

## Introduction to 2014 volume of *Jewish Journal of Sociology*

This volume of the *Jewish Journal of Sociology* covers a lot of ground, touching on issues of fundamental importance for the study of contemporary Jewish life.

The issue starts with a special section on ‘The Relevance of the Jewish Question in the Twenty First Century’, co-edited with Ilan Baron.

Baron’s own contribution to this section, which also serves as an introduction, argues that The Jewish Question seemed to be ‘solved’ in the latter half of the twentieth century. The foundation of the Jewish state of Israel, together with legislation in many Diaspora countries and internationally to protect the rights of minorities, seemed to guarantee the Jewish place in the world. Yet, as Baron argues, the Question has not gone away, and as he shows with reference to the work of the authors Howard Jacobson and Michael Chabon, for both Jews and non-Jews, the place of Jews in the modern world still raises complex questions and animates anguished debate.

Robert Fine’s article roots The Jewish Question in enlightenment and post-enlightenment thinking. He not only shows, like Baron, that the Question has not disappeared, but the same issues that enlightenment thinkers raised about the place of Jews in the modern world still resonate today. In particular, questions of how Jews fit or do not fit into universalist ideologies are still both theoretically and politically contested. It is in debates about contemporary anti-Semitism that these questions become most difficult and most intractable.

The Jewish Question as a question of difference is the focus of Fiona Wright’s article. Wright reflects in particular on her own position as a non-Jewish ethnographer researching Israelis who are critical of or oppose the Zionist project. Such subject positions complicated questions of what a Jew is and what Jewish difference might mean. As Wright alludes, it also opens up spaces for artistic and intellectual play that destabilize any closure in The Jewish Question today.

Roni Berger’s article, while not part of the special section, demonstrates that the question how to be Jewish within a particular kind of Jewish community can lead to tortuous questions that raise v difficult choices and dilemmas. For Haredi Jews leaving Haredi Jewish communities, The Jewish Question is less a question about the place of Jews in the world, so much as a very practical question of how to remain Jewish or not once the all-encompassing Jewish community that they were raised in has been left behind. The policy recommendations that Berger

offers reminds us that to be a Jew today is not simply to reflect on existential questions, but to be faced with the necessity of action.

Miron Kantorowicz, the Jewish social scientist that Mark Tolts discusses in his article, may or may not have thought much about The Jewish Question during his turbulent twentieth century, but he certainly experienced the fallout from the various grand projects that attempted to answer it. As life pushed him from Russia, Germany, the UK and finally to the US, Kantorowicz managed to make significant contributions to the emerging science of Jewish demography. In particular, this little-known figure forms part of the story of pre-war British Jewish demography.

It is serendipitous that Tolts' article appears in the same issue as an obituary of Professor Sigbert Prais, written by his daughter. Prais, the author of several articles in the Jewish Journal of Sociology, made an important contribution to post-war British Jewish demography. We owe it to pioneers such as Prais and Kantorowicz that those of us who are still fascinated and animated by The Jewish Question today are able to draw on 'hard' data in our deliberations.

We are delighted that, for the second year running, the Jewish Journal of Sociology's 'Chronicle' section has been produced by the Berman Jewish Policy Archive in the US. The digest of social research will be invaluable in surveying the constantly-developing field of Jewish social research.

SPECIAL SECTION:

THE RELEVANCE OF THE JEWISH  
QUESTION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST  
CENTURY

(CO-EDITED BY ILAN BARON AND  
KEITH KAHN-HARRIS)







THE JEWISH QUESTION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup>  
CENTURY: AN UNANSWERED  
QUESTION?  
EXPLORING THE JEWISH QUESTION IN  
LITERATURE AND POLITICS

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*Abstract*

This paper explores the relevance of the Jewish Question in the Twenty-First Century. The Jewish Question, what political space exists for the Jews in the modern world, was seemingly answered by two historic events in 1948. The first of these was the creation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. The second was the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first of these meant that Jews could live as Jews in their own state as a majority, in control of their own political destiny. The second of these paved the way for the age of minority rights that developed in the 1960s. This development meant that Jews could live a life as Jews in the Diaspora, thereby significantly altering the terms under which assimilation could be understood. Assimilation became integration. Consequently, it would appear that the Jewish Question has been answered and is no longer of significance in contemporary Jewish thought. However, if that is the case, why is it that the Jewish Question is serving a central role in important contemporary Jewish novels? The Question has served as a key plot element in the novels of two award-winning Jewish novelists, Howard Jacobson and Michael Chabon. Why is the Jewish Question featuring so strongly in the works of leading Jewish authors in the Twenty-First Century? Because it has not been answered. Using a combination of Jewish literature and a political sociological framing of contemporary debates regarding Diaspora/Israel relations, this paper explores how the Jewish Question was not answered, and suggests that part of the reason why the Question

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has not been answered is because we were never clear about what the Question was in the first place.

**Keywords:** Jewish Question, Political Space, Diaspora, Israel, Transnationalism, Michael Chabon, Howard Jacobson.

### *Introduction*

The Jewish Question which asks what political space exists for the Jews in the modern world, was seemingly answered by two historic events in 1948. The first of these was the creation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. The second was the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first of these meant that Jews could live as Jews in their own state as a majority, in control of their own political destiny. The second of these paved the way for the age of minority rights that developed in the 1960s. This development meant that Jews could live a life as Jews in the Diaspora, thereby significantly altering the terms under which assimilation could be understood. Assimilation became integration. Consequently, it would appear that the Jewish Question has been answered and is no longer of significance in contemporary Jewish thought. However, if that is the case, why is it that the Jewish Question is serving a central role in important contemporary Jewish novels. The Question has served as a key plot element in the novels of two award-winning Jewish novelists, Howard Jacobson and Michael Chabon. Their work helps to reveal not only that the Jewish Question remains relevant, but that its answers could challenge the underlying premises upon which the Question was based.

### *The Unanswered Answered Question*

Jewish political thought is seemingly no longer concerned with what used to be called the Jewish Question. This Question addressed what political space exists for the Jews in modernity. Michael Walzer suggests that there were only two (humane) answers: assimilation and Zionism.<sup>1</sup> There were, however, more than these two. Its well-known Jewish answers were not just assimilationism and Zionism but also Jewish socialism. The Jewish orthodoxy also provided its own response in its rejection of modernity. Walzer's point, however, is that in a sense all answers spoke to two spatial options. As he writes, "The question itself might be phrased as follows: What political space is there for Jews in the modern world? The first



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answer points toward citizenship in inclusive democratic states; the second answer toward sovereignty in the 'land of Israel.'"<sup>2</sup>

With these answers in mind, the Jewish Question, it would appear, is no longer relevant because both have ostensibly proved successful. Sixty plus years after the State of Israel declared independence, and in an age of minority rights in the Diaspora countries with significant Jewish populations, the Jewish Question seems to have, at long last, been resolved and in a positive way. Jews have their own state, and have international legal standing as a member of the community of nations. Instead of court Jews there are now diplomats that represent their own Jewish state.

The change has not just been political and legal. Israel also offers Jews a sense of pride, and in this vein is sometimes referred to as the world's first 'start-up nation'.<sup>3</sup> In 2009, Dan Senor and Saul Singer noted that Israel has more companies listed on the NASDAQ than any country other than the United States<sup>4</sup> While, this claim is no longer empirically valid,<sup>5</sup> Israel is nevertheless a leader in technological innovation. With a population of a little over seven million people, compared to the UK with over sixty million<sup>6</sup> but only 52 companies listed on NASDAQ, Israel's 64 remains an impressive economic and technological achievement. The 'start-up nation' story is reassuring for a people that have, according to traditional Zionist historiography, not amounted to much for the last 2000 years prior to the creation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948.

In the Diaspora, the Jews have never been more established or more secure, especially in the United States where Jewish culture has influenced wider American discourse.<sup>7</sup> Yiddish curses have ventured into the English vernacular just as the Jewish deli has become an important contributor to American food culture. Jews can be religious and successful politicians in Washington. Jews can lobby for Israel and not be accused of dual loyalty, as the various successes of AIPAC, J-Street, and the related activities of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations attest to.<sup>8</sup> All of these successes mean that the Jewish Question seems to have been answered, and for good. Or has it? Is the Jewish Question still relevant today?

In one sense, the Question has been answered and resolved. Jews are no longer faced with having to decide if they should be Jews or citizens. Of course, the actual history of Jewish politics did not involve quite so clear-cut a distinction. European Jews who fought for Jewish rights in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century were not seeking to reject their Jewish identity in the process.<sup>9</sup> Yet the historical responses to Jewish struggles for equality in the modern-nation state cannot be read outside of the rise of modern anti-

Semitism with its claims about a Jewish world conspiracy and the ultimate horrors of the Holocaust.<sup>10</sup> The successes of European Jewry in its quest for integration were ultimately limited as national race discourses developed and suggested an incompatibility between being both a member of the Jewish nation and being a citizen.<sup>11</sup> The choices for European Jews were, consequently, attempt to assimilate and lose any public Jewish identity or become a Zionist.<sup>12</sup> Both choices, however, were similar in that they both accepted the underlying premise that tied nation to political emancipation.<sup>13</sup> The failure of the integrationists and assimilationists in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, coupled with the development of minority rights in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century altered the conditions under which assimilation could mean integration.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, today, most Jews in the Diaspora can be both citizens and Jews.

In another sense, however, the Question has not been answered because the answers that it did provide have led to significant cleavages that may fracture the integrity of the Jewish people. The most significant of these cleavages is how Jews in Israel and Jews in the Diaspora are heading in different directions, with the possible consequence of fracturing the Jewish people.<sup>15</sup> While Arthur Hertzberg noted this challenge to Jewish peoplehood in the 1970s, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century the situation may well be more serious due to the increasing moral gulf that separates many Diaspora Jews from Israel. For Diaspora Jews, who live in countries with minority rights and in the United States especially, fought for minority rights, it can be troubling to support a country that, as Simon Rawidowicz noted in Israel's early days, offer no such protection.<sup>16</sup> Many Jews in the Diaspora are troubled when expected to uncritically support Israel, a country that has not lived up to its moral promise because of the unfortunate consequences of war and the intoxication of military victory.<sup>17</sup>

It is in this sense that the Question has not been answered, and this absence can partly explain the extent to which Israel is contributing to splits in the Jewish community, as recently demonstrated by Keith Kahn-Harris.<sup>18</sup> In this case, it is not so much that there are different answers about what Israel should do vis-à-vis the military Occupation and the Palestinians, or how Diaspora Jews should understand their relationship with Israel. Rather, it is that the answers in effect all speak to the same underlying assumptions. To borrow language from Thomas Kuhn,<sup>19</sup> they may disagree in their conclusions but the paradigm remains the same. The Jewish Question was ostensibly about a paradigm shift in Jewish thinking from the Jewish people being a stateless people to a people either with a state of their own or becoming an equal member of an existing state. Yet, this paradigm has some potentially fatal flaws.

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As Michael Walzer has argued,<sup>20</sup> Jews have traditionally been most comfortable thinking about persecution as opposed to the political challenges of ruling, and as a people who have been the victims of the rule of others for so long, there was often an assumption in Zionist thought that a Jewish state would be different than other states because of the Jews' history of persecution. Whether it was Theodor Herzl or the socialist Nahman Syrkin, Israel was supposed to be a land of hope and promise.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the idea that Jews could be an oppressor people, when every year at Passover the Jews remember what it meant to be slaves in Egypt, is a disturbing conclusion, all the more so for Jews who live in the Diaspora and do not live with the same kinds of security challenges that exist in Israel. This different socio-political experience is not meant to suggest that either Israeli Jews or Diaspora Jews are right when it comes to critiquing what goes on in Israel – it is only, for the moment, to emphasize different experiences and perception that have contributed to Diaspora and Israeli Jews heading in a variety of different directions.

In this regard, Hertzberg was writing at a turning point in Diaspora/Israel relations. Whereas the debate used to be about which form of political space the Jews should strive for, the debate has become how to navigate the spaces created by Jewish politics. One significant example of a success was the effort by American Jews to lobby for the rights of Soviet Jewry to emigrate. The Jackson-Vanik amendment of 1974 tied U.S.-Soviet trade relations to the USSR's treatment of its Jewish population. However, today most of the negotiations are about Israel, Israeli security policy and of the role that the Diaspora has in Israeli politics. This kind of debate is new and it certainly marks a different landscape from when Zionism was, in the words of Rabbi Isaac Wise, viewed as the "inebriation of morbid minds."<sup>22</sup> Today the debate is about what it means to support Israel.<sup>23</sup>

As Peter Beinart writes, "We need a new American Jewish story, built around this basic truth: We are not history's permanent victims."<sup>24</sup> He argues that, "In the spirit of Hillel, [Israel] must not do to others what Jews found hateful when done to them."<sup>25</sup> His view is that Israeli democracy must be protected, which means confronting both the institutional racist policies in Israel and a security discourse that prioritizes national rights over democratic ones. His argument remains Zionist, but one that seeks to build on the historical legacy and politically liberal democratic values that have animated so much of American Jewish life. Gershom Gorenberg has also argued that security for Israel should be directed toward protecting its democratic character above protecting the borders it gained in 1967 and still controls. In a direct appeal to Diaspora Jewry he writes,

What Diaspora Jews should give Israel – now, immediately, without waiting – is a reminder that we were strangers in Egypt, in Russia and Germany, even in America. They can remind Israelis of the urgency that the minority experience gives to liberal values. They can support organizations in Israel, as they do in the Diaspora, that advocate human rights and the separation of religion and state. They can help fund institutions that teach Judaism as it deserves to be taught, as a faith that deepens respect for every human being. Instead of pretending that Israel is the country that they want it to be, or giving up on it because it is not, they can help make it that country.<sup>26</sup>

Compare these views with those of Alan Dershowitz who argues that defense for Israel is to focus on territorial integrity and protection from terrorist attack and defends a vision of Israel that while imperfect means that criticisms of Israeli policy without more wide global condemnation of other states is a kind of bigotry<sup>27</sup> (although this normative approach is really a kind of moral nonsense, since moral argument is rarely accomplished by comparing how bad you are by noting how somebody else is worse). Security debate around Israel all too often heads into paradigmatic divisions that do not speak to each other. Either you support Israel's right to defend itself against external enemies, including enemies within that could be terrorists, or you support Israel as a democratic country with the rule of law and respect for human rights. What these options demonstrate, however, is that the debate is no longer about whether Jews should be Zionists or assimilationists, but about how Jews can best support and defend Israel.

The Jewish Question has seemingly been answered then, but its answers have led to more questions, questions that we do not have the answers for, or if we do, risk tearing apart Jewish communities. Moreover, we may not even know what the actual question is. It may be that the framing of the Jewish Question was itself always problematic, searching for political spaces in the wrong places and uncritically adopting modern-European-national assumptions about political space. To even suggest as much today, when Israel's existence is as assured as it has ever been, and when Jews in the Diaspora can by and large now live in an age of minority rights that protects them as much as anybody else, may seem odd. Nevertheless, Israel's existence, minority rights, multiculturalism, melting pots, pluralism or cultural mosaics have been unable to resolve an underlying discomfort that the Jewish Question addressed.<sup>28</sup> This discomfort is reflected in the uncertainty and possible anxiety faced by many (younger) Jews in the Diaspora who seek out how to retain their

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Jewish identity in an age when Israel is not just the national homeland for the Jews, but also an occupying military-power with a nuclear arsenal and some serious problems with racism. Indeed, according to one Israeli poll, “a large number of Israeli Jews seem to accept discrimination against Arabs and that while Israelis do not perceive their country to be an apartheid state, they are mostly unopposed to it becoming one.”<sup>29</sup> If the Jewish Question has, by way of one of its answers, provided for a spatial foundation upon which Jews could uphold institutionally racist ideas, is it possible to uncritically accept this answer? What if the answer is a consequence of a problematic question?

What kind of research can justifiably question a historical context in which the Jewish Question was not only about Jews finding a political space for themselves, but also was framed by attempted genocide? The Jewish Question was very much formulated in the assumptions of its time, but that does not mean that the spatial framing behind the Question needs to be accepted, or that the Question is beyond reproach. The issue is not to doubt the importance of Israel, but it is to follow in the intellectual path taken by Hannah Arendt when, as a refugee, she sought out alternative ways of thinking about politics, political space Jewish identity, Zionism, and belonging.<sup>30</sup>

Debate about Israel does not critically question the spatial underpinnings upon which this answer to the Jewish Question was based. In other words, as Hannah Arendt noted,<sup>31</sup> the answers to the Jewish Question were really all variations of the same type of answer, but it was an answer that could only lead to more conflict and thus require asking the question again. The ongoing debate about the Diaspora Jewry’s relationship with Israel demonstrates the various ways in which the Question has not been answered. Indeed, the Question remains relevant, not just in regard to Diaspora/Israel relations, but also in the role that the Question plays in contemporary Jewish culture and society. It is in this vein that Jewish fiction becomes important, as a marker of significant issues that continue to inform and influence cultural and social Jewish landscapes.

First, that these novels have been written by award winning authors is all the more interesting. It demonstrates the extent of successful integration into the wider society where Jews live, for in this case not only are these authors well respected and recognized as leading authors, they are well regarded as Jewish authors. The literary and commercial success of these novels illustrates the integration as opposed to assimilation as the Jewish identity of the authors is not hidden, questioned or marginalized. This publicity of Jewish identity is greater in North America than in the UK, but exists in both countries nevertheless.<sup>32</sup> The novels that brought

them some of the highest awards in literature are all explicitly Jewish texts. The main characters are almost all exclusively Jewish, they are often set in Jewish communities, they are faced with Jewish problems, and so on. It is not simply that the authors of these novels are Jews and are widely successful as authors. It is that Jewish novels can be recognized to an extent that demonstrates a high degree of integration, not assimilation.<sup>33</sup>

In this regard, the success of these authors could be an example of how successful the integrationist answer to the Jewish Question has been. Yet this argument misses the point, for integration in the Diaspora has not required nor demanded distancing oneself from Israel and thus participating in debate about the Jewish Question. Indeed for some Jews, it was important as Diaspora Jews to become Zionists. For example, in the United States, Louis Brandeis (1856-1941) and Solomon Schechter (1847-1915) both argued for American Jews to be Zionists, but did not call for them to move to Palestine or Israel. Brandeis, who was an associate justice of the Supreme Court, was perhaps the most famous.<sup>34</sup> What he did was to equate being Jewish with being a Zionist.<sup>35</sup> Not only that, he also claimed that to be a good Jew and a good American, one should become a Zionist.<sup>36</sup> As Brandeis argued, “loyalty to America demands... that each American Jew become a Zionist.”<sup>37</sup> He claimed that American Jews had a home, and did not need a new one, but many Jews did not have a home and for them there was Israel. Schechter, one of the founders of Conservative Judaism in North America, saw Zionism as an important factor in preventing assimilation because it helped to maintain a sense of Jewish identity in the Diaspora.<sup>38</sup>

Second, it is noteworthy that all of these novels are in some way connected to the Jewish Question. Both Howard Jacobson and Michael Chabon place central emphasis on the Jewish Question as a starting point for a narrative. In both cases, the narrative begins in some way with the Nazi answer. Neither author begins with any of the answers provided by Jews themselves, although Jacobson comes closest. His novel, which, as will be explored below, involves regular referrals to the need for Israel because of the Nazis but is primarily almost a monologue of a tortured soul riveted by guilt caused by Israeli security policy toward the Palestinians. Thus, if we are to recognize these authors as voices that contribute to and reflect Jewish cultural and socio-political themes, regardless of the extent to which they may be representative they are powerful, it is fairly clear that the question of what political spaces exists for the Jews today remains important and animating. The question, however, is why, and what is it about the Jewish Question that remains relevant?

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Methodologically going back to explore the context in which the Question was asked would require asking what kinds of answers could work in the age of National Socialism. Yet, the issue today is how the answers to the Jewish Question may not have actually been answers but were more like further questions. It is not the aim here to engage in historical counter-factualism as a means to critique the main 20<sup>th</sup> Century Jewish answers to the Question. Rather, the method here is to use contemporary Jewish literature to explore the relevance of the Jewish Question today. In short, the Jewish Question created subsequent questions that have fundamentally challenged the original terms of the Question and its answers. Jewish literature, which in this context refers to literature not only written by Jews but also about Jewish themes, provides a way to explore this situation. Moreover, some significant 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish novels imply that the Jewish Question may not have been answered. If we read contemporary Jewish literature as aiming to say something about Jewish life,<sup>39</sup> we find that something peculiar is going on, at least in regard to the novels that I focus on here: *The Final Solution*, *Kavalier and Klay*, *The Yiddish Policeman's Union* and *The Finkler Question*.

### *The Jewish Question in Chabon and Jacobson*

Something peculiar is going on when leading Jewish authors, in both the United States and the United Kingdom feel that the Jewish Question remains an important point of Jewish identity and use the Jewish Question as either the focus of, or the starting point for their novels. If the Jewish Question has been answered, why is it so strongly featured in the work of leading Jewish authors? Firstly, because the Question speaks to the scope of political imagination that has shaped if not haunted modernity and Jewish political discourse. Second, because its answers have contributed toward a contemporary crisis that may be splitting the Jewish people. In this sense, the Jewish Question's normative purpose, to find a political space for the Jews, has led to political spaces that may either be unmaking the Jewish people or demanding that we question the normative values that come with nationhood and contemporary Diaspora life. The new political spaces for the Jews are requiring new questions that are remarkably similar to the original one. As such, a significant aspect of the Question has been unanswered. The novels by Michael Chabon and Howard Jacobson help, when read together, to make sense out of these issues.

To begin, Michael Chabon's three novels, *The Final Solution*, *The Yiddish Policeman's Union* and the Pulitzer Prize winning *Kavalier and*

*Klay* all speak in some way to the Jewish Question and its 20<sup>th</sup> Century Jewish answers. While only *The Yiddish Policeman's Union* is directly centered around the Jewish Question, all three novels begin in some measure as a response to the Nazi answer to the Final Solution

*The Final Solution* is set during the Second World War. A small boy, Linus Steinman, is found wandering on some train tracks in England, with a parrot on his shoulder. The boy is Jewish, German, a refugee: "He formed part of a small group of children, most of them Jewish, whose emigration to Britain was negotiated by Mr. Wilkes, the vicar of the English Church in Berlin."<sup>40</sup> The boy is staying at the house of the Panickers. The father, an Anglican Vicar, the mother a housewife who cares for the lodgers' meals, and their son, a problematic youth who becomes a murder suspect. He is suspected of the murder of the potential thief of Linus' parrot, and an old man, who could be a retired Sherlock Holmes, decides to find the parrot, and ends up finding both the parrot and the murderer of the potential parrot thief. The novel's relevance to the Jewish Question is twofold. First, the title of the novel is a clear reference to Hitler's solution to the Jewish Question. Second, the boy is an escapee of Holocaust.

*The Final Solution* is a detective novel, with three mysteries. The first is a murder mystery. The second is the mystery of the missing parrot. These two mysteries are related, and in the end the rescue of the parrot also results in finding the murderer. The third mystery is not solved. The parrot recites numbers, but the numbers are never explained. The "old man" detective does not solve this riddle and the reader is never told what the numbers mean. We are told what they do not mean: they are neither Swiss bank accounts, nor cypher codes. But it is likely that the numbers have something to do with the Nazi Final Solution, possibly the identification numbers of trains departing for concentration camps, or something along those lines. While in this novel Chabon is not trying to provide a narrative of Jewish life, it does serve as an important introduction to the relevance of the Jewish Question in Chabon's other works, for like the other two novels of interest, he begins this one with a reference to the Jewish Question: "'Nazis was it?' Said Shane. He gave his head a moderate shake. 'Rotten business. Tough luck for the Jews, when you come right down to it.'"<sup>41</sup> Tough luck indeed.

The mystery in this novel of the unanswered numbers, which may represent extreme tough luck, emphasizes the unanswered elements for how Jews today understand the political spaces that have come into being post-Holocaust. Linus survives the war, and so does the mystery of the numbers. These numbers could represent the everlasting shadows of the Holocaust. They also, however, could represent unanswered questions



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about political space and Jewish politics. In this vein, Chabon has multiple characters in multiple novels searching for a life by fleeing or escaping their homes because of the Nazis. The first of these characters is the young Linus. The second is Josef Kavalier, from the novel *Kavalier and Klay*.

Josef, or Joe, wants to become an escape artist. He takes lessons, learns the ropes, how to pick locks, etc. He even has his younger brother throw him into a river while chained inside a bag. He manages to escape and then has to save his younger brother Thomas from drowning in the same river after Thomas went in trying to save Josef from drowning.<sup>42</sup> Saving Thomas is a recurring storyline in this novel, and Joe spends a large portion of the novel trying to save his younger brother from the Nazis, a task that he comes tragically close to accomplishing. Alas, his brother dies en route. However, while he tries to save his brother, Joe's story is one of escape. Joe's parents do their best to help Joe escape from Prague before it is too late. He is the only one given the chance, but the route they provide for him does not work out and he has to find another way out. He is, with the help of his escapist teacher, Bernard Kornblum, hidden in a coffin that is carrying the Golem out of Prague and into safety. "As soon as the German army occupied Prague, talk began, in certain quarters, of sending the city's famous Golem, Rabbi Loew's miraculous automaton, into the safety of exile."<sup>43</sup>

Note the last phrase, "the safety of exile" for this phrase raises all the hopes, dreams and dangers that the Jewish Question sought to address. Exile has, in the Zionist liturgy, not been a safe place. For Jewish victims of Nazi aggression, to refer to exile as a place of safety is both cruel and hopeful. The exile is not a reference to the fate of European Jewry in the Nazi death machine, but to the hope of escape from Prague into another, safer place in the Diaspora. Interestingly, in the novel this safer place becomes the United States. The exile is not the exile of the *Galut*, but being forced to flee from one city to another, which is ultimately what Joe ends up doing, and finds his way to New York City which becomes his home. Joe thus goes into exile, and he departs Prague with words of warning and wisdom from Kornblum: "Forget what you are escaping from. Reserve your anxiety for what you are escaping to."<sup>44</sup>

The Jewish Question was forward looking, in the sense that it posed a question about the future of the Jews. However, it was also always backward looking, framing the issue of needing to escape from something. Thus, for example, we find extensive analysis in traditional Zionist thought about anti-Semitism, but nowhere near as much systematic analysis about state-building. This point is raised by the Israeli reporter and author Ari Shavit in his book, *My Promised Land*. As he argues, Israel

survived because the Zionists did what they needed to, and did not distract themselves with too much abstract thinking.<sup>45</sup> Chabon, however, invites us to change focus of the Question, so that we ask more clearly and critically about the future, about what we were escaping to.

The shift in direction, instead of asking what the Jews ought to escape from to a critique of what they have escaped to, is reflective of the anxiety that many Jews feel when confronted with the political and security challenges that Israel faces, and what role Diaspora Jews have in confronting and addressing related issues. These anxieties are exposed in Chabon's novel *the Yiddish Policeman's Union*, where Israel does not exist: "Nineteen forty-eight: Strange time to be a Jew. In August, the defense of Jerusalem collapsed and the outnumbered Jews of the three-month-old republic of Israel were routed, massacred, and driven into the sea."<sup>46</sup> Instead of surviving in Israel, those who made it out alive ended up in the Jewish community of Sitka, Alaska, in the United States.

This outpost of a Jewish community in the far North is not as outlandish as it may seem. Gerald S. Berman writes in the journal *Jewish Social Studies* that, "In August 1939, the United States Department of the Interior released a report drafted under the auspices of Undersecretary Harry Slattery entitled *The Problem of Alaskan Development* which called for the economic development of Alaska by means of a limited influx of European refugees."<sup>47</sup> The proposal was never adopted. Chabon's novel presumes that it was. The Slattery Report was one answer to the Jewish Question, and it provides the basis for Chabon's novel.

The Jewish Question hovers over this book in a different way than *Kavalier and Clay*. In both novels the Question's relevance sets the stage for the life experiences of the novel's protagonists but in *the Yiddish Policeman's Union*, we also have a physical space for the Jews to live as Jews, in a Jewish community of their own that has a legal separation from the rest of the United States. It is not the characters so much as the place that makes this novel an important contribution to contemporary thinking about the Jewish Question. Sitka may not be the most culturally Jewish of places (in the Diaspora, New York fills this role as *the Jewish City* according to some)<sup>48</sup>, but in the novel it is a political and legal Jewish polity.

Nevertheless, this fictional Jewish polity does not replace Israel. As Chabon writes in the novel, "Observant Jews around the world have not abandoned their hope to dwell one day in the land of Zion. But Jews have been tossed out of the joint three times now – in 586 BCE, in 70 CE and with savage finality in 1948."<sup>49</sup> Jews still hope, and Sitka does not betray that hope, even though it is a Jewish community with some degree of political and legal autonomy.

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Yet it is a peculiar kind of political space, a temporary one:

Like the rest of Congress, like most Americans, the House Committee was sobered by grim revelations of the slaughter of two million Jews in Europe, by the barbarity of the rout of Zionism, by the plight of the refugees of Palestine and Europe. At the same time they were practical souls. The population of the Sitka Settlement had already swollen to two million. In direct violation of the act, Jews had spread up and down the western shores of Baranof Island, out to Kruzof, all the way up to West Chichagov Island. In the end, Congress granted the Sitka Settlement "interim status" as a federal district. But candidacy for separate statehood was explicitly ruled out. NO JEWLASKA, LAWMAKERS PROMISE, ran the headline in the *Daily Times*. The emphasis was always on the word "interim." In Sixty years that status would revert, and the Sitka Jews would be left once again to shift for themselves.<sup>50</sup>

The Sitka Settlement is thus presented by Chabon as both an answer and not an answer to the Jewish Question. It is temporary and in sixty years the Question will reappear. Or will it?

What is of especial interest is that the Slattery Report provides an answer to the Jewish Question that indirectly raises a point of view that the main Jewish answers did not take seriously. Why was it that, excluding Jewish socialism, the main Jewish answers to the Question presumed that a solution lay in the political qualities bequeathed by a specific spatial setting, one where the Jews were either sovereign over their own land, or were protected by the sovereignty of others? The Sitka Settlement, however, has no sovereignty. It is an interim federal district. The Jewish Question did not think of districts, perhaps because a district might seem like a ghetto, perhaps because in a district they would not have control over the laws, but remain at the mercy of other more powerful rulers. Whatever the reason, Chabon instructs us to take alternatives seriously, to remember that no political space is permanent, and, perhaps, to be a little anxious about the future. Kornblum, Joe's escapist teacher in *Kavalier and Klay*, encourages thinking hard about the future. Jews may be escaping *Galut* or possibly escaping a life in Israel (think of the Israeli Diaspora,<sup>51</sup> for example). Wherever Jews are escaping to, however, Kornblum's lesson is not to think that it will to be a place that provides all the answers.

The epitome of this anxiousness can be found not in one of Chabon's characters or novels, but in Howard Jacobson's Man Booker winning novel, *The Finkler Question*. The title of the novel is a clear reference to the Jewish Question, and to one of the protagonists in the novel Finkler. Finkler's question is a late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century exploration of Israel and

Jewish identity. The question is not explicitly stated but it is regularly alluded to with Finkler, a philosopher, regularly debating Israel and the Middle East with his former teacher and elder, Libor. They cannot separate their Jewish identity from the security politics of Israel, or, for that matter, from the security politics of Jewish history. Libor would often raise the Holocaust as a defense clause supporting Israel, and he would attack any Jew who is critical of Israel as being self-hating. The novel repeats this circle of debate almost endlessly.

For Libor, Israel provides a “lifeboat position.” As he says, “No, I’ve never been there and don’t want to go there, but even at my age the time might not be far away when I have nowhere else *to* go. That is history’s lesson.”<sup>52</sup> This argument is, in the words of one veteran Israeli peace activist and current volunteer with the American liberal Jewish lobby group J-Street, not a strong argument, nor one that he had heard for a long time.<sup>53</sup> Thus it was with great surprise when he learned that a young woman who also volunteers for J-Street was using precisely this argument.<sup>54</sup> Libor, the fictional character, is not young, and so his historical consciousness would surely be different from that of a twenty-something (non-fictional) New Yorker. What is interesting, however, is the extent to which the fictional debates in the Finkler Question replicate those taking place in the Jewish world, and do so almost verbatim, even if the arguments are not good ones. Peter Beinart, for example, explicitly challenges this kind of historical-victim mentality in his approach to Jewish politics and Israel.<sup>55</sup>

The characters Finkler and Libor display a deep level of anxiety in their debates around Israel, so much so that it is a third party, Treslove, who is not Jewish and as such plays the role of the outsider who can describe the neurosis of these debates. For Libor, the Holocaust is always central, so central that he rarely has to even mention it. “It was always possible, Treslove concluded, that Jews didn’t have to mention the Holocaust in order to have mentioned the Holocaust.”<sup>56</sup> Libor’s accusations toward Finkler being a self-hating Jew also do not ring true. “Treslove had never met a Jew, in fact never met anybody, who hated himself less than Finkler.”<sup>57</sup> Moreover, Finkler’s view toward Israel is one of simultaneous disappointment (tinged with disgust) and frustration. “Treslove... could never quite get whether Finkler resented Israel for winning or for being about to lose.”<sup>58</sup> For Libor the questions over Israel were one of conscience whereas for Finkler the issue is justice. Neither of them are ever satisfied. When Finkler raises the justice question, Libor says that shame is best kept within the family, and that you can explain to your family member your shame, but you would not boycott a family member. Libor and Finkler are unable to resolve their dispute, and they

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both represent archetypes of contemporary debate around Israel. The other characters in the novel fit into these archetypes, modifying and supplementing them. They never, however, challenge them. The terrain of the debate remains fixed between the poles of Libor and Finkler.

Occasionally, for Finkler the terrain of this discussion slips out of control. Finkler's son, Immanuel gets into a fight. Finkler is led to believe that the fight was with anti-Semites. Immanuel attended a debate at the Oxford Student Union. The topic was something along the lines of "This house believes that Israel has forfeited its right to exist."<sup>59</sup> Many student unions in the UK currently have such debates. As Finkler interrogates his son, he learns the truth, that Immanuel ended up picking a fight with Jews.

'They were Zionists. The real meshugganers with black hats and fringes, like settlers.'

'Settlers? In Oxford?'

'Settler types.'

'And he picked a fight with them? What did he say?'

[Blaise, Immanuel's mother replies] 'Nothing much, He accused them of stealing someone else's country...'

She paused.

'And?'

'And practicing apartheid...'

'And?'

'And slaughtering women and children.'

'And?'

'There is no and. That's all.'

Immanuel looked up. He reminded Finkler of his late wife, challenging him. He had that same expression of ironic unillusionedness that comes with knowing a person too well. 'Yes, that's what I said. It's true, isn't it? You've said so much yourself.'

'Not specifically, to a person, Immanuel. It's one thing to iterate a general political truth, it's another thing to pick a fight with a person in the street.'

'Well, I'm not a philosopher, Dad. I don't iterate general political truths. I just told them all what I thought of them and their shitty little country and called one of them, who came up to me, a racist.'

'A racist?' What had he said to you?'

'Nothing. It wasn't about him. I was talking about his country.'

'Was he an Israeli?'

'How do I know? He wore a black hat. He was there to oppose the motion.'<sup>60</sup>

Finkler ends up being furious at his son for provoking this physical fight. Yet as his son points out, his argument was not that far away from

Finkler's. While a significant portion of the exchange involves the complications of the father/son relationship, there are other ingredients as well. It is fascinating how his son assumes that a religious looking Jew is automatically some type of right-wing settler type. The correlation between Jewish identity and hawkish support of Israel is a problematic feature of the politics of perception that complicate relations both inside Jewish communities and between Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Indeed, such perceptions play a part in the European Left's relationship with Israel and minority Jewish populations in Europe.<sup>61</sup> Another important ingredient in their exchange is the extent to which Israel polarizes Jewish opinion to such an extent that it can provoke Jewish attacks. In the extreme, relevant examples include the assassination of Rabin or of Orthodox Jews attacking Jewish women at the Wailing Wall. Outside of Israel, similar debates take place, with the emotional and ego-laden Finklestein/Dershowitz saga being one of the more public illustrations.<sup>62</sup>

Whereas Chabon's novels took the Jewish Question as a starting point for creating narratives about Jewish lives in fictional settings, Jacobson's novel is about where the Jewish Question has gone, and what it has brought the Jews. The difference between the two authors is stark. Chabon treats the Question as unanswered, as opening up possibilities for future scenarios of Jewish life. He warns against taking the future for granted, but without forgetting the past. He provides alternative realities, where Jews live in Alaska instead of Arad, and he develops Jewish themes in the Diaspora, comic books, Superman, escape from the Nazis, desires for vengeance against the Nazis, hope in the Diaspora. In his novels, the Jewish Question is left open.

In Jacobson's novel, however, the Question is a kind of closed question. It is not so much a question with only a yes or no answer, but one that offers an equally dichotomous alternatives as represented by Libor and Finkler. Israel is one answer, but this answer is unsettling. The title of the novel, *The Finkler Question*, is a reference to how the Jewish Question remains for some a dark shadow that has, because of Israel, turned Jews into aggressive military Occupiers, frustrating the hopes and dreams of another people. An underlying moral struggle throughout this novel is with Jews transforming from the oppressed into the oppressor, courtesy of modern nation-state-hood. The Question's answer has thus given rise to a somewhat existential problem about what it means to be Jewish, when Jewish identity is now readily associated with Israeli oppression. The debates throughout the novel regularly address this issue, placing it in historical and contemporary geo-political contexts, but without providing a resolution.

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### *Conclusion: A Possible Paradigm Shift?*

These novels each represent a different approach to thinking about the Jewish Question. They explore the role of identity, morality, escape, anxiety, and critique. Taken together they reveal the range of questions and uncertainties that the Jewish Question addressed and has left unanswered. The novels do not provide answers but they do help illuminate what the questions are. For example, one of the main points that reverberates throughout the Finkler Question is that the Israeli answer to the Jewish Question has created a deep neurosis within Jewish circles about what it means to be Jewish. The answer, Jacobson tells us, is with Israel. Even in the Diaspora, Israel often animates Jewish political thought and defines Jewish political spaces, sometimes to the point of violence. Of course, while being Jewish in no way requires that one become a Zionist, the expectation is there nonetheless, from both inside and outside Jewish communities.<sup>63</sup>

The point to take from reading these four novels together is not so much that the Jewish Question has been asked and answered, but that the Question may have been unclear. Each novel suggests a different way to explore the Question and its answers, but when read together they demonstrate that the Jewish Question remains a point of interest if not of contention in the construction of modern Jewish identity and contemporary Jewish political discourse.

Answers to the Jewish Question were supposed to provide security, safety, prosperity, and so on. An answer would resolve the perpetual uncertainty and insecurity of Jewish life in the Diaspora. In important ways, the answers that exist today have accomplished much in this regard. Yet, the anxiety contained in the Jewish Question, and which is a deep trait in collective Jewish psychology, remains. This anxiety is familiar, developed over hundreds of years of fear, persecution, victimhood, and violence. Yet, the ongoing presence of this anxiety, so clearly revealed in character Libor from the Finkler Question, allows a history of insecurity to overshadow accomplishments and strengths. While the past may not have been always bright, perhaps Jews should not have been so willing to be seduced by the future. Perhaps Jews should have been more anxious about what the future could create. For Jews today this future is largely defined by the existence of Israel, and of what it means to be a Jew in the age of the Jewish State.

When the Question was originally being posed it was during a period when political thought was heavily influenced by the nationalist politics of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.<sup>64</sup> The history of the Twentieth Century was not

kind to the Jews, and it was not surprising that so many Jews ended up learning one of many painful lessons from the Holocaust. This lesson had to do with the ostensible homelessness of the Jewish people, of their being without a state of their own. Zygmunt Bauman has argued that this distinguishing feature of the Jewish people, their statelessness, their seemingly perpetual homelessness, this geographical void, was part of what made them vulnerable.<sup>65</sup> To counteract this vulnerability, the Zionists fought for their own political geography, and many Diaspora Jews also came to the aid of the new Israeli state. This internationalization of Jewish life was not the internationalization of humanitarianism or human rights (epitomized in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by the lawyer and French Jew René Cassin, one of the authors of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights). Rather this internationalization was more closely related to the international diplomatic activities of the Jews in the 1840s, in response to the blood libel charge in Damascus,<sup>66</sup> and much later developed as part of national political lobbying, especially in the United States,<sup>67</sup> home to the largest percentage of Diaspora Jews.<sup>68</sup> This was an inter-nationalism, or more accurately a kind of transnationalism,<sup>69</sup> focused on the role of nations and of nation-states. Many Jews in the Diaspora went along with this discourse, coming to increasingly understand the future of Jewry being tied to the future of Israel. Israel became the ostensible centre of Jewish geography in a way that had not been the case before.

This centrality, however, always existed in a tension, a tension that the novels illustrate and hint at, but which, in everyday life, is often hidden from view, for what the novels insinuate is that the Jewish Question was really a question about paradigms and a possible paradigm shift. Using Thomas Kuhn's definition of a paradigm,<sup>70</sup> the paradigm that framed the Jewish Question was by and large one defined by the political spaces of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The influence and promise of the modern nation-state was both a salvation and a threat to Jewish life, and the Jewish Question approached the topic of political space accordingly, finding both salvation and threat in the politics of nationhood.

What could not have been foreseen was the extent to which the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century came to promise a form of "assimilation" for Jews that had not previously existed. The legal regime of minority rights<sup>71</sup> created the conditions under which minority populations could retain their identity as a minority group. The rights discourse changed, especially in the 1960s with the civil rights movement, but so too did Jewish political discourse. For while minority rights were granting Jews increasing opportunities in the democratic Diaspora, Israel was creating another reality whereby Jewish salvation resided not in promise of minority rights



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and the law, but the grand historical narrative of the nation-state. As a consequence, Jews in Israel and the Diaspora started moving in different directions.<sup>72</sup> As David Vital has observed, “the rise of an independent Jewish state has both revolutionized and destabilized the Jewish world.”<sup>73</sup> The evidence of this destabilization is evident in the seemingly intractable debate surrounding Israel’s place in the Diaspora.

Jacobson’s novel in particular indicates that what is at stake is not a debate but the potential of a paradigm shift. The incommensurability of viewpoints between Libor and Finkler is evidence of something more than a disagreement. There is no middle ground in their worlds. Even though they are friends, they are also adversaries in their worldview. They may both belong to the Jewish people, but in such seemingly different ways that Libor can view Finkler as a self-hating Jew, simply because of Finkler’s moral frustrations with Israel. It is safer to view this debate within the comfortable world of fiction, but this safety is no less indicative of a developing sociology among world Jewry. The situation regarding Finkler’s son could well be a retelling of similar incidents at the London School of Economics, Columbia University, or Concordia in Montreal, for example. Fiction illustrates the problem, but it also demonstrates the hopelessness of the discourse.

While Jacobson’s novel is heavily involved in revealing this hopelessness, it is not featured in Chabon’s novels. His argument is for the need to escape from such hopelessness by thinking differently. His turn to alternative realities, counterfactual histories, and warnings about the future are all gestures toward the need to escape from the “normal science”<sup>74</sup> of Jewish thought about political space. What his novels suggest is not so much what the answer to the Jewish Question is, but that what we thought were the answers have created a new reality that cannot be answered in the terms that framed the Question. The knowledge that grounded the Jewish Question and its answers does not appear capable of resolving the current crisis about Israel’s role for Jewish identity, about how the Diaspora is to engage with Israel, or about what political spaces do exist for the Jews today.

As some important Jewish intellectuals have argued, the creation of Israel may not be the resolution to the Jewish search for an equal political footing in the modern world.<sup>75</sup> The turn to Israel, and the importance that Israel plays in the construction of Jewish identity and in Jewish political discourse, has also had some significantly challenging consequences that accompany the transition from being a people familiar with persecution to a people now with political authority.<sup>76</sup> This transition has not gone unnoticed, and it was a transition that the Jewish Question did not take seriously enough. The regular blindness on the part of Zionists as to how

Zionism would be received by the Palestinians, the willful ignorance behind the idea of Palestine being a “land without a people for a people without a land,” are signs that the challenges that came with political authority, with majority/minority politics, were not seriously addressed within the terms of the Jewish Question. Rather, the Question largely took it for granted that the answers would all take on a similar spatial formula, with the modern nation-state setting the geographic conditions of possibility and resolving any obstacles. Now that this condition has been met, the Jews in the Diaspora and the Jews in Israel are faced with having to confront the reality that the Question created problems that it could not answer: namely that by tying Jewish political aspirations to the nation-state, it may have been necessary to sacrifice the diaspora values and traditional moral discourses of Jewish identity and in the process dramatically redefine what means to be Jewish. Arthur Hertzberg was right when he pointed out that Jews in the Diaspora and in Israel are heading in different directions.<sup>77</sup> He was wrong, however, to think that the two could be rejoined within the contemporary political spaces of the nation-state. The Jewish Question may have been answered, but its answers have taken Jews into largely unforeseen directions and has created new questions about what it means to be Jewish in modernity, questions that cannot be answer according to the same guiding assumptions that framed the original Jewish Question.

### *Notes*

<sup>1</sup> Walzer, M, ed. *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* vii.

<sup>3</sup> Senor, D. and Singer, S. *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*, 1st ed. ed. New York: Twelve, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Eizenstat, S. E. *The Future of the Jews: How Global Forces Are Impacting the Jewish People, Israel, and Its Relationship with the United States* New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Israel has 64 listed companies which is less than the United States at 4601, but both China at 150 and Canada at 147 have more than Israel, although Israel has more companies listed than the UK which has 52. See, <http://www.nasdaq.com/screening/companies-by-region.aspx> (last accessed July 2, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Population numbers are from the CIA factbook (last accessed July 3, 2013). <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.

<sup>7</sup> Goldberg, J. J. *Jewish Power: Inside the American Jewish Establishment* Reading, Mass.; Harlow: Addison-Wesley, 1996.

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<sup>8</sup> Dual loyalty here does not mean that debate over the Israel lobby necessarily raises the spectre of dual loyalty. The debate over the Israel lobby is not the same as a debate over a Jewish lobby, although there was significant debate on this score in regard to the article and book published by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt. Whatever the faults may be of the Mearsheimer and Walt article and subsequent book, their focus is on the Israel lobby, which includes Christian organizations and other non-Jewish groups. Mearsheimer, J. J. and Walt, S. M. *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* London Allen Lane, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> See for example, Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France*(Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Compare Leff's *Sacred Bonds* with Arendt, A. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* London: André Deutsch, 1986. On the relation between identity, nation and the Holocaust see Bauman, Z. *Modernity and the Holocaust* Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1991.

<sup>11</sup> See Part III in, Mendes-Flohr, Paul R., and Jehuda Reinharz. *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. 2nd ed. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> For a historical framing of this debate see Laqueur, Walter. *The History of Zionism*. 3rd. ed. London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> See, Arendt, H. *Jewish Writings*. edited by Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman New York: Schocken Books, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Compare, Hertzberg, Arthur. *Being Jewish in America: The Modern Experience*. New York: Schocken Books, 1979; Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*. Translated by George Becker. New York: Schocken Books, 1995; Wettstein, Howard, ed. *Diasporas and Exiles: Varieties of Jewish Identity*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002; Zeitlin, Irving M. *Jews: The Making of a Diaspora People*. Cambridge: Polity, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Hertzberg. *Being Jewish in America*..

<sup>16</sup> Myers, David N. *Between Jew & Arab: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz*. Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press; Hanover; London: Published by University Press of New England, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Note Beinart's argument for saving liberal Zionism. See, Beinart, P. *The Crisis of Zionism*. New York: Times Books, 2012

<sup>18</sup> Kahn-Harris, K. *Uncivil War: The Israel Conflict in the Jewish Community*. London: David Paul, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Kuhn, T. S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed., Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996. Kuhn is not altogether clear on what he means by paradigm (or incommensurability, which could mean disagreement over a conclusion more than anything else), but for the immediate purpose what matters is in how a paradigm denotes the unity of a research community that shares a

common knowledge, that it is what unites a scientific community and that paradigms are incommensurable in that they are fundamentally opposed.

<sup>20</sup> Walzer. *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*

<sup>21</sup> Hertzberg, A. *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1975 pp. 200-231, 330-351.

<sup>22</sup> Laqueur. *The History of Zionism* p. 402.

<sup>23</sup> Eizenstat, S. E. "Loving Israel. Warts and All," *Foreign Policy* 81(1990-1991).

<sup>24</sup> Beinart, P. *The Crisis of Zionism* p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Beinart, P. *The Crisis of Zionism* p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Gorenberg, G. *The Unmaking of Israel* New York: Harper, 2011 p. 248.

<sup>27</sup> Dershowitz, A.M. *The Case for Israel* Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2003.

<sup>28</sup> The trend toward increased alienation by Diaspora Jews, especially younger Jews, from is more intense in North America, but still present in the UK. Compare: *PEW v JPR*

<sup>29</sup> Baron, I. Z. "Not My Grandfather's Israel: The Growing Racism of the Modern Israeli Public." *Tikkun Daily*. November 27, 2012. <http://www.tikkun.org/tikkundaily/2012/11/27/not-my-grandfathers-israel-the-growing-racism-of-the-modern-israeli-public/>

<sup>30</sup> See, Arendt, H. *The Jew as Pariah*, ed. Ron H. Feldman New York: Grove Press, 1978; Arendt, H. *Jewish Writings*, ed. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman New York: Schocken Books, 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Arendt, *Jewish Writings*.

<sup>32</sup> Kahn-Harris, K. and Gidley, B. *Turbulent Times: The British Jewish Community Today* London: Continuum, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Other Jewish authors in the second half of the Twentieth Century who demonstrate a similar integrationist success are Mordecai Richler and Philip Roth. In Richler's case, there are even national debates about his success, or comparative success: Barber, J. "Why Mordecai Richler Isn't Being Studied in Canadian Universities," *The Globe and Mail*, Wednesday, December 22 2010. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/why-mordecai-richler-isnt-being-studied-in-canadian-universities/article1321266/> (last accessed January 8, 2014).

<sup>34</sup> Laqueur, W. *The History of Zionism*, 3rd. ed.(London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> Urofsky, M. I. *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust*(New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975).

<sup>36</sup> Brandeis, L. D. "The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It," in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, ed. Arthur Herzberg(Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press).

<sup>37</sup> Eisen, *Galut*, 157.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. See, Schechter, S. "Zionism: A Statement" in *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers* (New York: Burning Bush Press, 1959), 91-97.

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<sup>39</sup> There are many examples, but one less-well known historical example that makes this point exceptionally well is Perle, Y. and Roskies, D.G. *Everyday Jews: Scenes from a Vanished Life* New Haven, Conn.: London: Yale University Press, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Chabon, M. *The Final Solution* New York: Fourth Estate, 2005 p. 18.

<sup>41</sup> Chabon, M. *The Final Solution* p. 19.

<sup>42</sup> Chabon, M. *The Adventures of Kavalier and Klay* New York: Fourth Estate, 2000, 2010 pp. 34-36.

<sup>43</sup> Chabon, M. *The Adventures of Kavalier and Klay* p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> Chabon, M. *The Adventures of Kavalier and Klay* p. 21.

<sup>45</sup> Shavit, A. *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2013.

<sup>46</sup> Chabon, M. *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* London: Harper Perennial, 2008, 2007 p. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Berman, G. S. "Reaction to the Resettlement of World War II Refugees in Alaska," *Jewish Social Studies* 44, no. 2/3 (1982): 271.

<sup>48</sup> Aviv, C. and Shneer, D. *New Jews: The End of the Jewish Diaspora* New York: New York University Press, 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Chabon, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, p. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Chabon, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, p. 29.

<sup>51</sup> Gold, G. J. *The Israeli Diaspora* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.

<sup>52</sup> Jacobson, H. *The Finkler Question* London: Bloomsbury, 2010 p. 25.

<sup>53</sup> Interview conducted in New York City on August 22, 2012.

<sup>54</sup> Interview conducted in New York City on August 14, 2012

<sup>55</sup> Beinart, *The Crisis of Zionism*.

<sup>56</sup> Jacobson, *The Finkler Question* p. 24.

<sup>57</sup> Jacobson, *The Finkler Question* p. 25.

<sup>58</sup> Jacobson, *The Finkler Question* p. 25.

<sup>59</sup> Jacobson, *The Finkler Question* p. 118.

<sup>60</sup> Jacobson, *The Finkler Question* p 189. The phrase "shitty little country" is an allusion to a remark made by the French ambassador to London in 2001, Mr Daniel Bernard, to the then owner of the Daily Telegraph Conrad Black. See BBC. *'Anti-Semitic' French envoy under fire*. December 20, 2001. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/1721172.stm> (last accessed July 25, 2013).

<sup>61</sup> A relevant discussion of this is, Shindler, C. *Israel and the European Left: Between Solidarity and Delegitimization* New York: Continuum, 2012.

<sup>62</sup> See for example, Finkelstein, Norman G. *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History* (Berkeley, Calif.: [Great Britain]: University of California Press, 2005) p. 17; Dershowitz, Alan 'Is Norman Finkelstein in Tehran?,' *The Huffington Post*, December 12 2006; Wilson, John

K. to Academe Blog, June 8, 2012, <http://academeblog.org/2012/06/08/an-interview-with-alan-dershowitz/>.

<sup>63</sup> See, Baron, I. Z. *Obligation in Exile: The Jewish Diaspora, Israel and Critique*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming 2015.

<sup>64</sup> See Laqueur, *The History of Zionism*.

<sup>65</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*.

<sup>66</sup> Frankel, J. *The Damascus Affair: 'Ritual Murder', Politics, and the Jews in 1840* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; Cohen, R. "Diasporas and the Nation-State: From Victims to Challengers," *International Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1996).

<sup>67</sup> Goldberg, *Jewish Power*.

<sup>68</sup> Eizenstat, *The Future of the Jews*.

<sup>69</sup> Vertovec, S. *Transnationalism* London: Routledge, 2009. See also, Baron, *Obligation in Exile*.

<sup>70</sup> Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

<sup>71</sup> Preece, J. J. *Minority Rights* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005. For more on minority rights and the modern nation-state see Tully, J. *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. A key text in the multicultural minority rights literature is Kymlicka, W. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press, 1995.

<sup>72</sup> Vital makes a similar conclusion, but from different premises. See, Vital, D. *The Future of the Jews: A People at the Crossroads?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990 p. 147.

<sup>73</sup> Vital, D. *The Future of the Jews* p. 147.

<sup>74</sup> Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

<sup>75</sup> Shatz, A. ed. *Prophets / Outcast: A Century of Dissident Jewish Writing About Zionism* New York: Nation Books, 2004; Karpf, A., Klug, B., Rose, J., Rosenbaum, B. eds., *A Time to Speak Out: Independent Jewish Voices on Israel, Zionism and Jewish Identity* London: Verso, 2008.

<sup>76</sup> See Walzer, *Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism*; Walzer, M., Lorberbaum, M., and Zohar, N. J. eds., *The Jewish Political Tradition: Authority*, vol. I New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.

<sup>77</sup> Hertzberg, *Being Jewish in America*.

# TWO FACES OF UNIVERSALISM: JEWISH EMANCIPATION AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

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*Abstract*

It is widely recognised in Sociology that Universalism is an equivocal principle: on the one hand, inclusive and challenging of all exclusions in the name of a common humanity; on the other, exclusive of those deemed inhuman, not yet human or positively anti-human. Universalism has indeed shown two faces to Jews: an emancipatory face manifest in movements for legal recognition of Jews as equal citizens and for social recognition of Jews as equal human beings; and a repressive face manifest in depictions of ‘the Jews’ as a particularistic people. The former declares that Jews are human beings and that this human status should have practical consequences; the latter turns ‘the Jews’ into a homogenised and unitary category deemed incapable of meeting the universal standards of humankind. The ‘Jewish question’ has historically straddled these two faces, but it remains necessary to distinguish conceptually between Jewish emancipation and the Jewish question, that is, the question of what is to be done about the harm the Jews allegedly inflict on humanity at large. The purpose of this paper is to explore the relation between these two faces of universalism through a brief review of three historical moments: the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment, 19<sup>th</sup> century revolutionary tradition, and contemporary cosmopolitanism.

**Keywords:** universalism, Jewish emancipation, Jewish question, antisemitism, enlightenment, Marx, cosmopolitanism.

“Prejudices, like odorous bodies, have a double existence both solid and subtle--solid as the pyramids, subtle as the twentieth echo of an echo, or as the memory of hyacinths which once scented the darkness.”

George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1874)

## *Introduction*

It is widely recognised in the field of Sociology that Universalism is an equivocal principle: on the one hand, it is inclusive and challenges all

exclusions in the name of common humanity; on the other, it can be exclusive and repressive of those deemed inhuman, not yet human or anti-human. Nowhere is this equivocation more pronounced than in the universal principles embodied in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. They contained in practice multiple exclusions – women, slaves, colonised peoples, Jews, Protestants, foreigners, actors, etc. – but the idea that every human being has the right to have rights provided the register under which the excluded could and did demand rights for themselves. They set the scene for the successive battles to come for what Jürgen Habermas has named ‘the inclusion of the other’ and Lynn Hunt has named ‘the logic of universality’.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the universal principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, revised and extended in 1791 and 1793, also set the scene for the exercise of terror against those condemned as *hostis generis humani* or ‘enemies of the human race’.<sup>2</sup> The terror embodied at that time in the guillotine has subsequently been re-enacted in all manner of ways against newly discovered ‘enemies of humanity’.

The temptation in Sociology has been to posit a choice between philosophical and methodological universalism on one side and postmodern and postcolonial critiques of universalism on the other.<sup>3</sup> What is at stake here is which epistemological approach to adopt and how this selection can be justified. However, what if the equivocation lies in the principle of universalism itself and what is demanded of us is not a choice between one approach and another but rather recognition of the equivocal character of what is out there in the world?

In this paper I shall explore this question through the relation of Universalism to Jews. The premise of my argument is that Universalism has shown two faces to Jews. Its emancipatory face has been manifest in movements for legal recognition of Jews as equal citizens and for social recognition of Jews as equal human beings. Its repressive face has been manifest in depictions of ‘the Jews’ as a particularistic people incapable of embracing or actively hostile to the values of universal humanity. The inclusive face of Universalism declares that Jews are human beings and that their human status should have practical, legal and political consequences. The exclusive face of Universalism turns ‘the Jews’ into a homogenised and unitary category outside of and opposed to the universal aspirations of humankind. The two faces Universalism has shown to Jews are characteristically expressed in the idea of ‘Jewish emancipation’ on one side and that of ‘the Jewish question’ on the other.

To be sure, the ‘Jewish question’ is a catch-all phrase that has as often as not straddled the two faces of universalism, but I argue that



conceptually it is necessary to distinguish between the inclusiveness of Jewish emancipation and exclusiveness of the 'Jewish question', which refers in effect to the harm the Jews allegedly inflict on humanity as a whole and what is to be done about it. To illustrate this claim, I shall briefly review three historical contexts in which this relation has come to the fore: the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment, 19<sup>th</sup> century revolutionary thought and contemporary cosmopolitanism.

*Enlightenment thought and the Emancipation Movement*

The troubled relation between universalism and antisemitism has not gone unnoticed within sociological thought. For example, in his analysis of *The Civic Sphere* Jeffrey Alexander rightly draws the readers' attention to the 'endemic inferiority' projected onto Jews within the eighteenth century Enlightenment. He maintains that even among supporters of emancipation Jews were characteristically represented as locked in the past, self-centred and tribal, loyal only to their own, unwilling to participate in the civic life of 'Christian' societies. Alexander cites Arthur Hertzberg's claim in *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*, that 'modern, secular anti-Semitism was fashioned not as a reaction to the Enlightenment ... but within the Enlightenment', and maintains that it was commonplace within the Enlightenment to say that the Jewish religion contained principles that made it difficult or impossible for Jews to manifest the universal solidarity required for civil life. The common refrain on the Jews, as Alexander puts it, concerned their 'bitter hatred of all who do not belong of the tribe' and their inability to look at non-Jews as 'members of a common civil society'.<sup>4</sup>

The point Alexander makes is that in the eighteenth century Enlightenment the two faces of universalism might appear as opposites but were intimately connected. He argues that leading advocates of emancipation were commonly saturated with concerns about the 'Jewish question' and prone to justify emancipation in terms of finding a 'solution' to the 'Jewish question'. There is much truth to this argument. It was the orthodoxy within the Enlightenment to take for granted the harmfulness of the Jews, especially their tendencies toward usury and behaving as a nation within the nation. The Enlightenment orthodoxy sought to explain this harmfulness by reference to the restrictive social and political circumstances in which Jews were forced to live, and to seek a solution through the hope that better circumstances would make Jews better human beings. If the Jewish question was the question of what to do about the harm Jews caused for society, the Enlightenment solution was

neither to leave things as they were nor to get rid of the Jews by forced conversion, territorial expulsion or physical elimination, but to improve the Jews by improving their status in society. It was through this enlightened logic that Jewish emancipation was deeply imbricated in the Jewish question.

The most famous example is that of the leading Prussian supporter of Jewish emancipation, Christian von Dohm, who argued that ‘the hard and oppressive conditions under which the Jews live almost everywhere’ explained their corruption. He maintained that since ‘the Jew is more a man than a Jew’, he or she could be improved once treated as a human being.<sup>5</sup> The French revolutionary supporter of Jewish emancipation, Clermont-Tonnerre, argued along the same lines that ‘Usury ... so justly censured is the effect of our own laws. Men who have nothing but money can only work with money: that is the evil. Let them have land and a country and they will loan no longer: that is the remedy’. He argued along the same lines that ‘The Jews have their own judges and laws... that is your fault and you should not allow it. We must refuse everything to the Jews as a nation and accord everything to Jews as individuals... It is repugnant to have in the state an association of non-citizens and a nation within the nation’.<sup>6</sup> In both cases, that of the Prussian reformist and the French revolutionary, ‘the Jews’ were spoken about rather than spoken to. Their harmfulness was presupposed, explained as the ill effect of the old order, and countered through the credo that emancipation would provide the golden key permitting the Jews to become productive members of society.

It is clear that anti-Jewish prejudice was not simply overcome even within the Enlightenment and emancipation movement, but it is also important not to overstate the case. First, although arguments in favour of emancipation were often rooted in the Jewish question, the aim of Jewish emancipation itself was a huge step forward. It meant that denial of equal rights to Jews was no longer to be tolerated and that Jews were to be integrated as human beings of a certain faith (or no faith at all) in a society of equal citizens. It signalled the abolition of an order in which Jews were permitted to profess their own religion and run their own self-government but were subject to multiple fiscal, occupational and residential restrictions that left the majority in poverty, vulnerable without to persecution and within to the power of rabbinical elites.

Second, Enlightenment and the emancipation movement contained a plurality of voices, among which there were those that focused less on the harm Jews caused to their host societies than on the harm host societies inflicted on Jews. Jews could be participants in Enlightenment, not merely

beneficiaries of Enlightenment. The best-known case in point was Moses Mendelssohn, friend and colleague of Kant, who in 1781 solicited von Dohm's text on *Civic Improvement of the Jews*. Mendelssohn took exception to Dohm's presumption that Jews needed fundamental regeneration to make them worthy of equal rights. He understood that Enlightenment 'had not trodden down all the tracks of barbarism in history' and saw parallels between the prejudices of those who in the past sought to transform Jews into Christians and those who now wished to transform Jews into productive citizens. He held that all special restrictions on Jews must be ended without demanding any changes in the behaviour of Jews in return: if abandonment of the Jewish way of life were the condition of civil union, 'we must rather do without civil union'. The 'we' here was quite different from the 'we' of Dohm and Clermont-Tonnerre. Mendelssohn called on fellow-Jews to remain 'stiff-necked' in the face of the Faustian pact they were supposed to enter, which demanded abandonment of 'harmful' Jewish habits in return for equal rights. He not only defended the utility of Jewish traders and bankers, but also attacked on universalistic grounds the idea that any human being is simply useless.<sup>7</sup> Mendelssohn revealed that the temptation to typify any category of human beings as 'useless', 'harmful' or 'parasitic' is a violent abstraction and that the rights of human beings should be considered independently of the contribution they are deemed to make to the community.

Perhaps the key point to make here is that enlightenment is a cooperative learning process that deploys the idea of universalism reflexively not only as grounds of criticism of external conditions but also of inward-looking self-criticism. Consider Kant. The great cosmopolitan philosopher showed that he was not immune to the premises of the Jewish question when he wrote of Jews that 'all estimation of other men, who are not Jews, is totally lost, and goodwill is reduced merely to love of their own tribe', and when he dabbled with the view that the 'Palestinians' were 'cheaters' who benefitted only from 'outwitting' other people.<sup>8</sup> Was Kant able to transcend this prejudice? The jury is out on this question. We know that in the last decade of his life Kant advanced his critique of colonialism and of the racial ways of thinking that accompanied colonialism.<sup>9</sup> His typifications of 'the Jews' were aligned with equally prejudicial typifications of other 'nations' and 'races' including Asians, Africans and Native Americans, but all such racial presuppositions were destabilised by his universalistic theory of both the monogenetic origins and future moral unity of the human species.<sup>10</sup> We can speculate on why the critique of colonial ways of thinking evolved in Kant's later political

writings: perhaps it was for a mix of endogenous reasons like his turn toward a philosophy of right whose premise was the unity of the human race, exogenous reasons like his knowledge of the slave revolt of the Black Jacobins in Saint Domingue, and communicative reasons like his friendship with Mendelssohn. Kant's own support for Jewish emancipation also evolved even if it remained qualified in ways characteristic of the Enlightenment; he never approached the extremes of either Fichte's declaration of the absolute unsuitability of Jews for European citizenship of any kind or of Hegel's later unqualified endorsement of Jewish emancipation.<sup>11</sup>

*Emancipation and the 'Jewish Question' in the revolutionary tradition*

Let me move on to my second moment: the revolutionary tradition. Jeffrey Alexander finds 'striking parallels' between representations of Jews in the eighteenth century Enlightenment and the representations of Jews in nineteenth century Marxism. He argues that Marx himself built upon anti-Jewish stereotypes as part and parcel of his universalistic critique of capitalism. Notoriously, in his second *Essay on the Jewish Question* Marx seems to be saying that Jewish idolatry of money must be abolished for human emancipation to be possible. According to Alexander, Marx's own proto-antisemitism goes some way toward explaining why Marxist movements subsequently displayed 'powerful antisemitic overtones'.<sup>12</sup> Alexander captures well the temptations of revolutionary movements to flirt with or embrace anti-hegemonic forms of antisemitism. My question, however, is whether this is the whole story? What occurred, I suggest, is that the opposition between Jewish emancipation and the Jewish question that had been contained within Enlightenment thought was now broken into extremes: with on one side opposition to emancipation articulated in the name of the Jewish question and on the other opposition to the Jewish question articulated in the name of emancipation.

This opposition was the substance of the dispute between Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx in 1843-44 over the 'Jewish question' in Germany.<sup>13</sup> Bauer, a radical Young Hegelian, argued that Jews should not be granted equal rights until they abandoned Judaism. He saw the attachment of Jews to Judaism as the sign of their hostility to universalism. He maintained that while history is a process of evolution, the Jews refuse to change; that their concern is self-interest and not the interest of the whole; that they claim discrimination at the hands of European society but through their

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financial power actually possess prodigious influence over its destiny; that their particularism is encapsulated in the pride in being the 'chosen people'. Bauer argued that as long as the Jews did not repudiate Judaism, emancipation would be a licence to inflict further harm on society. Against the French juridical turn toward the 'Rights of Man and Citizen', Bauer stood for a German social turn toward human rather than the political emancipation. On this basis he was able to reformulate universalism in terms of a world without Jews.

Marx's two *Essays on the Jewish Question* and then Marx and Engels' monograph on *The Holy Family* challenged with increasing intensity Bauer's opposition to Jewish emancipation as well as his more general devaluation of civil and political rights.<sup>14</sup> Step by step Marx began to discern the banality of Bauer's radicalism and to develop the insight that the 'Jewish question' was simply irrelevant to Jewish emancipation. The essential logic of Marx's argument was very simple and to the point: Since the rights of man include the right to be religious or not in any way one wants, what grounds could there be for excluding Jews because of their religion? Since the rights of man include rights of private property, what grounds could there be for denying civil rights to Jews because of their alleged egoism? Since the rights of citizens abstract political man from society, what grounds could there be for denying political rights to Jews because of their alleged role in society? Since money was the earthly God of the bourgeois world, what grounds could there be for excluding Jews for allegedly turning money into their God? Marx maintained that Bauer's prejudices about 'the Jews' were the visible sign of a larger inability to understand modern society. The real question was not the 'Jewish question', which was in any event a question of the lens through which the burgeoning antisemitic consciousness perceived 'the Jews', but whether a backward state like Germany, which had not yet granted equal rights to Jews, could catch up with modern states like the US and France that had long since done so. Marx and Engels never ceased to declare their contempt for the 'foul and enervating literature' of those species of radicalism and socialism that were capable only of 'hurling the traditional anathemas against liberalism', while representing the Jews as 'a secret world power which makes and unmakes governments'.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, many of the radicals and socialists Marx and Engels criticised were bearers of such anti-Jewish prejudices, including Dühring, Proudhon, Fourier, Lassalle and Bakunin.<sup>16</sup>

The battle between emancipationists and anti-emancipationists within the radical tradition reached some kind of temporary resolution in the 1870s, when the emancipation of Jews became an accomplished fact in

most of Western Europe. Marxists generally supported Jewish emancipation in the hope that legal recognition of Jews as equal citizens would also lead to Jews becoming full human beings – and in some instances join the revolutionary movement. They were faced, however, with the fact that the formal equality accorded to Jews generated multiple resentments and gave rise to political forms of antisemitism, which no longer traced the harmful qualities of Jews to their Judaism but to their unalterable quality of ‘Jewishness’.<sup>17</sup> In this context Marxists generally declared their opposition to antisemitism, but were also tempted to frame antisemitism as a response to the actual harm Jews inflicted on society. They were tempted to present improvement in the behaviour of Jews (especially in the financial dealings of Jewish bankers) as the condition of success in the struggle against antisemitism. The notion that antisemitism contained a kernel of truth was widely held within Marxist circles – so much so that Marx’s own writings on the Jewish question were re-read as if it were Marx, not Bauer, who anticipated a ‘world without Jews’.<sup>18</sup>

To be sure, there may have been aspects of Marx’s work that encouraged this distorted reading. According to Karl Löwith, Marx’s idea of human emancipation signified ‘emancipation from every kind of particularity in human life as a whole; from the specialisation of occupations just as much as from religion and privatisation’.<sup>19</sup> This conception of human emancipation as emancipation from every kind of particularity is not without support in Marx’s own texts, especially *The Communist Manifesto*, and when read through the lens of the Jewish question was vulnerable to the argument that human emancipation meant in practice emancipation from ‘the Jews’. However, while for Bauer the idea of human emancipation was premised on particularising the Jews and then imagining a ‘world without Jews’, the vista of human emancipation Marx developed was to overcome the dominance of abstractions in the modern world – symbolised in this instance by the abstraction of ‘the Jews’.<sup>20</sup> Marx did not condemn Jews for failing the test of universality, the presumption of the Jewish question, but on the contrary aimed to extract Jewish emancipation from the grip of the Jewish question.

In the revolutionary tradition of the nineteenth century, no less than in the Enlightenment tradition of the eighteenth, the two faces of universalism continued to manifest themselves in shifting relations between Jewish emancipation and the Jewish question now translated into the language of political antisemitism. The Bauer-Marx debate, like the Dohm-Mendelssohn debate over half a century earlier, made explicit this opposition and radicalised it.

*Contemporary cosmopolitanism and the 'Jewish question'*

Let us now turn to our own times. In the Holocaust antisemitism became the sign under which, in most countries of Europe, Jews were stripped of legal rights, morally degraded, herded into ghettos, and murdered through starvation, torture, shooting or gas chambers. In this period the so-called 'final solution to the Jewish question' took on a life of its own and was seemingly prioritized over all other imperatives – economic efficiency, political domination, even winning the war. After the Holocaust antisemitism did not simply vanish but serious attempts were made to recognise the harm it caused and exclude it from the European landscape. The words 'Holocaust' and 'Shoah' were redeployed to conceptualise this event; the story of the Holocaust was afforded a significant role within the public sphere; official apologies, national commemoration sites, memorials, museums and laws criminalising Holocaust-denial became widespread; with the fall of the Iron Curtain 'Europeanization' drew some former satellite countries of the Soviet Union into the orbit of Holocaust commemoration; and Auschwitz became perhaps a crucial signifier of absolute evil. Confronting Europe's antisemitic past became part of the reconstructive project of transforming Europe into a pluralistic, multi-layered, postnational political community. Given the social integration of surviving Jews in Europe and America and the formation of Israel as a 'Jewish democratic state', one could be forgiven for thinking that the 'Jewish question' was pushed to the margins of the Western world. It is in this spirit that Jeffrey Alexander writes of the acceptance of Jews today in American society as equal human beings also worthy of respect as Jews. Referring to the popularity of Woody Allen films, he wittily observes it is now the non-Jew rather than the Jew who must give up an earlier identity in order to make the 'transition from provincialism to cosmopolitanism, from particularity to universalism', and that Jewish difference has at last gained recognition as a positive identifier and source of admiration.<sup>21</sup>

Again the question I pose is whether this is the whole story or can we still hear within the pluralistic culture of European and American civic society echoes of the Jewish question in new discursive forms? Such echoes seem to me audible, for example, in the criticism expressed within self-consciously universalistic circles of intellectual and political life that collective memory of the Holocaust has become particularistic: that it privileges the suffering of Jews at the expense of other sufferings, that it turns the cry of 'Never Again' into the injunction 'never again *to Jews*';

that the treatment of the Holocaust as *radical* evil, rather than as one evil among many, crowds out other injustices; that the focus on antisemitism ignores the other racisms that have supplanted antisemitism in Europe; and that the accusation of ‘antisemitism’ is misused to stigmatise whole categories of people as antisemitic – ‘the Muslims’, ‘the Left’, even ‘Europeans’ in general. The thrust of this critique is that *universal* meaning is no longer drawn from collective memory of the Holocaust and that an exclusive emphasis on *Jewish* suffering undermines the spirit of universalism to which the world aspires.<sup>22</sup> The Israel question overshadows these concerns. It has become common parlance to maintain that the principal reason collective memory of the Holocaust is now distorted is to protect Israel from criticism, that an ethnically defined ‘Jewish state’ is an anachronism that has deeply destructive practical consequences, and that it is because Israel cannot be defended openly that it is defended covertly through the charge of antisemitism. The major refrain of this critique, loss of universal resonance in commemoration of the Holocaust, may be subjected to empirical testing. As an assumption, however, echoes of the Jewish question reverberate within it.<sup>23</sup>

The work of the Marxist philosopher, Alain Badiou, may serve to illustrate a harsher, less equivocal version of the contemporary revival of the Jewish question. Badiou polemicises against what he sees as a powerful current of thought whose mission, as the title of one of his jointly authored works attests, is to find ‘antisemitism everywhere’ (*Antisémitisme partout*). He raises the spectre of a ‘victim ideology’, which is fixated on the extermination of Jews and only Jews, renders all other forms of racism invisible, demands that Israeli crimes be tolerated, and accuses of antisemitism those, like himself, who refuse to tolerate them. Badiou maintains that such ‘purveyors of antisemitism’ place themselves not just on the side of Israel against Palestinians but of all occupying and repressive power against popular resistance.<sup>24</sup> He speaks in the name of a universalism he traces back to St Paul’s disconnection of Christianity from established Judaism, and contrasts this European tradition of universalism with the ‘identitarian’ claims of Israel and its supporters. He affirms the credo that the state must be universal and from this avowedly cosmopolitan standpoint stipulates that the Jewish state is a throwback to the emphatic nationalism of a superseded era of European history. He maintains that Israel’s defenders resort to the charge of ‘antisemitism’ precisely because an ethnically defined state can no longer be explicitly defended.

Am I wrong in hearing in Badiou the old thematics of the Jewish question expressed in a new form? The word ‘Jew’ is now avoided or



abstracted by speaking of ‘the Jew’ as a signifier or sign. The representation of ‘the Jews’ we find in traditional versions of the Jewish question is now reconfigured in terms of a critique of Holocaust commemoration, the Jewish state, Israel’s supporters, Zionism, even the struggle against antisemitism. In his analysis of Holocaust commemoration, support for Israel and struggles against antisemitism Badiou offers no recognition of the diversity of their political forms of expression in which cosmopolitan and nationalist perspectives coexist with and contest one another, or of the normality of the ‘particularism’ for which he singles out these particular political activities.<sup>25</sup> Rather his work exemplifies a shift of emphasis within the sphere of post-war universalism from engagement with the history and legacy of European antisemitism to denouncement of the threat posed by an amorphous array of targets, none of which mention Jews but all of which are identified with Jews.

My contention is that the echoes of the old Jewish question can still be heard in the nooks and crannies of our own cosmopolitan culture and derive from imposing the matrix of a Manichaean struggle between the universal and the particular onto conflicts that are human, all too human.<sup>26</sup> The struggle for the soul of universalism persists within contemporary cosmopolitanism. Old prejudices can still be heard, like George Eliot’s ‘twentieth echo of an echo’, and the universalistic consciousness still has its work cut out.

### *Conclusion: the equivocations of universalism*

The most cherished ideas of universalism can function as renewed sources of dichotomous thinking. To take one fairly recent example, the idea of ‘postnationalism’ started life as an emancipatory project for postwar Europe and more generally as a resource for thinking about the concrete forms in which a pluralistic universalism might be embodied in existing political communities. However, there is also a temptation to transform the distinction between nationalism and postnationalism into a moral division of the world between ‘us’ and ‘them’, in which ‘we’ extol ourselves as ‘postnational’ and label ‘others’ as ‘national’. The process of dichotomising this distinction allows ‘us’ (once again) to pride ourselves on our universalism and find ‘others’ guilty of particularism. In place of a postnational vision for changing Europe, constructed in order to come to terms with its horrendously violent past, Europe is represented as the privileged site of postnationalism. All that is at odds with this self-image – Europe’s own history of ethnic identification, ethnic cleansing,

indifference to others, crimes against humanity, genocide, etc. – is projected onto an Other.

The return of the Jewish question is just one form in which the opposition between Universalism and Particularism can be re-instated; we see it in the pathologising of ‘Zionism’ as the repository of all ‘we’ do not recognise in ourselves.<sup>27</sup> It is not inevitable, but it remains a potentiality within universalism that the most inclusive forms of universalism can metamorphose into instruments of exclusion. Universalism has to be reflective or it may become nothing at all. In the light of the three historical instances I have touched upon in this paper, we are hopefully in a better position to draw certain conclusions about the equivocations of Universalism.

First, the ambivalence of universalism in relation to Jews has led some commentators to focus on anti-Jewish tendencies within the Enlightenment, the revolutionary tradition and contemporary cosmopolitanism at the expense of its emancipatory tendencies. They do not realise, however, that giving up on universalism means giving up on a key philosophical antidote to antisemitism. As we challenge the limits of Enlightenment, the limits of the revolutionary tradition and the limits of contemporary cosmopolitanism, we should not abandon the humanity they promoted, achieved for some, and promised for all. Other commentators have embraced the demand that Jews needed to rid themselves of their asocial or anti-social tendencies in order to become full citizens of the world – including Jewish nationalism and Zionism. They do not realise that accepting the terms of the Jewish question can mean accepting the theoretical presuppositions of modern antisemitism. The position I seek to occupy challenges both the distrust of universalism shown by its critics and the faith in universalism shown by its self-proclaimed advocates. My belief is that there is a space beyond these poles, where it is possible to embrace the unity of the Universal and the Particular in a more reflexive mode: that is to say, without turning the Universal into an ‘ism’ and setting it against the particularism ascribed to ‘the Jews’. It is a space in which we seek not only to reconcile the Universal and the Particular, the human being and the Jew,<sup>28</sup> but also to reconcile both the Universal and the Particular with the Singular in a sense articulated by Hannah Arendt: ‘we are all the same ... in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives or will live’.<sup>29</sup>

Second, we should recognise that political currents genuinely committed to universalistic principles – whether from liberal, socialist or Marxist standpoints – have at times shown themselves capable not only of welcoming Jews into the civic community, not only of combating

antisemitism, but also of locating the sources of antisemitism in the behaviour of Jews themselves and of demanding that Jews must change to become full members of the civic community. The conventional wisdom that universalistic forms of political and intellectual thought are by virtue of their universalism immune to the temptations of antisemitism fails to capture this troubling ambivalence.<sup>30</sup> Walter Benjamin's well-known observation in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, that 'there is no document of civilisation which is not at the same time a document of barbarism', may exaggerate the identity of civilisation and barbarism but it alerts us to the ties that bind the civilising function of universalism to the barbaric search for a 'solution' to the 'Jewish question'.<sup>31</sup>

Third, we should recognise that modern antisemitism has taken and continues to take different forms, some of which are reactionary and some radical. This distinction has been historically blurred by all manner of fusions and crossovers, but conceptually it remains significant. Reactionaries aim to reverse the achievements of the Revolution in the name of traditional hierarchy, national identity, religious truth, etc. They represent 'the Jews' as the sign of a world gone wrong – as architects of anticlericalism, loss of privilege, the egoism of human rights and the dissolution of stability – and they represent the old order as a happy state that guarded itself against 'the Jews' by enforcing on them an inferior civil and legal status. Radicals embrace the achievements of the revolution and present themselves as its faithful heirs. They represent 'the Jews' as a reactionary power opposed to the revolution who undermine the principles of 1789, subject society to a new tutelage and impose their own domination through conspiracy and the covert power of money. They conceive of 'the Jews' either as relics of the past evidenced by the caste-like character of Jewish Law, or more actively as the personification of the dark side of modernity whose calculating utilitarianism contradicts the genuine universalism of the Moral Law.<sup>32</sup> To be sure, these conceptually distinct forms of antisemitism can come together; for example, in Soviet uses of the antisemitic term 'rootless cosmopolitan Jew', Jews were conceived as having no roots in the nations that granted them hospitality and as acting through an international network in ways loyal only to themselves. The *bad universalism* signified by the term 'rootless cosmopolitan Jew' was contrasted both with a traditional conception of 'Russian nature' and with a modern conception of the *good universalism* the revolution brought into being.<sup>33</sup>

Fourth, the historical ambivalence of universalism has led some commentators to treat antisemitic tendencies within Universalism as an exclusive property of the past rather than as an enduring potentiality of

present. The ascription of antisemitism to the past has taken many forms, including positivist sociology with its trust in societal modernisation and historicist Marxism with its trust in historical progress. What we might call the ‘past-ification’ of antisemitism is in fact a common thematic within Sociology: modernists have presented antisemitism as a product of pre-modernity, for instance, of German backwardness and late state formation; postmodernists have presented antisemitism as a product of modernity and of the instrumentally rational character of the modern state; postnationalists have presented antisemitism as the product of a nationalist age when Jews were excluded from the ethnically defined nation; cosmopolitans have presented antisemitism as the product of the methodological nationalism that once reigned supreme in the modernist imagination. The shared assumption behind these sociological approaches is that antisemitism is always in the past and may be backed up by historical evidence purporting to demonstrate that antisemitism has been marginalised in mainstream society – not least as the result of social learning processes brought into being by the experience of the Holocaust.

Contemporary cosmopolitanism conforms to this sociological tradition when it contrasts the homogenising universalism of the past, the ‘humanistic’ universalism which it presents as sacrificing plurality and particularity, with the pluralistic ‘postuniversalism’ or ‘pluriversalism’ of the contemporary cosmopolitan vision, which it presents as recognising ‘difference’ and as rejecting all homogenising claims.<sup>34</sup> The time-consciousness of contemporary cosmopolitanism assumes a break between past and future; the Jewish question is associated with the past and based on the ‘either-or’ logic of either being a Jew or a human being. This notion is now declared historically obsolete in favour of the ‘both-and’ logic of being respected both as a Jew and as a human being.<sup>35</sup> The strength of this time-consciousness is that it challenges the naturalism of ‘eternal antisemitism’ approaches, which present antisemitism as a permanent, insuperable feature of relations between Jews and non-Jews,<sup>36</sup> but its answer to an essentially a-historical frame of reference is to turn it on its head and confine antisemitism to history. My argument is to look for a space beyond the alternatives of naturalising and historicising antisemitism, in which the question remains open of whether the forces that once gave rise to antisemitism remain operative in the here and now. In place of a ‘then and now’ time frame a more reflexive approach to universalism opens up buried questions: not least, it reveals that suspicion of homogenising claims was already present *within* the universalism of the Enlightenment and the revolutionary tradition; and that the sacrifice of particularity is *still* a temptation within contemporary cosmopolitanism.

What we see in all these instances is an ongoing struggle for the soul of universalism. The cosmopolitan project should in my view be conceived as an engaged project that pits itself against regenerated forces of domination and exclusion, and not as a quietism that looks back on the past with the contented smile of one securely ensconced in a new age.

To paraphrase Hannah Arendt, we cannot simply assume that what was good in the past, the emancipatory face of universalism, has become our heritage or that what was bad in the past, the 'Jewish question', has simply been buried by time in oblivion.<sup>37</sup>

One final word: if echoes of the Jewish question are still to be heard in contemporary cosmopolitanism, as I suggest they are, so too are the echoes of Jewish emancipation. The cosmopolitan imagination is altogether right to distinguish **between particularistic and universalistic ways of combating racism and antisemitism, but it must also acknowledge that** if particularism is a temptation that faces *all* antiracist and anti-antisemitic movements, why pick on movements against **antisemitism? The cosmopolitan imagination should** criticise the limits of nationalism but not of course to identify all that is wrong with nationalism in general with Jewish nationalism. The cosmopolitan imagination should appeal to **universal principles to combat racism and antisemitism, but not take** the most nationalistic opponents of antisemitism (the 'right-wing settler', the 'Jewish lobbyist') as representative of the whole nor pathologise opponents of antisemitism as deviants. Nothing is more 'natural', more usual, than that if you are attacked as a Jew, Muslim, African or Black, you fight back as a Jew, Moslem, African or Black. The cosmopolitan imagination should show us why it is wrong to treat whole groups of people as unitary, otherised categories, but not respond to such categorical thinking by simply reversing the problem and labelling the labellers. The sociologist Raymond Aron correctly warned against mirroring antisemitic depictions of Jews in depictions of antisemites as essentially defined by their hatred of Jews. We must resist the temptation to paint a portrait of the antisemite that is as totalising as the antisemite's stereotype of the Jew.<sup>38</sup> The cosmopolitan imagination observes that while a common defence of antisemitism is that it is true to reality, what marks out antisemitism is its resistance to empirical criticism. If we point out that most Jews are not powerful financiers or that most powerful financiers are not Jews, the antisemitic imagination remains no less fixed on the Jewish financier. Similarly if we point out that most Jews are not supporters of ethnic cleansing and that most supporters of ethnic cleansing are not Jews, the

antisemitic imagination remains no less fixed on the Jew who supports ethnic cleansing.<sup>39</sup>

We may conclude that the two faces of universalism are not easily disentangled: to do so requires an on-going and radically incomplete process of thought, criticism and understanding. The ‘lesson’ of this paper is not that universalism must be abandoned because of its exclusionary aspect but rather that its emancipatory aspect must be rendered iteratively reflective.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Habermas, J. *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press 1998; Hunt, L. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York: W. W. Norton 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Edelstein, D. *The Terror of Natural Right: Republicanism, the Cult of Nature, and the French Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Benhabib, S. ‘We and the Others’ in *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2002, pp. 24-48.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander, J. *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006, pp. 459-548. The quotation is from Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews: The Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 7. See also Rose, P. *Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany: From Kant to Wagner*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990; and Traverso, E. *The Jews and Germany*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> von Dohm, C. ‘Concerning the amelioration of the civil status of the Jews’ (1781) in Paul Mendez-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz eds. *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Cited in Hunt, L. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York: WW Norton and Co 2008, pp. 155-158.

<sup>7</sup> Mendelssohn, M. *Jerusalem*. New England: Brandeis University Press, 1983. See Feiner, S. *Moses Mendelssohn: Sage of Modernity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, *Jewish Lives*, 2010; Mirabeau, *Sur Moses Mendelssohn, et sur la Reforme Politique des Juifs*. Whitefish MT, Kessinger Publishing, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Kant, I. *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009 p. 100.

<sup>9</sup> Kleingeld, P. Kant’s second thoughts on race. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 57, 229, 2007 pp. 573–592; Bernasconi, R. Kant’s third thoughts on race. In: *Reading Kant’s Geography* (eds. S. Elden and E. Mendieta), Albany: SUNY Press pp. 291–316.

<sup>10</sup> Fine, R. Enlightenment cosmopolitanism: Western or Universal? In *Enlightenment Cosmopolitanism* (eds. D. Adams and G.Tihanov), London:

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Legenda, 2011 pp. 153-170; Muthu, S. *Enlightenment against Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Fichte prioritised the Jewish question over Jewish emancipation. In his *Contribution to the Correction of the Judgments of the Public on the French Revolution* (1793) he not only held that the Jews constituted a 'state within a state' and grounded itself in 'hatred of the entire human race', but concluded that Jewry and the principles of the French Revolution were fundamentally at odds. He wrote: 'I would see no other way to give the Jews civil rights than to cut off their heads in one night and put others on them in which there would not be a single Jewish idea'. Cited in Meld Shell, S. Kant and the Jewish Question. *Hebraic Political Studies*, 2, 1, Winter 2007 pp. 101–136 at p. 132. Hegel by contrast responded in his *Philosophy of Right* (1821): 'although it may well have been contrary to formal right to grant even civil rights to the Jews, on the grounds that the latter should be regarded ... as members of a foreign nation, the outcry which this viewpoint ... produced overlooked the fact that the Jews are primarily human beings; this is not a neutral and abstract quality, for its consequence is that the granting of civil rights gives those who receive them a self-awareness as recognized persons in civil society... If they had not been granted civil rights, the Jews would have remained in that isolation with which they have been reproached, and this would rightly have brought blame and reproach upon the state which excluded them... While the demand for the exclusion of the Jews claimed to be based on the highest right, it has proved in practice to be the height of folly.' Hegel, W. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 pp. 295-6.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander, J. *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006, pp. 486-8.

<sup>13</sup> See Fine, R. Re-reading Marx on the Jewish Question. In: *Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology* (ed. M. Stoetzler), Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2014 pp. 137-159.

<sup>14</sup> Marx, K. On the Jewish Question. In: *Marx's Early Writings* (ed. L. Colletti), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992; Marx, K. and Engels, F. *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism: Against Bruno Bauer and Company*. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980.

<sup>15</sup> Marx, K. and Engels, F. The Manifesto of the Communist Party. In: *Selected Works*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970 p. 57.

<sup>16</sup> See Draper, H. *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*. New York: Monthly Review Press, vol.1, 1977 pp. 109-129; vol.2, 1978 pp. 300-302, 548; vol.4, 1981 pp. 291-303.

<sup>17</sup> See Arendt, H. *Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1979 pp. 80-88.

<sup>18</sup> See Fischer, L. *The Socialist Response to Antisemitism in Imperial Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Löwith, K. *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, London: Routledge, 1993 p.106.

<sup>20</sup> Marx's recognition that in capitalist society waged workers are not mere commodities but owners of commodities, beginning with their own labour-power, meant that as owners of property (however minimal or formal) workers become themselves subjects of right. For Marx, recognition of the right of all human beings to have rights, as Hannah Arendt was later to put it, was the beginning of their long and arduous journey of human self-emancipation.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander, J. *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006, pp.

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<sup>22</sup> See Judt, T. The "problem of evil" in postwar Europe. *New York Review of Books*, 14 Feb, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> See Butler, J. The Charge of Anti-Semitism: Jews, Israel and the Risks of Public Critique. In *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, 2004 pp. 101–127.

<sup>24</sup> Badiou, A. The uses of the word "Jew". <http://www.lacan.com/badword.htm>, 2011. Badiou, A. and Hazan, E. *L'Antisémitisme partout: Aujourd'hui en France*. Paris : La Fabrique Edition, 2011.

<sup>25</sup> See the discussion of two conceptions of justice in Sen, A. *The Idea of Justice*. London: Allen Lane, 2009 pp. 106–115

<sup>26</sup> See Harrison, B. Antizionism, antisemitism and the rhetorical manipulation of reality, Hasten lecture: Bloomington, Indiana, April 3, 2011, *Proceedings of Indiana Conference on Antisemitism*, April 3–5, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> See Fine, R. Fighting with phantoms: a contribution to the debate on antisemitism in Europe, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 43, 5, 2009 pp. 459–479; and Fine, R. 'Nationalism, Postnationalism, Antisemitism: Thoughts on the Politics of Jürgen Habermas', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft*, 39, 4, 2009 pp. 409–420.

<sup>28</sup> See Sznajder, N. *Jewish Memory And the Cosmopolitan Order*. Cambridge: Polity, 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Arendt, H. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958 p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> See Stoetzler, M. *The State, the Nation, and the Jews: Liberalism and the Antisemitism Dispute in Bismarck's Germany*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Benjamin, W. Theses on the Philosophy of History. In *Illuminations* (ed. H. Arendt), New York: Schocken, 1968 pp. 255–266.

<sup>32</sup> See Achinger, C. Threats to modernity, threats of modernity: Racism and antisemitism through the lens of literature, *European Societies*, 14:2, 2012 pp. 240–258.

<sup>33</sup> Grüner, F. Russia's battle against the foreign: the anti-cosmopolitanism paradigm in Russian and Soviet ideology, *European Review of History*, 17, 3, June 2010 pp. 445–472.



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<sup>34</sup> Beck, U. *The Cosmopolitan Vision*. Cambridge: Polity 2006. Mignolo, W. Border Thinking, Decolonial Cosmopolitanism and Dialogues among Civilizations. In; *The Ashgate Research Companion to Cosmopolitanism* (eds. M. Rovisco and M. Nowicka). Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Alexander, J. *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006, pp. 465-8; Sznajder, N. *Jewish Memory And the Cosmopolitan Order*. Cambridge: Polity, 2013 ch.1.

<sup>36</sup> See Arendt, H. *The Jewish Writings*. New York: Schocken, 2007 pp. 54-55.

<sup>37</sup> See Arendt, H. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1979 p. ix.

<sup>38</sup> 'Anti-antisemites tend to present all the colonisers, all the antisemites, all the whites as essentially defined by their contempt for natives, hatred of Jews, desire for segregation. They paint a portrait of the coloniser, the antisemite or the whites that is as totalising as their stereotypes of the Jew, the native or the Blacks. The antisemite must be *wholly* antisemitic.' Aron, R. *Paix et Guerre entre les Nations*. Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1969 pp. 87-88.

<sup>39</sup> See Sartre, J-P. *Antisemite and Jew*. New York: Schocken, 1965 p. 15.

# THE QUESTION OF OTHERS: REFLECTIONS ON ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE 'JEWISH QUESTION'

*Fiona Wright\**

## *Abstract*

In this essay I interrogate the place of the 'Jewish Question' in contemporary anthropology, based on ethnographic research conducted with Jewish Israeli non- and anti-Zionist left-wing activists. I engage with Jonathan Boyarin's proposal for 'Jewish ethnography' (Boyarin 1996b) via reflections on the ways in which anthropology has failed to incorporate 'Jewish theory' as a theoretical other of its disciplinary premises. Exploring the ironies of Israeli activists' artistic and leisure practices, I argue that there is an ambivalent self-mockery at the heart of their attachments to Jewishness. I analyse this with reference to the theories of Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, and Emmanuel Levinas, who have similarly placed in question the stability of 'Jewish identity', and thus what it might mean to do 'Jewish theory', in relation to histories of European racism and colonialism. Ultimately I place in question the ideas of both 'Jewish ethnography' and 'Jewish theory' with a critical perspective on how Jews are seen to present a problematic otherness for anthropology not similarly conceptualised vis-à-vis other 'Others'.

**Keywords:** Jewishness, otherness, ethnography, Israel/Palestine, Levinas, subjectivity

As though the foreigner were first of all the one who puts the first question or the one to whom you address the first question. As though the foreigner were being-in-question, the very question of being-in-question, the question-being or being-in-question of the question. But also the one who, putting the first question, puts me in question.

(Derrida & Dufourmantelle 2000: 3)

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Derrida's questioning of the question, and of those that put it to us, evokes 'the Foreigner' in ways that recall what has also frequently been made of the figure, or the question, perhaps, of 'the Jew'. It is the allegorized Jew that signifies foreignness, exile, diaspora, and discomfort. *Questioning Jews* is indeed what Virginia Dominguez called her review article that wondered whether anthropology has a 'Jewish problem' – a problem with the Jew/s that arises from the way in which its/their murky status (foreigner or citizen? coloniser or colonised?) complicates our questions (Dominguez 1993), and indeed, puts our questions, puts us, in question. Why is it that the Jew, like the Foreigner, should so trouble anthropology? In particular, how does a discipline that is founded on a methodology of identifying otherness, perhaps even an epistemology of otherness, struggle so much with this particular other?

In this paper I explore these questions partly out of a sense of necessity in relation to my ethnography of Jewish Israeli left-wing activism, as the 'Jewish question' continues to haunt any discussion of Israeli ethics and politics. During fieldwork research I conducted with Jewish Israeli radical left-wing activists from various organisations in Israel/Palestine between November 2009 and May 2011, I found a pervasive sense of discomfort with attempts either to fix what Jewishness was or should represent for my interlocutors, or to erase from view the emplacement of their ethico-politics within their specifically Jewish/(Israeli) backgrounds and contemporary context. Indeed this discomfort echoed some of the reflections offered by Jonathan Boyarin in his call for a 'Jewish ethnography' (J. Boyarin 1996b), as a critical stance both on the reproduction of certain culturalist tropes in anthropology's central methodological practice, and on the nature of contemporary Israeli politics and its totalistic and exclusionary rendering of Jewishness. Thus in what follows I consider Boyarin's proposed model of 'Jewish ethnography' but also question it through probing certain other contributions that may also be considered 'Jewish theory'. Finding their alternative formulations of the significance of reflections on Jewish identity, and the kinds of ethico-politics that an engagement with such questions might produce, I suggest caution in the drive to fix as a cultural or methodological model the idea of Jewishness, even one reclaimed from its Zionist formulations. In this way I also move from the specific reflection on the 'Jewish question' to a more general consideration of how anthropology conceptualises otherness.

Specifically, I trace in my ethnography of Jewish Israeli left-wing activists' ironic cultural practices, shadows of Levinasian ethics, as well

as its elaborations by Judith Butler and Jacques Derrida. Rather than reproducing in these connections the idea that Emmanuel Levinas is a ‘Jewish thinker/philosopher’, as some demand, or even a ‘theologian’, a theorist only of ‘Jewish ethics’, I ask what such a move to categorise theory, as well as ethnography, does to our capacity to offer an anthropological analysis. I question the implication that somehow ‘Jewish theory’ is too particular(ist), not part of the universal canon of Western philosophy, which would legitimate its introduction into a broader theoretical discussion that goes beyond the specific case or ethnographic interest with which it is being brought into relation. Further, I highlight the essentialising undertone of this charge, as it asks, does this ‘Jewish theory’ only work, analytically, in relation to an analysis of ‘Jewish ethnography’, or an ethnography of Jews? This paper interrogates this challenge, and its idea of ‘Jewish theory’, via some reflections on ‘Jewish ethnography’. In thus considering the interface between theory and ethnography, I also write between the two. Whilst presenting some ethnographic material in conventional fashion as the basis for a distinct analytical interpretation, mostly this article builds upon a back and forth between observations from the field and readings of theorists that mirror the ethico-political practices of Israeli activists, such that ethnography and theory are not intended to be read separately. Indeed part of my critique of Boyarin’s model of ‘Jewish ethnography’ is that it furthers a distinction between empirical and theoretical work through which the historical production of both is concealed from view. In this paper, rather, the echoes of scholarly critiques in activist practices, and vice versa, allow a different conceptualisation and practice of Jewishness to emerge that questions its stable delimitation in either theoretical or ethnographic terms.

In the first section, then, I reflexively introduce my fieldwork experience and the ways in which I, as a non-Jewish ethnographer, came to reflect on the ‘Jewish question’ in very particular ways. This positioning of both self and other is presented in dialogue with both Jonathan Boyarin and his idea of ‘Jewish ethnography’, and the work of Virginia Dominguez, whose self-reflection on her non-Jewish identity whilst conducting research in Israel helpfully clarifies the distinctions between and among the approaches taken by Dominguez, Boyarin, and myself. The second section of this paper introduces Jewish Israeli left-wing activists’ cultural engagements with what Boyarin calls *Yiddishkayt*. Here I observe how activists’ ironic and critical reformulations of notions of exile and diaspora put into question Boyarin’s model of reclaiming diaspora for ‘Jewish ethnography’. Following activists’ highlighting the problematic nature of such reclamations of identity, in the third section I

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elaborate on those Levinasian theoretical contributions that may similarly furnish us with both an alternative understanding of the ethico-politics of Jewishness, and a critique of identity politics more broadly. Finally, I reflect on post-colonial writing addressing the historical roots of the 'Jewish question' in order to place in critical context the emergence of both 'Jewish theory' and 'Jewish ethnography' as resources for anthropologists and other scholars. Given the ways in which both 'ethnography' and 'theory' will be shown in this paper to question the rendering of Jewishness as a cultural or methodological model, I suggest that we retain the unease and the traces of absence that the question of Jewishness, or the 'Jewish question', reveals.

### *Self and Other*

Perhaps an apt place to start is with the admission that over the course of eighteen months of fieldwork research in Israel, I never found a way of answering the question of whether I was Jewish or not with which I felt comfortable. My discomfort lay not only in the fact that I was not Jewish, and had no known family genealogy that could potentially explain my interest in Israel and Jewish ethics. Rather it was also an anticipation of and reaction to my sense that the question itself was rarely asked easily or freely – it was posed to me, very often, as an apology as much as a question. 'I'm sorry to ask, but...' was almost always the phrasing that opened the question, even as both I and my interlocutors saw it as an inevitable and legitimate one. Sometimes, and mostly when those with whom I was in conversation were not leftist activists but other Israelis, this was not the case and there was no embarrassment or shame conveyed in the asking, but this was uncommon. In the question-as-apology of activists who saw themselves as opposing violence, racism, and oppression, there was something of a discomfort with the need to know, with the fact that it makes a difference whether someone is or is not a Jew as the relation with her is formed. The fact of difference, we might say, and in particular of Jewish difference, and its perceived relation to those political realities activists sought to oppose, was a source of unease, for both ethnographer and her interlocutors.

My fieldwork experience thus posed an additional challenge to what Jonathan Boyarin has proposed as a model for anthropological methodology and theory in general, that of 'Jewish ethnography'. Boyarin's intellectual project, often writing with his brother Daniel Boyarin, who works within and among Talmudic studies, gender and queer studies, and the history of religion, traces an ethnography of Jews

and Judaism, including some work based in Israel/Palestine, as a series of reflections on how the Jewish textual tradition, alongside histories of othering, exile and persecution, as well as Zionism and Israeli colonialism, inflect contemporary experiences of Jewishness and formulations of Jewish ethics (J. Boyarin 1992, 1996a, 1996b, D. Boyarin & J. Boyarin 1993, 1997; cf. Bunzl 2000 and Cohn & Silberstein 1994). Both scholars explicitly position themselves as observant Jews with ambivalent positions towards both Orthodox Judaism and Israeli and Zionist ethico-politics. Based on this work Jonathan Boyarin has proposed that 'Jewish ethnography' would be 'a fragmentary ethnography', reflecting the 'partial and tentative nature of ethnographic learning' and 'resisting the impulse to portray 'whole' cultures' (J. Boyarin 1996b: 25). This, he claims, is an approach that can be deduced from histories of Jewish difference as well as Judaism's textual tradition:

Estrangement from the self, or at any rate a double consciousness, is constitutive of Jewishness not because we persist only through being repeatedly rejected by others but because there was a time before the Jew was a Jew. Abraham becomes the first Jew when he leaves his father's ways and his father's house to follow an invisible God. Coming to be Jewish is coming to be Other. What is relevant here regarding the possibility of a distinctively Jewish ethnography is that Judaism contains the Other in its own genealogy, that is to say, its own imaginary. (J. Boyarin 1992: 66)

Boyarin clarifies that this proposal is not intended as a universalisation of the figure of 'the Jew', nor as a call that only Jewish ethnographers could take on in their scholarship, but rather as closer to the project of feminist and post-colonial theory in their attempts to enact a 'critical recuperation of repressed cultural traditions' (ibid.: 71), and as an intervention in light of what Dominguez described as 'the always unstable position of Jews in post-Enlightenment society – at times minoritized, at times subsumed into the category of the dominant population, at times considered different but not Different, and at other times said to exemplify Difference' (Dominguez 1993: 622).

In this sense, the notion of 'Jewish ethnography' relates to the critique of the dominant historiography of Zionist Israeli politics proposed both by scholars and by the activists with whom I conducted research. These critiques challenge Israeli narratives' negation of diaspora or exilic Jewish history in the Zionist reformulation of the Jew as *sabra* (Almog 2000), and the idea that the establishment of the state of Israel brought redemption to the Jewish people, as a unified national body, thereby

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erasing difference among Jews (Raz-Krakotzkin 2005). Boyarin's suggestion is to rescue diaspora from Zionist ideology as a possible cultural and political 'resource', rather than that which must be extinguished, and to clearly separate Jewishness from Israeliness or Zionism, as much as the three concepts may now be implicated in one another. Where Mizrahi scholars Ella Shohat and Yehouda Shenhav have pointed to the ways in which Zionism has silenced the voices, histories, and experiences of Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews in favour of a model which elevates one particular version of Ashkenazi Jewish culture and history to equate to Israeli culture and history in general (Shohat 1988, 1999; Shenhav 2006), Boyarin also points to how this politics has been based upon a rejection of *Yiddishkayt* – of Jewish life in the European diaspora. This interpretation links the transformation of Jewishness, and the negation of its constitutive Otherness, to the parallel Zionist denial of Palestinian life in Israel, which, Boyarin argues, 'was profoundly though by no means uniquely traceable to an internal lack consequent on the rejection of the Zionist pioneers' *alte zakhen* [Yiddish for 'old things']' (J. Boyarin 1996b: 9).

The connection Boyarin draws between Jewish otherness and other Others within the context of Israel/Palestine – in his case, mainly referring to the Palestinians – is important in the way it highlights that the attention to difference or alterity is not only about challenging an idea of whole and unified 'cultures', but also about attending to the ways in which certain subjects are formed in oppositional relation to those who have been ethnically, politically, or culturally 'othered' within histories of nation-building and colonialism. This, indeed, is what differentiates Boyarin's model of 'Jewish ethnography' – that can be extended beyond his particular focus on Jews and Israel/Palestine – from Virginia Dominguez' study of conceptions of self and other amongst Jewish Israelis. Whilst her perceptive study *People as Subject, People as Object* (Dominguez 1989) rightly identifies a Jewish Israeli preoccupation with constantly assessing and re-assessing the boundaries of self and other – what she describes as self-representation and self-objectification through the repeated opposition of that self to various others – she focuses primarily on internal differentiations between different Jewish *edot* (roughly, ethnic groups, but a term she scrutinises for its ideological charge).<sup>1</sup> In this regard Dominguez reflects the blindness of her interlocutors (mainly highly educated, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv-based, Ashkenazi Israelis) to the Palestinian question and their presence in Israel. Considering how the objectification of Ethiopian or Mizrahi Jews as internal Others shows how Israeli discourse relies upon certain containment strategies towards difference in order to buttress the anxiety around the oneness of the

‘Jewish people’ and the state of Israel’s capacity and legitimacy in representing it, Dominguez also takes for granted the introspective nature of such ideas of Jewishness and Israeliness. In doing so she undermines both the vast range of Jewish histories that have not been constituted in this relation to the Israeli state and the Palestinian challenge to the naturalness of the Zionist project in Israel.

It is revealing, however, that Dominguez’ most acute observations of Jewish Israeli unease with external others – also, here, meaning Palestinians – come with her reflections on her position as non-Jewish ethnographer, and particularly one who ‘falls in love with’ Jewish Israel, and for whom the deep identification she feels with her interlocutors is sometimes jarringly interrupted by reminders of her ‘outsider’ status. Where Dominguez’ experiences as ethnographer overlap with my own, though, both as non-Jews studying Israel, is also where the differentiations between Dominguez’ interlocutors and the Israeli left-wing activists with whom I worked become apparent. Where her friends and colleagues’ responses to her non-Jewishness index a rather stable sense of Jewish self that is interrupted by her inquiries, it is rather the already questioned and fragmented idea of selfhood that I encountered in activists’ questioning of my identity. In one instance, for example, Dominguez discusses sharing the draft of a text she has written with a couple of academic Israeli friends, only to be shocked by the response that her writing could be interpreted as anti-semitic. In discussing a piece she had written that referred to the categorisations of kinds of people used in the Israeli census, and pointing to the ways in which it indexes the problematic status of Jewishness, as opposed to the other possible identity categories in Israel, she writes:

My otherness was indexed in his objection. It was not just that I *linked* otherness to selfhood in a way foreign, even offensive, to Arye. It is also that *I* did so. Suddenly my non-Jewishness became relevant. [...] In appropriating their constitution of their other, I was “otherizing” their other – “liberating” the other from its author(s). It wasn’t quite clear what I was, thereby, doing to the self. (Dominguez 1989: 157-158)

Differently, she reflects on her time in Israel during the war with Lebanon in the summer of 1982, and her intense emotional reaction to and experience of being caught up in the ‘frenzy’ of the ‘home front’ (Dominguez 2013). It is in her self-reflective identification of her feeling, without having known or articulated it at the time, and just before the Sabra and Shatilla massacres invited widespread protest at the Israeli army’s involvement in that atrocity, that Israel’s acts in that war were



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unacceptable, even 'criminal' (ibid.), that one can sense the cracks in the way she describes her affection for the place:

Something about Israel – its landscape, its struggles with peoplehood, its ongoing *shtick* – draw me more deeply, as a person with multiple friendships, a life full of sadnesses, loves, and political reactions, and an analyst of human collectivities and noticed and unnoticed social processes. (Dominguez 2012: 20)

In these examples, both the affront of the critique of a non-Jewish ethnographer, as well as her reflections on the seductive pull of a place 'full of sadnesses' whose processes of exclusion and othering go largely unnoticed, from within, underline the ways in which Dominguez confronted and was attracted by the troubled but ultimately unified sense of peoplehood that is the object of her analysis.

Thus whilst the awkward relationship of a non-Jewish ethnographer with her Jewish Israeli interlocutors is one which we clearly share in certain respects, my research with those whose self-positioning differed from that of the liberal elite with whom Dominguez worked revealed a different relation to non-Jews that relates, I suggest, also to a different ethical subjectivity and sense of self. The unease with which the question of our insider or outsider status was raised during my fieldwork was, as I described above, not only my own, but also that of the left-wing activists with whom I was in dialogue. Their challenges, in their lives and activist practices, to Zionism and the dominant narratives of Israeli and Jewish life of the state of which they are citizens already go beyond the depictions of a tension between oneness and fragmentation that is the subject of Dominguez' book. The question of Jewish otherness in and as a relation to the 'Palestinian question', to colonialism, and to histories of racism, is not only raised by myself and others such as Jonathan Boyarin, but rather is raised by left-wing activists themselves as their practices actively inscribe the interface of these questions. Thus, I suggest, the question from them came as an apology – an apology for their enduring attachments to a particular subjectivity they felt had been tainted by its complicity with violence. Moreover, and as I will describe here, activists' ironic relations to Boyarin's *Yiddishkayt* also place in question the viability of an identification with exile or diaspora as an alternative cultural and political model to contemporary Israel's Zionism.

*Irony in Yiddish*

On the 9th May 2011, the eve of the state's independence day, a bar in Jaffa staged a party, and the Facebook invitation to it was worded as follows:

Independence Party of Medinat Weimar

Medinat Weimar, the movement for a Jewish state in Thuringia, Germany, is pleased to invite you to a party to celebrate the return to exile, of the body and soul. On this day all of us are diaspora Jews!!! A party with radical Jewish music – Klezmer, Punk, Cabaret and more...

This invitation was bizarre on numerous levels. *Medinat Weimar* – ‘The State of Weimar’ – was of course a fictional political movement, whose ambition of establishing a Jewish state in Germany and celebrating a ‘return to exile’ mocked nationalist rhetoric and the very notion of a Jewish state, and called for the affirmation of a Jewish identity not subsumed in Zionist narratives of the redemption of the Jewish people through the establishment of the State of Israel. Add to this, though, the location and organisers of the party – a bar in Jaffa run by a Palestinian Israeli activist, which was at the time becoming increasingly popular with Tel Avivi left-wing Jewish activists – and the move to undercut any ethnic or nationalist politics that could be read into the Medinat Weimar project became clearer, yet stranger, still. Why are Jewish and Palestinian Israeli left-wing activists listening to Klezmer music in Jaffa on Israeli independence day? What kind of ‘exile’ was here being evoked, satirised, affirmed, or invented?

The inspiration for the ‘Medinat Weimar’ party was the project of the same name by Israeli artist Ronen Eidelman. His work promotes and simulates the idea of establishing a Jewish state in Eastern Germany in a manner intended to provoke humorous and somewhat surreal questions about Jewish identity, Zionist Israeli nationalism, discourses of anti- and philo-semitism, guilt and remembrance in Germany, as well as the country's ongoing reluctance to criticise the State of Israel. The ‘movement's thirteen principles’ include the following:

- Medinat Weimar is a solution to overcome the present crises and heal Jewish trauma, German guilt, East Mediterranean conflicts, East German troubles and many other problems in the world;
- Medinat Weimar defines Jewish not through blood or ancestry but through similarity in mind, culture, common history and unity of fate. Jews from European origin, Jews from non-European origin, Palestinians

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Arabs (Muslim and Christian alike) and all other parties affected by the activities of the state of Israel are considered to share a common fate;  
– Medinat Weimar believes peoples maintain not only the rights of self-determination and self-definition, but self-redetermination and self-redefinition as well.<sup>2</sup>

Only in the final principle does Eidelman make it most clear that this 'movement' is an absurdist provocation, rather than a serious project to establish a new Jewish state, as it has been received (and opposed) by some commentators. The thirteenth principle reads: 'Medinat Weimar is not a realistic movement, but rather one that seeks to agitate and provoke by taking anti-Semitic, neo-liberal, nationalistic, Zionist arguments to their unreasonable conclusions illustrating their inner logic and absurdity'.<sup>3</sup>

In choosing to frame their independence day party in the spirit of this provocative art project, activists rejected the mainstream independence day celebrations, with their nationalist imagery and sentiment, and danced and drank instead to an ironic and satirical aesthetic. The idea of the celebration of the culture of exile or diaspora (the *gola* or *galut* in Hebrew) – Klezmer music, the Yiddish language, and other elements of European Jewish history, was serious, on the one hand, with a genuine critique of the Zionist erasure of different Jewish histories in the nation-building project of the new Israeli state. The recent trend amongst leftists towards learning and promoting non-Israeli European Jewish language and culture could be considered the Ashkenazi version of the politics of Mizrahi activists who felt their heritage destroyed by Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel.<sup>4</sup> Those studying Yiddish or appreciating the music of bands such as *Oy Division*, an Israeli Klezmer revival band who often played at leftist events or at alternative venues such as *Levontin 7*, often did so out of a critique of and opposition to the Israeli state and its appropriation, and partial elimination, of a particular Jewish culture and ethics. Judaism and Jewish-ness must not, for these activists, necessarily be identified with Israeli nationalism and state violence.

On the other hand, however, there was an irony and humour at play in the recreation of this aesthetic, as leftists enjoyed its absurdist and fantastic quality, and were aware of the sense in which what was being recreated was not exactly what existed before but a projection of the past in relation to an unsatisfactory present. This celebration of exile involved not only the celebration of a fictional past, but the appropriation of an idea – the *gola* or *galut* – which has been intensively promoted in state-sanctioned educational and cultural arenas as the Jewish history of

suffering and weakness which is held in contrast to a new, strong and secure Israeli, Hebrew, Zionist identity (Almog 2000; Penslar 2005; Zerubavel 1997). In taking this idea which is so tightly connected to official state discourses and promoting it as their own, Israeli leftists are simultaneously pulling the rug from under their own feet even as they also engage in a serious critique of the claims of Zionism and the Israeli state to represent Jews and Jewish culture. As Eidelman's final principle declares, there is a self-mockery in the idea of attaching oneself to any new identity or culture in order to displace another, and a recognition that the other that is being embraced is only so in relation to that escape from the self. This sense of irony was evident at many parties or concerts that took place during my fieldwork – the 'colonial party' for Purim in which guests were invited to dress up as their favourite historical character from the British Mandate period, or the Klezmer concert where the bizarre mix of Russian-speaking *olim* (Jewish immigrants to the state) and young radical leftists that made up the audience displayed the difference in the two groups' appreciation of the music – the former understanding and enjoying the Yiddish and Russian lyrics, and the latter smiling at the references to Palestine and political critiques of the Israeli state regime.

This irony partly resembles what Alexei Yurchak has described of Soviet public life and in particular the spaces of *svoi* and *vnye* sociality – a kind of relation to the state whereby one is neither in active opposition to, dissent against, the state, but nor is one co-opted by its authoritative discourses. Yurchak bases his analysis on what he calls the 'principle of performative shift' – the way in which the dominant and authoritative discourses of the Soviet regime were reproduced in form (the signifiers) whilst the content (the signified) could change (Yurchak 2005: 114). Thus the kind of subversion of the state Yurchak analyses was not the idealised 'dissident' position, of overt opposition to the state, but rather the everyday ways in which even those people working at its heart could 'displace' its power. Yurchak comments, 'between its fixed authoritative forms, this system was "injected" with elements of the new, unpredictable, imaginative, creative, "normal life" that was not limited to the constative meanings of authoritative discourse, even if enabled by its performative reproduction' (ibid.: 115-116).

The kind of activist practices I have described are clearly far more in the position of dissidence and opposition than those cultural forms about which Yurchak writes (and indeed he writes about his informants' explicit rejection of the idealised dissident position, the kind of imagination of themselves towards which my informants in many ways aspired). However, in the way in which the Medinat Weimar project, and others in this vein, appropriate and use the same concept of the exile/diaspora Jew

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as that promoted by the state, and in a way which parodies or mocks through an identification with the very concept being mocked, resembles the way in which Soviet *anekdoty* worked to 'engage, release, expose, and enable a complex set of discontinuities at personal, discursive, social, temporal, and other levels' (ibid.: 281). Here Yurchak refers to Peter Sloterdijk's concept of 'humour that has ceased to struggle', to explain the humour of Soviet *anekdoty*, which identify with, yet gently mock, dominant norms, sometimes in ways which made it impossible to tell whether the object or person was being ridiculed or not. Even whilst Israeli radical activists' humour and irony is far more in the classic protest mode, and often does have the provocative effect that activists intend, its protest is also tempered by the recognition of, reflection on, and sometimes soft parodying of, their own position of belonging to a dominant political regime. This kind of irony recalls Jonathan Lear's concept of 'radical hope', as he argues 'the possibility of constituting oneself as a certain sort of subject suddenly becomes problematic. One symptom of this is that at such a historical moment *a peculiar form of irony will first become possible*' (Lear 2006: 44; italics in the original). From this crisis of subjectivity can emerge creative practices of self-imagination that re-frame the subject's ability to relate to history. In relation to Israeli activists' irony these are moments of subversion which disrupt the hegemony of this regime through the assertion of an exilic kind of ethics – a subjectivity which at once is part of, longs for, identifies with a place, a culture, or a collective, and also rejects and distances them.

The ironic nostalgia of my interlocutors, and their projects of celebrating non-Zionist and de-territorialised Jewish identities and languages are ever more poignant and compelling as Israeli Jewish nationalism seems to grow increasingly exclusionary and racialised. These practices constitute a nostalgic 'aspirational normalcy' (Berlant 2007: 281) – the idea of being attached to a nostalgic vision that actually keeps one from flourishing – but with the kind of irony that Yurchak identifies in the Soviet context. Activists don't quite attach themselves to such imaginaries, and yet they also do. As Anne Allison writes in relation to her use of Berlant's term in the context of Japan and the emergence of a precarious stratum of the underemployed, what she calls 'my-homeism' – the celebration of a certain domestic intimacy that in fact no longer remains as it is imagined to once have existed – becomes more appealing as a fantasy as its possibility in reality fades (Allison 2012: 100). However, what is also clear in my ethnography, in the irony of activist practices, is that this celebration of the past as exile is a critical and self-reflective one. This humour is subversive because it uses the language of the state and of Zionism to ridicule and displace them, whilst also

acknowledging certain attachments to and desires for an identification with those narratives. In its ironic and humorous re-interpretations of an exilic past, this ethico-politics manifests itself as the celebration of a past that has already long been appropriated and deployed by the Israeli state in its shaping of a dissatisfactory present. In this sense, activists' 'aspirational normalcy of the past' incorporates both an aspiration for a more 'normal', less violent, past – a more innocent past, perhaps, an ideal of not being implicated as a perpetrator of violence – and the critical awareness that this version of the past and of exile is manifested only as a subversive orientation towards the present. In this case, certain Jewish Israeli subjects are placing in question the model proposed by Boyarin of a progressive Jewish reclamation of diaspora, such that his proposition for a 'Jewish ethnography' might also be further interrogated. In what follows I do so by exploring its connections to some other 'Jewish theory' that also confronts the questions raised here about Jewishness, identity, and fragmentations of diasporic models of being.

### *Identity in Question*

Judith Butler has reflected on the influence of her Jewish upbringing on both her politics vis-à-vis Israel/Palestine, and her theoretical inquiries into a non-violent ethics, partly in response to the increasingly polarised debates over charges of anti-semitism brought towards critics of Israeli policy in public culture in the United States as well as in Europe and Israel. Butler has insisted upon a separation of Jewish and Zionist/Israeli ethics and indeed has pointed to the internal dissidence within Israel that makes critique of Israeli state policy quite clearly distinct from a generalised dislike of Israelis as a 'people' (Butler 2006). In *Parting Ways* Butler echoes Boyarin in his call for the consideration of exile and diaspora as models from Jewish experience that can be employed as part of a progressive politics to take us beyond state violence and in particular its form in contemporary Israel (Butler 2012). Exploring the thought of prominent Jewish philosophers – primarily Emmanuel Levinas, Walter Benjamin, and Hannah Arendt – and framed as in conversation with that of Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish, Butler draws upon 'Jewish' philosophical resources to propose an ethico-politics of 'cohabitation'. She argues that the relation to otherness that is at the heart of Jewish history and ethics can be interpreted in Levinasian ways as forcing us to think beyond a lens of tolerance, and the idea of choosing to live with others, and towards a recognition of the unchosen-ness of the human condition and the ways in which others may impinge upon the subject's

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relation to herself. It can only be genocidal, Butler claims, to imagine one can reject an 'ontology of plurality' and choose with whom one can share the world, as she gleans from Arendt's commentary on the Eichmann trial (ibid.: 100).

Butler's engagement with Said and Darwish, though, at the heart of her reading of 'Jewish philosophy', differs from that of Boyarin – whose recognition of the Palestinian place in Jewish and Israeli life does not go as far in unsettling the very foundations of political identity as we might gauge from Butler's work. In her reading of Said's *Freud and the Non-European*, in which she refers to Levinas' ethics and his interpretation of the subject as radically interrupted, even persecuted, by the other, we see echoes of what I have described of Israeli left-wing activists' practices of the displacement of attachments to selfhood. Where activists' ironic reformulations of exile and diaspora place in question their belongings and attachments in Zionist Israel, I suggest, Butler and Levinas provide a parallel interpretation of Jewish ethics that similarly disrupts stable oppositions of self and other. Butler contrasts this feature of Levinas' writings with Martin Buber's promotion of an 'I-Thou' relation and its association with his binationalism in the early days of Zionism and the state of Israel. 'The Levinasian position,' Butler claims, 'assumes the asymmetry of the relation between the subject and the Other; it also assumes that this other is already me, not assimilated as a "part" of me, but inassimilable as that which interrupts my own continuity and makes impossible an "autonomous" self at some distance from an "autonomous" other' (ibid.: 38). Butler ends and interprets this section of her discussion with a citation from Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness*, in which in a conversation with a Jewish lover the question of loving Arabs or loving Jews is raised as an absurd and impossible one. The question of the love for these particular others, Butler suggests, raises the paradox of 'an impossible and necessary union' of binationalism – 'not love, but [...] a necessary and impossible attachment that makes a mockery of identity, an ambivalence that emerges from the decentering of the nationalist ethos and that forms the basis of a permanent ethical demand' (ibid.: 53). It is the 'permanent ethical demand' of the relation to otherness at the heart of subjectivity, and specifically in the relation of Jewish Israeli to Palestinian, of ethno-national self to its other, that can be read also into my activist interlocutors' re-positioning of the notions of exile, identity, and nationalistic identifications.

Where Boyarin outlines a diasporic ethics that insists on asserting the particularism of identity, then, Butler pushes for one that highlights the unchosen-ness of that very same identity. There is thus an important difference between the use of the idea of diaspora of the two scholars,

even as both claim to unsettle and challenge liberal multiculturalism and its realisation in the nation-state form. In this case, Butler's making a 'mockery of identity' seems closer to my ethnographic case of Israelis who uncomfortably, and often humorously, refer to their own Jewishness and raise the question of their relations to non-Jews within this frame. In this sense activists' reformulations of diaspora Jewishness mirror Butler's reading of Levinas as destabilising any interpretation of his thought, as only, or straightforwardly, 'Jewish'. When activists ironically mock their own attachments to the nature of Jewish identity in relation to contemporary Israeli politics they are placing in question the political effects of certain attempts to make of 'the Jew' a particular ethical figure. If it is the consequence of activists' and Levinas' Jewishness that the very basis of the identity of 'the Jew' is in question, what kind of sense does it make to refer to Levinasian ethics as 'Jewish theory'? And indeed, does recognising the interruption of otherness at the heart of ethical subjectivity not destabilise any particularist idea that certain (Jewish) subjects represent, or are, the Other, always an index of the self-sameness of those from whom they are different? A closer engagement with Levinas' thought itself here will help in considering these questions.

In a 1969 essay entitled *Judaism and Revolution*, Levinas addressed the political events of the previous year in Paris in a typically cryptic manner (Levinas 1994). It was amongst the Talmudic readings that he regularly gave, which have often been considered separately from his 'philosophical' work. The *Mishna* and *Gemara* (the compilation of texts that together constitute the Talmud) discussed raise the question of an employer's obligation toward his workers and evokes, among other principles, the obligation of hospitality and the idea of the *minhag ha medina* – obligation to respect the custom or law of the city in which one finds oneself. Levinas excuses himself from the beginning of his lecture with the caveat that his knowledge of the Talmud may be inferior to the Jewish religious scholars he is addressing, thus marking his distance from the 'theologians', and proceeds to challenge what he calls the 'sublime materialism' (ibid.: 97) of Marxist political discourses. He emphasises not the concept of 'man' and his alienation through political economy, but rather 'Jewish humanism' – 'the man whose rights must be defended is in the first place the other man; it is not initially myself. It is not the concept "man" which is at the basis of this humanism; it is the other man' (ibid.: 98). In other words, Levinas uses here the Jewish text, a 'union text before the letter' as he refers to it (ibid.: 98), to make a broader ethico-political point – to challenge the socialist ideas by which he was surrounded, questioning what alienation might entail otherwise than through the concept of the proletariat, and the idea of the rights of man through a



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consideration of the obligation, or responsibility, towards other men. He makes much effort to underline that the 'descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' of the *Mishna* do not refer only to those recognised as Jews but as signifying a 'self-conscious humanity' (ibid.: 98), suggesting that 'the heirs of Abraham are of all nations: any man truly man is no doubt of the line of Abraham' (ibid.: 99).

Another important facet of this text, however, is its commentary on Israel and Zionism. Levinas was clearly also motivated here by the anti-Zionism of some of those participants of the 1968 protests, a move he found unconscionable given his feeling that Israel represented vulnerability itself – the vulnerability to persecution upon which he based his ethics of responsibility. Levinas' Zionism famously led him to support Israel throughout and despite its actions towards the Palestinians. In response to this some have considered him an awkward philosopher through which to think ethics, whilst others have found ways of following his philosophy whilst rejecting his politics on Israel/Palestine (Butler 2012; Caro 2009). In *Judaism and Revolution* the tension is clear. Levinas writes that 'we are responsible beyond our commitments' (Levinas 1994: 108) – which I read as meaning responsibility for others extended for Levinas beyond our particularisms, be they ethnic, religious, or national (concepts that, notably, Levinas never definitively separates out from one another, signalling the ambiguity of what precisely he was referring to when writing explicitly about Judaism). His attachment to Israel relates to his perception of its necessity for the existence of a Judaism whose significance extends far beyond what it might mean for Jews:

Doesn't Jewish persecution aim at something else in Judaism, an intangible something? Someone here has said – I liked the expression very much – Judaism or responsibility for the entire universe, and consequently, a universally persecuted Judaism. To bear responsibility for everything and everyone is to be responsible despite oneself. To be responsible despite oneself is to be persecuted. Only the persecuted must answer for everyone, even for his persecutor. Ultimate responsibility can only be the fact of an absolutely persecuted man, having no right to a speech that would disengage him from his responsibility. [...] Non-Jews can also feel this Jewish particularism. This adds to the acuteness of the tension between Judaism and universalism and confers upon Judaism a meaning beyond universalism, if one can express it thus. (ibid.: 114-115)

Levinas' appeal here to interpret Judaism as universal persecution differs somewhat from the work of other scholars who seek to universalise the Jew as a figure of the persecuted and the exilic. In arguing for an understanding of 'Jewish particularism' as 'meaning beyond

universalism', Levinas recalls his distinction between 'totality' and 'infinity', where the transcendence of infinity is not opposed to that which is captured in the 'totality' of representation and thought – it is not negativity, or non-thought, but simply that which is beyond thinking, or what Levinas refers to as 'thematization'. This is his critique of Heidegger's *Being* and the basis of his other widely recognised motif of 'the face', which, as has been made clear by several students of Levinas, does not signify the actual, physical face, but the interruption to sameness and the trace of infinite otherness, or transcendence (Butler 2012; Critchley 1999; Hand 2009). Thus, in another essay on Judaism, Levinas describes his notion of responsibility as that which 'will never end' – '*ein ladavar sof*'. 'In the society of the Torah,' he writes, 'this process is repeated to infinity; beyond any responsibility attributed to everyone and for everyone, there is always the additional fact that I am still responsible for that responsibility' (Levinas 1989: 226). Jewish particularism takes us into the realm of the beyond, or the transcendental, for Levinas, and not into the universalisation of 'the Jew'. It is employed as an exemplar of his philosophy of ethical subjectivity – of an ethics of responsibility and, ultimately, persecution that is inescapable and infinitely recurring.

Here Levinas' theory, Jewish but also beyond Jewishness, recalls the ways in which Israeli left-wing activists related their ethics and ironic displacements of exile and diaspora to a specifically Jewish context whilst simultaneously calling into question the kinds of attachments and identities that were thereby being evoked. This challenge to Jewish Israeli ethico-politics reflects that posed by Levinas and Butler to the positioning of any theory as particularly Jewish, given how their interrogations of Jewishness lead us to question any idea of stable ethno-nationalist identities. These readings of 'Jewish theory', then, together with Israeli activists' resistance to practicing a stable Jewishness, in my ethnography, lead me to approach the idea of 'Jewish ethnography' with suspicion. As these authors explore, we are already far beyond the realm of the exclusively Jewish. Hence, although Levinasian thought is often considered Jewish or even theological in substance, I wish now to return to the emergence of such categorisations in the final section of this paper, and revisit the unease with which my activist interlocutors both ascribed to and unsettled them in their engagements with the Israeli/Palestinian present.

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*The Questionability of Jews (and Others)*

Tracing the emergence of the conceptualisation of Jews as a minority in Enlightenment, secularising, western Europe, Aamir Mufti suggests that the Jew becomes a question because of the challenge posed by the combination of both Jewish community and Jews' perceived cosmopolitanism to the emerging liberal, European nation-state (Mufti 2009). In being asked to identify himself, 'who are you?', as Mufti explores particularly through the example of Lessing's play *Nathan the Wise*, the Jew comes to signal the impossibility and unfinished nature of the secular nation-state project, an unanswerable question and thus a crisis for the politics of emancipation and rights of late imperial Europe. Mufti suggests,

The 'question' that is repeatedly addressed to the figure of the Jew in these early decades of the era of emancipation – 'Who are you?' – is, in a rigorous sense, an impossible one to answer, for the impossibility of an adequate response is inherent in its rhetorical form as a question. To respond, for instance, that, 'yes, we are French' – or German or English, as the case may be – is to make an utterance whose truth will always be in question. For while the demand may purport to be addressed to the 'Jews of France' (or England or Germany), it assumes the existence of Jews in general, and of Jews as a question in general. The attempt in the nineteenth century to assimilate the Jews into any of the European nation-states, no matter how sincere, is thus one almost intended to fail and to remain an open question. (ibid.: 89-90)

The specificity of the Jew as the minority subject of this question – this demand to answer for and to the European, and Christian, nation-state – is emphasised also by Gil Anidjar when he asks instead 'the Christian question', or rather, asks why it was never asked in the same way as its Jewish counterpart.<sup>5</sup> Anidjar argues, alongside Talal Asad (1993), that the category of religion as a distinct and separate sphere from, say, political life, and importantly as distinguished from race, paralleled the emergence of the Jew, and indeed the Arab, as well as the connection between them as two kinds of 'semites', in the same historical period that Mufti studies. It was, and is, the fantasy of 'Western Christendom', or Europe, Anidjar suggests, that both created the categories of race, ethnicity, religion, and politics, whilst also externalising the Jew, the Arab, and others, from its majority and Orientalist limits. The tendency to separate analyses of anti-semitism, on the one hand, and Orientalism, on the other, ignores the ways in which both the idea of enmity between different subjects, and the

contemporary relation of Europe to the question of Jews and/or Arabs, 'have been co-constituted by, and most importantly, *with and within*, Europe' (Anidjar 2008: 36. Cf. Anidjar 2003).

The 'Christian question' cannot similarly be asked, Anidjar argues, because this would destabilise the very foundations of Europe as an idea that separates itself from the histories of racism that yet belong to its very invention of the concept of race.<sup>6</sup> Anidjar places political Zionism within the same analytical framework:

No less Orientalistic than its elders in its conceptions of the East, no less anti-Semitic than the rest of the Christian West, Zionism more pointedly reinscribes what was already at work in the early invention of the Semites: the European wedge that, now called "secularization," would turn away from religion, distance itself from the only invention of its Semitic, monotheistic, and desertic origins ("Les Juifs dehors!" – Herzl heard in Paris and, upholding the imperative, called on Jews everywhere to abide), and separate race from religion, and religion from (modern) politics, separate, finally, the Jew from the Arab. Political Zionism, then, is another name for the beginning and end of the "Semite," its paradoxically double internalization and exteriorization. The enemy within, the enemy without: the Arab, out of the Jew, and the Jew, out of Europe, exported, deported. (Anidjar 2008: 33)

The history of the 'Jewish question' is thus framed by Mufti and Anidjar as the history of European imperialism and secularisation, and their concomitant processes of differentiation and exclusion. Does it then make sense to make 'Jewish theory', or indeed, 'Jewish ethnography' out of this history, this exclusion, this question? Does the putting into question of the Jewish question not invite us similarly to destabilise the bounds of theory and ethnography that would export and deport their Jewish versions – Jewish theory, Jewish ethnography – from the philosophical and anthropological canon?

Such is my sense when I recall the apology in the question – a placing in question of the question – when my interlocutors and I interrogated each other and ourselves on the question of (my) Jewishness. It would not be enough only to examine the crisis of representation in ethnographic research and writing, or to consider the complexities of the power dynamics between ethnographer and her subjects, as a reflection on this moment, as we have long since learnt must also be done in the practice of ethnography (Clifford 1983; Clifford & Marcus 1986; Marcus & Fischer 1986; Crapanzano 1980; Rabinow 1977). Rather I would point to what Johannes Fabian has noted as the problem of 'presence': the fact that, despite the endless traces of absence – in the case he discusses the absence

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of the memory of anti-semitism in Germany – we work with the illusion that we are present to ourselves, that the self is present, whilst the Other has to be made present, to be re-presented so as to be comprehensible to the self (Fabian 2007). Such insistence on representation could be considered an extension of the way in which, as Gil Hochberg notes, the amnesia of nationalist historiography prevents us from seeing how self and other, like Arab and Jew, are 'necessarily configured through or in relation to the other' (Hochberg 2010: 2). It is this amnesia, these traces of absence, I suggest, that provoked the unease or the awkwardness of the question of Jewishness that I relate through my fieldwork encounters.

Thus, whilst Fabian suggests addressing this problem by aiming for greater presence, for anthropology to become a 'human science of presence' (Fabian 2007: 117), as he confronts the ongoing othering of the Others in the distinction between studying 'our' societies and the other ones, I hesitate to follow him in this quest for presence. In the quotation from Derrida's *Of Hospitality* with which I opened this paper, it is precisely the presence of Being, in the terms of phenomenology, that Derrida questions. Following Levinas in his reworking of the trace as an absence, an inscription left by the trauma of the Other, Derrida makes of Levinasian infinity the aporia of language that characterises his work on writing and difference. The relation of the Same and the Other, Derrida argues in one of his most sensitive interpretations of Levinas, *At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am* (Derrida 2007), is one of untying, or undoing, of negotiating 'the compromise that will leave the nonnegotiable intact, and manage it so that the fault, the one that consists in inscribing the wholly other in the empire of the same, alters the same enough to absolve it from and of itself' (ibid.: 150). It is the acknowledgment of absence, of alterity and non-self within the subject, that I take from Derrida, following Levinas, to be an open question to which a response is necessary, indeed inevitable, but one which cannot simply be closed. The ever necessary asking of the 'Jewish question', which nonetheless has been posed through processes of differentiation and exclusion, resonates here as a question that delineates absence and alterity as its very premise.

### *Conclusion*

In examining what is at stake in a call for 'Jewish ethnography', and its echoes in what we might consider various formulations of 'Jewish theory', I have argued that what might be particularly Jewish is a cautious questioning of the very drive to categorise and elevate an ethno-national identity as either representation or methodology. In the work of Levinas,

Butler and Derrida critical engagements with Jewishness recall the uneasy attachments and subjectivities of those Jewish Israeli activists with whom certain awkward interactions raised the question-as-apology as an analytical focus. Theoretical renderings of subjectivity as always interrupted by otherness provide a lens through which to consider the ironic reformulations of diaspora and exile in activists' cultural practices not as a reclamation of a particularistic identity but rather as critique of, and creative resistance to, the ethico-political imperatives to do so in contemporary Israel/Palestine. Following their lead, I question the attempt to address the relative lack of a sustained attention to Jews and Jewishness in anthropology through a methodology of 'Jewish ethnography' by pointing instead to the very constitution of the 'Jewish question' through lack, absence, and exclusion. In this way a broader question about anthropology's conceptualisations of identity and subjectivity can be raised, that does not make of fragmentation and trauma only a Jewish experience but neither writes Jewish experience out of the history of European theory and ethnography.

Engaging the notions of fragments, failure, void, and silence, Israeli film-maker and writer Udi Aloni discusses the work of Palestinian film-maker Elia Suleiman in the provocatively entitled *What Does a Jew Want?*, as he describes Suleiman's chronicling of 'Israeli Arab' life in Israel/Palestine. The double negation of the label of 'Israeli Arab' – neither Jew nor Palestinian – is rendered by Suleiman, in Aloni's words, through an 'aesthetic of the present-absent subject' (Aloni 2013: 78). The Arab who is not Palestinian, and the Israeli who is not a Jew, Aloni suggests, places the question of absence amongst the appearance of presence, such that Aloni cannot call himself 'Israeli' or a 'Palestinian Jew'. Neither can Suleiman be called a 'Jewish Palestinian', as Aloni considers strategies of naming that might deal with the trauma of absence (ibid.: 82). There is no resolution of the question Aloni poses of 'What Does a Jew Want?', just as Anidjar did not seek to resolve that of 'What does the Christian Want?', when he asked it, but rather to underline what it is about the question that unsettles theories of sameness and difference. Similarly, I hesitate to try to resolve the question with which I was faced during fieldwork and which caused my discomfort, alongside that of those who asked it, with either 'Jewish ethnography' or 'Jewish theory'. The absence of a similar notion of 'Christian ethnography' and 'Christian theory' is enough, I think, to trouble us as we attempt either to particularise the trace of absence or to universalise the experience of particularity, and thus to ask the 'Jewish question' to answer for our troubles with otherness.

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### Notes

<sup>\*1</sup> *Edot* is the plural form of *eda* – roughly translated, ethnic group – which, however, is used far more commonly to refer to Mizrahi than Ashkenazi Jews, highlighting its Orientalist and colonialist overtones as the *edot* of the East are contrasted to the internally differentiated and European groupings of different Ashkenazi Jews – e.g. Polish, German, Hungarian, etc. (cf. Penslar 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Cited from Ronen Eidelman's website:

<http://ronen.dvarim.com/cms/2008/05/08/the-movement-for-a-jewish-state-in-thuringia/#more-214> (accessed 02/08/2012).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Rachel Leah-Jones' documentary film *Ashkenaz* (Leah-Jones 2007) gives a nuanced and entertaining account of this counter-cultural identity politics and issues of race and ethnicity in contemporary Israel.

<sup>5</sup> Differently, Jonathan Boyarin also addresses the historical emergence of Jewish-Christian(-Muslim) relations and identities in Europe with reference to Spanish colonial conquests in Latin America (Boyarin 2009).

<sup>6</sup> In anthropology, certain scholars have considered, following the growing study of Christianity as ethnographic object, the relationship between Christian theology and anthropology's history as a discipline as well as its theoretical premises – see Cannell (2006) and Robbins (2006). This work is instructively critical of anthropology's Christianity and indeed has suggested that Christianity is 'the repressed' of the discipline (Cannell 2006: 4) but as Robbins notes is in its infancy and has not gone as far as Anidjar and others I cite in probing the relationship between Christianity, Europe, and colonialism.

## REGULAR ARTICLES







1 THE JOURNEY OF LEAVING AN  
2 INSULAR COMMUNITY: THE CASE OF  
3 ULTRA ORTHODOX JEWS  
4

5 *Roni Berger\**  
6

7 *Abstract*  
8

9 **T**his article describes a study that used a qualitative methodology to  
10 capture the lived experience of individuals who grew up in Ultra  
11 Orthodox and Chasidic communities and left to explore a new  
12 path. A target sample of 19 individuals, mostly from the New York area,  
13 was used. Non structured individual in-depth interviews were conducted  
14 to learn how these individuals perceive, describe, and interpret their  
15 experience. Thematic analysis of the interviews was conducted. A major  
16 theme that emerged in this analysis referred to the process of leaving.  
17 Four phases were identified in the process: 1) initial questioning; (2)  
18 growing doubts; (3) beginning to share selectively with a small group of  
19 trusted others; (4) revealing a new and altered identity. These phases are  
20 discussed and illustrated. Implications for intervention and for future  
21 research are suggested.  
22

23 **Keywords:** Leaving orthodoxy, ex-orthodox, exiters, ex-haredi, off the  
24 derech,  
25

26 Insular communities follow a separatists segregationist strategy, involving  
27 positive attitudes to own culture and negative attitudes to the culture of the  
28 wider society (Berry, 1997). They are often religious and include  
29 Mormons, Amish, new religious movements, cults and Ultra-Orthodox  
30 Jews (also called Haredi). These communities try to maintain their  
31 distance from the larger society and their traditional way of life as the  
32 world around them is changing drastically and fast. All aspects of life are  
33 highly structured and regulated by clear guidelines, ideas and practices, to  
34 which total conformity is demanded.

35 Specifically, Ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities were described by  
36 Davidman and Gareil, (2007) as follows:

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\* Support for this study was provided by an institutional grant from Adelphi University. Help with recruitment of participant was given by Shulem Deen, Unpious.com Editor and Founder.

1 Jews, like other highly encapsulated groups provide environments that  
2 are insulated from secular life in a variety of ways. Education, worship,  
3 food, dress, and observance are all governed within the community.  
4 Rules pertaining to every aspect of life are clearly and strictly outlined by  
5 religious texts and reinforced by the rabbis, who lead, teach, and shape  
6 their communities. The communities themselves are geographically  
7 isolated; haredim [the concept that literally translated “anxious ones”  
8 refers to Ultra Orthodox Jews] generally live within their own distinct  
9 neighborhoods and rarely interact with those whose secular lives they  
10 disdain (p. 205).

11  
12 These tightly knit communities are characterized by large families as  
13 birth control is restricted, high rate of poverty, a restrictive life style and  
14 dress code enforced by a “modesty patrol”, rigorous social control with  
15 strict separation between men and women until they are married, typically  
16 in an arranged marriage at the age of 18-19. Exposure to radio, television,  
17 non-religious media, movies, literature, art, music, and the web is strictly  
18 limited. Orthodox education consists almost exclusively of religious  
19 content and the Jewish scriptures. Boys and men spend most of their time  
20 in prayers and religious studies whereas the focus for women is on family  
21 matters. Everyday language is often Yiddish. In some sects, women are  
22 not allowed to drive.

23 Individuals who explore life out of these communities, especially the  
24 more extreme sects, are like new immigrants who step into a foreign  
25 world often demonized by their community of origin as negative and  
26 dangerous. They often lack basic education, language proficiency,  
27 vocational training, and marketable skills necessary to function in the  
28 modern world. They also lack knowledge of norms of behavior with  
29 respect to dress and interpersonal behaviors; particularly with the opposite  
30 sex (they do not get education regarding sexuality, sexually transmitted  
31 diseases, and safe sex). Having been raised to believe that the  
32 nonobservant live utterly meaningless lives, their values, worldview, and  
33 identity are also challenged. Consequently, they become culturally  
34 disorientated.

35 While converts into strict religious groups have considerable  
36 institutional support, the same is not true for those who choose to  
37 transition into secular society. They are frequently stigmatized, rejected,  
38 and publically humiliated by their friends and communities. Stigmas and  
39 social punishment may extend to their families, who often ostracize and  
40 disown them and they may lose contact with children, parents, and  
41 siblings. Consequently, “transgressors” often face the challenge of  
42 navigating an unfamiliar outside world with little preparation and no



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1 financial, psychological, or social support. This may beget loneliness,  
2 stress, depression and self-harming behaviors.

3 Research about insular communities is limited as accessibility is  
4 challenging because they tend to isolate themselves and minimize  
5 interaction with the outer world for fear that secular modern ideas  
6 influence their beliefs and way of life. Available studies have focused on  
7 the likelihood of seeking screening for medical conditions, the association  
8 of religiosity with mental health and attitudes toward mental illness, some  
9 aspects of marital and child-adult relationships and residential relations  
10 between different religious groups (Albert, Harlap & Caplan, 2004; Bartz,  
11 Richards, Smith & Fischer, 2010; Blumen, 2012; Flint, Benenson &  
12 Alfasi, 2012; Goldberg & Yassour-Borochowitz, 2009; Pirutinsky,  
13 Rosmarin, & Pargament, 2009; Schnall, Pelcovitz & Fox, 2013).

14 Leaving religion was conceptualized by Roof and Landers (1997) in  
15 three typologies. *Disengagement* is the rejection of external religious  
16 authority while maintaining theistic beliefs and redefining the relation of  
17 the individual to religious institutions. It includes moving from one  
18 religion to another, eroding of traditional beliefs and institutional  
19 loyalties, moving into and out of active religious participation and  
20 exploring alternative religious and spiritual possibilities (often called New  
21 Religious Movements). *Dissent* refers to opposition to religion as a  
22 bureaucratic organizational structure such as the church but not  
23 necessarily losing faith. *Defection* means rejection of religion all together  
24 and opting for a secular viewpoint and life styles. Defecting can occur  
25 publicly (Bar-Lev, Breslau, & Ne'eman 1997; Peter et al. 1982; Wright,  
26 1984) or privately, while maintaining the appearance of being Orthodox  
27 (Barzilai 2004).

28 Most studies about leaving insular communities documented socio  
29 demographic characteristics of those who left a church or a cult (Albrecht,  
30 Cornwall & Cunningham, 1988; Balch, 1985; Roozen, 1980; Solomon,  
31 1981), diverse aspects of the process of defecting and contextual factors  
32 that shape it (Albrecht & Bahr, 1983; Bar-Lev, Breslau, & Ne'eman 1997;  
33 Brinkerhoff & Mackie, 1993; Bromley, 1991; Jacobs, 1987), and post-  
34 leaving reflection on the experience (Rothbaum, 1988; Wright, 1984).  
35 Many of these studies focused on “deconversion” i.e. people who joined  
36 an encapsulated community and then returned to the secular world from  
37 which they originally came rather than disaffiliation by those who were  
38 born into enclave communities and left them (Shaffir, 1997). In addition,  
39 personal memoirs are available that report the experience of crossing over  
40 (Auslander, 2007; Brown Taylor, 2007; Feldman, 2012; Garrett &  
41 Farrant, 2003; Schachtmen, 2006).

1 Studies about leaving religion focused on Christianity. A couple of  
2 studies were about conversion out of Islam (Khalil & Bilici, 2007), where  
3 leaving is considered an extremely serious crime. A handful of studies  
4 examined disaffiliation from Orthodox Judaism and its psycho-social  
5 implications (Attia, 2008; Davidman & Gareil, 2007; Winston, 2005).  
6 Some of these studies included participants who grew up “with one foot  
7 out the door” as they came from families that were less embedded in the  
8 community (e.g. one parent was less or not religious, there were  
9 relationships with non-orthodox relatives) and others focused on specific  
10 sub-populations such as adolescents who ran away from mostly abusive  
11 dysfunctional families (Attia, 2008). No distinction was documented  
12 between Chasidic and non-Chasidic Ultra-Orthodox communities relative  
13 to the findings in these studies. Except for the accounts of persons that  
14 have left the Haredi world (e.g. Feldman, 2011), there is a scarcity of  
15 scholarly knowledge about the lived experience of those who grew up in a  
16 community that meticulously observes the Halakha (Jewish law) and  
17 decided to leave it.

18 Previous efforts to document experiences of those who left (e.g.  
19 Shaffir & Rockaway, 1987) were few and far between. As the  
20 development of technology continues to crack dents in the attempts to  
21 maintain the insulation of the Ultra-Orthodox community, this study  
22 sought to capture and document how individuals who grew up in Jewish  
23 Ultra-Orthodox and Chasidic communities and opted to explore a new  
24 path, perceive, interpret and make meaning of their lived experience.

### 25 *Method*

26  
27  
28 To examine the lived experience of those who chose to go “off the  
29 derech” (OTD) [literally means “straying from the path” and is used to  
30 describe individuals who digress], a target sample of 19 formerly  
31 Chasidic and Ultra-Orthodox men (n=12) and women (n=7) was  
32 interviewed. Participants were recruited through postings on web sites of  
33 two not for profit organizations serving “exiters” as well as snow ball (i.e.  
34 participants referring other potential participants). Criteria targeted were:  
35 1. Self identification as having grown up in an Ultra Orthodox  
36 community; 2. Self identification as having left this community to pursue  
37 any other type of life and affiliation (e.g. modern Orthodoxy, non-  
38 orthodoxy, secular); 3. Ability to speak English or Hebrew; 4. Consent to  
39 participate in the study and be interviewed. The original single posting  
40 produced two dozen responses within several hours, followed by requests  
41 to be interviewed that came from all over the country. This overwhelming

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1 response may suggest that individuals in this population group feel not  
2 being heard and are anxious to share their stories.

3 Seven of the interviewees were separated or divorced, one was  
4 married, and 11 were never married. Seven had children and one had  
5 grandchildren. Participants reported being raised in Ultra-Orthodox or  
6 Chassidic communities of various sects (Lubavitcher, Satmar, Litvish,  
7 Belz and non- specified) in Williamsburg, Crown Heights and Boro Park  
8 in New York City. As those who abandon a religious affiliation tend to be  
9 young adults (Albrecht, Cornwall & Cunningham, 1988; Bromley, 1991;  
10 Hoge, 1981; Need and de Graaf, 1996; Roozen, 1980), most participants  
11 were 18-30 year old. However a few were in their 30's, 40's or older.  
12 Quite a few were attending college at their 20's or 30's. Several attended  
13 an all-male or all female college, or a co-ed college with a large Orthodox  
14 Jewish student body. Because the process is gradual, they could not  
15 identify a specific date of leaving; however, with a few exceptions, most  
16 dated their leaving within five years prior to the interview. Individuals  
17 who contacted the researcher by email or by phone were screened for  
18 meeting the inclusion criteria. For those who qualified, an interview time  
19 and location were negotiated at their convenience.

20 While those who leave are often collectively portrayed by the  
21 community as marginal, troubled, and problematic, participants varied in  
22 their personal and familial backgrounds. No confirmatory statements from  
23 others is available; however, many self described as compliant, well  
24 embedded in the community, obedient, model "top of class" students and  
25 "good kids" when they were growing up. Their families were reported as  
26 intact, divorced, or remarried. With the exception of a few families  
27 described as abusive or dysfunctional and a couple of parents (especially  
28 fathers) reported to have alcohol problems, most stated that their families  
29 were functional, warm, and "normal". Sample statements were "I was  
30 very close to my parents, I was the oldest and everybody loved me, I was  
31 a good boy and I was perfect", "My family is a pillar of the community".

32 Data were collected by means of individual, in-depth, non-structured  
33 interviews designed to capture participants' perspectives on their journey  
34 away from Ultra Orthodoxy. Such interviews are often used in  
35 "discovery" qualitative research to allow participants tell their story. The  
36 interview started with a brief explanation of the purpose of the study (I am  
37 interested in anything you care to share about your experience moving  
38 away from the way in which you grew up to where you are today), did not  
39 follow any pre-conceived interview guide and included probing for  
40 examples, elaboration and clarification as the individual told the story.  
41 Thirteen interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed; notes were  
42 taken for six interviews because of participants' request or due to

1 conditions not conducive to recording. It became increasingly clear quite  
2 early in the process of data collection how eager people were to share  
3 their stories, as interviews quickly became monologues of sharing  
4 narratives. One participant explained his motivation for sharing his story  
5 “I want that people on the inside will be less afraid of the outside and  
6 people on the outside be less ignorant of inside”.

7 Thematic analysis was conducted to identify main themes within the  
8 data. Specifically, an inductive ‘bottom up’ method was employed, i.e.  
9 themes were identified from the data themselves rather than driven by any  
10 specific theoretical framework. This type of analysis provides a flexible  
11 approach that allows for a rich, detailed, and complex interpretation of the  
12 data in search of certain patterns across the entire data set (Braun &  
13 Clarke, 2006).

14 Two foci informed the analysis. First, the data set that was chosen for  
15 analysis included those parts of the interviews that had relevance to the  
16 journey away from Ultra Orthodoxy. Second, the analysis focused on the  
17 content of the narrative (conceptualized by Braun & Clarke 2006 as a  
18 semantic or explicit level) and did not include sociolinguistic aspects  
19 (such as laughter and other emotional expressions, pauses and pitch of  
20 voice), nor looking beyond what a participant has actually said. Topics  
21 were then clustered in a cross case comparison into common core themes.

22 The method used for this study presented some limitations. First,  
23 because of the self-selected nature of the sample, generalizing its  
24 conclusions must be done with caution and is limited to those similar to  
25 the sample in the current study. Second, while the subjective report met  
26 the goal of gaining in-depth understanding of the lived experience of  
27 participants, there is a potential risk that social desirability and unresolved  
28 emotional issues relative to their decision to leave may color participants’  
29 perception, interpretation, and reporting of their experiences. Thirdly,  
30 most participants have left fairly recently and thus it is not clear how the  
31 process will evolve in the long range. Future research may be helpful in  
32 addressing this gap by targeting “veteran exiters”. Finally, as in all  
33 qualitative research, characteristics of the interviewer may affect the  
34 interaction and what the interviewee chooses to share. The researcher is a  
35 secular Jew who shares cultural though not religious background with  
36 participants and in a way represents the world towards which they are  
37 heading.

### 38 *Findings*

39  
40  
41 The analysis yielded six themes, i.e. patterns that emerged across  
42 interviews. However, presenting and illustrating all of them is beyond the

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1 scope of this paper. Therefore the current report is focused on the theme  
2 that appeared in all interviews and referred to trajectories of transitioning  
3 out of the Ultra-Orthodox world. The decision to limit the discussion to  
4 this specific theme allows for a more detailed and nuanced account (Braun  
5 & Clarke, 2006).

6 Participants described a long, gradual, oscillating, slow, “bumpy”,  
7 “complicated” and for a few as “relatively smooth” process of  
8 transitioning from Ultra Orthodoxy. They often reported oscillating back  
9 and forth, experimenting with OTD, going back to what is considered  
10 proper behavior and away again in continuing circles. Participants were at  
11 different phases of the journey and included in the words of one man,  
12 “people who have done it, who want to do it, who are in the middle of  
13 doing it”. The self exploration of where they were was manifested by  
14 numerous emails sent by some to examine if they indeed fit into the  
15 category of those who left. A typical comment was “I am still at struggle  
16 with finding my place in religiosity”. That the process often continues was  
17 apparent both from verbal statements that this is always work in progress  
18 and from interviewees’ search for accurate words (as evident from  
19 numerous pauses, repeating words, leaving sentences unfinished, and  
20 starting again).

21 While every individual journey was unique, four pivotal milestones  
22 were common in the narratives: (1) initial questioning; (2) growing  
23 doubts; (3) beginning to share selectively with a small group of trusted  
24 others; (4) revealing a new and altered identity.

25  
26 **Initial questioning.** The journey varied in terms of when and how it  
27 started. With a few exceptions of those who began “straying” at very early  
28 ages (five and nine) or later in life (20’s to 40’s), for most participants, the  
29 process began at adolescence. Two major types of beginnings were cited.  
30 One was the emergence of cognitive doubts and the other was emotional-  
31 relational dissatisfaction. Men more often reported the former whereas  
32 women reported more of the latter. However, no clear dichotomy existed  
33 between these groups of beginnings; rather, participants reported a  
34 combination of both with diverse degrees of emphasis or dominance of  
35 one or the other.

36  
37 ***Emergence of cognitive doubts.*** Intellectually motivated beginnings were  
38 described as “things began to not make sense”. One young man who  
39 became involved in learning philosophy reached the conclusion through  
40 his studies “once that argument [regarding the existence of god] was  
41 dropped, I decided that there is no reason to believe”. The idea was  
42 mirrored in another statement. “The more I read, the more I realize how

1 illogical all this is. It just did not make sense philosophically to me that  
 2 god stands behind my back and watches if I turn on the light on Sabbath  
 3 and if I do, he will punish me”. A cognitive dilemma aroused between  
 4 what they were told in their traditional education and information that  
 5 they began to gather from other sources. For example, one man stated

6  
 7       Scientists were saying the earth is four and a half million years old and  
 8       now they can prove it; he [the rabbi] told me in yeshiva it’s six thousand  
 9       years old and period, end of story. So, I am doing more and more  
 10       research and become much more curious as I want to find answers  
 11       because I know I am right and the more I read, the more unclear it  
 12       becomes. I am not finding the right answers.

13  
 14       One woman felt increasingly frustrated as “I gradually began to  
 15       realize that the way I am being brought up is biased, bigoted and lacks  
 16       social conscience as everybody who is different is looked down at”.  
 17       Several interviewees described a feeling of living a lie, which was  
 18       emotionally challenging. Some struggled to maintain a co-existence  
 19       between the knowledge that they started to acquire and the belief that they  
 20       continued to hold; however, intellectual doubt often led to losing faith  
 21       followed by changes in practice, which changes appeared slowly and to  
 22       various degrees.

23  
 24       ***Emotional-relational dissatisfaction.*** Two types of dissatisfaction  
 25       emerged from interviews. First, the discontent with an environment that  
 26       they described as “run by arbitrary rules”, “extreme”, “non-  
 27       compromising”, “prison-like”, “boot camp, like a cult, run harshly”,  
 28       “controlling”, “like a glass bubble, living on an island that did not allow  
 29       you to touch the real world”. Demands on individuals often felt intensive,  
 30       pushing them to the edge beyond what they could tolerate and failing to  
 31       accommodate their particular needs and challenges. For example, “After  
 32       getting up early for Shacharit [the Morning Prayer], we had to learn non-  
 33       stop until close to midnight”. One participant stated “in secular education,  
 34       they would have given me accommodation [to his learning disability] but  
 35       not in the yeshiva”. It was the absolute demand for obedience that “broke  
 36       me... when they tried to push me to a place that does not fit my needs,  
 37       that is where the friction began”. Another man in his 20’s identified the  
 38       pressure, which started when he was 19, to find a “shiduch” [match] and  
 39       get married as the straw that broke the camel’s back. “Once you get  
 40       engaged, you are stuck and I was afraid to be stuck; so I had to make an  
 41       irreversible decision to leave or to stay”.

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1 A second relational-triggered beginning was abuse by parents or  
2 spouses or suffering a loss (such as the death of a brother of leukemia).  
3 Those individual described wondering “why did god do it to me”, which  
4 became “If there was god, he would not have allowed this to be done to  
5 me; since it did happen, there is not god”. One women in her 20’s who  
6 was married in an arranged marriage advocated by her father said “From  
7 the outside he [husband] appeared religious but when I realized how he  
8 treated me, I decided that if this is what religiosity means, I do not want  
9 it”. Several participants described verbal, physical abuse and molestation.  
10 One interviewee in her late teens shared that she started to rebel and test  
11 the limits at a very young age by exercising forbidden behaviors such as  
12 turning on the light on Sabbath and consuming dairy products lacking  
13 proper certification that the product was made from milk, milked under  
14 the supervision of an observant Jew. This type of milk is defined in the  
15 US and other countries as “Cholov Yisrael”, which literally translates as  
16 “milk of Israel” and loosely means “milk by a Jew”, and is the only type  
17 of “legitimate” milk in Ultra Orthodox groups. She reported being  
18 physically abused by her parents, forced to leave her home and becoming  
19 homeless at age 15. She felt that the community ignored her situation and  
20 scolded her for “informing” the abuse to the authorities (reporting of child  
21 abuse to secular authorities is viewed negatively by certain Orthodox  
22 Jewish communities) pushing her even further away as “this is against  
23 Jewish values to throw out someone who has nowhere to go”. Another  
24 man in his 30’s shared that he always associated sexuality with “Avodah  
25 Zarah” [Hebrew; literally translates as “foreign worship”, meaning  
26 idolatry] and “here was my uncle who is Jewish being sexual with me;  
27 how is this possible?”

28 Several women reported gender discrimination as the trigger to the  
29 beginning of the process; e.g. “My father would tell me that I cannot do  
30 such and such and then find for himself some permission to do it”. One  
31 young woman was furious about lucrative celebration of rituals of passage  
32 for boys [Bar Mitzva] but not girls, the line in the daily morning blessing  
33 said by men (but not by women) expressing gratitude to God for not being  
34 created a woman [“baruch shelo asani isha”, which translates “thanks for  
35 not making me a female”] and the prohibition of women to sing to a  
36 gender-mixed audience. Female interviewees claimed that while men can  
37 be unnoticed as they lead a double life, go to movies, eat non-kosher, and  
38 sleep with other women, women are under constant scrutinizing and  
39 “stuck” with family responsibilities. Three women cited becoming aware  
40 of their sexual orientation as the beginning of the process. While there is a  
41 clear biblical prohibition of homosexuality in men as an abomination, the  
42 same is not true regarding lesbianism. Nevertheless, the women described

1 being made uncomfortable and eventually pushed to leave, if they insisted  
2 on openly pursuing their sexual orientation.

3 External push and pull forces often played a role in initiating the  
4 process of leaving. For one man who was enrolled simultaneously in a  
5 yeshiva, where he pursued religious education, and a college, where he  
6 wanted to gain education for a professional career, the demand by the  
7 head of the Yeshiva to choose one or the other led him to opt for the non-  
8 orthodox route. Another man became disenchanted with his rabbi's  
9 constant threatening "if you do not learn [the torah all day long], you  
10 burn". People who were critical in setting off the process included  
11 extended family members such as an older relative, teachers, and friends.  
12 Typical was attributing the beginning of leaving to the encouragement by  
13 an older cousin to "listen to your inner voice; what you think is right and  
14 what you think is wrong"

15  
16 **Growing doubts.** The initial questioning was typically followed by a  
17 period of contemplating the budding doubts. Most participants reported  
18 deliberating privately whether things are indeed as definite as they were  
19 raised to believe or is the picture more complex and diverse factors need  
20 to be considered. "The more you study, the more you see that things are  
21 contradictory". Compatible with the Talmudic teaching of "Seek not that  
22 which is beyond you; do not question that which is hidden" (Vol.  
23 chagigah, chapter 13, p 1), one man in his 30's who is completing a  
24 doctorate in neuroscience in a prestigious university interpreted his doubts  
25 as evidence to the limited ability of the human brain to understand things  
26 that are above them. He reported having a "eureka" moment "it hit me that  
27 if it does not make sense, why should I believe in this religion?" One  
28 woman in her 20's described a vague sense of uncertainty "Many people  
29 were off the derech and I felt a connection to them but the community  
30 denigrated them. I saw in them a lot of sadness and I thought that it is  
31 because they strayed and went off the right path".

32 At this phase, eager, fervent often non-selective consumption of  
33 "secular" information occurred. Some described visiting homes of friends  
34 whose parents were more lenient and permitted secular books and many  
35 reported sneaking into the public library. Several participants described  
36 waiting until it was almost Sabbath to decrease the likelihood of being  
37 seen, going into the library and "packing" as many books, DVD's and  
38 other material as they could and spending most of the weekend listening,  
39 reading and watching movies to learn about the outside world.

40 One participant related the effects of this immersing in "swallowing"  
41 the information "The more I read, the more I started to have questions  
42 about everything I thought were the facts of life". As doubts increased, an



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1 internal dialogue about a needed change began to sprout. Some described  
2 a feeling of total collapse of their world "...everything I know, my entire  
3 world is this. I work in this community, I live in this community". Yet,  
4 there was a growing sense of split between the internal and the external. A  
5 frequent comment was "I felt like I had two personalities". For one man,  
6 who waited until he was in his 40's to begin to leave, this phase was  
7 especially long because he did not want to "shake the tree" and cause his  
8 children confusion and emotional issues as they were growing up.  
9 Participants reported that changes in behavior were slower than in  
10 thinking and giving up mandated rituals were deserted before breaking  
11 "do not do" rules. Thus, men stopped putting on tefillin (leather boxes  
12 containing scrolls with passages of scripture worn by observant Jewish  
13 men weekday morning prayers) before they began to eat non kosher food.

14 For those who began straying away very young (at their pre-teen  
15 years), the first phase was mostly testing by committing forbidden acts  
16 such as using electricity on the Sabbath, eating a dairy pizza shortly after  
17 they had meat rather than waiting the required six hours or discovering the  
18 sweet taste of candies not acceptable in their community and realizing that  
19 no divine punishment followed. While they gradually expanded their  
20 rebellious acts, these young deserters typically did not leave formally until  
21 they were 18 and felt independent. In the absence of financial resources  
22 they sometimes committed petty crimes to survive. A couple of  
23 interviewees described shoplifting food in supermarkets and one man  
24 reported stealing from charity boxes to pay for train rides.

25 Emotionally, this phase was described by many as very stressful.  
26 Several individuals reported feeling so distressed that they contemplated  
27 suicide as they were struggling to find their way "it drove me crazy", "I  
28 was dying inside". Others talked about the amount of anxiety involved in  
29 every little step they made on their way out and yet others stated "they  
30 [the Ultra orthodox community] broke me". Mostly, this phase was very  
31 lonely "I thought that I am the only one to whom this happens", confusing  
32 "I thought that I am either crazy for thinking these thoughts or I am a  
33 brilliant genius discovering something nobody else did" and tormenting,  
34 "I just could not be intellectually dishonest, it was killing me". Several  
35 participants pictured this phase as colored by fear instilled in them by  
36 years of warning and frightening. For example, "I was afraid that if I leave  
37 religion, I will also lose all the morale that I grew up with and I will  
38 deteriorate to drugs. Fear kept me in the community for a while".  
39 However, there were exceptions like one man in his 20's who posited  
40 "None of this was very difficult. I never felt guilt. It was easy to eat bread  
41 on Passover or to eat pork". For parents, an added source of agony was the

1 concern that their access to children, and in one case grandchildren, will  
2 be blocked

3 **Beginning to share selectively with a small group of trusted others.**

4 Discussions about issues related to Judaism without revealing their  
5 personal doubts often constituted the next phase. Without sharing their  
6 inner conflict, participants initiated dialogues about questions such as  
7 critique of the non-humanitarian nature of kosher slaughter and the  
8 relationships between scientific knowledge and religious beliefs. In spite  
9 of keeping quiet about the personal nature of the discussion, interviewees  
10 tended to limit it to a few whom they felt that they could trust. Participants  
11 reported that when they were involved in the discussion of questions that  
12 troubled them relative to God and religion, they made the effort to keep  
13 the appearance of a “philosophical inquiry” rather than admitting the  
14 personal struggle that it disguised.

15 Some described seeking help from rabbis in resolving his questions  
16 because “they are supposed to know”. He became quickly disappointed  
17 and disillusioned as “...they all ended up with the same thing – why are  
18 you asking questions? ... Are you smarter than your father? Than your  
19 grandfather? Leave it alone”. Others sought for answers in books “I had  
20 no doubt that everything I was told and everything I knew was true. I just  
21 had to find the right book”. This phase often begot a sense of awakening –  
22 “...eventually it just dawned on me – they are wrong. The first twenty or  
23 so years of my life were based on false premises”.

24 This phase was often characterized by a struggle, described by one  
25 interviewee “So I was getting more and more disconcerted and  
26 disillusioned with Orthodoxy. Still, I was scared. I wanted to fit into the  
27 community and I wanted my family to like me” and by another “For some  
28 time I was going back and forth. Sometimes wanting to be a good  
29 Lubavicher but it did not last long”.

30 Gradually, the indirect disguised sharing became more open as  
31 interviewees began to discuss their searching with somebody close whom  
32 they felt that they could trust. Although they shared the decline of their  
33 faith with selected others, many remained mostly “closeted”. One woman  
34 described coming out to a rabbi and asking him to show her places in the  
35 Torah that mention a problem with her behavior, refusing to accept  
36 blindly his statement that her actions are forbidden.

37  
38 **Revealing a new and altered identify.** Some continued gradually the  
39 process that they called “coming out”, “drifting” or “straying“ by  
40 beginning to present external manifestation of the change such as shaving  
41 the beard and adopting a dress style that was typical of the dominant  
42 culture. Several participants would change their appearance and behaviors

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1 as they moved between the Orthodox and non-orthodox worlds such as  
2 observed dietary rules in the neighborhood but not elsewhere and wearing  
3 shorts and tee shirt under the traditional Chassidic outfit and taking off the  
4 top layer when they left the community. “I bought nice cloths and as soon  
5 as I was on the train and there were no other [Orthodox] Jews around, I  
6 would take off my yarmulke, change my cloths and pass for a non-Jew,  
7 maybe Catholic school student”. Women wear long dresses to cover the  
8 knees, elbows, and collar bone around their neighborhood but change to  
9 forbidden jeans and sleeveless tops elsewhere. This led to a feeling of  
10 living a “double life” with a discrepancy between the inner world “in my  
11 head” and the external appearance.

12 Some described a bold coming out fully and publically, “...and at that  
13 point I said I’m done with the hiding. I’m done with the shame. We’re  
14 going public. This is who we are and the community is going to have to  
15 deal with it. This is the reality”. Others never made their transformation  
16 known for fear of hurting relatives and losing relationships with parents,  
17 friends, and children. That these fears were not unfounded was  
18 demonstrated by a participant who reported loosing custody of her  
19 children because she left.

20 Those who left because of their sexual orientation experienced a  
21 “double coming out” as gays and as non-orthodox. These two processes  
22 exacerbated each other. One woman stated “I suddenly realized that  
23 hiding was making me act out and be somebody I wasn’t comfortable  
24 being. The guilt and the shame came from the hiding. I didn’t want to  
25 hide”.

26 When they no longer belonged to the community, participants had to  
27 reinvent themselves and develop an alternative to the prescribed identity  
28 that they once held. One man expressed this “When you do not fit into the  
29 box any longer, you must find your own way”. Self examination mounted  
30 at this stage as many were contemplating how they felt about themselves  
31 and the world that they left. One young man expressed feeling lost,  
32 confused, and desperate, as on one hand “the extreme orthodox  
33 environment never catered to my needs” and on the other hand “I lack too  
34 much to be able to integrate in the non-orthodox world because of all the  
35 years that I lost”. The absence of clear directives was cited by several as a  
36 hardship. One woman stated “everyone who tries to leave is lost; there are  
37 no guidelines how to do it [leave]”, which is especially challenging for  
38 individuals raised in a prescriptive environment where all is dictated and  
39 one does not have to find one’s own way.

40 Acquiring a new identity did not come easily and many reported  
41 inching their way in their new world “one day at a time”. One young  
42 woman described trying on different identities “Do I want to be modern

1 orthodox? I tried that for several months; do I want to be conservative? It  
2 does not feel like the real thing”. A young man spoke about “developing a  
3 personality...we [he and his wife who joined him on the journey] first  
4 started discovering ourselves” to describe the move from a way of life  
5 where all is prescribed and personal decisions are limited to a reality  
6 where options are available and one must weigh alternatives and make  
7 choices. Another man described his route as “first I became non-  
8 Lubavicher; I did not like the Messianic spirit and, then non-religious  
9 because I did not like the Yiddishkeit [i. e. Jewishness, Jewish way of  
10 life]”.

11 Leaving the community did not necessarily mean leaving religiosity or  
12 spirituality. While they may need to develop an identity that does not  
13 include affiliation with the Ultra Orthodox community, it still may be that  
14 of a religious individual. Thus, some maintained religiosity that was less  
15 strict than when they were growing up; for example, “I am now a very  
16 traditional Jew but do things my Jewish way”, or “For me not to be a Jew  
17 is like to be amputated. I want to be a Jew but in a different way; in a way  
18 that works for me and fits me”. One young woman stated “I am very  
19 religious and traditional but not Orthodox... I want to become a rabbi”  
20 (which is possible in some streams of Judaism such as Reconstructionist,  
21 Reform, and Conservative; recently one orthodox institute became the  
22 first to ordain women as spiritual leaders and halakhic authorities).  
23 Another stated that god is and will always be part of her life; that she did  
24 not leave religion, god, or spirituality; rather, she left the pressuring  
25 religious community and yet another said “I am a cultural Jew”. However,  
26 most participants left religion and the community to become as they self-  
27 described “not religious”, “between agnostic and atheist”, goy (Hebrew  
28 and Yiddish for a non-Jew) or “atheist”; one woman stated “My  
29 relationship to religion is pretty antagonistic”. Several became activists for  
30 causes such as broader education, gay rights, and social justice.

31 One aspect of developing the new self was completing a GED [the  
32 acronym stands for General Educational Development, which is the  
33 process of earning the equivalent of a high school diploma for those who  
34 failed to complete high school] and going to college to acquire the type of  
35 education that they did not received within the Orthodox educational  
36 system and that is necessary for modern life. Some felt forced to opt for  
37 “degree mills” because they could not meet the requirements of a school  
38 with high admission standards. One young man who tried to apply to  
39 modern orthodox programs but was rejected because of the lacuna a in his  
40 secular education in subjects such as math and science, explained “I  
41 missed too much in terms of background knowledge; therefore, I cannot

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1 achieve a high school diploma and must go to a college that does not  
2 require it, thus compromising my chances for any serious education”.

3 As in most cases families would not support them, exiters were  
4 lacking resources to pay for the education. Thus, they sometimes found  
5 themselves in a bind. They could not afford basic education, without  
6 which they could not get a job that will generate funds to pay for school.  
7 This conundrum bred all types of strategies such as joining the army,  
8 which two male participants did.

9 As they were struggling to create their new identity, exiters had to do  
10 so both in the secular world they were entering and in their families and  
11 previous community that they left. In the outside world they were learning  
12 to navigate, assess possibilities and make decisions rather than follow  
13 prescribed routes as well as struggling to get rid of their inherent sense of  
14 “otherness”. One man stated, “I just wanted to fit in... I wanted to be able  
15 to walk anywhere in NY city and just fit it, not stick out”. However, even  
16 when they changed their appearance, they still felt in a strange land  
17 because they carry a gap and lack social references and cultural concepts  
18 that other children acquire growing up. One man in his 30’s stated “I  
19 wanted to know what any American youth my age knows” and “my new  
20 friends could not believe that I did not know who Pink Floyd were”.

21 In their families, interviewees tried to re-create a relationship, reach  
22 compromises and reason with parents and with children in a way that is  
23 respectful to their wishes and yet compatible with their own new reality  
24 and beliefs. Parents struggled to remain part of the life of children and  
25 find new ways of parenting. Custody battles were reported by several  
26 mothers. Once it became public that a mother was no longer Orthodox,  
27 some fathers, irrespective to how absent they were from their children’s  
28 life, initiated fights to gain custody and were often supported financially  
29 by the community, leaving mothers to face alone a battalion of lawyers,  
30 rabbis, and sometimes their own families.

31 Several participants reported that coming out to family was difficult  
32 because of the pain they caused, “I felt like I am killing my father”. One  
33 woman could not stop talking about her experience “I had a verbal  
34 diarrhea about the community and leaving it”. Some were frustrated  
35 because their families did not accept them unconditionally. One young  
36 man stated “I expected rather than superficial relationships with my  
37 mother, that she fully accepts me for who I am” and a young lesbian  
38 mother of three posited “I begged my mother to fully accept me”.

39 Emotionally, some felt anger towards the Orthodox community and  
40 especially the rabbis for siding with families who were non supportive of  
41 them and with ex-spouses who remained in the community, including two  
42 abusive ex-husbands. The anger was sometimes exacerbated when they

1 realize how much the path forced on them may interfere with their future  
2 out of the insular community. One woman stated,

3  
4 I'm angry. I'm angry at the way religion is hurting people ... I'm angry  
5 at the people who don't even have a chance to see the world the way I  
6 see it. I'm angry for my sisters who think they're happy and don't know  
7 that they have the right to the same level of knowledge, the same level of  
8 world experience as the men in their lives. I'm angry for children, who  
9 are denied the chance to a proper education and to living whole and  
10 expressing their full selves.

11  
12 Another cause for anger was expressed by a woman in her 20's  
13 relative to the absence of symmetric in the relationship between the Ultra  
14 Orthodox community and the exiters "we [those who left] try very hard to  
15 accommodate the community when we go back to visit the families by  
16 dressing and acting religious whereas the same is not true relative to the  
17 community's way of treating us".

18 When mothers were able to maintain custody, they faced the challenge  
19 of helping children make the change as painlessly as possible. One  
20 woman's narrative about her struggle to explain the shift to her three  
21 school age kids captured the story of several mothers who left

22  
23 We started talking seriously. We're going to switch out of these schools.  
24 The children adopted secular names, they played around with this and  
25 nicknames. ...I bought them little clothes that they could wear in the  
26 house to play around with and when they were wearing the jeans at  
27 home, all of a sudden, when they saw a person in jeans on the train, it  
28 wasn't that other. It was, Oh, would that styles of jeans look nice on me?  
29 I realized...my children can make this shift. They can come out on the  
30 other side whole

31  
32 Helpful in the struggle to reinvent themselves were the Internet and  
33 other social media, organization that cater to this population and  
34 sometimes a teacher, a relative and friends who left Orthodoxy and served  
35 as role models for the possibility to leave without getting lost and adopt  
36 other positive ways of being.

### 37 38 *Discussion*

39  
40 Findings of this study confirm previous research that examined defection  
41 from religious insulated communities and add more nuanced  
42 understanding of the phases in the transition process and the experiences  
43 associated with each phase. In agreement with previous research, the

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1 process of transitioning from an insular community to the modern main  
2 stream world emerged as multi-faceted, multi-stage, oscillating and  
3 complex. Davidman and Gareil (2007) found that “exiters” from Orthodox  
4 Judaism described their transition as long and torturous, involving pushes  
5 and pulls in both directions and Shaffir (1997) posited that typically a  
6 decision to exit follows an intense internal debate over the period of years.  
7 The current study identified pivotal points in this process and their  
8 individual challenges. Future research should seek to examine if these  
9 phases are universal or whether inter-group variations exist and how the  
10 nature and sequence of phases among those who leave Chasidic compare  
11 to leaving non-Chasidic Ultra-Orthodox communities.

12 Most, though not all, participants in this study were what Roof and  
13 Landers (1997) identified as defectors, i.e. they rejected religion all  
14 together and became non believers. However, a few chose the road of  
15 dissent and maintained the faith while distancing themselves from the  
16 Ultra Orthodox community and establishment whereas others chose to  
17 disengage by choosing a less restrictive and more main stream type of  
18 religiosity such as modern orthodoxy.

19 While combinations of multiple reasons can drive leaving religion, the  
20 current study identified two main types of beginnings triggered by  
21 cognitive or by emotional-relational motivations. This confirms previous  
22 literature. For example, Mauss (1969) conceptualized theoretically and  
23 documented empirically three dimensions of defecting religion among  
24 Mormons in the East Bay Area of California. First, an intellectual  
25 dimension, i.e. disinvolvement that is based upon disbelief of certain  
26 central tenets of a religion; second, a social dimension, which refers to  
27 leaving because of the disintegration of social bonds or as a consequence  
28 of unsatisfying social experiences; finally, an emotional dimension, i.e.  
29 defection as a manifestation of a psychological issue. Wuthnow and Glock  
30 (1973) conducted a longitudinal study of a large cohort of students most  
31 of whom were raised Christian and concluded that defection from religion  
32 was driven mostly by a general disenchantment with the conventional and  
33 psychological stress. Not surprisingly, several participants in the current  
34 study reported that their families and the broader Orthodox community  
35 often viewed the desire to OTD as a manifestation of a mental illness.

36 A more elaborate typology of reasons for leaving Orthodoxy was  
37 offered by Barlev, Breslau and Ne’eman (1997). They identified six  
38 clusters of factors that play a role triggering the decision to leave the  
39 Jewish religion: intellectual and cognitive factors such as the encounter  
40 with and exposure to philosophies and consciousness of the holocaust,  
41 emotional factors including traumatic experiences related to religiosity  
42 (“how can god allow his to happen?”), familial factors such as seeing

1 parents' religiosity as faulty and rebelling by rejecting it, social/cultural  
2 and educational factors, and, materialistic and hedonistic concerns.  
3 Participants in the current study tended to identify two of these six clusters  
4 but not the others. One reason may be the nature of the sample, which was  
5 mostly urban and young. Shaffir (1997) reported in a similar sample that  
6 the decision to leave was fueled mostly by curiosity, desire to reach  
7 intellectually beyond what is prescribed, and objection to imposed  
8 restraints as well as reluctance to remain within a perceived oppressive  
9 closed community.

10 Need and De Graaf (1996) approached the study of leaving religion  
11 from a different perspective and examined personal attributes and  
12 situational factors associated with the decision to leave and found that  
13 education, parental education, and marrying a non-religious spouse  
14 significantly increase the likelihood of becoming "unchurched" as did a  
15 general secularization of the social environment. This seems less  
16 applicable to the current sample as all interviewees grew up within similar  
17 insular, urban Ultra Orthodox communities.

18 Irrespective of the initial trigger, like Alice after she fell down the  
19 rabbit hole, "exitors" reported finding themselves in a new world,  
20 governed by unfamiliar rules and social codes, which may beget a sense  
21 of disorientation, distress, and loneliness. Similar experiences were  
22 discussed by Beckford (1976, 1978) who examined accounts of leavers in  
23 the context of Jehovah's Witnesses and Shaffir and Rockaway (1987) who  
24 studied leavers of Haredi Judaism. Beckford (1978) posited that members  
25 of the Watchtower Society internalizes specific views of their  
26 organization and that these views informed their accounts of  
27 conversion. While this type of analysis was not part of the current  
28 study, it might be helpful in the future to examine if the same is true  
29 for those who left Ultra Orthodox Judaism. Shaffir and Rockaway  
30 (1987) focused on the motivation for leaving, the process of the departure  
31 and the difficulties of transitioning to a secular world. In spite of the  
32 almost three decades that have since passed, some of the findings in the  
33 current study agree with and reaffirm theirs. Specifically, the enormous  
34 efforts required by former Ultra Orthodox to adjust to the lifestyle of  
35 secular Jews as no guidance exist to help them navigate the unfamiliar  
36 territory.

37 The absence of a cultural map was a source of stress. Similar to other  
38 transitions such as becoming a parent, immigration or changing sex,  
39 leaving Ultra Orthodoxy includes multiple losses. Major among them are  
40 the loss of self identity and of social support. Those who leave must revise  
41 their sense of self to meet their new ambiguous and self-constructed



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1 reality and develop their new identity (Frankenthaler, 2004). Unlike  
2 Christians who typically leave their religion to become members of  
3 another religious group such as another type of Christianity, non  
4 Christianity or new religious/spiritual movement, Jews who leave their  
5 religious identity do not necessarily desert the cultural and social  
6 Jewishness (Bar Lev, Breslau & Ne’eman, 1997). Thus participants in this  
7 study had to negotiate a new Jewish identity as an alternative to the Ultra  
8 Orthodox one that they left. For the most part they had quite a clear sense  
9 of who they are and who they want to be. These perceptions varied greatly  
10 reflecting where they were on the road of leaving, their characteristics,  
11 and circumstances. Future research may help clarify the dynamics and  
12 correlates of diversity in the struggle with the issue of identity among  
13 “exiters”. For example, are there sect, age, and gender- based differences  
14 in the journey? How those who leave non-Chasidic Orthodoxy compare to  
15 the exiters from Chasidic sects and how the experience of leavers of  
16 different sects within the Chasidic world (e.g. Belz, Bobov, Breslov, Ger,  
17 Lubavitch, Munkacs, Pappa, Sanz, Skver and Satmar) compare to each  
18 other?

19 The task of recreating their identity became even more challenging in  
20 light of the consistent finding in studies of exiters about the absence of  
21 ready-made society-wide public narrative and guidelines for those who  
22 leave to draw upon. The lack of previous experience in autonomous  
23 thinking as they come from communities that demand following dictates,  
24 further exacerbates the difficulty. Previous studies of those who left  
25 Jehovah’s Witnesses (Beckford, 1978) and Haredi Judaism (Shaffir, 1997)  
26 emphasized a pronounced sense of “scriptlessness” and participant in the  
27 study by Davidman and Gareil (2007) tended to portray themselves as  
28 “actors without a script”, who “have had to improvise new identities” (p.  
29 204). Similar to other minority populations, some of the interviewees in  
30 the current study felt that the system failed them, deprived them of the  
31 opportunity to acquire the tools necessary to function successfully in  
32 modern society. These reactions may lead to feelings of anger, sadness  
33 and sometimes hopelessness (Maier et. al., 2009).

34 To battle the stress involved in the transition and be successful in the  
35 task of developing their new identity, social support is of utmost  
36 importance. That the availability of such an “anchor” support is critical  
37 have been demonstrated relative to the struggle with diverse stressful  
38 situations (Berger, 2014; Rosenfeld & Tardieu, 2000). However,  
39 compatible with the results reported by Davidman and Gareil (2007), very  
40 little structural support is available for addressing the aftermath of  
41 disaffiliation. The narratives revealed how crucial it was to have along the  
42 way at least one supportive “other” such as a parent, spouse, relative,

1 teacher or friend and what a major challenge in the struggle of  
2 interviewees was the loss of support from their communities and often  
3 their families. In the absence of such support, participants used coping  
4 strategies similar to those reported in previous research such as reading  
5 books sneaked from the library and hidden under the mattress, wearing  
6 ‘secular’ cloths under their “religious” outfit and changing to go to a bar,  
7 hiding long side locks behind the ears or under a hat (Davidman & Gareil,  
8 2007) . These strategies are often deserted as “coming out” becomes more  
9 public and individuals more confident in their new self.

10 In spite of its limitations, this study offers several possible  
11 implications. First, the finding that with a few exceptions, the absence of  
12 support was cited as a major characteristic of the transition process,  
13 suggest the need to develop support services for “exiters”. That social  
14 support plays a critical role in helping negotiate stressful experiences has  
15 been abundantly documented (Berger, 2014; Trickey et. al., 2012)  
16 suggesting that creation of such support services is of utmost importance.  
17 Services may include concrete help such as temporary housing,  
18 educational and job preparation, guidance in all details of the new life  
19 such as what to wear (one participant named among her beginner’s  
20 mistakes wearing fishnet pantyhose for a job interview) and how to  
21 interact with individuals of the opposite sex as well as emotional and  
22 psycho-social support. Specifically, groups may be helpful as they can  
23 provide role models, information, and mutual validation and create a  
24 sence of belonging to compensate for the loss of the natural peer group  
25 caused by leaving their original community. In addition, a hotline may be  
26 very useful to offer advice. Given the extensive use that this population  
27 group makes of the web and the need of some to maintain confidentiality,  
28 social media offers an excellent platforma for information and sport  
29 services.

30 In addition, that public libraries emerged as a critical source for  
31 learning to navigate the new territory of the secular world, suggests that  
32 branches close to concentrations of Ultra Orthodox communities may  
33 consider expanding sections relevant to this audience and tailored to  
34 address their needs. This may include a combination of guidebooks on  
35 practical topics such as achieving a GED and applying to college and  
36 resource books, as well as collections of classics that the general  
37 population is exposed to throughout elementary, middle and high school  
38 but the religious education forbids. In addition, it may be useful to train  
39 library personnel to be equipped to effectively help those who seek  
40 information to facilitate their journey.

41 Like families of other population groups out of the mainstream  
42 consensus such as GLBT, families of those who leave Ultra Orthodoxy

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1 are often confused, angry and at a loss, struggling with what they view as  
2 a betrayal and a major dangerous mistake by their offspring. Guidance and  
3 support for families may be useful in helping them develop a way of  
4 making meaning of the situation and coping with it effectively, as families  
5 of some interviewees demonstrated feasible.

6 As with all services designed to address the aftermath of stress and  
7 crisis, services must be culturally-informed. Therefore, to maximize their  
8 effectiveness and minimize the potential for a destructive tear, planning,  
9 and delivery of services for those who leave and their families can be best  
10 developed in a collaborative dialogue with religious leaders of the  
11 communities of origin. While some may find these recommendations to  
12 be unrealistic, they were met with positive reactions in a recent  
13 presentation of the study to the staff in an organization that serves this  
14 population and helped recruit participants. It thus appears that the question  
15 of applicability of these recommendations remains to be evaluated in a  
16 future action-research study.

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FOR HIM LONDON WAS A FRUITFUL  
TRANSITORY STOP:  
THE MIGRANT'S DESTINY OF MIRON  
KANTOROWICZ

*Mark Tolts\**

*Abstract*

This article is devoted to the scholarly career of Miron Kantorowicz (1895 - after 1977), the German-educated Russian-Jewish refugee. Kantorowicz spent the fifteen years, from 1919 to 1934, in Berlin. He is best known in contemporary Germany as “Alfred Grotjahn’s librarian”, as he was long-time assistant to Grotjahn, the founder of social hygiene, and his name is often mentioned among scholars expelled by the Nazis from Berlin University. However, Kantorowicz’s scholarly career and contributions to demography after his flight from Germany to England and his subsequent emigration to the United States are much less studied and understood. One of the reasons is that he changed his name several times. In June 1934 he immigrated to Great Britain with a provisional visa. The spelling of his family name in this country was changed to Kantorowitsch and his publications were accordingly credited. In London he found temporary work as a statistician at the Jewish Health Organisation of Great Britain (JHOGB), where his good knowledge of general British population statistics and his previous interest in Jewish demography were combined and properly utilized. In 1936, Kantorowicz published two seminal articles resulting from the reports he had prepared for JHOGB. His findings were highly acclaimed by later generations of demographers of Anglo-Jewry. Later, in the course of his migrations he became a co-founder of American demographic Sovietology. When he became a U.S. citizen, he finally settled on the name Myron K. Gordon.

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The article shows how Kantorowitz's scholarly career was re-moulded in the course of successive migrations.

**Keywords:** Anglo-Jewry; Demography; Germany; Jewish refugee scholars; Sovietology; United States

Miron Kantorowicz spent the fifteen years from 1919 to 1934 in Berlin, and later, in the course of his migrations became a recognized expert of Anglo-Jewish demography and co-founder of American demographic Sovietology. He is best known in contemporary Germany as “Alfred Grotjahn’s librarian”, as he was long-time assistant to Grotjahn, the founder of social hygiene, and his name is often mentioned among the scholars expelled by the Nazis from the Berlin University.<sup>1</sup> However, Kantorowicz’s scholarly career and his valued input to demography after his flight in 1934 from Germany to England and his subsequent emigration in 1938 to the United States are much less studied and understood. One of the reasons for this lack of knowledge is the myriad changes which his name underwent; on his acquisition of American citizenship, he finally settled on the surname of Gordon. Therefore, the aim of my paper is to show a noteworthy example of a scholarly career which was re-moulded in the course of successive migrations. In this study, I will examine Kantorowicz’s demographic publications, including previously unknown ones, as well as those materials in which he and his works were mentioned and/or discussed. Based on these findings, I will analyse the circumstances, problems and achievements in the career of this migrant scholar.

### *Berlin: Formative Years*

Miron Kantorowicz was born on 18 July 1895 in Minsk, Belorussia, which was then part of the Russian Empire.<sup>2</sup> In 1915 he matriculated and started to study law at the Petrograd (now St. Petersburg) University. In 1917 Kantorowicz moved to the respective faculty of Moscow University. However, following the Bolshevik seizure of power, he left Soviet Russia in 1918. One possible reason for this emigration was the fact that he belonged to a wealthy family: his father was a manufacturer. All his closest relatives – parents, brother and sister – emigrated to Germany and then left the country, escaping the Nazis by re-emigrating to British Palestine in 1936.

As of 1919, Kantorowicz was reported as being stateless in Berlin and from 1920 to 1925, he continued his education at the Berlin University. There he studied political sciences, history and philosophy, and



specialized in population statistics and social policies in the Faculty of Philosophy. In 1921 he began to participate in the seminar of Alfred Grotjahn, the founder of social hygiene (about him, see, for example, Rabson 1936; Lischke 2007, 118-119), which strongly influenced and formed his professional path. Kantorowicz also tried to supplement his socio-economic education with the study of medicine in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the problems of social hygiene, but he dropped this due to the deteriorating economic situation.

Kantorowicz began working as Grotjahn's assistant informally in the early 1920s, but he only became Grotjahn's librarian in 1929 when Grotjahn received the funds to pay for such a position. Kantorowicz became integrated in the German culture and society. In 1929, he married a German Jew from Berlin, Ann Wolitzer. To all appearances, he did not frequent Russian immigrant circles – we do not find any reference to him in inventories of the activities of Weimar-era “Russian Berlin”. Nor did we find traces of his working collaboration with the circle of prominent experts in Jewish demography (Arthur Ruppin, Jacob Lestschinsky and others) for whom Berlin in the 1920s was the hub of their scholarly activity.

Supposedly, Kantorowicz's German was perfect, and Grotjahn would not have tolerated any other level of fluency in an assistant. What is more, Grotjahn can be characterized as a chauvinist of the German language who reportedly even told his son that “no Grotjahn would ever learn how to speak any foreign language” (Grotjahn 1987, 18). Kantorowicz's linguistic skills were an important factor in his academic career in Germany.

Kantorowicz's dissertation *Mortality from Tuberculosis and its Social Causes* was approved with honours (*opus laudabile*) by both of its readers and on 4 June 1930 his Doctorate was officially approved. The dissertation was devoted to social aspects of tuberculosis, especially its occurrence among different occupational groups. This infection was frequently associated with Jews (see Hart 2000, especially chapter 4; for a contemporary presentation of this problem in the wider context, see Gilman 1995, especially chapter 4). However, Kantorowicz did not address to the Jewish aspect of the problem. His study was general, and suited to Berlin University's requirements of that period.

In 1948, the newly established British demographic journal *Population Studies* published its first overview of the mortality problem and the author cited this dissertation, noting moreover that Kantorowicz's position differed from that of Grotjahn (Peller 1948, 436); that is, Kantorowicz appeared in his dissertation as a mature scholar. Also notable was Grotjahn's tolerance for a different opinion in the work of his

assistant, as this was rather unusual for a German professor of his status during that period (see Ringer 1969, especially chapter 1).

Grotjahn was a progressive person and philosemitic (Weikart 2006, 107; on Jewish connections of Grotjahn, see also Eifert 1994). Politically active, he played a prominent role in the Social-Democratic movement of the Weimar Republic. For example, he was one of the main contributors to the health-related policy of the SPD and a member of the Reichstag from 1921 to 1924. Many of his co-workers were Jewish scholars, as was Kantorowicz (see Schneck 1994; Willich, Etzold and Berghöfer 2007). Therefore, it is understandable that Kantorowicz so admired Grotjahn both as a scholar and a person, and after his death in 1931 he published at least six articles devoted to his memory.<sup>3</sup>

Grotjahn was a prominent figure in the history of demography who belongs to a long tradition of cooperation between medicine and statistics/demography. Programmatically, the journal that he edited changed its name in 1914 to *Archiv für Soziale Hygiene und Demographie* where both social hygiene and demography appeared in the title. In addition to his study of social hygiene problems like morbidity and mortality, Grotjahn published a good many articles on purely demographic topics such as fertility (Mackensen 2003, 226-227); his works devoted to fertility are not forgotten even today and they attract attention of the contemporary scholars (see, for example, Van Bavel 2010). Therefore, Kantorowicz, as a disciple of Grotjahn, was well equipped when, in his later countries of exile – Great Britain and the United States – demography became the major topic of his scholarly activity.

To be sure, Kantorowicz could not have foreseen such a future in demography. In Berlin, he was devoted to the study of social hygiene and in 1931 he published a special article devoted to the bases and principles of this scholarly discipline (Kantorowicz 1931). However, the circumstances of his academic migration let him revisit this subject only at the end of his life, long after retirement (Kantorowicz Gordon 1977). After the Nazi takeover of power Kantorowicz was dismissed from the University as a “non-Aryan” in May 1933; he was not able to find other work in Germany and was forced to emigrate. The Nazis regarded Kantorowicz as a classic “Jewish enemy”. In addition to his origin, his left wing political orientation, as expressed in numerous publications written for the leading theoretical Social-Democratic journal *Die Gesellschaft* as well as the socialist book review *Die Bücherwarte*, made him a detested political opponent (see Institut zum Studium der Judenfrage 1935, 143; Schulz 1934, 164, 169-170; the second antisemitic book was republished for the last time as late as 1944!).

*London: Fruitful Transitory Stop*

In June 1934 Kantorowicz immigrated to Great Britain with a provisional visa; he was financed by the Professional Committee of the Central Committee for Jewish Refugees. The spelling of his family name in this country was changed to Kantorowitsch and his publications were accordingly credited. However, this change did not save him from Nazi surveillance.

The Nazis continued to regard Kantorowicz as a dangerous enemy throughout his years of exile in England; they were aware of the new spelling of his family name. The proof of this is that he was included in the "Sonderfahndungsliste GB" [Special Wanted List GB], a roll of persons, British and exiles, to be arrested should the Germans succeed in occupying Great Britain: "Kantorowitsch, Miron, Dr., 1895" (Schellenberg 2001, 206). This list contained only 2,820 persons, including Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden and other leaders of war-time Great Britain, as well as prominent authors such as Herbert Wells and Virginia Woolf along with many other noteworthy British figures. Inclusion of an exile such as Kantorowicz must have had a good reason. This is a puzzle worthy of a special study.

In 1933 and the first half of 1934, Great Britain was one of the favourite destinations of Jewish academics from Germany who, like Kantorowicz, lost their positions as a consequence of the Nazi "Aryan" legislation of spring 1933 (see Niederland 1988). For Kantorowicz migration to London led to some real opportunities because his training and work in Germany had provided him with solid ground for a successful new start.

Kantorowicz had established personal contacts with some British colleagues at least ten years prior to his arrival in London. For example, he stated that "as long ago as the year 1924", he had been corresponding with Edgar L. Collis, a pioneer of industrial medicine in Great Britain (*Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 101(4) (1938), 704; on Collis, see Bedford 1958). The vital statistics of Great Britain were already well known to Kantorowicz; in 1930, he had authored a sizable special publication devoted to the mortality from tuberculosis in England and Wales in which he presented findings from his dissertation, the statistical section of which included much British data (Kantorowicz 1930b). Clearly, the English language did not present problems for him.

In London Kantorowicz found work as a statistician at the Jewish Health Organisation of Great Britain (JHOGB), where his good knowledge of British population statistics and his previous interest in Jewish demography were combined and properly utilized. Kantorowicz's

earliest known publication is a review of the demographic-related articles of a Yiddish-language journal *Bleter far yidisher demografye, statistik, un ekonomik*, which was the official organ by the Society for the Statistics and Economics of the Jews (Kantorowicz 1925/26; on the Society, see Hart 2000, 71). This review contained a bibliography and it was the first of many bibliographies those were compiled by Kantorowicz in the course of his scholarly career (see below).

One should be noted that the work of JHOGB, although non-university organization, was based on high scholarly standards (see Endelman 2004, 75-81). For many years lack of funds had prevented JHOGB from counting the Jewish population in the country. However, as a refugee from Nazi Germany, Kantorowicz was temporary funded by an outside source. He received a grant from an organization founded to assist Jewish and other academics forced to flee the Nazi regime, usually known under its later name – the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL).<sup>4</sup> This gave to JHOGB the happy possibility to take a much-needed estimate of the size of British Jewry. In fact, in mid-October 1934 at the 9th annual meeting of JHOGB, Redcliffe Nathan Salaman, the President of the organisation, could already report that the statistical work had been performed “quite actively in the last four months in close cooperation with Dr. Kantorowitsch” (*The Jewish Chronicle*, 19 October 1934, 25).

In 1936, Kantorowicz published two articles in prestigious journals resulting from the reports he had prepared for JHOGB. The first of these was devoted to an estimate of the size of the Jewish population of London based on the Jewish death records (Kantorowitsch 1936a). To further these findings Kantorowicz also analysed Jewish marriage statistics from England and Wales (Kantorowitsch 1936b). Kantorowicz’s approach to this issue as well as his findings were highly acclaimed by later generations of demographers of Anglo-Jewry. However, British Jewry was only able to consolidate Kantorowicz’s efforts much later, once he had already left London for the United States. In 1965 they established the Statistical and Demographic Research Unit, which was renamed the Community Research Unit in 1987. Marlena Schmool, former Director of the Community Research Unit of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, remembers: “When I first started working on British Jewry in the 1960s, Kantorowitsch’s works were really the only statistically robust papers ...” (electronic mail from Marlena Schmool to the author, 1 February 2010). In fact, in an article she co-authored she wrote that “one of the main tasks of this paper may be said to be to bring Kantorowitsch’s estimate up to date” (Prais and Schmool 1968, 5).

## FOR HIM LONDON WAS A FRUITFUL TRANSITORY STOP

In addition to the two articles on Anglo-Jewry cited above, during his stay in London Kantorowicz authored an encyclopaedic overview of the world Jewish population (Kantorowitsch 1938). Thus, in England demography became the main field in which Kantorowicz was able to successfully apply the knowledge which he had accumulated in Germany. Of course, when a scholar counts people he is termed a demographer. Migration transformed Kantorowicz's scholarly course.

In the famous "List of Displaced German Scholars" (Autumn 1936; republished in: Anonymous 1993, 57) compiled by the *Notgemeinschaft Deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland* [The Emergency Association of German Scholars in Exile] to help them obtain appropriate appointments he appeared as follows:

KANTOROWITSCH, Dr. Miron; [Last university rank in Germany] Librarian; b. 95., married. [Knowledge of languages, not including German] (English, French, Russian.) [Last three positions] 1921/33: Researcher, Assistant, later Librarian Sozialhygienisches Seminar, Berlin University; since 1934: Statistician Jewish Health Organisation of Great Britain, London. SPEC.: Social Hygiene; Statistics. [Duration of present position] Temp.

The major undisputed potential advantage among the presented characteristics was his knowledge of four languages (English, French, German and Russian), knowledge which would eventually help Kantorowicz in finding a permanent position albeit only following his next move, to the United States, and even there only several years after his arrival. In Germany the position of "scientific librarian" – Kantorowicz's last university rank – was rather respectable, and two-thirds of all Jewish librarians held Ph.D. degrees, as did Kantorowicz (Müller-Jerina 1989, 551). However, his last university position in Germany did not sound particularly impressive to potential employers abroad. Nor was a specialisation in social hygiene an advantage for a refugee scholar in Great Britain of the 1930s, as social medicine only developed as a specialisation in the following decade there. The loss of Kantorowicz as a prospective progenitor in the development of the discipline in Great Britain was later noted with regret (see Weindling 1991, 252).

Kantorowicz established many important and intensive professional contacts in Great Britain, and acted as a representative of the JHOGB to the Royal Statistical Society (see *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 99(2) (1936), 296; *ibid.* 99(4) (1936), 774), where he was an active participant in its meetings. Furthermore, some of his reactions to the discussed presentations at these meetings were published, proving that

they were valued (*Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 101(1) (1938), 48-49; *ibid.* 101(4) (1938), 704-705). During his stay in London Kantorowicz took a course in epidemiology and medical statistics at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, receiving his certification in 1936 (APHA 1979, 256).

The chairman of the Statistical Committee of the JHOGB from 1931 to 1939 was the noted statistician Leon Isserlis, a direct descendant of Moshe Isserles, one of the greatest Ashkenazi legalists of the 16th century. In Leon Isserlis' obituary it was noted – meaning that this was surely an important point of this scholar's biography – that “he initiated the enquiry which led to the estimate of the Jewish population of London made by M. Kantorowitsch” (Irwin 1966, 615). Isserlis, who was himself born in the Tsarist Empire and had arrived in Great Britain in 1892 at age of ten with his widowed mother and siblings, provided his German-educated Russian-Jewish refugee-colleague with other support as well. Together with Joseph O. Irwin, the leading theoretician among British medical statisticians (about him, see, for example, Armitage 2001), Isserlis helped Kantorowicz in his preparation of an English translation of the seminal German-language book by the world class Russian statistician Alexandr A. Chuprov [Tschuprow] (Tschuprow, 1939).<sup>5</sup>

Working on the translation of Chuprov's book was Kantorowicz's last scholarly accomplishment in Great Britain. This translation was published in 1939, by which time he was already in the United States. Kantorowicz's funding in Great Britain was based on temporary sources. He shared the fate of many other fellow emigrants from Nazi Germany for whom Great Britain was only a transitory stop because of shortage of the country's resources for permanent scholarly positions in that time.

### *America: New Homeland*

Kantorowicz arrived in the United States in October 1938 with an immigrant's visa, supported by the Jewish Refugees Committee, and again changed his name: first to Myron Kantorovitz and later, when he attained American citizenship, to Myron K. Gordon (Etzold 2007, 79). The late 1930s were a very difficult time to enter the American scholarly world for Jewish refugee scholars. The effect of the Great Depression on the academic job market was still manifest and antisemitism was at a rather high level in American society as a whole, and in the universities in particular (see, for example, Coser 1984, 7; Krohn 1993, 23). In the month after his arrival, November 1938, the Nazis organized *Kristallnacht* to pressure Jewish emigration en masse, and in the following year, 1939, for

the first time in the 1930s the annual German-Austrian immigrant quota to the United States was completely filled (Strauss 1971, 68). Among the immigrants were many highly qualified scholars who were to compete with Kantorowicz on the academic job market.

Unlike in Great Britain, Kantorowicz had no long established contacts with American colleagues. His extensive knowledge of German and British statistics was also of little help to him in his search for a position in the United States. Moreover, counting Jews in this country was very different, and since the type of data that had been available in Great Britain did not exist in the United States, the methods Kantorowicz had developed for Anglo-Jewry could not be applied. Nor was social hygiene as a specialisation an advantage for him in the United States, as had been the case earlier in Great Britain. Therefore his start in the United States was rather difficult: after his arrival he at first had only short-lived positions at Princeton University and the Carnegie Corporation.

However, Kantorowicz's close ties with the late Grotjahn secured him Frederic Osborn's request to write about Grotjahn – this would become his first American article (Kantorovitz 1940). Osborn was a Wall Street banker who was very active in the institutionalization of American demography (Notestein 1969). He was also a prolific author. Moreover, after America's entry into World War II he ran the Army's Morale Division first as Brigadier and later as Major General. Thus, in Osborn Kantorowicz acquired contact with a very influential American. In 1940, Kantorowicz received the position of Research Associate of the Milbank Memorial Fund in New York. This was great luck for a refugee scholar at that time in the United States; however, the character of his responsibilities there – a study of the statistics of nutrition – was very far from his main specialization. Nevertheless, by 1942 Kantorowicz had as usual successfully met his obligations and he had co-authored an article which was the outcome of this study (Wiehl and Kantorovitz 1942).

In January 1939, the Council of the League of Nations appointed a committee to study demographic problems. Then World War II erupted and the League initiated a cooperative arrangement with the Office of Population Research of Princeton University, thus initiating an extensive scholarly program of demographic research (see Anonymous 1947, 280). Due to the enormous difficulty of the study of the Soviet population, this task became a special sub-project for which the famous American demographer Frank Lorimer was responsible (about him, see Van de Walle 1985). However, he was not fluent in the Russian language.<sup>6</sup> In fact, when the project was published Lorimer (1946, XIII–XIV) wrote:

The author is deeply indebted to his colleague, Dr. Myron Kantorovitz Gordon. The undertaking required the collaboration of a person with statistical experience and with high standards of scholarship who was also familiar with the Russian language. The author was peculiarly fortunate in obtaining the aid of a friend with these particular qualifications. Among other services, Dr. Gordon accepted primary responsibility for the preparation of the Bibliography.

Lorimer recruited Kantorowicz for the Soviet population project because he had been looking for a person – and this is to be understood from his acknowledgement – “with statistical experience and with high standards of scholarship who [is] also familiar with the Russian language”. The quality of Kantorowicz’s publications in Germany and Great Britain was indisputably high, and the years spent in Petrograd and Moscow universities had provided him with sufficient knowledge of Russian scholarly terminology. Of course, the first task in the implementation of the Soviet population project was to compile a bibliography which would serve as its basis. Kantorowicz could prove his ability to fulfil this task: he had published two very impressive bibliographies on population problems before his flight from Nazi Germany (Kantorowicz 1933a; Kantorowicz 1933b). In 1935, Lorimer had, in his capacity as the Secretary of the Population Association of America, initiated the demographic reference journal *Population Literature* (renamed *Population Index* in 1937). Thus, Lorimer was well placed to understand Kantorowicz’s potential, and Lorimer made no mistake in choosing the person who became the main project investigator. The book that resulted from the Soviet population project became the seminal source for demographic Sovietology (see, for example, Barron 1959, 81). Indeed, after the end of the Cold War, this book was acclaimed in Russia and it is still highly respected there (Anonymous 2006).

Kantorowicz joined the Soviet population project in 1942, and he was appointed to a position of Research Associate in Population Studies of the American University in Washington, D.C., where Lorimer was a professor. Kantorowicz’s responsibility in the project was challenging. As a discipline, demography was crushed by Stalin’s regime in the 1930s. The two special demographic research institutes in the Soviet Union were closed, and many experts in the field were arrested and executed. Most demographic data were kept secret and/or falsified (see, for example, Tolts 2001). However, demography was not an exception. In fact, in the war period the U.S. Interdepartmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Publications “got more information out of Germany than the Soviet Union” (Abrahamsen Dessants 1996, 740).



## FOR HIM LONDON WAS A FRUITFUL TRANSITORY STOP

Despite all these obstacles, Kantorowicz compiled a bibliography which included 512 titles in four languages — Russian, English, German and French — some of these titles being the names of series with many volumes (Kantorovitz Gordon 1946). He not only found most of these sources, but selected from them the relevant parts necessary for the project and translated huge amounts of this material from Russian to English. The accuracy of citations of the Soviet figures in non-Russian publications was checked against the original Russian sources and corrections were made where necessary.<sup>7</sup>

The role of Kantorowicz in the project was not merely technical. In 1945 the special issue of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* devoted to world population problems was published, and it became a seminal publication in the history of American demography; Kantorowicz's contribution to the special issue analysed Soviet demographic problems (Kantorovitz Gordon 1945). Thus, in the process of his work on the project, Kantorowicz became a recognized expert in the field of Soviet demography.

In 1945, work on the project was finished and the book went to press. In the same year Kantorowicz obtained American citizenship, and in August he became a research analyst of population studies for the U.S. Department of State. One year later, in the same capacity, he moved to the Preventive Medicine Division of the Surgeon General's Office of the U.S. Army. From 1954 till his retirement in 1963, Kantorowicz served as Chief of the East European Section of the U.S. Army Medical Information and Intelligence Division. Thus, the post-World War II Soviet-American confrontation opened advantageous employment possibilities for him.

One of Kantorowicz's most important professional contacts in the United States was Eugene M. Kulischer, an outstanding scholar of migration problems who coined the term "displaced persons" (see Jaffe 1962). In two of his books he thanked Kantorowicz for his help (Kulischer 1943, 5; Kulischer 1948, VI-VII), and in turn, Kantorowicz authored a comprehensive review of Kulischer's last book (Gordon 1949). In this period Kantorowicz occupied a unique place in American demographic Sovietology as a scholar who combined solid German training in the field of population studies with fluency in the Russian language.

In 1949, Kantorowicz received the very prestigious Meritorious Civilian Service Award (Cattell 1956, 252). A year later, his name appeared as one of several authors of an article on epidemiology (Crocker, Bennett, Jackson, Snyder, Smadel, Gauldand and Gordon 1950). The affiliation of the co-authors of this work was noted as Department of Virus and Rickettsial Diseases, Army Medical Department Research and Graduate School, Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C. This

publication shed light on the character of the work with which Kantorowicz was involved as a highly qualified translator of Soviet literature – as noted above, in Great Britain he took a course in epidemiology – in this period and possibly may be a clue to the reason he was granted the Meritorious Civilian Service Award. With this award Kantorowicz’s position as a civilian employee of the U.S. Army was decidedly strengthened. Thus, the process of his adaptation to America was successfully finished. Moreover, even his new name – Myron K. Gordon – sounded very American.

We have very little information on Kantorowicz’s activities in the 1950s. However, we do know of two of his reports, which can shed some light on his professional responsibilities: “Standard of Living and Public Health in the U.S.S.R.” (1955), and “The Red Cross and Red Crescent Association of the U.S.S.R.” (1956) (see Etzold 2007, 78). To these we can add a third report: “Physical Standards for Military Service, USSR” (1962) (cited in Wheeler 1965, 915).

When, after Stalin’s death, the Soviet Union resumed publication of demographic data, the prestigious *Population Index* chose Kantorowicz to write of them (Gordon 1957). This clearly reflected his respectable position in American demographic Sovietology of that time. He also took part in scholarly discussions regarding the Soviet population (see, for example, Milbank Memorial Fund 1960, 64-65, 218-220). In both these cases Kantorowicz cited German authors in his analyses. Thus, till the end of his demographic career in the United States his inclination toward German scholarship and his dissemination of its results persisted.

We do not know the precise date of his death, which appeared in published sources as being after 1977 (see, for example, Weder 2000, 419). However, at the last he became an object of a demographic study as a survivor within the world community of demographers (see Bourgeois-Pichat 1983, 478): Kantorowicz appeared in the listing as one of only a dozen members of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population who were aged 80 and above in 1975. In 1981 he was not listed among the living in the same study; we must therefore assume that he died before that year.

### *Concluding Remarks*

Our study presented an important case of a Jewish scholar’s biography moulded and re-moulded under the tragic circumstances of the twentieth century by successive migrations. Russian-born Kantorowicz received excellent academic training in Germany and there he became a prolific scholar. However, after the Nazi takeover of power, he was treated as a

classic “Jewish enemy” and he was forced to emigrate. Moreover, as we discovered Kantorowicz was under Nazi surveillance even after he left Germany.

Fortunately, Great Britain provided him with temporary shelter. Our study for the first time analysed his very prominent role in the development of the Anglo-Jewish demography at the period of his stay in Great Britain. Subsequently, Kantorowicz’s encyclopaedic knowledge in the field of world demographic literature helped to bring knowledge of Soviet population studies to American soil. The United States ultimately became home to this long-time Jewish outcast.

Flight to any other country usually retarded a scholarly career (Krohn 1996, 184). For Kantorowicz, this factor was strong: he had to adapt to three new countries over the course of his life. However, as we have seen from our study, he successfully overcame these and other obstacles and his contribution to the development of demographic knowledge of Anglo-Jewry and the Soviet Union is very respectable.

### *Kantorowicz’s Publications*

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kantorowicz's story from this perspective was presented in: Tutzke 1972; Etzold 2007, 75-85.

<sup>2</sup> Kantorowicz's biographical information here and hereafter, if not stated otherwise, is drawn from the following sources: Tutzke 1972 (based on archival material of Berlin University as well as his correspondence with Kantorowicz); Röder and Strauss 1980, 236 (based mainly on Kantorowicz's answers to a questionnaire); and a Curriculum Vitae that appeared in his dissertation (Kantorowicz 1930a, 58).

<sup>3</sup> For a listing of these publications, see Tutzke 1972, 507.

<sup>4</sup> Originally named the Academic Assistance Council (AAC). I would like to thank Catherine Andreyev who discovered this information about Kantorowicz in materials of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (electronic mail from Catherine Andreyev to the author, 23 September 2013). For the Catalogue of the Archive of the Society where Kantorowicz's file is preserved, see: <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/modern/spsl/spsl.html> (last accessed 20 January 2014). On the history of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, see, for example, Bentwich 1953, IX-XIV.



## FOR HIM LONDON WAS A FRUITFUL TRANSITORY STOP

<sup>5</sup> For the translator's acknowledgement, see p. VI. On Chuprov, see Sheynin, 2011. For a positive evaluation of the translation, see, for example, Neyman 1939.

<sup>6</sup> I am greatly indebted to Stephen Wheatcroft who drew my attention to this point during our personal communication at the seminar "Histoire de la statistique démographique" (Paris, 16-18 December 1996).

<sup>7</sup> For an example of such a correction, see Lorimer 1946, 120, note 18.

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SHALOM SALOMON WALD, *Rise and Decline of Civilizations: Lessons for the Jewish People*, 452 pp., MA Academic Studies Press, Brighton, ISBN: 978-1618113771, 2013, \$33 (paperback)

*Rise and Decline of Civilizations: Lessons for the Jewish People* has a simple George Santayana-esque goal: to learn the lessons of history so the Jewish people will not repeat the mistakes of past civilizations. Shalom Wald largely succeeds, as his historical perspective is broad and erudition considerable. But even more than that, *Rise and Decline* succeeds because it benefits from the fact that both the past and the future are truly unknowable. And as someone who has also scrutinized Jewish history (and made predictions about its trajectory) as well as consumed a fair share of political analyses and punditry, it is evident that being right or wrong about the past, present or future is less important than how well-argued, intriguing or compelling your assertions are.

So with these caveats in mind, I delved into Wald's work, eager for insight gleaned from history's greatest observers to stave off what might truly be the End of the Jews. And Wald does not disappoint. From the outset, *Rise and Fall* is provocative. Employing the terms "rise" and "decline", or "civilization" for that matter, Wald acknowledges, is an ideological move. After all, my rise might be your decline. These sharp-edged, value-laden terms, however, can be somewhat smoothed by objective, measured discourse – which Wald deploys.

However, in Wald's handling of contentiousness – which this topic inevitably evokes – he exposes a fundamental weakness in his argument. In other words, Wald often tries to have it both ways. For example, Wald manages to navigate the controversy around terms mentioned above, but one that cannot so easily be resolved appears on page 3. It is "Jewish". Though Wald nods to the eternal controversy about defining who is a "Jew," and states that he will not wade into that morass, he nonetheless stakes a position. He presents an "expert opinion," that, with a thick patina of academic objectivity, defines what a Jew is. He then proceeds to state how many Jews there are, using this definition and a 2011 data set.

This is not the last time that Wald will do this. There are at least eight other moments during the unfolding of his polemic that Wald will make a bold assertion, and then, just as deftly, backpedal from it with a dollop of disinterestedness.

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In Part II, Wald introduces the historians he will review and interrogate. In total, it is a stimulating collection of thinkers. Ranging from Thucydides to the Chinese historian Sima Qian and Muslim historian ibn Khaldun to Gibbon, Weber, Toynbee and a strong cross-section of American and British historians (with a handful of other European historians), Wald introduces each with a brief chapter about their work and their connections to the Jews.

But, then, oddly, he seems to back away from them. Are they the right ones? he wonders aloud. Was a better choice possible? One wonders if he should be held responsible for the list he constructed. But then, he concludes, “[a] different selection of authors might change the relative weight of the main factors, or add one or two more, but the overall picture would likely remain the same.”

Parts III and IV effectively lay out Wald’s lessons from history, specifically external conditions for a civilization’s rise and decline (Part III) as well as the “drivers” of that rise and decline (Part IV). In many instances, Wald’s chapter headings pose a simple question in the form of an “either/or” statement. So, for example, in Part I, Chapter 1 wonders: Are the Jews are a “civilization” or a “culture”? (Wald’s conclusion: Both.) Chapter 7 of Part III posits whether there will be an “End of Civilization” or “Decline of the West”. (Wald’s conclusion: Either would be bad.)

Many of the macro-historical conditions Wald enumerates in Part III prove to be good for the Jews. Toynbee’s notion of a “challenge and response” fits well into a Jewish schema as does Hodgson’s notion of a “window of opportunity” and Gibbon’s nuanced appreciation of multiple causes for decline. However, a “golden age” myth depicting a thriving peak (from which a civilization inevitably descends) does not fit so well, nor does the correlation between cultural creativity and civilizational health or how the Jews will fare when civilization, be it humanity’s or the West’s, finally comes crashing down.

Part IV enumerates a checkered collection of “drivers”, some of which prove to be good for the Jews. However, others raise some disturbing questions about the nature of Jewishness in the present and near future. Religious practice provides a strong bond between Jews, as does the social capital that accompanies high levels of education and economic success. But others, like a common language or galvanizing leaders, do not. And more controversially, neither does genetics. Here is where Wald tries most to stake a claim and flee from it simultaneously and disturbingly.

Under the rubric of “extra rational bonds”, Wald introduces evolutionary psychology and biology as well as epigenetics and transgenerational inheritance to explain the ineffable bond between Jews.

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He quotes a BBC science program on epigenetics that trumpets how “genes have a ‘memory’” while simultaneously (and unsuccessfully) attempting to mute the claim’s triumphal overtones.

Wald, like any post-Shoah Jew, should be circumspect about espousing a “scientific explanation for Jewish group feeling” as it is a mere euphemism for a racialized notion of Jewishness. (And for folks who assert the latter, Wald’s response is quasi-dismissive: they just don’t understand the science.) However, as he unpacks the recent research, he comes uncomfortably close to embracing a nucleic-acid based “magical consensus” all the while claiming that he is agnostic about it. He concludes that “[h]istoriography and the social sciences must be open to new findings from evolutionary science, genetics, epigenetics, and genomic research.” How open social scientists should be remains unsaid.

Despite Wald’s waffling, what ultimately makes *Rise and Fall* valuable are his sensible and well-grounded recommendations based on the premise that *Jewish decline is inevitable*. (This assertion is one from which he does not ultimately back away.) Wald’s to-do list is short – four items in all – and, more important, actionable. Even more important, one would be hard-pressed to find a responsible member of the Jewish establishment who would disagree with anything on Wald’s list... except perhaps the second item which calls for the development a wholly new cadre of Jewish leaders who are “morally and intellectually unassailable, ready to rally a large part of the public behind vital goals, and able to implement long term policies.”

Wald’s appendix for policy-makers is also invaluable, capably summarizing the key terminology and twelve “drivers” (in various combinations) that will (probably) determine whether the future will be good or bad for the Jews.

However, one driver that appears in the appendix is curiously missing from the body of the work: *the status of women*. Wald alludes to women’s rights and the status of women eleven times in *Rise and Decline*. (He alludes to Protokin almost twice as much.) As useful as Wald’s mission of offering sound recommendations will prove to be (or not), it is somewhat diminished by the lip service he pays to more than half of the Jewish people. In the list of 66 “JPPI Brainstorming Participants” who gathered with Wald to consider the Jewish future, only eight<sup>1</sup> were women. Of the 18 JPPI Staff Participants, only three were women. Consider also that, in 2013, of the 74 largest Jewish non-for-profit organizations, only ten had women leaders – and they earned 66 cents for every dollar earned by the

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<sup>1</sup> Or, perhaps, nine. I could not determine if Leslie Cardin was a man or a woman.

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men at the same level.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it is unfair to expect Wald to speak from both sides of the mechitzah. However, one cannot claim to speak for everyone without acknowledging how little attention you are giving to the folks on the other side of the curtain. One cannot have it both ways.

**Dan Mendelsohn Aviv**

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://forward.com/articles/189200/women-leaders-of-jewish-non-profits-remain-scarce/?p=all#ixzz30KeBi4ho> for the complete salary survey.

REGUER, SARA, *The Most Tenacious of Minorities: the Jews of Italy*, 240pp., Academic Studies Press, Boston, ISBN: 978-1-61811-244-6, 2013, £48.95 (hardcover)

This well written, clear, insightful introduction to the history of the Jews of Italy includes 8 succinct chapters followed by bibliographical references and interspersed with timelines, with boxed text summarizing key ideas, people, and events chronologically arranged.

The first 8 chapters flow chronologically and Chapter 9 is titled, "Reclaiming the Heroic Jewish Judith" and includes a translation and introduction to the poem "Yotzer for Hanukah" authored by Yosef ben Shlomo from Carcassonne who wrote a midrashic variant for the Judith story instead of following the Apocrypha. Chapter 10, titled "Converso", looks at the converso Maria Maddalena de Riu (1876-1960), born in Sedilo, who tenaciously kept certain mitzvot and customs.

In chapter 1 Reguer traces the formation of the Italian Jews back to ancient Rome in the time of the Book of Maccabees. In chapter 2 Reguer notes the journey depicted in the Babylonian Talmud of Rabban Gamliel II, R. Joshua ben Hananya, R. Eleazar ben Azarya, and Rabbi Akiva as emissaries to Rome to advocate for the withdrawal of the edict against Judaism by Emperor Domitian. Reguer goes on to describe the 2nd century trip of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai and Rabbi Eleazar ben Yossi to help Rabbi Matityahu ben Kharash, head of the Italian Yeshiva, with points of Jewish law. Reguer makes passing reference to the catacomb tomb inscriptions of Jews. The fact that these inscriptions are rarely in Hebrew but in Greek and Latin speaks to the level of acculturation with the host society, even with the maintenance of the "scuola" (from the Latin word for synagogue) led by the archisynagogus (synagogue president) who raised funds for the Temple and later for the Yavne Yeshiva of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai. Reguer touches on the Bar Kokhba Revolt of 132-135 which was not just a revolt to reclaim a Jewish homeland from Roman domination, but against the Hadrianic persecutions.

In chapter 3 Reguer touches on Shabtai Donnolo (913-982 CE), a Jewish physician in Oria on the Adriatic coast who authored *Sefer ha-Mirkakhot* (book of Remedies) and a commentary on *Sefer Yetzira*. In this chapter we also encounter Rabbi Abraham ibn Daud's *Sefer ha-Qabbala* (Book of Tradition). Reguer also discusses *Josippon*, the historical narrative written in Hebrew by an anonymous southern Italian author which described the period of the second temple, drawing on the Latin works of Josephus, the Apocrypha, and medieval chronicles. A fourth

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source is Ahimaatz ben Paltiel (b. 1017) who moved from Oria to Capua and wrote *Megilat Ahimaatz* describing his geneology in rhymed Hebrew prose. A fifth source is that of Benjamin of Tudela who traveled through northern Italy, specifically Genoa, Lucca, Pisa, and Rome crossing the boot into Trani, Apulia, Taranto, Ortranto, and Brindisi. A sixth cultural Jewish luminary is Jacob Anatoli who at the request of King Frederick translated Averroes and Arabic astronomical works into Hebrew.

Chapter 4 covers the first printed book in Hebrew (1468), the Trent blood libel (1475), Judah Messer Leon (c. 1420-1498) author of *Nofet Tsufim* (Book of the Honeycomb's Flow), the formation of the Ghetto Nuovo in Venice (1516) and later the Ghetto Vecchio for Middle Eastern and Sephardic Jews, Rav Ovadia Sforno (1470-1550), the printing press of Gershom Soncino (1460s-1534), Daniel Bomberg's Venetian 23 volume printing of the Talmud (1519-1523,) and the burning of the Talmud in Rome (1553) recounted by R. Joseph ha-Kohen in *Emek Ha-Bakha*. In the north of Italy Rabbi Joseph Colon and R. Judah Minz of Padua ran yeshivot, and Verona and Cremona also had Rabbinic Academies. Reguer notes that the Rabbinic luminary Elijah Delmedigo (1458-1497) published his *Sefer Behinat ha-Dat* (Examination of Faith) in 1490. In the wake of the schism between the Rome and Avignon papacies, the Jews sent a delegation to the Holy See to ask the Pope for his protection, to which the Pope responded with the "Bull of Benevolence" which allowed Jewish doctors to practice medicine (1419). This chapter also discusses Immanuel of Rome (c.1261-1328) who in his *Mahbarot* (Compositions constituting 28 cantos) with the poem *Yigdal* draws on Maimonides' 13 principles of faith. Attention is also paid to women's Jewish history as in the example of Anna the Hebrew who provided cosmetics for Catherine Sforza and Queen Elizabeth I, with the further two examples of Benvenida Abrabanel and Dona Gracia Nasi. Christian Hebraicists such as Pico Della Mirandola and Johannes Reuchlin are also touched upon.

Chapter 5 discusses the Ghettos of Venice, Rome, Florence, and Trieste and highlights the intellectual creativity of Leone Da Mondena (1571-1648) author of *Historia de Riti Hebraici* and his autobiography *Hayyei Yehuda*. Salomone de' Rossi (1570-1630) a baroque Hebrew composer served as the court musician of Gonzagas of Mantua. Reguer also touches on Rabbi Moses Chaim Luzzatto (1707-1747) author of the *Mesilat Yesharim*. In women's history, mention is made of Sara Coppio Sullam (ca. 1592-1641) who hosted a salon in Venice for distinguished intellectuals and the prayer services for women (*scole delle donne*) in which a women would lead the responses in an attached room to the synagogue.

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Chapter 6 deals with the ghetto walls being taken down (1789) in the wake of the French Revolution, and their reinstatement in 1814. The chapter carries the story of the Jews of Italy up until the early twentieth century: the formation of the Consortium of Italian Jewish Communities (1920), Mussolini's meeting with Chaim Weizman (1926), and the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (1933) when Hitler became Chancellor.

Chapter 7 covers topics such as the 1938 Manifesto of Racist Scientists, the 1938 Rome-Berlin Axis whereby Jews were expelled from academies and cultural institutions, racial laws of 1938, the banning in 1939 of Jews from professions, the formation of the Jewish resistance organization DELASEM (Delegazione per L'Assistenza degli Emigranti Ebrei) with headquarters in Genoa in June 1940.

Chapter 8 titled "Contemporary Italy" discusses the meeting of the Italian Synagogue congregation of Jerusalem in 1941, the 1951 dismantling of the Congeliano Veneto Synagogue and its shipping to Jerusalem to become the Italian synagogue in the old German compound, and the arrival of Libyan Jews (1967) Persian Jews (1978) Russian Jews (1991), Iranian Jews (1997) in Italy.

While Reguer does mention legislative actions curtailing Jewish freedoms and rights, blood libels (Trent 1475) and expulsions (i.e. from Naples in 1208) and burning of Jewish books (1553 Rome), Crusader violence during the 6 Crusades from 1096 to 1289, the Inquisition and the burning of the neofiti in auto de-fes (1513) and an auto de fes of 23 Jews on the piazza of Ancona around 1556 etc, the book avoids a lachrymose depiction of the history of Jewish in Italy. Reguer argues that "the story of the Jews of Italy is one of re-creation and tenacious resistance to merging with the larger community in the process of acculturation and assimilation (p.176)."

Some scholars may have wished that the bibliographies might have been longer. Also while Reguer cites in the bibliography the important scholarship of Bonfil, Ruderman, David, Shulvass, etc. there are no footnotes to these researchers. Footnotes might have strengthened the book.

To sum up, this book is highly recommended as an introduction and general overview to courses on the history of Jews in Italy. More advanced research should consult a wider bibliography and other seminal scholarly works.

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ERIK H COHEN, *Identity and Pedagogy – Shoah Education in Israeli State Schools*, 360pp., Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, ISBN: 978-1936235810, 2013, \$85 (hardcover)

When I was growing up in the 1960s and early 70s in the UK, the Shoah was not yet “institutionalised”, to borrow a phrase from Erik Cohen’s 2013 publication, *Identity and Pedagogy – Shoah Education in Israeli State Schools*. There were virtually no education units or curricula related to the study of that period taught in Jewish schools or synagogue classes in the UK. As a Jewish teenager in London in a non-Jewish high school, the Shoah was not part of my education at all, a situation that was also mirrored in Jewish schools in Israel in those decades. In the UK now, all teenagers study the Holocaust as a Unit in the National History curriculum, and it is used as a lens through which to teach universal values of tolerance, anti-racism and democracy.

Shoah education in Israel in the first decade of the twenty first century is the subject of the research and the bulk of this book. The development of Shoah education in Israel has moved from the first steps of designating a National Day of Mourning in 1951 (Yom HaShoah) to a broadening and diversification of texts and curricula which emphasize both the specific and universal aspects of Shoah.

The first part of Cohen’s book traces the history of approaches to teaching the Shoah in Israel and compares this to other Jewish centres around the world. But the main focus for this book is the National Survey of Shoah Education in Israel, a major nation-wide survey on Shoah Education in Israeli state schools, conducted by the author between 2007 and 2009. This was the first national study of the issue in the Israeli state system and was designed to give as broad, detailed and complete a picture as possible, by surveying a large and diverse population, employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Surveys were sent to principals, teachers and students, in high, and junior high schools of a wide variety throughout Israel.

Cohen’s sample size was sufficiently large and diverse for reliable analysis and recommendations to be drawn, and the second half of the book explains and reflects on the enormous quantity of data gathered. By and large, according to this study, Israeli schools appear to be doing a good job. The author shows how highly Shoah education was evaluated by principals, teachers and students alike. Principals see Shoah education as successfully imparting Jewish, Israeli and universal values. Teachers are satisfied with the training they receive, and the academic core is the same in religious and general schools. The investment in Shoah education

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in schools is significant, and Cohen highlights that this is important and necessary because in Israel the school is the primary setting for learning about the Shoah. In grades 7-10, an average of 15-20 hours a year are spent on Shoah education in schools, and this rises to 40-45 hours in grade 11. In the UK, where although Shoah education is taught to some extent in every state high school, the locus for in depth Shoah education for Jewish students is as likely to be the synagogue or the Youth Movement as it is the school. In Israel on the other hand, the impact of the youth movement on Shoah education is “apparently marginal” (Cohen p103).

One of the interesting, though not surprising, results of Cohen’s research is found in the chapter on “The Journey to Poland”. The pupils’ rate the trip to Poland and testimonies of survivors as the most effective means of learning about the Shoah. First hand sources are well known as highly effective ways of transmitting almost any subject. In the UK for example, all the mainstream Jewish high schools run Poland trips for their older teenagers. In Israel, a significant and growing number of 12<sup>th</sup> graders also go to Shoah sites in Poland on school tours. Cohen calls this a “sort of civil-religious pilgrimage”(192). The itineraries are designed to teach about the Shoah, impart strong emotional experiences and involve participants in commemorative symbolic acts. These school journeys are part of a growing trend of “Shoah tourism” among Jews both in Israel and in the Diaspora. Cohen makes parallels between these Jewish heritage tours and the group tours to Israel for Diaspora teens, a phenomenon he researched in 2008. Whilst there are many similarities, Cohen finds that over 80% of Israeli youth said they intended to go to Poland when in grade 12. The only barrier is a financial one, whereas in Cohen’s previous research, he found that barriers to going on a group tour to Israel were cultural and religious, as well as financial.

Cohen concludes that development of Shoah education has been an extended process, reflecting changes in the politics and society in Israel, and even within the national school system, there is not uniformity of approach. He acknowledges that there is one area for further, in-depth research: the first is Shoah education among “other” populations in Israel – the ultra-Orthodox and the 1.5 million Arab citizens of Israel.

Apart from the enormously rich collection of data analysed in this book, Cohen provides the researcher and the graduate student with invaluable role modelling in methodology and surveying in particular. The structure of the questionnaires, for principals, teachers and students, all shown in full in the appendices, provide a very helpful blueprint for anyone planning to run education surveys. As well as showing great clarity, the structure and content of the questions are extremely useful

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transferable tools. They teach survey design and should be required reading on any doctoral research programme.

In addition, Cohen's use of Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), which is a multidimensional data analysis technique based on facet theory, is enhanced by a very clear explanation of this particular framework and approach.

In 2009, the Holocaust Education Department in the UK conducted a parallel piece of research on Shoah education in state schools in Britain. More than 2000 teachers participated in an on-line survey and consultations took place with representatives from more than twenty UK educational institutions, both Jewish and general. The findings of this research resonate widely with Cohen's work, and the UK study is cited in Cohen's very comprehensive, impressive bibliography. There are of course, specific issues that illustrate the particularistic nature of teaching the Shoah in Israel, to Jewish teenagers, in Jewish schools and Cohen deals with these within his findings. From analysing the precise differences between the general term "Holocaust" and the Jewish term "Shoah", to identifying the specific issues related to Shoah teaching in Jewish Israeli society, Cohen acknowledges that teaching about the Shoah has a distinct place and purpose within Israel.

Cohen concludes with a summary of suggestions for further development of Shoah education in Israeli schools. One of these suggestions advocates bringing informal and experiential activities to enrich the more traditional cognitive teaching and learning that takes place in schools. The trip to Poland, already cited, is one of these methods, and engaging with survivors and hearing their stories is another.

As we become further and further removed from the Shoah as an event within personal memory, so teaching about it in school becomes more and more important, in a personal, a collective and a universal sense. Cohen's book is a significant addition to our knowledge of teaching and learning, remembrance and education. It is more than merely a critique and exploration of an area of the Israeli High School curriculum. It is a thorough, complete exposition of the process of coming to terms with, and understanding one of the most challenging eras in modern society.

### **Dr Helena Miller**

#### Literature Consulted

Cohen E. H., *Youth Tourism to Israel: Educational Experiences of the Diaspora*, Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications, 2008

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Pettigrew A. and Foster S, *Teaching About the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools: an empirical study of national trends, perspectives and practice* , London: University Press, 2009

LISA FISHBAYN JOFFE, SYLVIA NEIL, *Gender, Religion and Family Law: Theorizing conflicts between women's rights and cultural traditions*, 308 pp., Brandeis University Press, ISBN: 978-1-61168-326-4, 2013, \$40 (paperback)

Hardly a day goes by without a story in the news about women being threatened or harmed in the name of religion. All over the world – from France to India to Turkey to South Africa to the United States to the Middle East – nations are dealing with religious demands on women's bodies, demands that limit women's freedoms and at times end in violence. Lisa Fishbayn Joffe and Sylvia Neil, in their new edited volume *Gender, Religion and Family Law: Theorizing Conflicts Between Women's Rights and Cultural Traditions* bring together a fascinating and comprehensive series of essays that explore this complex tension between religion and democracy around issues in family law. The book takes a comparative legal approach to this tension, which, according to one contributing writer, impacts women's lives in nearly every country in the world.

Chapters in the book cover issues in Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Mormonism, and several African traditions, and revolve primarily around marriage, divorce, and body cover. The writers – top legal scholars in their fields around the world who refer to one another's work, with the intriguing effect of creating dialogue within one volume – cover an impressive breadth of international ground from the United States, Canada, the UK, South Africa and Israel, in an attempt to create an overarching and comprehensive theoretical approach to these issues.

Indeed, the undeniable parallels among legal approaches to all these issues – from the *niqab*, to the *agunah* issue (women denied divorce in Judaism), to polygamy, the Islamic *mahr* (“dowry”) – paint a troubling and complex portrait of the threat to religious women's rights in democratic nations across the globe. Even the most liberal democracies seem to be struggling with how to protect women against encroaching religious patriarchal practices. In fact, not only are liberal democracies struggling to protect women, but, as many of the writers show, liberal democracies seem to be tripping up on their own misapplications of concepts of pluralism.

This perceived conflict between feminism and pluralism informs many of the essays, and is explored by Fishbayn Joffe in her riveting introduction. “While there may be general agreement that just laws and social policies should demonstrate respect for women's individual autonomy,” she writes, “in practice there is often ambivalence about how

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such respect should be manifested... [T]hose committed to respecting women's capacity to make their own lives must consider whether this is best achieved through accepting women's actual choices without comment or by also trying to identify and change the background circumstances that condition these unappealing choices." (p. xxiii)

The first section of the book outlines some of the ethical legal debates over the place of religion in democracy vis a vis women's lives. Martha Minow, in describing the "paradox of liberalism", which she says is "often phrased as how to 'tolerate the intolerant'," provides a series of intricate theoretical frameworks for enabling democracies to collaborate with religious cultures in order to protect women's rights while also protecting basic religious freedoms. Among other things, she describes the complexity of such attempts to protect women when women themselves have a vested interest in group membership, and brings some insight from Professor Martha Nussbaum, who argues for creating frameworks of universal human rights that supersede relativistic cultural claims of religious groups. Ayelet Shchar, continuing this discussion, analyzes calls for "privatized diversity", which propose allowing religious groups to operate their own separate religious tribunals. She argues that these tribunals do not necessarily protect women, and in fact may push these religious structures "underground" where they are completely unregulated. Similarly, Linda C. McClain, in analyzing calls for a modern *millet* system, examines issues such as the banning of the veil in countries such as France and Turkey and religious divorce in the UK and concludes that "a call for legal pluralism in the form of a modern millet system in the United States clashes with basic political and family law norms of sex equality." (p. 81)

The second section looks at specific cases around the world in which civil law and religious law intersect. Susan Weiss describes the groundbreaking use of civil tort law in Israel to protect *agunot*, women denied divorce in Judaism. Pascale Fournier explores the practices of *mahr*, Islamic dowries, and the multiple and divergent ways in which this custom may either protect or harm Muslim women. Rashida Manjoo critiques the status given to Muslim family law in South Africa, where she says, "Some states use the right of religious freedom to defend gender-based discrimination in the area of family law, while other states are reluctant to intervene... ([to] avoid entanglement with religion." (p. 165). Likhapha Mbatha and Lisa Fishbayn Joffe explore the legalization of polygyny in South Africa, and the complexity of feminist opposition to polygyny against the backdrop of accusations that such opposition is rooted in colonialist oppression of African traditions. It is a fascinating

## BOOK REVIEWS

case study that challenges feminist advocates to find approaches that respect tradition while advocating for protection of women.

The third section looks at several specific case studies of religious women making change. Irit Koren looks at Jewish brides who create more pro-feminist wedding rituals, and Fatou Kiné Camara looks at Muslim women's spiritual rituals in Senegal. The stories, which are more sociological than legalistic, offer an incisive and vibrant portrait of religious women's agency.

In this third section appears a chapter which I felt did not belong in this book. The chapter, which examines the phenomenon of "*yoatzot halakha*" – women becoming advisors to other women on matters of menstruation in Jewish law – I felt was falsely self-promoting and disingenuous in its feminist claims. The essay heavily cites the writings of several avowedly anti-feminist religious men, and aggrandizes a phenomenon that is doubtful in its empowerment of women within the law. The program in question is regularly described by its founder as *not* giving women any actual authority within Jewish law, and meanwhile its founder is quoted in the chapter making the rather obnoxious claim that the program predates and outdoes religious feminism. I am also not certain how this chapter relates to the topic of "family law" that the book aims to cover, since there are no legal issues discussed.

Beyond that, however, the book is a fascinating and intelligent exploration of an important issue that has an increasing impact on women's lives around the world. The book makes a vital contribution to the field, and should be required reading in women's studies programs – especially in discussions that seek to understand the complex lives of religious women. The book makes a vital contribution to the process of constructing a comprehensive approach within the context of western democracy to encroaching religious claims on the bodies and lives of women.

**Dr. Elana Maryles Sztokman**

KEITH KAHN-HARRIS *Uncivil War: The Israel Conflict in the Jewish Community*, 223 pp., David Paul, London, ISBN: 978-0992667306, 2014 , £10.00 (paperback)

The angst and anguish of British Jews in comprehending and coping with Israel's political and military actions are documented and dissected in Keith Kahn-Harris's book. It attempts to disentangle the different types of reaction to a specific event. Indeed the author lists fourteen categories – from the “decent left” to the “neo-conservative right”, from “private engagers” to the “apathetic”. Even Howard Jacobson's fictional “Ashamed Jews” gets a look-in.

In particular the book documents and explains the divisions amongst British Jews during the first decade of the twenty-first century. But what do British Jews really think? Significantly there has only been one UK survey of Jewish attitudes towards Israel even though the American Jewish Committee has been carrying out regular surveys for the past thirty years. The JPR survey of 2010 suggested that British Jews are decidedly dovish – 74% opposing the settlement drive, 67% endorsing “land for peace” while remaining strong on Israel's right to security. Thus a similar proportion supported Operation Cast Lead in 2009 and the erection of a security barrier to thwart the suicide bombers. It is unlikely that many would have voted for Netanyahu in last year's election. However such surveys do highlight the distinct difference between Jewish organisations which stand in the public arena against ill-informed critics and the views of the ordinary Jew in the street. Many “representative” Jewish organisations choose not to get involved and do not express an opinion. In not having a policy about the West Bank settlements and in not criticising an Israel government, the silence of organisations can easily be construed as a quiet support.

Keith Kahn-Harris's book rightly reflects unease and disquiet during the period of the al-Aqsa Intifada. It adopts a sociological, psychotherapeutic and spiritual reflection rather than an overtly political and historical analysis. Civilian casualties in any incursion into Gaza attract the media far than Israel's reasons for actually being there. On the moral level, the wholesale killing of families is terrible, but it is also a political weapon that Hamas deploys. This is Israel's Achilles heel that eventually brings about a ceasefire.

The advent of social media has played an important role in the polarisation since 2000. It is a great leveller in that it allows constructive comment alongside anti-Semitic innuendo in the name of free speech. The



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blogosphere occasionally resembles a pub discussion which starts off rationally and then descends into foul-mouthed rants as its participants become progressively more intoxicated. Pour the complexity of the Israel-Palestine conflict into this whirlpool and it is not surprising that “uncivil wars” break out.

The book is good on events since the year 2000, but is often incorrect in its recording of history before then. It is not the case to suggest that there was a broad consensus after the Six-Day war in 1967. Groups such as Siah (Israel New Left), BAZO (British Anti-Zionist Organisation), Mapam and the Israel-Palestine Committee all existed in the 1970s. This peripheral concern moved into the mainstream in 1982 when Begin and Sharon misled British Jews with the rationale for Israel’s invasion of Lebanon. This catalysed the formation of the British Friends of Peace Now in 1982 – not 1987 as the author maintains. It became the central focus of opposition since many of its founders were intellectuals and academics – people who were disposed to ask questions and did not imbibe the accepted wisdom emanating from Jerusalem.

The period since 1982 has also been marked by the rise of Palestinian Islamism which has divided the “peace camp”. Some believed that just as it was possible to talk to the PLO the same could be done with Hamas and Islamic Jihad. This resulted in the emergence of such groups as Jews for Justice for Palestinians and Independent Jewish Voices – and leftist opposition to them. The development of real-time television news has brought home the brutality and nihilism of war – and this has clearly affected many Jews who live and work amongst non-Jews. On the spiritual plain, the morality of Judaism is invoked. The idea of deference to Israeli political figures has waned.

While many British Jews passionately believe in Israel’s survival, the blanket survivalism of the 1948 generation – a generation which tolerated little dissent – has diminished as they have passed on. The current generation of British Jews are more discerning. Unity is not synonymous with uniformity. The spat between the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Leadership Council is evidence of the latter’s willingness to break with the past. It also relates to the significant influence which communal philanthropists can exert.

This book overflows with good intentions, but as the Oslo process of the 1990s indicated, it is only a meaningful peace which will soothe the savage Jewish breast.

**Colin Shindler**  
**Emeritus professor at SOAS, University of London.**

SARAH BUNIN BENOR: *Becoming Frum. How Newcomers Learn the Language and Culture of Orthodox Judaism*, 288pp., Rutgers University Press, ISBN: 978-0813553894, 2012, \$27.95 (paperback)

Since the growth of the *baalei teshuvah* movements from the late 1960s and 1970's, there have been many scholarly books that have documented "haredization", the so called "shift to the right" and religious intensification of Jewish communities. The renewed interest in Jewish observance, in particular in Orthodoxy, seems to be part of a broader global spiritual trend, but in contrast to other religions, the Jewish revival may also have an ethnic aspect, the desire to (re)connect, (re)discover, (re)learn the religion of the ancestors.

Sarah Bunin Benor's fascinating book *Becoming Frum, How Newcomers Learn the Language and Culture of Orthodox Judaism* guides the reader through the transition process of born-again Jews into the world of Orthodoxy. The newcomers were usually brought up in non-Orthodox or secular homes as opposed to the *frumers*, who were born and raised Orthodox. Since Herbert M. Danzger's 1989 book *Returning to the Tradition* there have been many comprehensive academic studies on born again Jews<sup>1</sup>. What makes Benor's book special is that she focuses on the adult language socialization of *baalei teshuvah*. *Being Orthodox* involves not only religious practices, observance, or religious beliefs, but also a set of speaking practices and a distinct language, called in the book "Jewish language". This book describes how the *baalei teshuvah* turn their lives around and adopt the *frum* orthodox lifestyle and the *frum* way of speaking "Yinglish", "Jewish", or "Orthodox".

According to the author, *baalei teshuvah* exist in a cultural borderland between their non-Orthodox upbringing and their new *frum* communities. Benor's aim is to describe and understand how they navigate this borderland, how they negotiate their own "in-between-ness", how they construct their identities between their old and new lives, between their

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<sup>1</sup>Danzger, Murray Herbert: 1989 *Returning to Tradition. The Contemporary Revival of Orthodox Judaism*. London: Yale University Press New Haven. Kaufman, Debra Renee: 1993 *Rachel's Daughters. Newly Orthodox Jewish Women*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. Davidmann, Lynn: 1991 *Tradition in a Rootless World. Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism*. Berkley, Los Angeles, Oxford: California Press. Minny E. Mock-Degen: 2009 *The Dynamics of becoming Orthodox. Dutch Jewish woman returning to Judaism and how their mothers felt about it*. Amphorabooks, Amsterdam.

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past and present, between their original families and their new surroundings.

Benor is not only a cultural anthropologist but also a linguist and an expert on “Jewish language” or languages. Combining the two disciplines she analyses how and to what extent the newcomers incorporate Yiddishisms into English, how frequently they use religious phrases (eg “Baruch Ha Sem”), whether they choose the Ashkhenazi pronunciation of “Mazel tov” or the Israeli pronunciation, how some indicate their Sephardi roots by using Ladino phrases, and how these new ways of speaking express their desire to blend in and help them find their own status and position in the community.

Through this book we gain a deep insight into the complex and diverse cultural and religious differences along the Orthodox continuum. A whole chapter is dedicated to the relationship between language and the different orthodoxies from the Modern Orthodox to the so-called “Black Hat” Orthodox. Language, appearance, and observance plays a major role in how baalei teshuvah represent their transformation and how they are perceived. The intensity and “properness” of the use of biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish, Israeli Hebrew and the other linguistic cues, reveal one’s location along various social axes and serve as indicators of the schools and yeshivot where people studied, identity, knowledge, their sense of security, confidence, and the stage their process of becoming frum. However, while trying to integrate, the newcomers also influence the speech of those who are frum from birth.

Orthodox Jewish English does not only involve a special Jewish vocabulary with an Ashkenazi or Israeli pronunciation, it also means a very distinct grammar. The fact that most native English speaking baalei teshuva adopt the use of phrases that are grammatically incorrect in English, but make sense in Yiddish and are customary in Orthodox communities, is a symptom of “third generation ethnic revival”. This means that while first generation immigrants struggle in learning the language, their children are careful to speak and sound “correct” in order to integrate and to distinguish themselves from their immigrant parents. However, their children, the third generation, might want to take greater pride in their distinctive heritage and they feel more comfortable with being American and having a special ethnic background. Besides the radical lifestyle change, they express their newly found religious Jewishness by speaking like their grandparents or great-grandparents. This conscious symbolic linguistic “return” to their grandparents’ culture causes tension between the baalei teshuvahs and their parents.

Benor gives a number of examples of linguistic borrowings from Yiddish. A number of prepositions are used with influences from their

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Yiddish correlates, especially “by” and “to”. “By”, from the Yiddish “bay”, the German “bei” and the Israeli “etsel”, means ‘at’, ‘besides’, ‘near’, ‘about’, ‘around’. The use of these prepositions are transferred to Orthodox English, for example instead of “at the mikveh” most would say “by the mikve” or: “are you eating by Rabbi Fischer?” “By” is often used in the sense of ‘according to the opinion of’, but in Orthodox English it is used as in the Yiddish: “Who’s Reb Yehuda holding by” or: “I pasken by him”. Not surprisingly the most common usages of by among baalei teshuva in the early stages are in the sense of “at someones house”, “I spent Shabbos by them”. This usage of “by” is considered to be a characteristic of Orthodox Jewish language in particular, and much less frequent in general Jewish English.

The book examines the “return” process as a model of transitioning that has different stages from peripheral belonging to becoming an inside member of the community. In line with this process the author distinguishes stages that baalei teshuva tend to go through as they acquire Hebrew and Yiddish words, choose and learn a pronunciation and adopt the grammar, the gestures etc. This stages include: hearing a word without understanding or even noticing, hearing the word in a context that facilitates understanding or remembering it, asking or looking up for the meaning, using it with a mistake, using it in a marked way, often playfully, and eventually using it correctly and unselfconsciously.

Benor points out another typical baal teshuvah phenomenon that my own research in Europe has supported as well. She calls this the “Matsiyahu Phenomenon”. Matsiyahu was once a secular singer, became a long bearded Hasidic “black hat” raggae star who recently has shaved his face clean but still wears kipah and tzitzis with sneakers. His story is a good example of someone who dives headfirst into frum culture and then bounces back to reclaim elements of his previous life. Some baal teshuvah change their mind, and leave completely, some find a balance they can live in, some try to prove themselves by “hyperaccommodating” to blend in.

What makes this book so useful is that it is based on ethnographic sociolinguistic research in which the author not only visited and interviewed people, but as a non- Orthodox fieldworker participated in the every day life of the communities, made close friendships, attended family events, becoming an active member these communities while she was walking the path of a newcomer toward becoming an insider herself. Therefore her account has a very personal tone but is at the same time deeply analytical. Having written a book on Hungarian Jews and the baal teshuva movement in Hungary, I could relate to the chapters describing the difficulties of the fieldwork or the dilemmas of analyzing in a rigid

## BOOK REVIEWS

academic framework those people who during the research became close friends. By spending several months in several different communities she could observe and examine the living spoken language: real dialogues, real situations, language errors, mistakes, slips of the tongue.

**Dr Zsófia Kata Vincze, ELTE Budapest University**

# CHRONICLE

## *BJPA Berman Jewish Policy Archive*

In cooperation with the Jewish Journal of Sociology, our good friends in the UK, we are pleased to present this review of the year 2013 in Jewish social research. Included are summaries of 75 selected pieces of empirical research (both quantitative and qualitative) that appeared in the 2013 calendar year and are included in the Berman Jewish Policy Archive @ NYU Wagner. Full references and pdfs are available through a search on the BJPA website.

Although in the annals of Jewish social research 2013 may go down as the Year of the Pew Study, truth be told, recent social scientific research on contemporary Jewish life encompassed a number of fields and sub-disciplines. Population and community studies abounded, as did studies in Jewish education, program evaluation, and related areas.

Of course, your comments and additional contributions are invited. Should we have missed any research published in 2013, please do send it along.

Happy reading, happy thinking,

**Prof. Steven M. Cohen** Director, Berman Jewish Policy Archive @ NYU  
Wagner Research Professor, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

*The Pew Report*

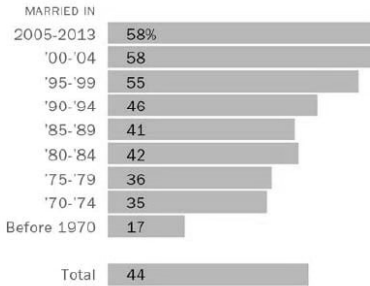
PewResearch Religion & Public Life Project

# A Portrait of Jewish Americans

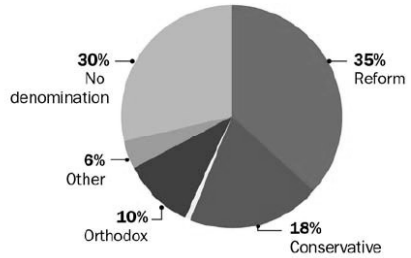


## Intermarriage, by Year of Marriage

*% of Jews with a non-Jewish spouse ...*



## Jewish Denominational Affiliation



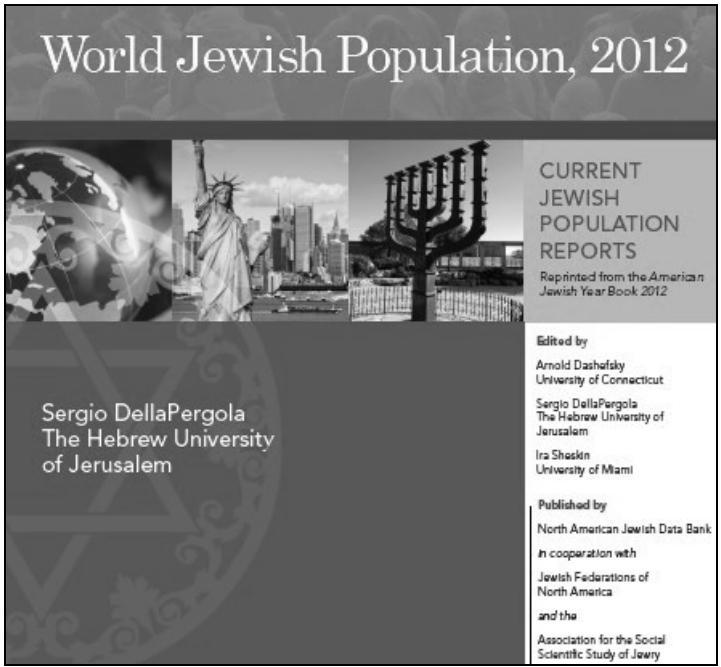
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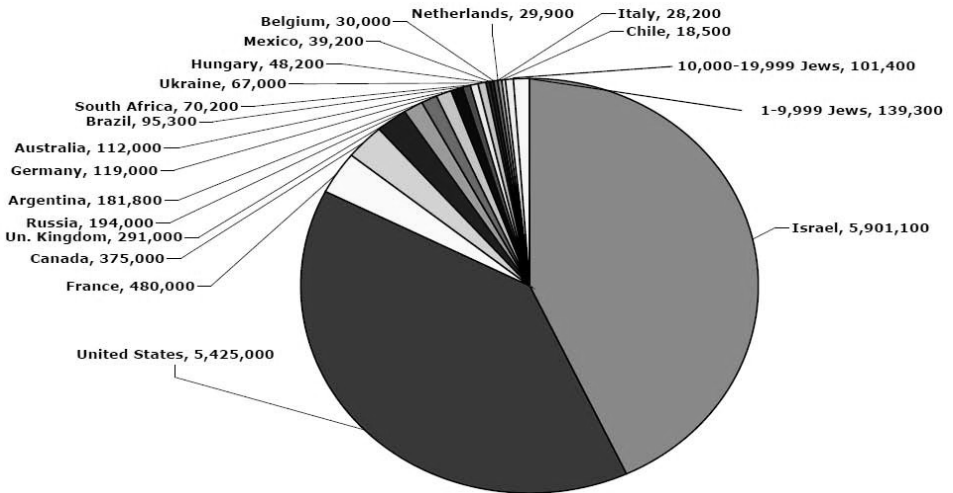
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Figure 2: Largest Core Jewish Populations, 2012

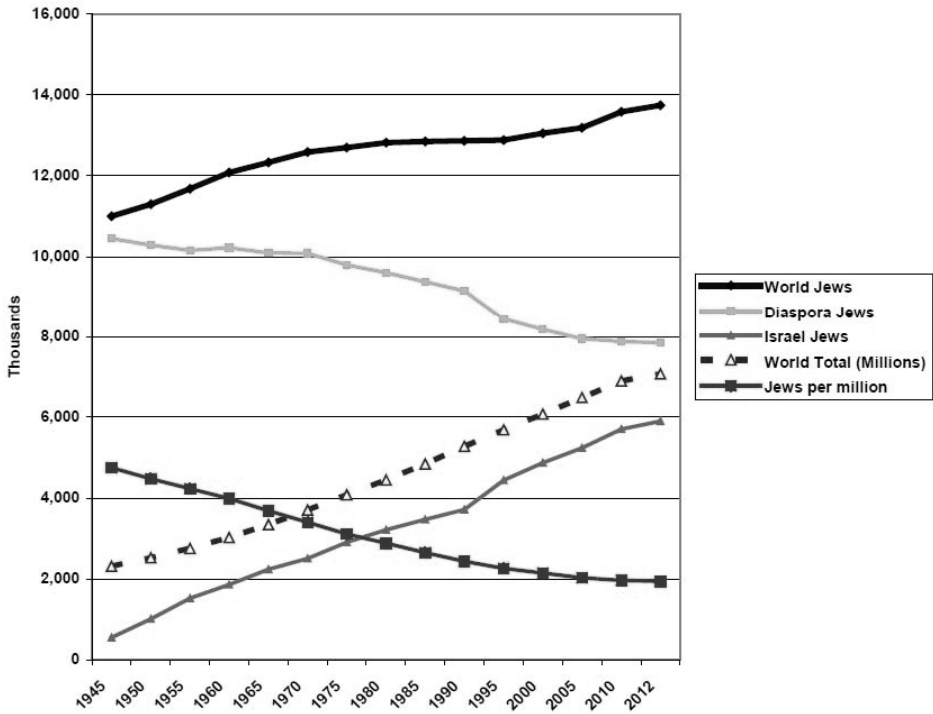


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# CHRONICLE

## World Total Population and Jewish Population Core Definition 1945-2012



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# Jewish Population in the United States, 2012



## CURRENT JEWISH POPULATION REPORTS

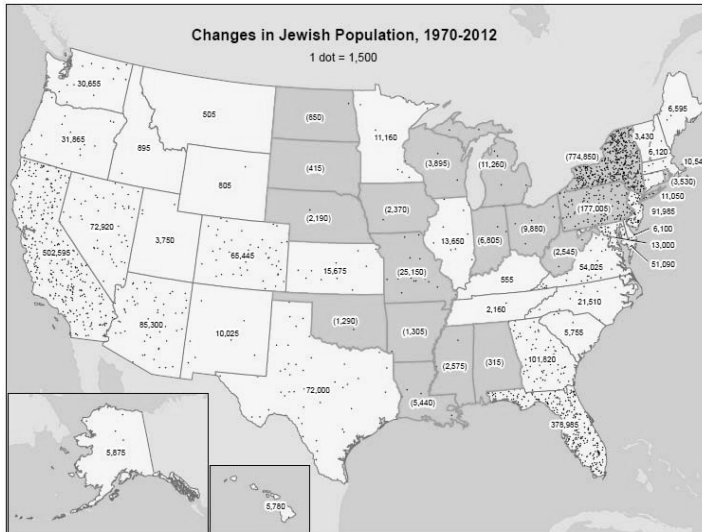
Reprinted from the American  
Jewish Year Book 2012

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Arnold Dashefsky  
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University of Miami

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and the  
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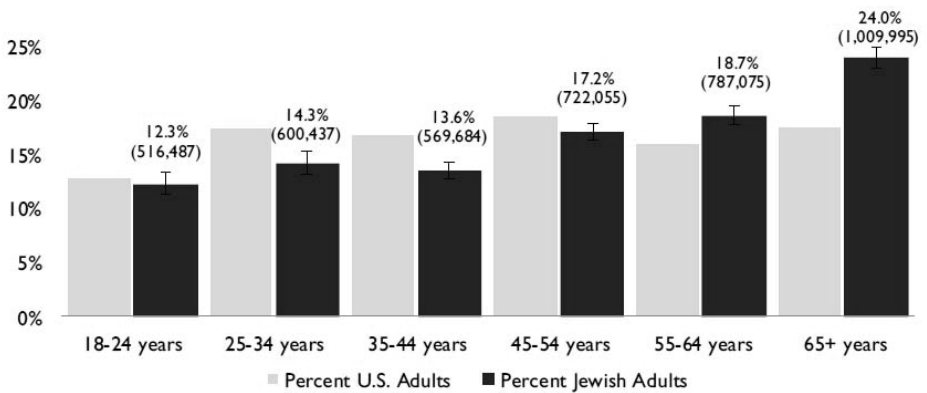


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FIGURE 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. JEWISH POPULATION: 2012.



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**Smith, Greg. Cooperman, Alan. / Pew Research Center**

What Happens When Jews Inter marry?

Inter marriage rates appear to have risen substantially in recent decades, though they have been relatively stable since the mid-1990s. Looking just at non-Orthodox Jews who have gotten married since 2000, 28% have a Jewish spouse and fully 72% are inter married.

**McGinity, Keren. / AJS Perspectives**

The Hand that Rocks the Cradle: How the Gender of the Jewish Parent Influences Inter marriage

## CHRONICLE

1 The author determines that the gender of the Jewish parent in an  
2 intermarried pair is a key factor in instilling Jewish identity in their  
3 offspring.

4  
5 ***Graham, David. / JPR***

6 2011 Census Results (England and Wales): Initial Insights into Jewish  
7 Neighbourhoods

8  
9 In 2001, the British national Census produced the largest dataset ever  
10 compiled on Jews in Britain. In 2011, it produced an even larger dataset,  
11 rendered all the more valuable because of the comparisons that can now  
12 be drawn with the 2001 data. With the release of 2011 Census statistics at  
13 the level of the neighbourhood, a highly detailed picture of change in  
14 Britain's Jewish community between 2001 and 2011 can be drawn.

15  
16 ***Graham, David. / JPR***

17 2011 Census Results (England and Wales): A Tale of Two Jewish  
18 Populations

19  
20 The 2011 Census was held on 27th March 2011 and included a  
21 question on religion for only the second time. The latest release of census  
22 data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) covers age and sex by  
23 religion. This affords a unique opportunity to chart detailed demographic  
24 change in the Jewish community over the decade since 2001. This report  
25 focuses on one particular aspect of the findings - i.e. evidence of two  
26 distinct Jewish populations: Haredi and non-Haredi Jews.

27  
28 *Population and Continuity*

29  
30  
31 ***DellaPergola, Sergio. / Jewish Studies at the Central European***  
32 ***University***

33 Demographic Trends, National Identities and Borders in Israel and the  
34 Palestinian Territory

35  
36 This article aims at reviewing from the perspective of demography  
37 some of the contemporary trends and dilemmas involving the relationship  
38 between population, territory and national identity in Israel and the  
39 Palestinian Territory.

1 ***DellaPergola, Sergio. / Jewish Studies at the Central European***  
2 ***University***

3 National Uniqueness and Transnational Parallelism: Reflections on the  
4 Comparative Study of Jewish Communities in Latin America  
5

6 Based on numerous local studies and quantitative data from several  
7 countries, this paper focuses on three principal issues: (1) Jewish  
8 migration, (2) national and transnational identities, and (3) paradigms of  
9 Jewish identity.  
10

11 ***Graham, David. / JPR***

12 Thinning and Thickening: Geographical Change in the UK's Jewish  
13 Population, 2001-2011  
14

15 Between 2001 and 2011 the size of the UK's Jewish population  
16 appeared to be static – the total count increased by just 1.1%. However,  
17 this stability disguised tremendous volatility just below the surface,  
18 especially in terms of geographical change. Though not entirely the result  
19 of a direct transfer of the Jewish population from one set of places to  
20 another, it is clear that some Jewish areas are ‘thinning’ while others are  
21 ‘thickening’. In short, more Jews are living in fewer places.  
22

23 ***Ukeles, Jacob B. Miller, Ron. Cohen, Steven M. Beck, Pearl. /***  
24 ***UJA-Federation of NY***

25 Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 - Geographic Profile  
26

27 A geographical breakdown of the 2011 New York City study, with  
28 updates and corrections as of October 2013.  
29

30 *Geography and Demography*  
31

32  
33 ***Axelrod, Toby. / JPR***

34 Jewish life in Germany: Achievements, Challenges and Priorities Since  
35 the Collapse of Communism  
36

37 A detailed look at Jewish life in Germany based on interviews with  
38 German Jewish leaders.  
39

40 ***Boyd, Jonathan. / JPR***

41 Jewish life in Europe: Impending Catastrophe, or Imminent Renaissance?  
42

## CHRONICLE

1       Is Europe an increasingly treacherous place for Jews, or a fertile  
2 environment in which Jewish life can thrive?  
3

4       ***Chertok, Fern. Parmer, Daniel. Aitan, Ellie. Davidson, Joshua. /***  
5       ***CMJS, SSRI***

6       Living on the Edge: Economic Insecurity among Jewish Households in  
7 Greater RI  
8

9       This study examines macro-level indicators, outlines services  
10 currently available in Rhode Island communities, collects systematic data  
11 about requests for assistance, and includes in-depth interviews.  
12

13       ***Boxer, Matthew. Aronson, Janet Krasner. Davidson, Joshua.***  
14       ***Aitan, Ellie. / CMJS, SSRI***

15       The 2013 Greater Buffalo Jewish Community Study  
16

17       A challenge confronting the Buffalo Jewish community going forward  
18 is to find ways to maintain the loyalty of long-standing members while  
19 being welcoming to those less involved.  
20

21       ***Ukeles, Jacob B. Miller, Ron. Cohen, Steven M. / UJA-Federation***  
22       ***of NY***

23       Special Reports from the Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011  
24

25       Special Report on Poverty and Special Study on Partly Jewish Jews  
26

27       ***Kotler-Berkowitz, Laurence / Berman Jewish DataBank***

28       The Great Recession and American Jews: Evidence from Baltimore,  
29 Chicago and Cleveland  
30

### *Other Demography*

31  
32  
33       ***Cohen, Steven M. Gitlin, Jason. / JCPA***

34       Reluctant or Repressed? Aversion to Expressing Views on Israel Among  
35 American Rabbis  
36

37       This survey of 552 rabbis examines American rabbis and how they  
38 speak about Israel.  
39

40       ***Lebel, Yuval. Hermann, Tamar. Heller, Ella. Atmor, Nir. / The***  
41       ***Israel Democracy Institute***

42       The Israeli Democracy Index 2013

## CHRONICLE

1 Since 2003 an extensive annual survey has been conducted in Israel,  
2 assessing the quality of Israeli democracy. The project assesses trends in  
3 Israeli public opinion regarding democratic values and the performance of  
4 government.

### 5 6 ***ADL, Marttila Strategies***

7 The 2013 Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews in America

8  
9 The latest ADL survey of the American people found that 12 percent  
10 of Americans harbor deeply entrenched anti-Semitic attitudes. This marks  
11 a 3 percent decline since 2011.

### 12 13 ***European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)***

14 Antisemitism: Summary overview of the situation in the European Union  
15 2001–2012

16  
17 This update of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights  
18 (FRA) overview of antisemitism in the EU relates manifestations of  
19 antisemitism as they are recorded in the 28 European Union (EU) Member  
20 States.

### 21 22 ***FRA, JPR***

23 Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States:  
24 experiences and perceptions of antisemitism

25  
26 This survey is the first-ever to collect comparable data on Jewish  
27 people's experiences and perceptions of antisemitism across a number of  
28 EU Member States. Its findings reveal a worrying level of discrimination,  
29 particularly in employment and education, fear of victimization, and  
30 concern about antisemitism online.

### 31 32 *Community Relations*

33  
34 Connected to Give is a collaborative project of a consortium of  
35 foundations and Jewish federations working in partnership with Jumpstart  
36 to map the landscape of charitable giving by American Jews.

### 37 38 ***Gerstein, Jim. Cohen, Steven M. Landres, Shawn. / Jumpstart***

39 Connected to Give: Key Findings

40  
41 This initial report is an examination of the relationship between the  
42 charitable giving behavior of American Jews and: their key demographics

## CHRONICLE

1 (especially age and income); their motivations for giving; the types of  
2 organizations to which they contribute (both Jewish and non-Jewish); and  
3 comparisons with giving patterns among non-Jewish Americans.  
4

5 ***Gerstein, Jim. Landres, Shawn. / Jumpstart***

6 Connected to Give: Jewish Legacies  
7

8 This second report focuses on planned giving, which refers to  
9 charitable contributions pledged through provisions in wills or other estate  
10 planning documents.  
11

12 ***McKitrick, Melanie A. Landres, J Shawn. Ottoni-Wilhelm, Mark.***

13 ***Hayat, Amir D. / Jumpstart***

14 Connected to Give: Faith Communities  
15

16 This third report examines how Americans' religious identities relate  
17 to their charitable giving behavior, specifically: giving patterns across  
18 different types of organizations, including those with and without  
19 religious ties; formal and informal connections with religion and  
20 spirituality; key demographics; and motivations for giving by religious  
21 tradition.  
22

23 ***Hammerman, Julie. / JLens, Jumpstart***

24 Impact Investing: Rabbinic Perspectives  
25

26 More than 150 rabbis completed the Rabbinic Survey on Jewish  
27 Values and Investment Decisions.  
28

### *Philanthropy*

29  
30  
31



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34 ***Soomekh, Saba. / Jumpstart, JFN***

35 LA 2013: The Jewish Future - Only Sooner  
36



## CHRONICLE

1 A report based on a private funders' summit seeking to accelerate  
2 LA's development as a global center for Jewish creativity and community  
3 in the 21st century.

4  
5 ***21/64, Johnson Center at Grand Valley State University***  
6 ***#NextGenDonors: The Future of Jewish Giving***

7  
8 Jews in the next generation are becoming less interested in religious  
9 practice and are distancing from Israel. What does this mean for Jewish  
10 philanthropy?

11  
12 ***Boyd, Jonathan. Staetsky, Laura. Sheps, Marina. / JPR***  
13 ***Immigration from the United Kingdom to Israel***

14  
15 This report presents sociodemographic characteristics of British  
16 immigration to Israel (aliyah); compares British immigrants to Israel with  
17 other immigrant groups; compares British immigrants to Israel with the  
18 Jewish population in the UK; and assesses the potential impact of  
19 immigration to Israel on the prospects of the British Jewish population.

20  
21 ***Avner, Brian / HUC-JIR Thesis***  
22 ***Reform American Bar and Bat Mitzvah in Israel***

23  
24 This paper is focused on compiling literature and experiences about  
25 B'nai Mitzvah, Jewish rites of passage, and Israel travel in order to create  
26 recommendations for a meaningful and holistic Israel B'nai Mitzvah  
27 experience.

28  
29 ***Gorodzinsky, Aaron. / HUC-JIR Thesis***  
30 ***The Benefits of Long-Term Trips to Israel***

31  
32 This thesis explores the experiences of participants in long term (four  
33 or more months) programs in Israel, based on in-depth interviews with  
34 fifteen Jews from New York and Los Angeles.

### *Israel-Diaspora Relations*

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39 ***Good, Brandie. Swackhamer, Lyn E. Billig, Shelley H. / Repair***  
40 ***the World***

41 ***Breaking for Change: How Jewish Service-learning Influences the***  
42 ***Alternative Break Experience***

## CHRONICLE

1 Each year, over 2,000 college students and other young adults  
2 participate in Immersive Jewish Service-learning (IJSL) Alternative Break  
3 programs. This is a study of participants in IJSL Alternative Break  
4 experiences during the 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012 academic  
5 years. The research investigated the short-term impacts of participation in  
6 Alternative Breaks, particularly with regard to changes in attitudes,  
7 behaviors, or activity levels in areas connected to civic mindedness, social  
8 justice, and religious connectedness and practices. The research also  
9 explored whether there were differential impacts based on demographic  
10 characteristics of the participants, such as gender or age or Jewish  
11 denominational identity. Finally, the research investigated several  
12 elements of program design, such as the content of reflection activities  
13 and the levels of group cohesion that were associated with various  
14 impacts.

### 15 ***Repair the World, Rosov Consulting***

16 Serving a Complex Israel: A report on Israel-based Immersive Jewish  
17 service-learning  
18

19  
20 This paper reports on an exploratory study of 332 North American  
21 alumni of 12 different Israel-based immersive Jewish service-learning  
22 (IJSL) programs who participated in programs from August 2009 to June  
23 2012. This study was designed to address the following primary research  
24 questions:

25 1. Who participates in Israel-based IJSL programs? 2. Why do they  
26 choose to participate? (i.e., what are participants' primary motivations for  
27 choosing (a) to do service; (b) to do so abroad; and (c) to do so in Israel?)  
28 3. What happens for participants as a result of the programs? (An open-  
29 ended inquiry looking at what participants perceive to have been the  
30 consequences – for them – of having participated in programs). 4. What  
31 are the implications of these learnings for funders and providers of Israel-  
32 based IJSL programs?  
33

### 34 ***Kopelowitz, Ezra. / Research Success Technologies, YU-CJF***

35 Counterpoint Israel: Evaluation Summer 2012  
36

37 Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future (YU-CJF)  
38 Counterpoint Israel Program is a Jewish service-learning program that  
39 aims to train and empower college students to run English language  
40 summer camps for Israeli teens in Israeli development towns. This  
41 evaluation focused on impacts on Israeli teen campers, American

## CHRONICLE

1 counselors, relationships and partnerships created, and long-term outcome  
2 and sustainability.

### 3 4 *Service*

#### 5 6 7 ***Cousens, Beth. / YU-CJF***

8 Mapping Goals in Experiential Jewish Education

9  
10 This report examines experiential Jewish education (EJE) by speaking  
11 with twenty-two practitioners. Because core theoretical foundations for EJE  
12 have yet to be standardized, the paper offers ideas for EJE goal setting.

#### 13 14 ***JData***

15 Intermediate Federation Task Force on Jewish Day Schools

16  
17 The purpose of the Task Force is to support the Jewish day schools  
18 located in smaller communities that may lack the resources, population,  
19 and other advantages of larger cities. In 2012-13, the federations in  
20 intermediate communities asked their local day schools to enter their  
21 organizational data into JData. These data include information on  
22 enrollment, capacity, student recruitment and retention, staffing, budget  
23 (costs and revenue), and governance.

#### 24 25 ***Aitan, Ellie. Koren, Annette. Samuel, Nicole. Boxer, Matthew. /*** 26 ***CMJS***

27 Teaching and Learning about Israel: Assessing the Impact of Israeli  
28 Faculty on American Students

29  
30 This study is based on a survey of over 200 students who took courses  
31 from an American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise (AICE) visiting Israeli  
32 professor in spring 2011.

#### 33 34 ***Held, Daniel. / PEJE***

35 Learning from Parent Voices: How to Turn Positive Perception into  
36 Enrollment Growth

37  
38 This White Paper reports on the largest study ever conducted of day  
39 school parents. All told, between 2007 and 2012, more than 22,000  
40 parents (and 3,000 non-current parents) from 77 schools rated their  
41 satisfaction with their school.

## CHRONICLE

### *Education*

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4 ***Tamir, Eran. / RAVSAK***

5 School Quality Depends on Teacher Quality

6  
7 The author of a large-scale study of teachers at Jewish day schools  
8 finds that teacher support, including professional development and  
9 mentoring, is critical for satisfaction and retention.

10  
11 ***Perla, Dan. Chasky, Rachel N. Goldschmidt, Erik. / Changing***  
12 ***Our World***

13 Different Faiths, Common Challenge: Maintaining the Affordability of a  
14 Faith-Based Education

15  
16 Today, private religious schools must make critical financial decisions  
17 to ensure the prolongation of religious education in their respective  
18 communities. This publication examines the American private faith-based  
19 school marketplace and the financial interventions currently taking place  
20 in Jewish and Catholic school systems throughout the United States.

21  
22 ***Sinclair, Alex. Solmsen, Bradley. Goldwater, Claire. / CASJE***

23 The Israel Educator: An Inquiry into the Preparation and Capacities of  
24 Effective Israel Educators

25  
26 What are the capacities required to be an effective "Israel educator,"  
27 and how can emerging and current educators be best prepared to acquire  
28 those capacities?

29  
30 ***Chazan, Barry. Juran, Richard. Soberman, Michael B. / CASJE***

31 The Connection of Israel Education to Jewish Peoplehood

32  
33 To what extent is the growing interest in peoplehood relevant to  
34 contemporary Jewish concerns in general and to Israel education in  
35 particular?

36  
37 ***Sherry, Mindy F. / HUC-JIR Thesis***

38 Jewish Values Education in Reform Religious Schools

39  
40 This study examines Jewish values, explores how these values are  
41 taught, surveys the curricula used in a select group of religious schools,

1 and determines whether the curricula reflect current theological ideas  
2 regarding Jewish values.

3 **Davidowitz, Natalie. / HUC-JIR Thesis**

4 Holocaust Education in Jewish Day Schools: Choices and Challenges

5

6 This small-scale study sought to answer the following questions: Who  
7 designs and chooses Holocaust curricula in Jewish day schools? What  
8 factors affect their decisions? In which classes and grade levels do they  
9 teach the Holocaust? What content areas, methods, and resources are  
10 missing from the pool of Holocaust curricula available?

11

12 **Gottlieb, Owen. / CCAR Journal**

13 You Can't Wrap Herring in an iPad: Digitization of Sacred Jewish Books,  
14 the Stripping of Embodied Ritual, and Implications for Jewish Education

15

16 The Jewish people's relationship with the printed page is performed  
17 though embodied rituals, including the burial and kissing of books. With  
18 the shift to digital texts come questions of practice. The task for Jewish  
19 educators is to help the Jewish community understand the way in which  
20 book rituals have carried and communicated Jewish values.

21

22 **Kopelowitz, Ezra. Wolf, Minna. / The iCenter**

23 Israel Education in Practice: Growth of the Field from the Educator's  
24 Perspective

25

26 This report develops a definition of the field of Israel education for the  
27 purpose of understanding the core attributes of the emerging community  
28 of American Jewish educators who are advancing the goal of improved  
29 Israel education.

30

31 **Aaron, Scott.**

32 A Grounded Theory of How Jewish Experiential Education Impacts the  
33 Identity Development of Jewish Emerging Adults

34

35 The Jewish community has increasingly relied upon Experiential  
36 Education as a pedagogical approach to instilling Jewish identity and  
37 communal affiliation over the past twenty years. The Experiential  
38 Education format of travel programs has specifically been emphasized and  
39 promoted for Jewish Emerging Adults for this purpose. This grounded  
40 theory study examines participants in two different trip experiences, Taglit  
41 Birthright Israel and an Alternative Spring Break, through post-trip  
42 interviews.

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***Cohen, Charles. / Jewish Day School Affordability Knowledge  
Center White Papers***

"And You Shall Strengthen Your Brother": Middle-Income Strategies

This White Paper examines the affordability strategy of targeting "middle-income" families. From these programs some useful guidelines emerge, framed with a few key questions. Answering each of these questions will help ensure that your middle-income strategy meets your community's, schools', and families' needs. The examples set by existing programs show that setting data-informed goals, delineating the middle-income population in your school or community, and investing in an aggressive marketing plan, are all essential components to a successful middle-income strategy.

***Cohen, Charles. Perla, Daniel. / Jewish Day School Affordability  
Knowledge Center White Papers***

iCap: Keeping Jewish Day School Accessible to Middle-Income Families

iCap is a program of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Boston that caps a family's total tuition expense at 15% of its income, regardless of number of children enrolled.

***Cohen, Charles. / Jewish Day School Affordability Knowledge  
Center White Papers***

"According to His Way": Blended Learning

Public schools have been incorporating online instruction since the early 2000s, while the first Jewish day school built wholly on a blended learning model opened in 2011. This White Paper examines two different blended learning models: new blended learning schools, and traditional schools implementing blended learning in specific courses.

***Cohen, Charles. / Jewish Day School Affordability Knowledge  
Center White Papers***

"So I, Too, Plant These for My Children": Endowment Development

Endowment funds are critical to providing students an excellent, affordable education and to a school's long-term financial health. From interviews and other research, a few guidelines emerge for schools considering whether to start an endowment fund targeting affordability.

1  
2 *Communal Organizations*

3  
4 ***Cousens, Beth. / UJA-Federation of New York***

5 Connected Congregations: From Dues and Membership to Sustaining  
6 Communities of Purpose

7  
8 In many places, including synagogues, Jewish life is more inventive  
9 than ever before. Yet the current American zeitgeist seems to hold an  
10 antipathy toward membership, especially when a financial cost is  
11 attached. Since many of our synagogues rely on membership dues for  
12 their ongoing operations, this presents a significant challenge.  
13 Membership, dues, and engagement work together; a dues change cannot  
14 succeed without working on the engagement of congregants in Jewish life.  
15 Meaningful synagogue relationships and commitments allow Judaism and  
16 Jewish life to flourish. This report presents three models of synagogue  
17 life: the mishkan model, where each member, stakeholder, or partner is  
18 seen as imperative to the community's health and vibrancy, and following  
19 a free will dues system; the journey model, gather revenue from those  
20 paying for individual services, rather than from membership dues; and the  
21 hybrid model, incorporating elements of each.

22  
23 ***Craemer, Sarah. / HUC-JIR Thesis***

24 Strategies for Success: A Toolkit for Women in the Jewish Nonprofit  
25 World

26  
27 Gender inequality within the leadership ranks of the American Jewish  
28 community has been evident for many years. Although women represent a  
29 majority of the Jewish professional workforce, few rise to top positions.  
30 Men continue to serve as the CEOs of the majority of major Jewish  
31 organizations across the country. In an effort to understand how these  
32 women succeeded despite this considerable imbalance at the top of their  
33 organizations, the author conducted a series of eighteen interviews with  
34 middle and senior-level female executives. Female professionals can take  
35 a number of simple steps to attain more prestigious and lucrative positions  
36 within the Jewish nonprofit sector.

37  
38 ***Farahan, Natalie. / HUC-JIR Thesis***

39 Starting a Jewish Nonprofit? Think Again. Best Sources and Methods for  
40 Startup Funding

## CHRONICLE

1 This thesis examines how Jewish startups find funding. The author  
2 based the information on twelve interviews, seven with entrepreneurs and  
3 five with donors and organizations that support innovative Jewish ideas.  
4

5 ***Rosenberg, Barry. / JPPI***

6 Jewish Leadership in North America--Changes in Personnel and Structure  
7

8 This analysis of the approaching transition in the professional  
9 leadership of major Jewish organizations in the United States was  
10 prepared by Barry Rosenberg as the basis of a chapter on this issue in  
11 JPPI's 2012-2013 Annual Assessment. The piece discusses key issues in  
12 senior executive human resources in the Jewish community, and suggests  
13 concrete steps that Jewish organizations can take to meet the challenge of  
14 far-reaching leadership change.  
15

16 ***Weiss, Naomi Korb. Herring, Avi. Smolen, Justin Rosen. Snyder,  
17 Tamar. Walfish, Mordecai. Warshenbrot, Ruthie. / eJewish  
18 Philanthropy***

19 Key Findings: 2012 Jewish Communal Compensation Survey  
20

21 In the spring of 2012, a group of NYU alumni, all young professionals  
22 working in the Jewish communal sector, launched a compensation survey  
23 of the field. While this survey was crowd-sourced, and may not be  
24 representative, it still provides an important snapshot of the field. An in-  
25 depth look at the survey results will be released at a later date.  
26

27 ***Walfish, Mordecai. Herring, Avi. Smolen, Justin Rosen. Snyder,  
28 Tamar. Warshenbrot, Ruthie. Weiss, Naomi Korb. / eJewish  
29 Philanthropy***

30 Toward Transparency: An Analysis of the 2012 Jewish Communal  
31 Professional Compensation Survey  
32

33 This article presents and analyzes key findings of the 2012 Jewish  
34 Communal Compensation Survey. The analysis highlights differences in  
35 how salaries are distributed across organizational lines, level of education,  
36 and gender. It also compares trends that emerged from the data with other  
37 studies of the Jewish nonprofit sector, as well as research on the general  
38 nonprofit sector. Recommendations include:

- 39 • Increase transparency regarding compensation levels and develop  
40 field-wide compensation standards.
- 41 • Institute written workplace flexibility arrangements at Jewish  
42 communal organizations.



## CHRONICLE

- Address the compensation gaps.

### ***Cohen, Steven M. Fink, Steven / Habonim Dror***

Building Progressive Zionist Activists: Exploring the Impact of Habonim Dror

Habonim Dror has touched the lives of 40,000 Jewish young people. This study of almost 2,000 Habonim Dror alumni, ages 18-83, represents a first attempt to assess the impact, and across a range of parameters.

### ***Saxe, Leonard. Fishman, Shira. Shain, Michelle. Wright, Graham. Hecht, Shahar. / CMJS***

Young Adults and Jewish Engagement: The Impact of Taglit-Birthright Israel

This report looks at the short and medium-term impact of Taglit-Birthright as seen during the emerging young adult phase of life--the period immediately after the trips and the first few years that follow.

### ***Kopelowitz, Ezra. / Research Success Technologies***

The Impact of Ramah Programs for Children, Teens, and Young Adults with Disabilities: A Strategic Planning Survey of Special Needs Education Professionals, Ramah Special Needs Staff, Staff Alumni and Parents

The National Ramah Commission commissioned this research project with the goal of documenting the nature of the impact of Ramah special needs programming.

### ***Kopelowitz, Ezra. / Research Success Technologies***

Summary of Research Conducted for PEP and PEASP

This report summarizes Pardes's unique approach to training Jewish educators and highlights key learnings from ReST's one and a half years evaluating Pardes's selective two-year Educators Program (PEP) and the the Pardes Educators Alumni Support Project (PEASP).

### ***Benjamin, Beth Cooper. / Ma'yan***

It's Actually a Pretty Big Deal: Girls' Narratives of Contemporary Bat Mitzvah

Is the modern Bat Mitzvah really working for girls today?

## CHRONICLE

### *Program Studies*

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***Milstein, Amanda Koppelman. Neil, Lawrence. Avodah, Bailis. /  
Repair the World***

AVODAH Alumni Reflect and Respond: A Report of the 2012 Alumni Study

This study was designed to answer three basic questions: (1) Who are the AVODAH alumni and where are they today? (2) To what extent has the AVODAH year-long program experience shaped the career trajectories and other major aspects of the lives of its alumni? (3) Which elements of the AVODAH year-long program experience have been the most influential in shaping the lives of its alumni?

***Big Tent Judaism / Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI)***

Big Tent Judaism Professional Affiliates Evaluation of the Pilot Cohort

Big Tent Judaism/Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI) is deploying an "army" of outreach professionals throughout North America. This report evaluates the successes and challenges of the pilot cohort with the goal of using lessons learned to improve the program.

***BTW Consultants, Inc., Jim Joseph Foundation, Rosov Consulting***

Effective Strategies for Educating and Engaging Jewish Teens

This is a broad scan of teen and young adult education and engagement efforts from a variety of spheres, to identify examples of programs that are scalable and employ innovative practices.

***Rosen, Mark I.***

Looking for Connections: A Study of Jewish Families With Young Children in Chicago

The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago offers various opportunities for Jewish families with young children in the Chicago area to explore and become more engaged in Jewish life. In 2012, JUF sponsored a study that focused on the backgrounds, interests, and preferences of families participating in Joyfully Jewish programs.

***Tarle, Daniel. / HUC-JIR Thesis***

## CHRONICLE

1 Community Built Upon Relationships: How Moishe House Engages the  
2 Millennial Generation  
3

4 This thesis examines Moishe House's engagement model and how the  
5 fundamental features of which have helped it stand out within the Jewish  
6 community and the community at large.  
7

8 ***Summation Research Group, Jim Joseph Foundation***  
9 North Shore Teen Initiative (NSTI) Evaluation - Part II  
10

11 NSTI has been self-described as an "organization committed to  
12 building community among Jewish teens through institutional  
13 collaboration, a rich spectrum of innovative programming and  
14 participation in national opportunities."  
15

16 ***Woocher, Meredith. / Covenant Foundation***  
17 JECEI-Covenant Fellows Program Impact Study  
18

19 The Jewish Early Childhood Education Initiative (JECEI) was  
20 founded in 2004 by a group of forward-thinking philanthropists who had a  
21 clear vision and mandate to increase the number of families sending their  
22 children to high quality Jewish early childhood schools.  
23

24 ***Schneider, Mark. Kidron, Yael. Blum, Jarah. Abend, Molly.***  
25 ***Brawley, Alexandra. / American Institutes for Research (AIR)***  
26 Evaluation of the Jim Joseph Foundation Education Initiative: Year 2  
27 Report  
28

29 Jim Joseph Foundation's Education Initiative funds programs at HUC-  
30 JIR, JTS, and YU. This is the second report in an ongoing, five-year,  
31 independent evaluation of the Education Initiative.  
32

33 ***Agree, Isaac. Irie, Ellen. Orensten, Naomi. | BTW Consultants***  
34 The Jewish Resource Specialist Program: Year 2 Evaluation Findings  
35

36 This report presents evaluation findings for the Jewish Resource  
37 Specialist Program (JRS) for 2012-2013, the second year of the JRS pilot,  
38 including key achievements and challenges.  
39

40 ***Abbey, Alan D. / Shalom Hartman Institute***  
41 Reporting Jewish: Do Journalists Have the Tools to Succeed?  
42

## CHRONICLE

1           What makes a Jewish journalist different – if different she is – from a  
2 “regular” journalist? Do Jewish values and community affect Jewish  
3 media journalists in ways unique to them and the work they do? How  
4 much do they know of Jewish practice, history, values, ideas, and  
5 philosophy? How much do they know about Israel? Have they ever visited  
6 Israel? Are the pressures and challenges faced by Jewish media journalists  
7 different from those faced by other journalists, and if so, do Jewish media  
8 journalists have the tools to cope with these challenges. Is Jewish  
9 journalism any less important or valuable than mainstream journalism? In  
10 the world’s changing media environment, what is the place and what is  
11 the future of Jewish journalism? These are some of the questions the  
12 iEngage Project at the Shalom Hartman Institute set out to answer in this  
13 study.

14  
15 ***Setareh, Samira. / HUC-JIR Thesis***

16 **Gay, Iranian-Jewish, and American: Negotiating Traditional Identities in**  
17 **an Open Society**

18  
19           This research explores the cultural taboo of homosexuality and the  
20 manner in which members of a triple minority group negotiate their  
21 identities as traditional and gay within an open American society. The first  
22 study to focus on gay Iranian Jews in the United States, this thesis is based  
23 on eleven in-depth interviews with people who live in California and New  
24 York and identified themselves as members of all three groups. The study  
25 is framed by findings and theoretical models from previous research on  
26 Iranian Jews, ethnic identity, sexual identity and homosexuality in  
27 traditional communities.

# BJPA

Berman Jewish Policy Archive NYU Wagner

JEWISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

# The Year in Social Research on Jews & Jewish Life:

# 2012

## Introduction

In cooperation with the Jewish Journal of Sociology, our good friends in the UK, we are pleased to present this review of the year of Jewish social research: 2012. Included are the 68 pieces of empirical research (both quantitative and qualitative) that appeared in the 2012 calendar year and that also are included in the Berman Jewish Policy Archive @ NYU Wagner.



While most of these pieces of research derive from the United States, we also include research conducted in the UK, Israel, the Former Soviet Union, Sweden, and elsewhere. The wide breadth of research embraces public opinion research, evaluation research, basic research, policy analyses, institutional reports, Ph.D. dissertations, Master's theses, and Jewish population studies (including the New York study that I do commend to your attention).

In reviewing the full sweep of these studies, I was struck not only by the prodigious thought and creativity that went into producing this impressive literature, but also the diversity of topics, approaches, and researchers. Using terminology drawn from the Michelin travel guides, the list is definitely worth a stop, many of the abstracts are worth a detour, and I'm sure you'll find some of the full studies worth a trip.

And, of course, your comments and additional contributions are invited. Should we have missed any research published in 2012, please do send it along.

Happy reading, happy thinking,

**Prof. Steven M. Cohen**

Director, Berman Jewish Policy Archive @ NYU Wagner

Research Professor, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

*Please note: all publications listed here, and their full bibliographic information, are available via [bjpa.org](http://bjpa.org), by following the links provided with each listing.*

# JEWISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

## *About the Jewish Journal of Sociology*

*The Jewish Journal of Sociology* was sponsored by the Cultural Department of the World Jewish Congress from its inception in 1959 until the end of 1980. Thereafter, from the first issue of 1981 (volume 23, no. 1), the Journal has been sponsored by Maurice Freedman Research Trust Limited, which is registered as an educational charity by the Charity Commission of England and Wales (no. 326077). It has as its main purpose the encouragement of research in the sociology of the Jews and the publication of *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*. The objects of the Journal remain as stated in the Editorial of the first issue in 1959:

*'This Journal has been brought into being in order to provide an international vehicle for serious writing on Jewish social affairs. Academically we address ourselves not only to sociologists, but to social scientists in general, to historians, to philosophers, and to students of comparative religion.*

*We should like to stress both that the Journal is editorially independent and that the opinions expressed by authors are their own responsibility.'*

The founding Editor of the *JJSoc* was Morris Ginsberg, and the founding Managing Editor was Maurice Freedman. Morris Ginsberg, who had been Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics, died in 1970. Maurice Freedman, who had been Professor of Social Anthropology at The London School of Economics and later at the University of Oxford, succeeded to the title of Editor in 1971, when Dr. Judith Freedman (who had been Assistant Editor since 1963) became Managing Editor. Maurice Freedman died in 1975; from then until her death in December 2009 the Journal was edited by Dr. Judith Freedman. The 2010 and 2011 volumes were edited by Marlena Schmool and Geoffrey Alderman and the 2012 volume by Stanley Waterman. Keith Kahn-Harris is the current editor.



## *About the Berman Jewish Policy Archive*

**The Berman Jewish Policy Archive (BJPA) at NYU's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service is the central electronic address for Jewish communal policy.** BJPA offers a vast collection of policy-relevant research and analysis on Jewish life to the public, free of charge, with holdings spanning from 1900 until today, at [bjpa.org](http://bjpa.org).

BJPA's powerful search functionality allows students, researchers, educators, professionals, and others to access the most relevant content with ease. Prominent within the archive is the entire collection of two journals: *The Journal of Jewish Communal Service* and *Sh'ma: a Journal of Jewish Ideas*. Many documents from the American Jewish Committee (AJC) are also archived, including materials from the American Jewish Year Book. BJPA hosts large collections of material by Charles Liebman (z"l), Daniel Elazar (z"l), and Leonard Fein (*shlita*).

BJPA produces monthly Reader's Guides on topics such as [Environmental Issues](#), [Synagogues & Kehillot](#), [Jewish Politics](#), the major Jewish denominations, and [much more](#). Sign up for our mailing list at [bjpa.org](http://bjpa.org), and [register](#) for a free user account. Registration is *not required* to use the archive, but registered users can create a "Bookshelf" of BJPA materials to be saved and shared, or to gather bibliographical information easily. Registered users can also save customized search preferences, and upload documents for submission to the archive.

We further invite you to submit materials for inclusion on BJPA to [bjpa.wagner@nyu.edu](mailto:bjpa.wagner@nyu.edu). Follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/bjparchive](https://twitter.com/bjparchive) and on Facebook at [facebook.com/bjparchive](https://facebook.com/bjparchive).



*American Jewish Committee (AJC)*

<http://bit.ly/11gnCxZ>

### [2012 AJC Survey of American Jewish Opinion](#)

AJC's annual survey shows that President Obama would win a majority of the Jewish vote in a contest against Gov. Mitt Romney. Probed for the first time is the link between religious activity (based on frequency of synagogue attendance) and voting behavior. Among the 14 percent of American Jews who attend religious services one or more times per week, 52 percent would vote for Obama and 34 percent for Romney; 67 percent of those who never attend religious services – 31 percent of respondents – would vote for Obama, while 21 percent would vote for Romney.

*American Jewish Committee (AJC)*

<http://bit.ly/11gQrKr>

### [Colloquium Report: Are Young Committed American Jews Distancing From Israel?](#)

A report of the proceedings of an American Jewish Committee (AJC) colloquium on December 15, 2011, entitled "Are Young Committed American Jews Distancing From Israel?" This marked the second in a series of colloquia addressing the question of distancing from Israel among younger American Jews. Also included is a front page article on the colloquium that appeared in the New York Jewish Week as well as a background paper prepared for advance reading by colloquium participants .

*Bikkurim, Wellspring Consulting*

<http://bit.ly/11gQxSn>

### [From First Fruits to Abundant Harvest: Maximizing the Potential of Innovative Jewish Start-Ups](#)

Currently, the Jewish community offers very little support specifically geared toward post-start-up needs, nor are those needs broadly understood by funders, capacity builders, and even by the organizations themselves. This study focuses on those start-up and post-startup organizations, few in number but strong in transformative potential, that are poised to make a significant contribution to the Jewish community. It calls attention to the severe drop-off in communal support that occurs as start-ups grow into the post-start-up stage, when both budgets and potential for impact are greater.

*Board of Deputies of British Jews*

<http://bit.ly/11gQC8H>

### [Inspiring Women Leaders: Advancing Gender Equality in Jewish Communal Life - The Report of the Jewish Leadership Council's Commission on Women in Jewish Leadership](#)

The following report has taken the community forward in recognizing the need for and the benefits of gender equality. Jewish charitable organizations have very few women in leadership roles despite exceptionally high levels of achievement and education among women in the Jewish community. The report focuses on lay and professional leadership roles in Jewish communal organizations and recommends ways of advancing more women to senior paid and voluntary roles in the community.

*Dahaf Institute, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/11gQHsW>

### [Views of the Israeli Public on Israeli Security and Resolution of the Arab-Israeli Conflict](#)

This survey scrutinizes trends in the Israeli public's positions on foreign policy and defense and the effects of these positions on intentions about voting for the 19th Knesset, based on representative-sample responses of the adult population of Israel (N=500). 76% of Israelis (83% of Jews) believe that a withdrawal to the 1967 lines and a division of Jerusalem would not bring about an end of the conflict. 61% of the Jewish population believes that defensible borders are more important than peace for assuring Israel's security (up from 49% in 2005). 78% of Jews indicated they would change their vote if the party they intended to support indicated that it was prepared to relinquish sovereignty in east Jerusalem. 59% of Jews said the same about the Jordan Valley.

*Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/11gQNRn>

### [Israeli Settlements, American Pressure, and Peace](#)

President Obama apparently believed that pressuring Israel to halt construction of homes in Jewish neighborhoods in parts of Jerusalem formerly controlled by Jordan would advance peace. In reality, the opposite ensued. No major party in Israel, and no significant part of the Jewish public, is willing to count the Jewish neighborhoods that fall within the juridical boundaries of Jerusalem as "settlements" to be "frozen." From the Israeli point of view, Obama violated an Executive Agreement that Sharon had negotiated with President Bush. Stalled peace negotiations in the Obama years cannot be blamed on Netanyahu's policies of accelerating settlement construction.

*Reut Institute*

<http://bit.ly/11gQS7I>

### [The Israeli Diaspora as a Catalyst for Jewish Peoplehood: An Emerging Opportunity Within the Changing Relationship Between Israel and the Jewish World](#)

This report offers a conceptual framework for understanding the place and potential role of the Israeli Diaspora within the changing paradigm between Israel and the Jewish world. While the 'old relationship' between Israel and world Jewry was based upon an unwritten covenant grounded in classical Zionism, the emerging paradigm is shaped by partnership and mutuality, with the notion of Jewish Peoplehood taking center stage. This changing dynamic presents an opportunity for the Jewish people.

*Synagogue 3000*

<http://bit.ly/11gQWV2>

### [Reform and Conservative Congregations: Different Strengths, Different Challenges](#)

U.S. Jewish congregational life is showing signs of stagnation, with few young adults, many older members and more than adequate sanctuary space, according to a new survey of Jewish congregational life. The survey, which included responses from leaders in 1,215 synagogues, offers the most comprehensive view of Reform and Conservative movement congregations to date. Conducted by sociologist Steven M. Cohen for the Synagogue Studies Institute of Synagogue 3000, the survey is part of the larger Faith Communities Today (FACT), a national data set of American religious congregations.

Abrams, Samuel. Cohen, Steven M. | *Workmen's Circle / Arbeter Ring*

<http://bit.ly/11gSj66>

### [Workmen's Circle / Arbeter Ring 2012 American Jews' Political Values Survey](#)

Jewish voters prefer President Obama to Mitt Romney two to one. The issues driving the Jewish vote according to this survey are economic justice, including regulating financial institutions, support for progressive taxation, and the argument that government should do more to help the needy. American Jews today are pointedly more liberal than the overall population, especially on economic issues traditionally considered social justice concerns. Significantly, neither attachment to Israel nor confidence in Israelis vs. Palestinians as peace seeking strongly factor into Jews' presidential vote decision.

Ackerman, Matthew. Bernstein, David. Fuld, Avi. Savage, Sean. Shaubi, Eli. Young, Todd. | *The David Project*

<http://bit.ly/11gSuyh>

### [A Burning Campus? Rethinking Israel Advocacy at America's Universities and Colleges](#)

There has not to date been an attempt to conceptualize the campus specific situation for Israel in the United States or craft an overarching strategy for how to deal with it. Based on significant research (including surveys of students, campus professionals, and faculty), this document intends to fill this gap in order to assist the leadership and staff of the pro-Israel campus network and the wider Jewish community in developing a set of generally agreed upon principles. The heart of campus strategy should be identification and engagement with key influencers on a given campus, with the goal of moving them a realistic distance toward Israel.

Almog, Doron. Amidror, Yaakov. Dayan, Uzi. Eiland, Giora. Harari, Shalom. Tirza, Danny. Vardi, Rephael. Wegman, Yehuda. Yadlin, Amos. | *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*.

<http://bit.ly/11gSAGc>

### [What Israel Has Learned about Security: Nine IDF Officers Discuss Israel's Security Challenges](#)

Topics covered in this volume include Israel's experience in counterinsurgency warfare, the effectiveness of security barriers, predicting the rise of Hamas, lessons of the Second Lebanon War of 2006, and the possibility of security arrangements for Israel in the Golan Heights.

Arian, Asher. Keissar-Sugarmen, Ayala. | *AVI CHAI Israel Foundation*

<http://bit.ly/11gSGNT>

### [A Portrait of Israeli Jews: Beliefs, Observance, and Values of Israeli Jews, 2009](#)

The Guttman Center for Surveys of the Israel Democracy Institute was commissioned by AVI CHAI–Israel to conduct a survey of the Jewish profile of Israeli society, with regard to religiosity, belief, values, and tradition and practices. The survey also related to Jewish Israelis' attitudes toward religion, the state, and public life, relations between different sectors of Israeli Jewish society, and relations between Israeli Jews and Diaspora Jewry. This survey, along with two others, present a unique continuum of Jewish religiosity and tradition in Israel.

Avineri, Netta Rose.

<http://bit.ly/15fY2Qm>

[Heritage Language Socialization Practices in Secular Yiddish Educational Contexts: The Creation of a Metalinguistic Community](#)

This UCLA dissertation develops a theoretical and empirical framework for the model of metalinguistic community, a community of positioned social actors engaged primarily in discourse about language and cultural symbols tied to language. *Metalinguistic community* provides a novel practice-based framework for diverse participants who experience a strong connection to a language and its speakers but may lack familiarity with them due to historical, personal, and/or communal circumstances. As a case study of metalinguistic community, this dissertation provides an in-depth ethnographic analysis of contemporary secular engagement with Yiddish language and culture in the United States.

Baker, Alan. Bell, Abraham. Blum, Yehuda Z.. Gold, Dore. Helmreich, Jeffrey. Lapidoth, Ruth. Rothenberg, Laurence E.. Sabel, Robbie. Sharon, Avinoam. | *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/15fY3DN>

[Israel's Legal Case: A Guidebook](#)

This volume by recognized experts from Israel and abroad outlines Israel's legal case on key issues of international law. As questions are raised over the legitimacy and morality of Israel's actions, the authors in this volume see Israel's actions as firmly rooted in international law. These scholars present well-reasoned responses to the charges of "occupation," "apartheid," and "colonialism." They also discuss the legal status of Israeli settlements, the West Bank security fence, and Israel's borders.

Bard, Mitchell. Dawson, Jeff. | *American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise*

<http://bit.ly/15fYa2a>

[Israel and the Campus: The Real Story](#)

Some have argued that there is a well-funded and organized network promoting the delegitimization of Israel on college campuses. This report presents evidence to the contrary. Two groups are responsible for most of the anti-Israel activity: the Muslim Students Association (MSA) and Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). Unlike pro-Israel groups, most anti-Israel groups are student-led with little or no professional assistance. Rather than weaken the relationship between U.S. colleges and Israel, the boycott, divestment, sanctions (BDS) movement, has largely backfired. The most serious problem on campus is not from student activities, but from faculty.

Bell, Abraham. Cohen, Amichai. Fletcher, George P. Halevi, Jonathan D. Horovitz, Sigall. Kemp, Richard. Lapidoth, Ruth. Limon, Gil. Schondorf, Roy S.. Sharvit-Baruch, Pnina. Steinberg, Gerald M. | *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/15fY7U1>

[Israel's Right to Self-Defense: International Law and Gaza](#)

A review of Israel's consideration of questions of international law when forced to go to war, with a particular focus on the Gaza war of 2008-2009. It concludes that existing international law permits a nation to act in self-defense, and that Israel gives more thought to upholding the laws of war during its military operations than any other nation in history.

Be'er, Shmuel. Brodsky, Jenny. Korazim, Malka. Nir, Shiri. Resnizky, Shirli. | *Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute*

<http://bit.ly/15fYcHb>

### [Daycare Centers for the Elderly - Patterns of Utilization, Contributions and Programmatic Directions](#)

Daycare centers are one of the central services for elderly with disabilities in the community. There are now 172 centers in Israel serving 15,500 elders living in the community. The centers provide socio-cultural activities, personal care and rehabilitation services, all under one roof. This study included three components: 1) a census of the centers and their clients; 2) interviews with long-term care beneficiaries attending the centers and their family caregivers; 3) interviews with beneficiaries not attending the centers and their family caregivers.

Billig, Shelley H.. Brown, Stephany. Fredericks, Linda. Jaramillo, Dawn. Meyer, Stephen. | *Repair the World, RMC Research*

<http://bit.ly/15fYfmx>

### [Teaching to the Moment: A Study of Immersive Jewish Service-Learning Educators](#)

The purpose of this study is to identify the capacities and practices that enable JSL (Jewish service-learning) educators to be effective. To that end, the study is intended to explore the ways in which IJSL (immersive Jewish service-learning) educators from all walks of Jewish life and various associations think about their practice, the approaches and tools they use to implement programs, the factors they believe are associated with effective IJSL pedagogy, how they were trained and the professional development that they believe would strengthen their effectiveness as IJSL educators. This report provides an analysis of the results of cognitive interviews conducted with 11 representatives of the field and an online survey completed by 110 respondents.

Binstock, Michael. | *The Board of Deputies of British Jews*

[Simon Marks Jewish Primary School Inspection Report](#)

<http://bit.ly/15fYAWc>

[King David Primary School Inspection Report](#)

<http://bit.ly/15fYC0v>

[Menorah Primary School Inspection Report](#)

<http://bit.ly/15fYG06>

[Pardes House Primary School Inspection Report](#)

<http://bit.ly/15fYH45>

These inspections looked in detail at the following: (1) the quality of leadership and management, (2) the quality of the curriculum, (3) the quality of learning, teaching and assessment, (4) the quality of provision and outcomes for all groups of pupils, and (5) the impact of the schools' actions to bring about improvement.

Bleckman, Dina. Magidin de Kramer, Raquel. Nursahedov, Begli. Saxe, Leonard. Tighe, Elizabeth. | *Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies*

<http://bit.ly/15fYNc1>

### [Hardship And Needs Of Elderly Hesed Clients: An Analysis Of Clients Served By Hesed Service Centers In Russia & Ukraine](#)

The Former Soviet Union is home today for many Jews in poor communities. Throughout the FSU, the JDC has supported the development of Hesed welfare and Jewish community centers to provide services to Jews in need and to support the renewal of Jewish life. This report reviews the current economic, health, and social conditions of these elderly Jews in need in the FSU and to compares their circumstances to their counterparts in western countries such as the United States.

Boyd, Jonathan. Graham, David. Vulkan, Daniel. | *Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)*

<http://bit.ly/15fYQ7M>

### [2011 Census Results \(England and Wales\): Initial Insights About the UK Jewish Population](#)

An initial examination of 2011 UK Census data from England in Wales reveals a Jewish population of 2284,000 in England and Wales. London and its immediately adjacent areas account for 65.3% of the total Jewish population. This population has remained static over the ten year period. However this belies a far more complex picture due to high birth rates among the Orthodox (especially the *haredim*), but also low birth rates and ageing in the rest of the population, as well as a degree of assimilation.

Chesir-Teran, Daniel. Kopelowitz, Ezra. | Schusterman Family Foundation, Research Success Technologies

<http://bit.ly/15fYRbL>

### [Next Generation Advocacy: A Study of Young Israel Advocates](#)

This study--the first of its kind--gathered the views of almost 4,000 young Israel advocates in an effort to gain a better understanding of what compels young people to become involved in Israel advocacy, to become leaders in this area and to maintain their involvement during high school, college and beyond. The research explored: 1) the factors that lead teens and young adults to engage in Israel advocacy, 2) the role that organizations play in their involvement, and 3) the influence of mentors in supporting advocates' commitment over time.

Cohen, Steven M. | *Workmen's Circle / Arbeter Ring*

<http://bit.ly/15fYPAx>

### [Jewishly Engaged & Congregationally Unaffiliated: The Holy Grail of Jewish Engagement Efforts](#)

Jews who are engaged as Jews but unaffiliated with Jewish congregational life constitute about a third of congregationally unaffiliated non-Orthodox American Jews, and a sixth of all Jews, and comprise about one million Jewish individuals. Compared with other non-Orthodox Jews, they are more frequently: younger adults, living in the West, non-married, non-parents, intermarried, and lower income. Many see religion as important in their lives, even as many are cultural Jews, and most define themselves as spiritual. They are far more Israel-engaged than the unaffiliated. Politically, most are liberals, with strong commitments to economic justice.



Cohen, Steven M. Hoffman, Lawrence A. Ament, Jonathon. Miller, Ron. | <http://bit.ly/15fYTjX>  
*Berman Jewish Policy Archive @ NYU Wagner (BJPA), North American  
 Jewish Data Bank, Synagogue 3000 (S3K)*

### [Conservative & Reform Congregations in the United States: The FACT-Synagogue 3000 Survey, 2010](#)

This report includes the full survey data from the Faith Communities Today (FACT) Synagogue Survey, 2010. This survey informed the previous report, [Reform and Conservative Congregations: Different Strengths, Different Challenges](#). Contrary to the impression that denomination no longer matters, this research underscores the many ways in which Conservative and Reform congregations differ. The report confirms that U.S. Jewish congregational life is showing signs of stagnation, with few young adults, many older members and more than adequate sanctuary space. The survey, which included responses from leaders in 1,215 synagogues, offers the most comprehensive view of Reform and Conservative movement congregations to date.

Cohen, Steven M. Miller, Ron. Ukeles, Jacob B. | *UJA-Federation of NY*

<http://bit.ly/15fYUW>

### [Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 - Comprehensive Report](#)

Key findings include: **Growth:** There are more Jews in the New York area today: 1.54 million in 2011, up from 1.41 million in 2002. In New York City, the Jewish population is back to more than 1 million. **Poverty:** There are more than half a million Jews living in poor or near-poor households, a significant increase in the last 10 years. **Diversity:** There are large numbers of Orthodox Jews and Russian-speaking Jews, as well as other significant segments that include Israelis, Syrians, and, counted for the first time, biracial, Hispanic, and nonwhite Jewish households, and LGBT Jewish households. **Engagement:** Jews in the New York area continue to be engaged in Jewish life in a wide variety of ways, but fewer Jews in the New York area are engaged on some important measures — and the two ends of the engagement continuum are expanding; there are more Orthodox Jews, and more nondenominational Jews and Jews with no religion. **Intermarriage:** Half of the non-Orthodox couples wed between 2006 and 2011 are intermarried. On Jewish engagement, intermarried respondents significantly trail the in-married. **Philanthropy:** Since 2002, Jewish philanthropy has eroded modestly, while community needs have expanded.

Cox, Daniel. Jones, Robert P. | *Public Religion Research Institute*

<http://bit.ly/15fZ0Mj>

### [Chosen for What? Jewish Values in 2012: Findings from the 2012 Jewish Values Survey](#)

This survey of 1,004 American Jews is the most comprehensive, representative national study of its kind conducted by a non-Jewish research organization. The survey takes a broad look at how Jewish values, experiences and identity are shaping political beliefs and behavior and influencing social action in the Jewish community and beyond. The survey finds that more than eight-in-ten American Jews say that pursuing justice and caring for the widow and the orphan are somewhat or very important values that inform their political beliefs and activities. More than seven-in-ten say that tikkun olam and welcoming the stranger are important values. A majority say that seeing every person as made in the image of God is an important influence on their political beliefs and activities. Strong majorities of American Jews also cite the experience of the Holocaust, having opportunities for economic success in America, and the immigrant experience as important in shaping their political beliefs and activities. The survey also finds President Barack Obama with the same level of support (62%) among American Jewish voters as during a comparable point in the 2008 race.

Dayan, Uzi. | *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/15fYYUC>

### [Israel's National Security Considerations in Its Approach to the Peace Process](#)

The architects of Israel's national security doctrine from Yigal Allon to Moshe Dayan to Yitzhak Rabin found compelling reasons to insist that it must not return to the vulnerable 1967 lines, which only appeared to invite aggression and imperil Israel's future rather than set the stage for peace. These Israeli leaders sought new boundaries that would allow Israel to defend itself, by itself. Israel must never allow the West Bank to become a launchpad for rocket attacks on Israeli cities, which is what happened in the Gaza Strip after the 2005 pullout. Israeli security requirements in the West Bank are based in part on preventing that kind of outcome. The Israeli experience with an international presence has been poor. UNIFIL in Lebanon has not lived up to Israeli expectations in preventing the rearmament of Hizbullah since the 2006 Second Lebanon War. Likewise, EU monitors abandoned their positions at the Rafah crossing in 2006 when challenged by local insurgents from Gaza.

Deeter, Anne. | *AVI CHAI Foundation*

<http://bit.ly/15fZ2nm>

### [Online Learning State of the Field Survey: Summary Findings Report](#)

The AVI CHAI Foundation, in October 2010, began work on a new initiative: online/blended learning. To that end, the Foundation established a two-fold motivation and goal: 1) to improve the quality of education by increasing individualized instruction and enabling students to develop skills and ways of thinking needed in the 21st century; and 2) to bring down the cost of education. Furthermore, AVI CHAI's work to promote the adoption of online learning by day schools is three-pronged: 1) supporting the adoption of online courses at established Jewish day schools; 2) supporting entrepreneurs who are willing to experiment with the model of a day school in service of both educational and cost-saving goals via the incorporation of online learning (and other 21st century learning ideals); and 3) to stimulate the development of Judaic studies offerings online at both the middle and high school levels. In order to gain a better understanding of the status of the field in regard to online learning, the Foundation launched an initiative in the fall of 2011 to gather information about the depth and breadth of online course offerings throughout Jewish day schools in North America. This summary findings report describes the methodology and summary findings discovered through this initial state of the field survey research effort.

Deitcher, Howard. Held, Daniel. Mattenson, Pearl. Pomson, Alex. | *AVI CHAI Foundation*

<http://bit.ly/15fZ0fb>

### [Engineering Enduring Change: Learning What it Will Take to Transform Day School Israel Education from a Study of BASIS--The Bay Area Schools Israel Synergy Initiative](#)

BASIS--the Bay Area Schools Israel Synergy initiative--has been an ambitious initiative to intensify Israel education in eleven Jewish day schools with a combined enrollment of more than 2,000 students. This report studies the BASIS initiative so as to learn what might lead to enduring change elsewhere in the field of day school Israel education and in any Jewish communal effort to produce systemic and sustained change across multiple educational institutions.



Fishman, Shira. Hecht, Shahar. Sasson, Theodore. Saxe, Leonard. Shain, Michelle. Wright, Graham. | *Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS)*

<http://bit.ly/15fZ6DP>

### [The Impact of Taglit-Birthright Israel: 2012 Update](#)

This study is based on data from a survey of a sample of individuals who applied to Taglit-Birthright Israel between 2001 and 2006. Interviews, both telephone and web, were conducted with nearly 2,000 respondents. The sample of applicants includes both participants and nonparticipants. The present study represents the third wave of data collection in a broad longitudinal study aimed at understanding young adults' Jewish trajectories and assessing the long-term impact of Taglit. The first two waves of the study (conducted in 2009 and 2010) showed strong effects of Taglit participation, and the current analysis, with a sample that is more Jewishly diverse and includes older individuals who are more likely to be married, increases confidence in the previous findings. The findings focus on respondents who were not raised Orthodox, and the analysis compares responses of Taglit participants to a comparison group of individuals who applied to the program but did not participate. At the time of application/trip, there were few systematic differences between participants and nonparticipants. Overall, the results indicate that, despite the increasing time lag since the Taglit experience, there is substantial evidence of the program's positive impact on a broad range of measures having to do with an individual's Jewish identity, relationship to Israel, and connection to the Jewish people.

Fleisch, Eric. Sasson, Theodore. | *Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS)*

<http://bit.ly/15fZ52F>

### [The New Philanthropy: American Jewish Giving to Israeli Organizations](#)

In recent years, scholars of the American Jewish community have noted declining contributions to the federations and declining transfers by federations to overseas causes including Israel. Some observers have expressed concern that this pattern indicates distancing from Israel. Over the past two decades, as donations through the federation framework have declined, there has been a concomitant increase in the number of Israeli organizations directly reaching out to American Jewish donors. Some scholars have estimated that the increase in donations to these independent entities has offset the decline in federation giving. However, to date, no systematic research has tested this hypothesis. This is the first research of its kind to provide a comprehensive account (within the limits of the available data) of American Jewish giving in Israel. Our study draws on U.S. Internal Revenue Service documents to describe the sum and distribution of American Jewish donations to causes in Israel and to provide a partial account of historical trends.

Gaynor, Adam. | *The Curriculum Initiative (TCI)*

<http://bit.ly/15fZ5zL>

### [Through the Prism: Reflections on The Curriculum Initiative \(1994-2011\)](#)

This report was written at a critical point in TCI's trajectory as it recently dismantled its national infrastructure, and its local programs were absorbed by existing institutions. The report chronicles the history and growth trajectory of the organization through the years. TCI's educational methods of reaching students, as well as the organizational infrastructure, shifted as the program grew. Building on over a decade of work with the highly unaffiliated Jewish teen population in non-Jewish spaces, TCI pioneered an educational methodology that has broad implications for many other organizations.

Fleishman, Joel. | *Duke Sanford School of Public Policy*

<http://bit.ly/15fZcuU>

[Some Strategies Beginning to Pay Off ...And Promising Hints of Others, Like Early Glimpses of the Dawn: Year Four Report on the Concluding Years of the AVI CHAI Foundation](#)

This is the fourth in a series of reports on how The AVI CHAI Foundation goes about putting its full endowment to use and completing its grantmaking by the end of this decade. The AVI CHAI Foundation pursues its mission in slightly different ways in the three regions of the world where it operates. In Israel, the Foundation concentrates on fostering Jewish learning, culture, debate, community, and leadership, in part by helping to fuel a movement widely known as Jewish Renewal. In North America, it focuses on Jewish day school education and overnight summer camping. In the former Soviet Union, its emphasis is on engaging unaffiliated Jews and revitalizing Jewish life, education, and culture after decades of Soviet-era suppression. In each of the three regions, AVI CHAI's approach to these challenges has been shaped partly by the different prospects for recruiting long-term funders to carry on after it closes. In North America, the effort to recruit new donors will call for opening channels of conversation with people who may as yet be only marginally involved in the field. In Israel, AVI CHAI's hope of securing a future for its projects and grantees calls for cultivating not only the fundraising capacity of the individual organizations and the commitment of their direct contributors, but more broadly, the culture of philanthropy for Jewish Renewal in Israel. In the former Soviet Union, yet another strategy is required, a hybrid of those in North America and Israel. A strategy for strengthening and sustaining the Foundation's grantees therefore has to be custom-tailored to each field and area of interest.

Gold, Dore. | *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/15fZdit>

[U.S. Policy toward Israel in the Peace Process: Negating the 1967 Lines and Supporting Defensible Borders](#)

The high-profile dispute in May 2011 between President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the question of whether the 1967 lines should serve as the basis for future Israeli-Palestinian negotiations caused many observers to ask what exactly had been traditional U.S. policy in this regard. What emerges in the following analysis is that since 1967, U.S. administrations have not called on Israel to pull back to the 1967 lines, and have even asserted that Israel has a right to "defensible borders" instead.

Greene, Amanda. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15fZgLn>

[Teaching Israel in Reform Congregational Schools](#)

It is no surprise that the subject of Israel has been on the agenda of Reform Jewish Educators. While Israel trips have been successful in strengthening Jewish identity as well as connecting Jews to Israel, the majority of North American Jews in these Reform synagogues are not going to Israel. Thus it is essential that Israel be brought into the lives of those Jews through other avenues. This Capstone explores the following two questions: (1) what is being taught about Israel and (2) how is it being taught in Reform Congregations across North America, to pinpoint areas in which Israel Education can, and should, be improved. This small study makes it difficult to draw any decisive conclusions. But what can be gathered from this study is that the field of Israel education is growing. Israel remains an important priority for both scholars and educators in the field of Jewish education.

Guskin, Leah. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15fZfXH>

## [We Have an Announcement: Communicating Organizational Change in the Nonprofit Sector](#)

Change in any organization requires a great deal of planning and strategy in order to be successful. Unfortunately many nonprofit organizations are struggling to effectively communicate these changes to their employees. This poor communication has led to ineffective, and sometimes damaging, change. This paper addresses what nonprofit organizations are currently doing to communicate change with their employees, how effective their current efforts are, and how these nonprofits can be more successful at communicating change effectively and efficiently. Data was collected from three Jewish nonprofits in the United States that have recently gone through large, organization-wide changes. Two methods were used; interviews and surveys. Through interviews with top management in each organization, data about communication planning and message creation was collected. Through surveys of each organization's employee base, data about reception of the messages and perception of the change was collected. The end result of this study is a set of best practices for communicating change with nonprofit employees.

Hakman, Inbal. Rosner, Shmuel. | *Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI)*

<http://bit.ly/15fZjH8>

## [The Challenge of Peoplehood: Strengthening the Attachment of Young American Jews to Israel in the Time of the Distancing Discourse](#)

The claim that young American Jews are distancing themselves from Israel is rapidly becoming a major preoccupation of those in charge of cultivating the Jewish People. This paper shows that the claim of distancing is not supported by the data currently available and argues that the conversation about distancing, as such, defeats the very purpose of those who engage in it: to enhance the attachment of the American Jewish community to Israel. The relationship between the two largest Jewish communities, Israel and North America, is complex. Both communities are undergoing a process of change, carrying both risks of genuine distancing in the future as well as opportunities for building new models of partnership between the two communities. But parsing the relationship between the two communities along a binary model of distance versus closeness fails to capture its complexity. Moreover, the distancing discourse tends to exacerbate negative trends and thus risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instead, there is a need to promote the long-term programs that would bring the world's two largest Jewish communities even closer together. This paper analyzes the conflicting hypotheses concerning distancing, identifies the weak links in the research to date, and surveys the different aims served by the distancing discourse. It then reviews the salient features of the changing relationship between the Jewish communities of Israel and North America and proposes guidelines in response to the new relationship pattern between them.

Horowitz, Bethamie. | *The iCenter*

<http://bit.ly/15fZmCz>

## [Defining Israel Education](#)

In recent years there has been an upsurge in organizational activity on the American Jewish scene regarding Israel. The present inquiry, commissioned by the iCenter to support its own planning efforts, was designed to sharpen and clarify the special role of a *Jewish educational enterprise directed at learners in the years between kindergarten and the end of high school*. The findings draw on interviews with 21 experts about American Jewish and Israel education and ethnographic observations of the field and of the iCenter in 2010 and 2011, plus additional historical research about the development of the field.

Kay, Avi. | *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/15fZr9A>

### [From Altneuland to the New Promised Land: A Study of the Evolution and Americanization of the Israeli Economy](#)

Israel is often seen as an economic miracle. An examination of the evolution of the Israeli economy from the prestate period until today allows a glimpse into both the initial underlying values of the Israeli economy as well as the dramatic crises, developments, and events that have shaped contemporary Israeli society. From a primarily agricultural-based, semisocialistic economy, Israel has emerged as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world and a leader both in high-tech and in income inequality. This work surveys the history of the Israeli economy and suggests possible future directions it may take.

Katz, Elad. Lachman-Messer, Didi. | *Yad Hanadiv*

<http://bit.ly/15fZpyh>

### [A Social Capital Market for Israel: Report of the Working Group for Social Investment](#)

This report examines the field of social investment that has emerged in a number of countries, particularly in the UK and the US in recent years, and offers recommendations and ways to develop this field in Israel. Among the recommendations: establishing social investment funds; investing public funds in projects with social significance that yield economic returns; creating incentives for investment in social fields; and adopting an approach that encourages social-business corporations.

Katz, Esther. Korazim, Malka. | *Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute*

<http://bit.ly/15fZsKG>

### [The Paideia European-Jewish Leadership Program: Graduate Views of Program Contributions and Impacts](#)

Paideia was created with the mandate of working for the rebuilding of Jewish life and culture in Europe, and educating for active minority citizenship. After several years of activity, Paideia decided to conduct an evaluation study to provide a systematic overview of the program's contributions and achievements, and identify unmet needs. The evaluation comprised a follow-up study of all graduates from 2002-2009. This report presents the findings of that study. The study findings showed that graduates view the Paideia program as very successful and feel that it contributed to them to a great extent. It was found that all graduates continue to be involved in Jewish activities in their countries of residence.

King, Elenna. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15fZwtD>

### [Empowerment and Internal Struggle: An Exploration of the Women's Tefillah Group Movement in Los Angeles](#)

On the heels of religious feminism of the 1970's, women's tefillah groups have been creating safe and empowering spaces for Orthodox women to take on more participatory roles within Jewish ritual practice for the last few decades. This movement has grown within several Modern Orthodox communities, the majority of which are on the east coast and only one group in California, located in Los Angeles. Using ethnographic observations and in-depth interviews, this thesis explores a new area of research within this topic, focusing on the presence of women's tefillah groups on the west coast.

Kosmin, Barry A. | *JDC International Centre for Community Development*

<http://bit.ly/15fZy4N>

### [Second Survey of European Jewish Leaders and Opinion Formers, 2011](#)

The Second Survey of European Jewish Leaders and Opinion Formers presents the results of an online survey administered to 328 respondents in 32 countries. Conducted every three years using the same format, the survey seeks to identify trends and their evolution in time. The survey asked Jewish leaders and opinion formers a range of questions, seeking their views on the major challenges and issues concerning European Jewish communities in 2011 and their expectations for how their community's situation would evolve over the next 5-10 years.

Khokhlov, Igor. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15fZvGm>

### [Startups that Stop: Lessons for the Jewish Nonprofit World](#)

The American Jewish nonprofit world has enjoyed significant growth in the field of Jewish Social Entrepreneurship. While many Jewish Startups have been successful; there are a few that had to stop their operations after relatively short periods of time. This thesis is a close examination of initially successful Jewish startups that had to cease operations after a 3-5 year period. Information for this thesis was solicited from the principals of four major Jewish incubators and four startups, as well as several other lay and professional leaders in the Jewish community. Mixed methods of analysis were used: professional and lay leaders were interviewed using a unified protocol; cyber ethnography helped to collect and analyze scattered data on the web.

Lebovits, Jessica. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15fZzWD>

### [Teens of the iGeneration](#)

This research project investigates how teenagers and young adults access the news and, more specifically news regarding the Middle East and Israel. The project supposes that social and news media play a role in how they interact with the news. The research also examines how social and news media portray the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and thus, the information the teenagers and young adults receive. The research findings will be used to inform a tenth grade Jewish Religious School confirmation curriculum, which will teach the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the use of online media sources.

Levin, Rachel. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15fZD8x>

### [The Experience of Absorption Among Jewish Immigrant Populations in Israel: Ethiopian, Former Soviet Union, and North American Communities](#)

This thesis explores the absorption and integration processes of three Jewish immigrant populations in Israel: Ethiopian, Former Soviet Union (FSU), and North American. Through an analysis of scholarly literature and a new collection of immigrant narratives, it attempts to capture both the communal and individual experience of immigration and integration. The research surveys the similarities and differences of each community in relation to history, traditions, culture, and customs, and explores the ways in which all of these factors have impacted the immigration process. It also examines the impacts of Israel's policy on immigration—a policy that transitioned in the 1990s from an assimilationist stance to one of cultural pluralism.



Lipton-Schwartz, Matthew. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15fZEcP>

### [Five Alternatives to the Federation Philanthropic Model](#)

The Federation's central coordination and planning model is over a century old. This research examines five agencies, which have developed alternatives to the Federation umbrella model: Jewish Family Service, the result of Federations pushing agencies to be self-supporting, independent entities; Jewish Home for the Aging, which has reserved the philanthropic model for endowments and major capital expenditures; Zimmer Children's Museum, was founded independently and moved into the Federation building; Beit T'Shuvah, where the clients and their families become the funders; and National Council of Jewish Women, which has abandoned the philanthropic model and turned to retail.

Ludwig, Erik. Weinberg, Aryeh K. | *Institute for Jewish and Community Research*

<http://bit.ly/15fZG4l>

### [Following the Money: A Look at Jewish Foundation Giving](#)

This report presents selected findings from a forthcoming study of Jewish foundations and their impact on Jewish and non-Jewish charitable organizations. It focuses on Jewish foundation giving to Jewish causes in America and abroad. The report finds that Jewish foundations are making their mark on the Jewish philanthropic world. They help to fund the vast network of Jewish communal institutions, while also acting as catalysts for innovative programming and upstart organizations meeting the diverse needs of the Jewish community. The increasing role of foundations is not uniquely a Jewish trend. From 1999 to 2009 the number of grantmaking foundations in America has increased in total number from 50, 201 to 76, 545, an increase of over 50%. Nearly 10, 000 foundations have made grants to Jewish causes and of the 100 largest private foundations, 16 were founded by a Jewish donor.

Means, Makenzie. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15fZl3>

### [A Study of the Usefulness of Jewish History Knowledge in Jewish Communal Professions](#)

Little research exists on Jewish communal professionals' level of Jewish history knowledge and its importance to their jobs. This thesis aims to fill that scholarly gap through interviews with program directors from eight Jewish professional Master's programs, an examination of the history course offerings for each of the programs, and a survey that measured self-selected Jewish communal professionals' knowledge of Jewish history and how valuable it is to their careers. Survey respondents demonstrated an average level of Jewish history knowledge, with greater than fifty percent "passing" the quiz. Though program directors and respondents asserted that modern Jewish history, American Jewish history, and the history of Israel were the most important elements of Jewish history for communal professionals, quiz takers did not answer questions related to those fields correctly at a higher rate than questions on other aspects of Jewish history. It was also expected that respondents with a certificate or master's degree from a Jewish professional program would have a greater level of Jewish history knowledge and perceive that knowledge to be more valuable to them, but this only held true for respondents with a degree or certificate in Jewish nonprofit management. The sole discrepancy among communal professionals in terms of their levels of Jewish history knowledge and the perceived value of that knowledge was between CEOs and development professionals.

Mellman, Mark S. Strauss, Aaron. Wald, Kenneth D. | *Solomon Project*

<http://bit.ly/15fZKB0>

### [Jewish American Voting Behavior 1972-2008: Just the Facts](#)

This extensive analysis of exit poll data yields several key conclusions about the voting behavior of American Jews:

- From 1972 through 1988, Republican candidates for president attracted between 31% and 37% of the Jewish vote. From 1992 through 2008, the GOP share of the Jewish vote dropped to between 15% and 23%.
- In 2008, Barack Obama captured 74% of the total Jewish vote, which translates into 76% of the two-party vote.
- Jewish voters remain much more Democratic than the rest of the electorate.
- Jews have given even higher levels of support to Democratic congressional candidates.
- A majority of Jewish voters identify themselves as Democrats, and these numbers have proved remarkably stable over time.
- A large plurality of Jewish voters identifies as liberals, and these numbers too have been relatively stable over time.

Nijim-Ektelat, Fida. Sorek, Yoa. | *Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute*

<http://bit.ly/15fZL6>

### [Expanding Adoption Opportunities For Children At Risk](#)

Israel's Department of Adoption Services, Division for Personal and Social Services at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, in partnership with Ashalim, initiated a program which aims to increase adoption opportunities for children at risk who are unable to grow up in their birth families, and to improve adoption support services in Israel. The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute was asked to provide research to support the initiative. This report presents the first stage of the study, that consists of (a) a review of the literature about the adoption of children at risk, options for expanding adoption, and adoption support services and (b) interviews conducted with senior decision-makers at the Ministry of Social Affairs, professionals at NGOs in the areas of foster care and family court judges. The review presents findings about how current Israeli policy and regulations may lead to an overly protracted process before a child can be adopted and placed in a permanent home. Findings about the implementation of three policy options for improving the process and expanding possibilities for adoption are presented: --Open adoption, whereby some contact is maintained with the birth family - in contrast to the strict confidentiality currently imposed --Adoption by a foster family --Concurrent planning, whereby, for one year, work is done to rehabilitate the birth parents in parallel with preparations for adoption so that at the end of that period, a permanent solution is achieved for the child.

Noble, Steven J. | *Jewish Communal Service Association of North America (JCSA), Noble Consulting Associates*

<http://bit.ly/15fZNNt>

### [Effective CEO Transitioning/Leadership Sustainability in North American Jewish Nonprofit Organizations: A Research Study of 440 CEO's](#)

This report explores the nature and causes of a major challenge faced by countless North American Jewish nonprofits: effective succession planning for CEO transitioning and organizational leadership sustainability. It concludes by proposing ten practical recommendations to address this challenge. A survey was administered to 440 CEOs in the Jewish nonprofit world to explore these transition challenges. One major finding is that the vast majority of Jewish nonprofits do not have an "in-place" emergency back-up plan to address the situation of an unforeseen event in which the CEO exits very abruptly.

Reid Weiner, Justus. | *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/15fZQbP>

### [Targeted Killings and Double Standards](#)

TKs (targeted killings) have been subjected to significant scrutiny by several human rights groups in a manner that has both contributed to the lack of a genuine, honest, public debate surrounding the issue, and created an atmosphere in which different countries' TK policies are subject to different standards of evaluation and critique. This monograph looks closely at the work of both Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (AI), with respect to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and several Western armies (the U.S., the U.K., the Netherlands, Canada and Australia) that have implemented TK policies since November 2000 (collectively labeled "Western TKs"). A product of a year and a half of detailed research, the monograph identifies substantial and systemic failings in the work of HRW and AI.

Rosen, Steven J. | *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/15fZS3I>

### [Israeli Settlements, American Pressure, and Peace](#)

The settlement issue was often at the heart of U.S.-Israeli differences during the Obama administration. However, the crisis that erupted between the two countries appeared to be completely unnecessary. A settlement freeze had never been a precondition for negotiations when the 1993 Oslo Agreements were originally signed. Israeli-Palestinian negotiations continued with no settlement freeze under successive Israeli governments as well. When the Netanyahu government actually agreed to a ten-month moratorium on settlement construction, its importance was discounted by the Palestinian side, which only came to negotiate with Israel in the last month of the moratorium. Settlements turned out to be a far less important issue for determining the course of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Rubin-Schlansky, Hannah. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15fZUzf>

### [An Exploration of Israel Education in URJ Summer Camps](#)

This study examines how Israel Education is integrated into the curriculum of Jewish summer camps based on interviews of individuals in six URJ summer camps. Each was asked a series of questions probing their camps' curricular development and how they implement Israel Education throughout the summer. All of the camps integrate Israel into their curricula in some way. Some camps segregate Israel into its own learning activity, and others integrate pieces of Israel Education into many daily activities.

Sheskin, Ira M.

<http://bit.ly/15fZTEw>

### [The Jewish Vote](#)

This is the slide presentation accompanying Prof. Ira M. Sheskin's presentation in June 2012 (updated in October 2012) to the American Jewish Press Association's annual conference. It covers:

- Size and Geographic Distribution of the US Jewish Population and Implications for the Jewish Vote
- A Few Key Demographic Indicators
- Political Party
- Political Views
- Voter Registration
- Politically Active
- Obama's Policies: Impact on Jewish Vote?



Sheskin, Ira M. | *Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), North American Jewish Data Bank*

<http://bit.ly/15fZWjH>

### [Comparisons of Jewish Communities: A Compendium of Tables and Bar Charts](#)

This compendium is a single source of tables and bar charts designed to provide a comparative context for understanding American Jewish communities. It is intended for local Jewish communities seeking to compare themselves to others, as well as for researchers, teachers and students of North American Jewry.

Tolts, Mark.

<http://bit.ly/15fZZMF>

### [Yiddish in the Former Soviet Union since 1959: A Statistical-Demographic Analysis](#)

This paper is based mainly on the results of the post-war Soviet censuses concerning respondents' native language and second language. The statistical data on Yiddish were studied for the former union republics of the USSR and their capitals.

Trajtenberg, Manuel. | *Israel Prime Minister's Office*

<http://bit.ly/15g0172>

### [Trajtenberg Report: Creating a More Just Israeli Society](#)

This is an English translation of the official summary of the Trajtenberg Report. This report came out of the Trajtenberg committee, which was appointed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in August 2011 in order to examine and propose solutions to Israel's socioeconomic problems. It was established following the 2011 Israeli housing protests.

Trexler, Lauren. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15g02ba>

### [Why Join?: An Examination of Membership in National Council of Jewish Women/Los Angeles and Hadassah Southern California](#)

This thesis examines reasons why women join membership organizations like National Council of Jewish Women/Los Angeles (NCJW/LA) and Hadassah Southern California (HSC). To understand members' attraction to these organizations, 17 interviews were conducted with professional staff and lay leaders. Observational data was also collected at events sponsored by NCJW/LA and HSC.

Tyzzler, LuAnne. | *HUC-JIR Thesis*

<http://bit.ly/15g03f6>

### [Jewish Philanthropy: A Family Affair?](#)

The goal of this paper is to better understand how the value of *tzedakah* is transmitted between parents and children. The paper looks at how parents of religious school children in an LA Reform congregation understood *tzedakah* when they were growing up; how they experience *tzedakah* as adults with children of their own; how they give; where they give; and to what degree they involve their children in their giving. The results of this study are intended to inform a family education curriculum on the subject of *tzedakah*.

Verbit, Mervin F. | *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA)*

<http://bit.ly/15g042S>

### [American Jews--More Right than Left on the Peace Process](#)

The best data on the positions of American Jews on the peace process show that they are more on the "right" side of the political spectrum than is often claimed regarding such issues as the two-state solution, basic Arab goals, the future status of Jerusalem, and the settlements, and this pattern has been consistent over the last decade. Moreover, the more attached American Jews feel to Israel and the more importance they attribute to their Jewishness, the more likely they are to take positions on the right.

Vulkan, Daniel. | *Board of Deputies of British Jews*

<http://bit.ly/15g1JFF>

### [Britain's Jewish Community Statistics 2010](#)

This report is the latest in a series covering data relating to births, marriages, divorces and deaths in the British Jewish community. These data are collected on behalf of the whole community and this survey is the only one which regularly collects such data. Participants of this survey are those who have associated themselves with the Jewish community through a formal Jewish act, i.e. circumcision, marriage in a synagogue, or Jewish burial or cremation.

Weinberg, Aryeh K. | *Institute for Jewish and Community Research*

<http://bit.ly/15g1MBc>

### [Facing the Charge of Racism: New Research on Jewish Student Identity](#)

Accusations of racism have become a staple of anti-Israel protest on campus and, for Jewish students, these charges can negatively impact their college experience and raise important questions about their Jewish identity. The irony of the racism accusation is that young Jews are firmly committed to the global world in which they live. They embrace a world with permeable boundaries and multiple identities that celebrate and validate diversity, as do most young Americans. It should come as no surprise that Jewish students are committed to an expansive and inclusive vision of the world. Many are raised in homes that reflect the changing demographics of the 21st century. Nearly half (45%) of Jewish college students arrived on campus having been raised in a family with some level of diversity. The most effective defense against charges of racism is to embrace and celebrate the full spectrum of Jewish identity.

Weinberg, Aryeh K. | *Institute for Jewish and Community Research*

<http://bit.ly/15g1NVY>

### [Penetrating the Campus: Understanding How Anti-Western Biases Relate to Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israelism](#)

Anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism on campus often uses the language of resistance against Western power and is embedded within a loosely defined set of ideologies that include anti-Americanism, opposition to free markets and distrust of business. In this framework, Israel is viewed as an extension of Western neo-colonialism and Jews as the epitome of the oppressive powerful elite. Previously unacceptable anti-Jewish sentiment is then repackaged in a more palatable form. This research provides an exploratory look at the relationship between critical views of the West and negative views of Jews and Israel. The findings presented in this report reveal consistent and significant differences that shed light on the relationship between existing criticisms of America, capitalism and business, and rising anti-Israel and anti-Semitic views. Conclusions are based on data from an IJCR national survey of over 1400 college students fielded in 2010-2011.

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## Obituary: Professor Sigbert Prais 1928 - 2014

The economist and social scientist of British Jewry Professor Sigbert Prais died on 22 February 2014, aged 85. In the 1960s and 70s he had produced demographic studies of the British Jewish community and thereafter maintained his interest in Jewish sociology as a member of the Advisory Board of the Jewish Journal of Sociology and as a Trustee of the Maurice Freedman Research Unit until 2006.

Professor Prais was born in the Eastend (*Ostend*) of Frankfurt-am-Main in 1928, the eldest of four sons, but left Germany in 1934 and settled in Birmingham. There the family set up a successful business in the metal working industry and also made a significant contribution to Jewish life in Birmingham.

Having obtained a first degree at the University of Birmingham in Commerce, Prais gained a PhD at the University of Cambridge. In his twenties he made enduring contributions to econometrics: the modelling of economic data which displays dependent and independent variables, the analysis of the size of business, the measurements and shape of household expenditure, the reference points for the cost of living. He went on to hold positions in the University of Chicago, the IMF in Washington and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research in London. He also spent a year in Jerusalem under a United Nations technical assistance programme, advising the Government of Israel on statistical techniques.

In his early thirties, Prais returned to Birmingham for ten years to work in his family's factory as finance director. It was during this period that he began to apply his economics skills to the benefit of Jewish statistics and demography. Beginning with an (unpublished) survey of Birmingham Jewry, he made a major contribution to professionalizing the collection and analysis of Jewish demographic statistics for Britain.

At the seminal two-day conference 'Jewish Life in Modern Britain' in April 1962, he had lamented that 'there is hardly a single figure that can be quoted with any firmness for the Jewish community of Great Britain today'. In November 1965, as a direct response to the 1962 conference, the Board of Deputies of British Jews set up the Statistical and Demographic Research Unit (later renamed the Community Research Unit), where Prais became a member of the supervising committee, and honorary director and then consultant for the following nine years. In that time he determined the direction of research and established the regular compilation of the annual statistical demographic series, which continues to this day at the high standard he established and which provides British Jewry with a unique resource.

Prais honed the unit's techniques for collecting data while at the same time leaving behind a legacy of detailed description of Britain's Jewish population in the 60s and 70s. His investigations were published as papers in various volumes of this journal, as set out in the bibliography at the end of this obituary. His "careful and dogged" approach to the work was noted by Professor Ernest Krausz.

In Britain religion is not noted on birth certificates and until 2001 the decennial British census contained no question on religion. Assessments of the vital statistics of the British Jewish population had therefore to rely on indirect measures. Figures on births, marriages, population size and deaths were all compiled by the Unit under Prais' direction.

Regarding the birth rate, Prais and Schmool (1970) collected data from statistical returns from "authorized Mohalim" who, at that time "ritually circumcised virtually all Jewish male children". This to a large extent overcame the conundrum that official statistics took no account of religion.

In 1967 Prais introduced a refinement to a method which had been used on occasions prior to then to estimate the Jewish population: estimating the size of the living population by its deaths. Drawing on pre-war studies (by A. Ruppin) and post-war studies (of Switzerland and Montreal, Canada) in respect of Jewish mortality rates compared to those of the general population, Prais observed that the Jewish mortality rate was lower by between 5 to 15 per cent. He therefore employed a 10 per cent increase in his estimates for the British Jewish population while allowing a margin of error of  $\pm 5$  per cent. This method of estimating the Jewish population, with an adjustment for the lower mortality rate, was continued more or less unbroken until the introduction of the religion question in 2001.

The process for obtaining the figures for Jewish deaths across Britain was also established as part of the process for deducing population size: information was provided upon request by the Jewish burial societies of London, twenty London crematoria and ninety provincial burial organisations. A process for obtaining statistics on Jewish marriages was also put in motion: the records of the Chief Rabbi's office, the Sephardi synagogues, the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain and the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues were all studied.

The picture of the Jewish population of Britain that Prais' studies produced sometimes concurred with that of communities in other parts of the world, but there were sometimes striking differences: the figures for marriages under synagogue auspices between 1901 – 1965 were noted as being abnormally low when compared to Jewish communities elsewhere.

## EXPLORING THE JEWISH QUESTION IN LITERATURE AND POLITICS

It was suggested that the then ongoing decline in synagogue marriages was attributable to the rise in civil marriages. In 1971 the average family size in Britain was 2.1, whereas the average Jewish family size was lower at 1.72. But at that time, as today too, the right-wing orthodox group stood out “on all indicators as having a higher fertility than the rest of the Jewish community.” Finally, by 1961, the Jewish population of Britain appeared to have lost its unskilled social class – there were no Jews recorded as being in unskilled occupations.

When Prais left Birmingham in 1970 he continued his work in London and wrote the ground-breaking “Synagogue Statistics and the Jewish Population of Great Britain, 1900-70”. He returned to the theme of trends in British Jewish population in 1977 with a conference paper assessing the 15 years since the earlier conference.

Outside his professional sphere, Prais’s enthusiasm for Jewish sociology and anthropology remained to the end. He could not infrequently be sighted in oriental synagogues enjoying the Eastern melodies and had a particular passion for the music of the Moroccan singer Jo Amar.

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