of the community's framing institutions to include religious, welfare and community relations organizations in equivalent framing roles in an increasingly open environment in which new institutions and organizations could be established with relative ease and market-like competition could take place among them.

### France

In France, the Consistoire found itself confronting two rival local organizations, the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF) and the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU). Both at the very least claimed parity with the Consistoire as umbrella organizations within their respective spheres and, at times, claimed to have replaced the Consistoire as the community's central address. The CRIF was founded in 1944 to represent French Jewry before the Vichy government and has continued its representative role throughout the post-war years. While an independent organization, the president of the Consistoire was also its president automatically until very recently. The FSJU was founded after the war to serve as French Jewry's local fund-raising and social service delivery address. Israel-centred concerns were handled by the separately incorporated French branch of the Jewish Agency and Keren Hayesod, neither truly French organizations.

### The Netherlands

In the post-war Netherlands, the three separate congregational groupings for Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Liberal synagogues rebuilt the Federation of Dutch Communities to be their representative body without granting it much strength. The lead role fell to the Ashkenazic congregational group, the largest of the three by far.

### Australia

Australia, less disrupted by the war, never had a strong country-wide body. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) is the leading Australia-wide communal organization and is meant to play the major country-wide representative role. It has become progressively weaker through the competition of various country-wide state and local arms of Zionist bodies, B'nai B'rith, the World Jewish Congress, and the various welfare institutions which, while state or local, serve the country-wide community. Because the great strength of Australian Jewry is lodged in its two major roughly equal communities, Sydney in the state of New South Wales, and Melbourne in the state of Victoria, in fact the state bodies were and remain the stronger ones and the ECAJ leadership and headquarters are rotated between the two cities with every new election as the chairs shift between the two states on a rotation basis. Even within the states the powers of the state-wide bodies have diminished greatly in recent years, so that in the last analysis most organizations and institutions are independent of any serious framing body.

### Canada

Canadian Jewry, once held up as a shining example of a New World Jewish community with an appropriately institutionalized common structure, has gone in the same direction. In the inter-war years the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) could correctly have been said to be the address for the whole community country-wide. The CJC combined the British Board of Deputies model and the Polish *kehillah* model, reflecting the synthesis between the many Polish Jewish immigrants to Canada and the Canadian environment.

If anything, the CJC gained strength, to all outward appearances, in the first post-war generation, but during that time rival organizations were gathering strength, all stimulated by their counterparts in the larger American Jewish community who, intentionally or not, pressed their influence across the Canadian-American border. First, the CJC's representative status was challenged by B'nai B'rith, the Anti-Defamation League and the Canadian

Zionist Federation; then locally it was challenged by the local Jewish community federations. Assisted by the federation movement in the United States and with the added tendency of Canadian Jews for neat and comprehensive organizations, the federations not only became the framing bodies in all of the major Canadian Jewish local communities, but formed a National Budgeting Conference to undertake allocations within Canada that were neither local nor for Israel and overseas activities. The NBC immediately became powerful by virtue of its financial role. In the meantime, Keren Hayesod in Canada became the United Israel Appeal, locally controlled by community federations.

Then an arrangement was reached between the federations and the Canadian Jewish Congress so that the local branches of the CJC would enter the federation framework. By the early 1990s the CJC had lost not only its monopoly for representation but also its monopoly of the top leaders of Canadian Jewry, most of whom went to the federation movement or the UIA. The CJC began to attract only the second-level leadership. Its triennial country-wide meetings ceased to be significant decision-makers and in 1998 abandoned the pretence of decision-making and instead made the meeting a 'virtual happening' for the delegates.

### The USA

The United States, which from the first had been essentially an open market for every form of Jewish organization and institution, continued in this manner into the post-war period. Then the great financial needs of Israel and overseas rescue shifted effective power to the federation complex, which included the local federations, the United Jewish Appeal (UJA), its two parent organizations, the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the United Israel Appeal (UIA), and the federations' umbrella Council of Jewish Federations (CJF). For a short while in the 1950s, the struggle that had begun in the 1930s between the Jewish community councils and the community federations continued. The Jewish community councils sought to play both a representative role and a role leaguering all the separate Jewish organizations, synagogues and other institutions into one body, especially for cultural and representational purposes, at a time when the federations concentrated on fund-raising and service delivery.

For reasons that cannot be discussed here, in community after community the federations won out over the community councils by the 1960s. Community councils became Jewish community

relations councils, either as constituent agencies of the federations or sometimes even as federation committees with purely representational roles. While this change eliminated their efforts to be independent comprehensive representative bodies, it actually strengthened their ability to represent their local communities since they had the backing of the now-powerful federations.

More than that, their country-wide organization, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), began to become more powerful than the independent national bodies previously claiming to represent the Jewish community. All were self-proclaimed in that role. Principal among them were the American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906 by the leading Jewish notables at the time to represent Jewish interests in Washington; the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), founded by B'nai B'rith in 1913 to fight antisemitism by mobilizing popular support in the aftermath of one of the few blood-libel cases in American Jewish history; and the American Jewish Congress, founded in 1918 in an effort to provide a country-wide democratic body along the lines that were seen at that time as modified versions of the *kehilla* movement and which had come to emphasize separation of church and state in the United States in fields in which the Jews found themselves at a disadvantage because of their religion.

These three groups and other specialized representative bodies such as the Jewish Labor Committee and the Jewish War Veterans vigorously competed with one another, in most cases over the same turf, until the CJF stepped in in the 1940s in an attempt to bring order to the representation field. While formally the attempt failed, undoubtedly because of the market-place character of American life which gave the CJF no opportunity to impose its views on what were, after all, independent organizations, the effort did give birth to the NJCRAC and ultimately led to its assuming a position of supremacy, and to the other organizations becoming more specialized in what they did so that they conflicted less.

In the 1960s and 1970s it seemed as if the federations and their movement would become the unequivocal framing institutions in American Jewish life. The growth of the federations' community planning and Israel-oriented roles both pushed in this direction. Yet today the federations are fighting for their lives as a shift in the attitudes and outlook of American Jews has led the latter to abandon federated giving in droves and, if they are involved

at all, to seek directly the 'causes' of most interest to them as individuals. The unbounded individualism of the youth revolt of the 1960s is having its effect as the baby-boomers reach middle age and Israel's established institutions have lost drawing power.

Today it is fair to say that there has never been a time when American Jewish life has been so diffused, with so little in the way of common leadership and effort, except in the representation sphere, where the picture is curiously mixed. The federations and their country-wide arms have retained a much more important role because very few private bodies can compete with them and, indeed, very few want to.

The older representative organizations have become weaker, even if they continue to dominate the country's publicity channels, and of the new ones, only the Simon Wiesenthal Center has proved itself able to mobilize the resources and the talents necessary to be a competitive voice, which it has been, much to the distaste of the organized Jewish community. The World Jewish Congress, for its first half-century virtually unrecognized in the United States and with no real organizational presence there, has moved up rapidly as a public voice under the leadership of Edgar Bronfman and Israel Singer, who, by relocating the world headquarters to New York from Geneva and pursuing a strategy of selected issues handled in a well-publicized manner, have capitalized on a name that carries a greater cachet than its real weight might bear, to emerge with new strength. On the other hand, the Conference of Presidents, which had become strong during the years of Israel's maximum strength and visibility on the American Jewish scene, is now in something of an eclipse because of the decline of Israel's cachet, a factor compounded by the divisions over Israel in the American Jewish community, making it more difficult for the Presidents' Conference to take sharp stands or to speak in the name of the entire community.

### Contemporary patterns of communal organization

Today we still find five patterns of Jewish communal organization, but they are considerably different from the more rigid patterns of the modern epoch. They are:

- 1 Communities based on a single local organization or congregation. This is the simplest pattern and the closest to its predecessor congregational-community model. It exists only in the smallest communities where local Jews



find that they cannot afford the 'luxury' of different organizations despite the 'Jewish' incentives for division. Examples: Luxembourg and Monaco.

2 Integrated congregational communities where several different organizations or congregations exist but all are tied together around a single community or congregation and operate within that integrated framework. Examples: Gibraltar and Norway.

3 Government-recognized/assisted framing institutions in a very limited market situation, where the availability of government recognition and assistance encourages the distinction between recognized and unrecognized organizations and encourages Jews to belong to the former, but at the same time allows room for the latter to develop. Germany is the best example.

4 Communities with recognized framing organizations but with a semi-open market in which one or more organizations are accepted by the vast majority of Jews as central addresses for the community or for specific bundles of communal functions or which frame communal activity in that manner in a situation in which other Jewish organizations not only cannot emerge but cannot become strong enough to compete with those more formally recognized. Australia Canada, France and the Netherlands — four of the five communities under discussion — fit into this category.

5 Diffused communities that are either partially framed or unframed, where an open market exists for competing Jewish organizations to emerge in every sphere and in every arena. The United States is a prime example of this category.

What is characteristic of these new patterns is that membership in the community, indeed adherence to a formal connection with Judaism or the Jewish people, is an entirely voluntary matter. Even in a case such as Germany, where those registered as Jews pay their share of the government-levied church tax, which is then reallocated to the Jewish community, one can choose to register as a Jew or not as one wishes. All of the communities are increasingly pluralistic: that is to say, there is no establishment to impose a single pattern, religious or communal, on them, but rather people seek a way to express their Jewishness or Judaism with which they feel comfortable, even if they have to

invent new ways to do so, and sooner or later the community must recognize them in some way.

In one way or another all are organized to cope with five spheres of communal activity:

- religious/congregational;
- educational/cultural;
- external relations/defence;
- communal/welfare;
- Israel/world Jewry.

Formally, the third sphere, that of external relations and defence, embraces what in Europe are referred to as representative organizations. Indeed, outside the United States, before the Second World War, those organizations framed and spoke for the communities of concern here. That can no longer be said to be true for any of them. In the United States, this sphere has become subordinated to the communal/welfare sphere. In Australia it plays a very limited role and shares the field with more specialized bodies who 'represent' Australian Jewry's interests in Israel. In Canada this sharing is even more diffused. In France, the CRIF continues to represent internal French Jewish interests and its president now can be chosen independently of the Consistoire while French Jewry's interest in Israel is expressed through other channels. In the Netherlands, the largest congregational body, the NIK (that is, the first sphere), represents its congregations' interests directly and a weak coordinating council has very limited rule.

Most, if not all, of the spheres receive some government assistance. On the whole, government assistance has ceased to be in the form of general support and is more in the form of assistance for specific functions. Thus, even in the United States with its strong rules of separation of church and state, federal and state funding is available for Jewish health and welfare institutions. Elsewhere it may be available primarily for educational institutions.

There seem to be emerging two integrative sets of institutions in the various communities regardless of type. One is cosmopolitan, serving the community as a whole, either formally framing, such as a community or country-wide federation or a representative board, or developing a thick texture of informal relationships within the government-like institutions that may even merge into one comprehensive institution, or may simply absorb functions in the external relations/defence,

communal/welfare and Israel/world Jewry spheres.

The other is localistic, reflecting the growing concentration of individual and family Jewish activities within a congregational or local community centre framework. That framework may be very pluralistic, with congregations to serve every expressed Jewish orientation, or it may be in some more formal religious establishment in which individual congregations adapt to different styles in the interests of their members, but increasingly if Jews want to be counted, they connect themselves with a local congregation for lack of any other sure form of connection.

### Types of communal organizations

Larger communities will have four kinds of organizations:

1 Government-like institutions, whether 'roof' organizations, framing institutions, or separate organizations serving discrete functions that play roles and provide services on all planes (country-wide, local and intermediate) which, under other conditions, would be played, provided, or controlled—predominantly or exclusively—by governmental authorities. They are responsible for tasks such as external relations, defence, education, social welfare and public (communal) finance. They include:

- a more or less comprehensive fund-raising and social planning body;
- a representative body for external relations;
- a Jewish education service agency;
- a vehicle or vehicles for assisting Israel and other Jewish communities;
- various comprehensive religious, health and welfare institutions.

2 Localistic institutions and organizations that provide a means for attaching individual Jews to Jewish life on the basis of their most immediate and personal interests and needs. They include:

- congregations organized into one or more synagogue unions, federations or confederations;
- local cultural and recreational centres, often federated or confederated with one another.

3 General purpose mass-based organizations, operating country-wide on all planes that

function to (a) articulate community values, attitudes and policies, (b) provide the energy and motive force for crystallizing the communal consensus that grows out of those values, attitudes and policies, and (c) maintain institutionalized channels of communication between the community's leaders and 'actives' ('cosmopolitans') and the broad base of the affiliated Jewish population ('locals') for dealing with the problems and tasks facing the community in the light of the consensus. They often include a Zionist federation and its constituent organization and B'nai B'rith lodges.

4 Special-interest organizations which, by serving specialized interests in the community on all planes, function to mobilize concern and support for the programmes conducted by the community and to apply pressure for their expansion, modification and improvement.

The first two of these types are embodied in the institutions that form the structural foundations of the community and the last two in organizations that primarily function to activate the institutional structure and give it life. Institutions of the first type are easily identifiable in most communities. They include the boards of deputies founded by Anglo-Jewish communities, the American Jewish community federations and the Council of Federations, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Fonds Social Juif Unifié in France and the like.

The most important localistic institutions are the synagogues, which, by their very nature, are geared to be relatively intimate associations of compatible people. Even very large synagogues that lose their sense of intimacy are localistic institutions in this sense, in the overall community context. The most important localistic organizations are Jewish community or sports centres.

Organizations in the third category differ widely from community to community. In the United States, B'nai B'rith and Hadassah come closest to performing these functions, with a number of smaller country-wide organizations sharing in the task. In South Africa and much of Latin America the Zionist federations have assumed that role. The special-interest organizations are also readily identifiable in the various communities.

### Voluntary communities

By now all Jewish communities in the Diaspora are unbounded: that is to say, no clear external limits divide Jews from non-Jews. Rather, all are organized

as a series of concentric circles around a central core of Judaism/Jewishness that draws Jews towards it in varying degrees, circles which fade out at the peripheries into a grey area populated by people whose Jewish self-definition and Jewish status are unclear, certainly from a *halachic* standpoint but also from a sociological one. Thus every Diaspora community today is fully voluntary and its organization reflects its voluntary character.

Moreover, Judaism is recognized as a major faith in all five countries and many Jews who participate in the public square derive their compass in public positions and activities from the teachings of Judaism as they understand them, which generally means filtered through their particular Jewish experience. However, because the Jewish community is more than simply a religion in the conventional Christian manner but also has ethnic and communal dimensions that are both part of and stand somewhat separate from Jewish religion,

each Jewry articulates itself in a far more complex manner than can be encompassed by any representative organization except, perhaps, on a few specific issues in each community or in which there is a world Jewish consensus.

Consequently, the first task of every Jewish community is to learn to deal with the particular local manifestation of Jews' freedom to choose. This task is a major factor in determining the direction of the reconstitution of Jewish life in our time. It is increasingly true that Diaspora Jews, if they feel Jewishly committed at all, feel that they are so by choice rather than simply by birth. Not that organic ties do not underlie the fact of their choice, but birth alone is no longer sufficient to keep Jews within the fold in an environment as highly individualistic and pluralistic as the contemporary world. None are more conscious of this than Jews themselves.

## Appendix 3: United Kingdom Legislation Concerning Jews\*

by His Honour Judge Aron Owen

### Historical background

In the Middle Ages, hostility towards Jews was a common feature in many European countries. In England, during the reign of Edward I (1272–1307), the *Statutum de Judeismo* was passed in 1275. This statute forbade usury and included an order continuing to oblige Jews to wear a distinguishing badge and imposing upon them an annual poll tax.

In 1290, Edward personally decreed the expulsion of Jews from England. During the reign of Charles I (1625–49) the number of Jews in England steadily increased. Menasseh ben Israel (1604–57) of Amsterdam made a direct appeal to Cromwell to authorize readmission. His 'Humble Addresses' presented to the Lord Protector in October 1655 urged the revocation of the edict of 1290 and entreated that the Jews be accorded the right of public worship and the right to trade freely. No formal announcement was ever made of the Jews' 'readmission' but, from about 1657, the edict of 1290 ceased to have effect.

The Religious Disabilities Act 1846 extended to Jews the provisions of the Toleration Act 1688. Under the 1846 Act, British subjects professing the Jewish religion were to be subject to the same laws in respect of their schools, places for religious worship, education and charitable purposes, and the property held with them, as Protestant dissenters from the Church of England.

### Present position

Today, English law does not regard Jews as a separate nationality or as different from any other British citizen. They have no special status except in so far as they constitute a dissenting religious denomination.

Provision for that special religious position of Jews has, from time to time, been made in legislation (see, for example, the 1846 Act mentioned above). A discussion of the subject will be found in Halsbury's *Laws of England*, fourth edition, 1975, Volume 14, paragraphs 1,423 to 1,432.

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Some of the various statutory provisions in force today are set out briefly below. Further information and details can be obtained from the Board of Deputies (5th Floor, Commonwealth House, 1–19 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1NF. Tel. 020 7543 5400). Legal advice should be sought by those wishing to know the impact of specific legislation upon their own particular circumstances.

1 The *Representation of the People Act 1983* (which is a consolidation of several previous Acts) enables a voter in a parliamentary or local election 'who declares that he is a Jew' and objects on religious grounds to marking the ballot paper on the Jewish Sabbath to have, if the poll is taken on a Saturday, his vote recorded by the presiding officer. This right does not apply to Jewish holy days other than the Sabbath. A person unable by reason of 'religious observance' to go in person to the polling station may apply to be treated as an absent voter and to be given a postal vote for a particular parliamentary or local election.

2 The *Education Act 1994* permits Jewish parents to have their children attending state or state-aided voluntary schools withdrawn from any period of religious instruction and/or worship where such instruction or worship is not in the Jewish faith. In order to take advantage of these provisions of the Act, a written request must be submitted to the head teacher of the school.

3 The *Oaths Act 1978*. A Jew may take an oath (in England, Wales or Northern Ireland) by holding the Old Testament in his uplifted hand and saying or repeating after the officer administering the oath the words: 'I swear by Almighty God that...', followed by the words of the oath prescribed by law. The officer will administer the oath in that form and manner without question, unless the person about to take the oath voluntarily objects thereto or is physically incapable of so taking the oath.

Any person who objects to being sworn (whether in that way or in the form and manner usually administered in Scotland) is at liberty instead to make a *solemn affirmation*, which will have the same force and effect as an oath. The form of the affirmation is as follows: 'I...do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that...', followed by the words of the oath prescribed by law. The form of affirmation omits any words of imprecation or calling to witness.

4 *Marriage Act 1949*. English law expressly recognizes the validity of marriages by Jews in England if the ceremonies of the Jewish religion have been complied with.

The secretary of a synagogue has statutory powers and duties in regard to keeping the marriage register books, and the due registration of marriages between persons professing the Jewish religion under the provisions of the *Marriage Act 1949*. He has no authority unless and until he has been certified in writing to be the secretary of a synagogue in England of persons professing the Jewish religion by the president of the Board of Deputies.

When the West London Synagogue was established, acting on the advice of the Chief Rabbi and other recognized Jewish ecclesiastical authorities, the president of the Board of Deputies refused to certify the secretary of the new congregation. Accordingly, by the *Marriage Act 1949*, it is enacted that the secretary of the West London Synagogue of British Jews, if certified in writing to the Registrar-General by twenty householders being members of that synagogue, shall be entitled to the same privileges as if he had been certified by the president of the Board of Deputies. These privileges are also accorded to a person whom the secretary of the West London Synagogue certifies in writing to be the secretary of some other synagogue of not less than twenty householders professing the Jewish religion, if it is connected with the West London Synagogue and has been established for not less than one year.

The *Marriages (Secretaries of Synagogues) Act 1959* gives similar rights to Liberal Jewish synagogues.

5 The *Family Law Act 1996* contains important specific provisions in relation to Jewish religious divorce.

Section 9, subsections (3) and (4) provide as follows:

- (3) if the parties—
  - (a) were married to each other with usages of a kind mentioned in Section 26(1) of the *Marriage Act 1949* (marriages which may be solemnized on authority of superintendent registrar's certificate), and
  - (b) are required to cooperate if the marriage is

to be dissolved in accordance with those usages, the court may, on the application of either party, direct that there must also be produced to the court a declaration by both parties that they have taken such steps as are required to dissolve the marriage in accordance with those usages.

- (4) A direction under subsection (3)—
  - (a) may be given only if the court is satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case it is just and reasonable to give it; and
  - (b) may be revoked by the court at any time.

The effect of these provisions is that where parties who have been married in accordance with the usages of Jewish law (i.e. *chuppah* and *kiddushin*), seek a divorce, then, before such a Jewish husband and wife would be granted the civil decree of divorce by the English court, they could be required to declare that there has been a *get*, i.e. the Jewish religious divorce. There would thus be a barrier to such a Jewish husband or wife obtaining a civil divorce and being able to remarry unless and until there has been a prior *get*.

It is hoped that these new statutory provisions will go some way towards alleviating the plight of an *agunah*. The usual case of an *agunah* (literally 'a chained woman') is that of a wife whose husband refuses to give her a *get* so that she is unable to remarry in accordance with orthodox Jewish law. Under the above provisions of the *Family Law Act 1996* such a husband would himself be unable to obtain a civil decree of divorce and remarry.

6 *Shechita*. Animals and birds slaughtered by the Jewish method (*shechita*) for the food of Jews by a Jew duly licensed by the Rabbinical Commission constituted for the purpose do not come within the provision of the *Slaughterhouses Act 1974* or the *Slaughter of Poultry Act 1967* relating to the methods of slaughter of animals and birds. The right to practise *shechita* is thus preserved.

In March 1995 both Acts (the *Slaughterhouses Act 1974* and the *Slaughter of Poultry Act 1967*) were repealed and replaced by secondary legislation in the form of a Statutory Instrument. This implements the European Community's Directive (93/119EC) on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter. There is specific

provision that the requirement for animals and poultry to be stunned before slaughter or killed instantaneously does not apply in the case of animals subject to particular methods of slaughter required by certain religious rites. *Shechita* is accordingly safeguarded.

7 The *Sunday Trading Act*, which came into operation on 26 August 1994, has removed many of the difficulties caused by the Shops Act 1950. All shops with a selling and display area of less than 280 square metres may be open at any time on Sundays. Shops with a selling and display area of 280 square metres or more are still subject to some restriction, with an opening time limited to a continuous period of six hours between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

There is, however, a special exemption for 'persons observing the Jewish Sabbath' who are occupiers of these 'large' shops. Provided such an individual (and there are parallel conditions for partnerships and companies) gives a signed notice to the local authority that he is a person of the Jewish religion and intends to keep the shop closed for the serving of customers on the Jewish Sabbath, he may open it as and when he wishes on a Sunday.

The notice given to the local authority must be accompanied by a statement from the minister of the shopkeeper's synagogue or the secretary for marriages of that synagogue or a person designated by the president of the Board of Deputies that the shopkeeper is a person of the Jewish religion. There are severe penalties for any false statements made in connection with this intention to trade.

Large shops which were previously registered under Section 53 of the Shops Act 1950 may continue to trade on Sundays without new notification. But occupiers of food stores and kosher meat shops over 280 square metres who, even if closed on Shabbat, did not previously require exemption, may well have formally to notify their local authority that their premises will be closed on Shabbat to enable them to open on Sunday.

Jewish shopkeepers who close their premises for the twenty-five hours of Shabbat may open after Shabbat.

8 Discrimination against a person on account of his being a Jew is unlawful under the *Race*

*Relations Act 1976*.

9 *Friendly Societies Act 1974*. A friendly society may be registered for the purpose, *inter alia*, of ensuring that money is paid to persons of the Jewish persuasion during *shiva* (referred to in the Act as 'the period of confined mourning').

10 By the *Places of Worship Registration Act 1855*, as amended by the *Charities Act 1960*, the Registrar-General may certify a synagogue. The effect of certification is freedom from uninvited interference by the Charity Commissioners and, if exclusively appropriate to public worship, from general and special rates.

11 By the *Juries Act 1870*, the minister of a synagogue who has been certified is free from liability to serve on a jury, provided he follows no secular occupation except that of a schoolmaster.

## The Scottish Position

by Sheriff G. H. Gordon, QC, LL.D.

Jews do not appear in Scots legislation as a unique group, except in relation to United Kingdom statutes which treat them as such, of which the only one still in force is the *Representation of the People Act 1983*. European Regulations apply in Scotland as they do in England.

The *Education (Scotland) Act 1944* provides by Section 9 that every public and grant-aided school shall be open to all denominations, and that any pupil may be withdrawn by his parents from instruction in religious subjects and from any religious observance in any such school.

The oath is administered by the judge in Scots courts, and the witness repeats the words (which begin 'I swear by Almighty God') after him with his right hand upraised. No books are used. A Jewish witness is in practice allowed to cover his head if he wishes to do so. Anyone who indicates a wish to affirm is allowed to do so.

Section 8 of the *Marriages (Scotland) Act 1977* provides that a religious marriage may be solemnized by the minister or clergyman of any religious body prescribed by regulations, or by any person recognized by such a body as entitled to solemnize marriages. The bodies prescribed by the *Marriage (Prescription of Religious Bodies) (Scotland) (Regulations) 1977* (SI No. 1670)

include 'The Hebrew Congregation', whatever that denotes. In practice Orthodox marriages are solemnized by ministers authorized to do so by the Board of Deputies.

The *Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1980* includes regular ministers of

any religious denomination among those persons who although eligible for jury service are entitled to be excused therefrom as of right.

The *Race Relations Act 1976* applies to Scotland, but the *Sunday Trading Act 1994* does not, nor does the *Places of Worship Registration Act 1855*.

## Appendix 4: Gathering the Evidence—Consultations via Town Meetings, Interviews and Questionnaires

### Town meetings

Manchester: 9 November 1998  
 Leeds: 23 November 1998  
 Brighton: 1 December 1998  
 Golders Green: 2 December 1998  
 Glasgow: 6 December 1998  
 Central London: 8 December 1998  
 Redbridge: 25 January 1999

### Interviews

#### Personal Interviews

##### *Individuals*

Max Caller, chief executive, London Borough of Barnet, 15 July 1999  
 Daniel Fox, Consultant, GPC Government Policy Consultants, Brussels, 25 August 1999  
 Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, z'l, 23 March 1999  
 Lord Greville Janner, 22 April 1999  
 Sir Stanley Kalms, 22 April 1999  
 Jonathan Kestenbaum, chief executive, UJIA, 1 July 1999  
 Lionel Kopelowitz, former president, Board of Deputies, 29 March 1999  
 Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy, Spanish and Portugese Synagogue, 24 March 1999  
 Julian Lewis, MP, 15 March 1999  
 Councillor Josef H. Lobenstein, MBE, Mayor, London Borough of Hackney, 17 August 1999  
 Rabbi Avraham Pinter, principal, Yesoday Hatorah Schools, 21 December 1998  
 Rabbi Yitzhak Rubin, South Manchester Synagogue, 8 July 1999  
 Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks, 23 March 1999  
 Ita Symons, MBE, executive director, Agudas Israel Housing Association, 15 July 1999  
 Lord David Young, 15 April 1999  
 HE Dror Zeigerman, Ambassador of Israel, 22 April 1999

##### *Organizations*

Assembly of Masorti Synagogues, Dr Harry Freedman, director, 14 July 1999  
 Board of Deputies of British Jews, honorary officers, 26 April 1999  
 Council of European Rabbis, Councillor Abraham Dunner, executive director, 27 July 1999  
 Federation of Synagogues, Arnold Cohen, president, 19 April 1999  
 Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, Isaac Cymerman, director, 17 August 1999

United Synagogue, George Willman, chief executive, and Peter Sheldon, president, 13 December 1999

##### *Government departments*

Department of Education and Employment (DfEE), School Framework Liaison Team; Local Decision-Making and Surplus Places Policy Team. 14 July 1999  
 Government Office for London, 10 August 1999  
 Greater London Authority Transition Team. 10 August 1999  
 Home Office, Race Equality Strategy Team. Race Equality Unit, 8 July 1999  
 National Health Services, NHS Directorate. 19 July 1999

##### *Mass media*

Madeline Bunting, former religion correspondent, *Guardian*, 6 May 1999  
 Richard Clemmow, head of news programming, BBC Television, 28 April 1999  
 Ruth Gledhill, religion correspondent, *The Times*, 20 March 1999

##### *Discussions/focus groups*

Focus group: university students, Oxford University (nine men, three women), 29 November 1998

Focus group: student/young leadership activists. March 1999

Malcolm Cohen  
 Jennifer Etherton  
 Rachel Gaffin  
 Gabriel Herman  
 Andrew Palmer  
 Ann Waldek

Israel–Diaspora Trust discussion, 22 April 1999

Dr Sidney Brichto  
 William Frankel, CBE  
 John Franks  
 Hon. Judge Dawn Freedman  
 David Freeman  
 Wendy Leighton  
 Tony Sacker  
 Jeremy Schonfield  
 Clinton Silver, CBE  
 Peter Sussman  
 Marie van der Zyl  
 Clive Wolman

##### **Inquiry day, 29 April 1999**

Rabbi Tony Bayfield, chief executive, Reform Synagogues of Great Britain  
 Valerie Bello, national vice-president, B'nai B'rith  
 Rickie Burman, director, Jewish Museum



Melvyn Carlowe, OBE, chief executive, Jewish Care  
 Professor David Cesarani, director, Wiener Library  
 Adam Dawson, chair, Union of Jewish Students  
 Stuart Etherington, chief executive, National Council  
 for Voluntary Organizations  
 David Finkelstein, Conservative Party Director,  
 former director of research, Social Market  
 Foundation  
 Dr Edie Friedman, director, Jewish Council for  
 Racial Equality  
 Andrew Gilbert, former chair, Limmud  
 Louise Greenberg, literary agent, former chief  
 producer, BBC Radio  
 Arieh Handler, president, Mizrahi-Hapoel  
 Hamizrachi  
 Professor Robert Hazel, director, Constitution Unit,  
 University College, London  
 Ben Helfgott, chairman, Yad Vashem Committee,  
 Board of Deputies  
 Anna Josse, chief executive, New Israel Fund  
 Janice Lopatkin, director, Holocaust Educational  
 Trust  
 Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh, executive director,  
 Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues  
 Beverly Miller, senior manager, British WIZO, and  
 Lorraine Warren, honorary secretary, WIZO  
 Valérie Monchi, deputy editor, *Prospect* magazine  
 Jessica Penn, director, Runymede Trust Commission  
 on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain  
 Stuart Polak, director, Conservative Friends of Israel  
 Aubrey Rose, CBE, former senior vice-president,  
 Board of Deputies  
 Esmond Rosen, Merseyside Jewish Representative  
 Council; Liverpool Jewish Youth and Community  
 Centre  
 Sister Margaret Shepherd, director, Council of  
 Christians and Jews  
 Colin Shindler, editor, *Judaism Today*  
 Professor John Solomos, South Bank University  
 David Sumberg, MEP, director, Anglo-Israel  
 Association  
 Ned Temko, editor, *Jewish Chronicle*  
 Mike Whine, director, Community Security Trust  
 Annie Wigman, editor, *Jewish Youth Work*

#### Questionnaire respondents and written evidence

##### *Individuals*

Francis Adam  
 Frank Adam  
 Professor Geoffrey Alderman  
 Ruth Appleton  
 Rt. Hon. Sir John Balcombe  
 Daphne Band  
 David Behar  
 Lord Max Beloff

A. Ben Ari  
 Janet Berenson-Perkins  
 Moshe Berger  
 Robert Berman  
 Stanley Bloom  
 Rev. Stanley Brickman  
 Austin Burton  
 Ruth Canton  
 Rebecca Caplan  
 Maureen Casey  
 David Clark  
 Lady Valerie Cocks  
 Alan Cohen  
 Neville S. Conrad  
 Anne Cowen  
 J. Crivan, OBE  
 Councillor Abraham Dunner  
 Louise Ellman  
 Zennia Esterson  
 Marcus Fielding  
 Ann Fine  
 Barry Fineberg  
 Mike Frankl  
 Charles Frieze  
 Dr Eva Frojmovic  
 Ian Gerech  
 Jessica Gold  
 Brian Goldstein  
 Percy Gourgey, MBE  
 Colin Grazin  
 Ms V. Grosser  
 Fabian Hamilton, MP  
 Alan Harris  
 Lord Simon Haskel  
 Michelle Haynes  
 Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, QC, MP  
 Barry Hyman  
 Cyril M. Jacobs  
 Marcel Knobil  
 Clive Lawton  
 Norman Lebrecht  
 Irene Leeman  
 Joel Lerner  
 Oliver Letwin, MP  
 Vivien Lichtenstein  
 Raphael Loewe  
 Edward Mack  
 Stephen Marcus  
 David L. Marks  
 Mrs V. Mellor  
 Rt. Hon. the Lord Millet  
 Jonathan Morris  
 Simon Myerson  
 Rabbi Julia Neuberger  
 G. R. Pinto  
 Felix Posen

Rabbi Dr John D. Rayner  
 Ivor Richards  
 Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain  
 Aubrey Rose, CBE  
 R. Stephen Rubin  
 Samuel Rufer  
 David Sacker  
 Ruth Sacks  
 Rabbi Zorach Meir Salasnik  
 Karen Senitt  
 David Shepherd  
 Colin Shindler  
 William G. Stern  
 Peter Taylor  
 Doreen Wachmann  
 Malcolm Wald  
 Professor Bernard Wasserstein  
 Annie Wigman  
 Mallory Wober  
 Rt. Hon. the Lord Woolf  
 Myra Woolfson  
 Jessica Wyman

#### *Organizations*

Anglo-Jewish Association  
 Assembly of Masorti Synagogues  
 Association of Children of Jewish Refugees  
 Association of Jewish ex-Berliners  
 Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women  
 (AJEX)  
 Association of Ministers (Chazanim) of Great Britain  
 Beth Din (Court of the Chief Rabbi)  
 Birmingham Jewish Day Centre  
 B'nai B'rith District 15 of Great Britain and Ireland  
 Brighton and Hove Jewish Community  
 Cambridge Traditional Jewish Congregation Trust  
 Cardiff Hillel House  
 Cardiff Jewish Helpline  
 Cardiff United Synagogue  
 Central Council for Jewish Community Services  
 Centre for Jewish Education  
 Community Security Trust  
 Edgware Adath Yisrael Congregation  
 Edgware and District Communal Mikveh  
 European Israeli Forum  
 Fieldgate Street Great Synagogue  
 Friends of Kingsbury Mikveh  
 Friends of Shov Shmeitse  
 Giffnock and Newlands Hebrew Congregation  
 Glasgow Jewish Choral Society  
 Glasgow Jewish Male Voice Choir  
 Glasgow Jewish Representative Council  
 Habonim Dror  
 Hastings and District Jewish Society  
 Initiation Society  
 J. E. Joseph Charitable Fund  
 Jewish Blind and Disabled  
 Jewish Care  
 Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain  
 Jewish Learning Centre  
 Jewish Liberal Synagogue  
 Jewish National Fund  
 Jewish Women's Network (Manchester)  
 Jubilee Leisure Club  
 Keren L'Dovid and Nachlas Dovid  
 Keshet/The Learning Connection  
 King David Foundation  
 Kisharon  
 League of Jewish Women  
 Leeds Jewish Medical Society  
 Leicester Progressive Jewish Congregation  
 The Lynton Trust  
 Makor (formerly Jewish Programme Materials  
 Project/JPMP)  
 Manchester Central Board for Hebrew Education  
 and Talmud Torah  
 Manchester Jewish Homes for the Aged  
 Manchester Reform Synagogue  
 National Council for Jews in the Former Soviet  
 Union  
 National Council of Shechita Boards  
 Newport Hebrew Congregation  
 Nightingale House (Home for Aged Jews)  
 Noam-Masorti Youth  
 North Manchester Jewish Youth Project  
 Prayer for Israel  
 Queenshill Synagogue  
 Reform Synagogues of Great Britain  
 Revive! Brighton  
 Ruach Chavurah  
 Scottish Association of Jewish Teachers  
 Scottish Council of Jewish Communities  
 Sha'arei Shalom Synagogue  
 Sheffield and District Reform Jewish Congregation  
 Southend and District Jewish Representative  
 Council  
 South London Communal Council  
 Sutton United Synagogue  
 Synagogue Française de Londres  
 United Kingdom Jewish Aid and International  
 Development  
 Women in the Community-Women's Campaign for  
 Soviet Jewry (The 35s)  
 Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry/Leeds 35s  
 Zemel Choir



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