From Bare Survival to European Jewish Vision: Jewish Life and Identity in Vienna

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I. Introduction

During World War II (WWII) the 770 Jewish communities existing in Austria in 1938 with a population of some two hundred thousand Jews (of whom about 90 percent lived in Vienna) were almost completely annihilated and at its end less than five thousand Jews remained in the country. Up to the early 1950s there was a large consensus among Jews and non-Jews alike that there was no way that Jewish communal life in Austria could be revived. In May 1948 the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) issued a special report that began: "For Jews there is no life in Austria, no future"[1].

Today, in contrast, the six re-established Jewish communities (Baden, Graz, Innsbruck, Linz, Salzburg and Vienna), though still small in numbers, present themselves as self-confident, culturally active and well positioned within the Austrian environment. A culturally and religiously diverse Jewish life has taken root and has attracted considerable public attention. This transformation is exemplified in Vienna, which is the home of 95 percent of today's Austrian Jewish population. Its community developed from a *Liquidationsgemeinde* – a community that the Jews in Vienna as well as abroad planned to liquidate after the last Shoah survivors had left the country – into an established community with a population consisting of Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews of various nationalities whose religious denominations range from Reform to ultra-Orthodox, and an educational, social and religious infrastructure which could cater to a much larger community.

Yet, despite all the ethnic, cultural and religious differences dividing the Jewish population, the community has succeeded in keeping its unity and acts collectively vis-à-vis federal and regional authorities and other non-Jewish institutions via a single representative body. Indeed, in recent years the cooperation between its various separate groups has even increased somewhat. The Viennese community also developed from a frightened and voluntarily invisible community to a self-confident and active player in the Austrian cultural and political landscape. The Jews became growingly aware of their ability to stand up for their rights, and eventually to become an integral – not assimilated – part of the Viennese society in which they not only do not feel threatened but believe that they have a future. This vision of a future in Vienna is reflected in the large project of the new community compound on a street named

after Simon Wiesenthal including a school, a sports area and the new home for the elderly community members.

This paper examines and seeks to explain how this rather unique communal reconstruction and changed self-perception came about within Viennese Jewry. It finds the key to them in changes in Jewish identity in Vienna. By Jewish identity we mean the common identification with the Jewish group. Jewish group identity is influenced by communal, national and international social and political developments, and, in turn, is likely to influence internal and external communal politics, and thus to directly affect communal reconstruction and development.

In Vienna, Jewish group identity formation was directly affected by the changes in the perception and the role of the Shoah and of the state of Israel within Viennese Jewry, and in the relation between the Jews and the Austrian government and population. As each post-war generation became adult significant changes took place, transforming a mainly Shoah-based Viennese-Jewish group identity to one whose focus is on the local Jewish environment, occasionally already extending to a European-Jewish[2] vision.

II. The reconstruction of the Viennese Jewish community

a. The legal framework of the Jewish communities in Austria

The *Israelitengesetz* (legislation regulating the relations between the state and the Israelite Community) of 1890 – still part of the Austrian legal system – provided the legal basis for the Austrian Jewish communities until the last part of the 20th century. Among other things, it acknowledged the Jews as "Austrians of Jewish faith" – not as a nationality – and foresaw for each locality a single community (*Einheitsgemeinde*) that represented all the Jews, which offered the state a single point of contact and collected an obligatory *Kultussteuer* (cult tax) from its members. In the law the term 'Jewish faith' was not defined and, especially, no mention was made of the Halacha (Jewish religious law) ruling of 'who is a Jew'. Despite the lack of such a written basis only Jews according to the Halacha were members of the community.

After World War II, the Vienna Jewish community (*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*, IKG) was rebuilt on the pre-1938 model, uniting all the Jews under one roof. Its main characteristics are: (a) membership according to the Jewish law, (b) democratic elections for office holders contested by political parties representing a variety of religious and ideological groups, (c) a variety of communal institutions financed by the IKG but autonomous in their inner political and religious decision-making, (d) its sole responsibility for the external representation of the entire Jewish community.

Since 1981, however, the Israelitengesetz is no longer applicable in its entirety. In that year, in response to the lawsuit filed by an ultra-Orthodox group which claimed the IKG did not cater to its religious needs and sought to secede and establish a separate observant community, the Constitutional Court declared invalid the Einheitsgemeinde regulation that only IKG members would be recognized as Jews (in the event the ultra-Orthodox group chose not to exercise its newly gained right to secede) (see Adunka, 2000, pp. 465-468).

Again in 2004, the IKG adopted new by-laws which vary significantly from the Israelitengesetz: it explicitly restricts the possibility of membership to Jews according to Halacha and introduces a new financial regulation replacing the old ‘cult tax’, which was calculated according to a person’s income, with a rather moderate compulsory membership fee and voluntary contribution.

The Jewish communities in Austria are currently developing a proposal for parliamentary legislation replacing the Israelitengesetz that reflects the social and Jewish legal reality. For the time being this initiative encounters fierce opposition from the federal authorities, who fear that an agreement would encourage other religions to request a revision of their laws. The state does not want to introduce changes to the legislation concerning the religious communities recognized by the state out of fear of losing control over the latter. This new law would be especially important for the organizational restructuring of the Jewish communities in Austria, which was already put into effect: in direct response to the Constitutional Court’s 1981 ruling that membership of the Jewish community was a voluntary matter, and that any group of Jews could constitute a Jewish community, the legal status of the umbrella body of the Austrian Jewish communities (*Bundesverband der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinden*) was changed. Formerly an association (*Verein*), it became a public corporation (*Körperschaft öffentlichen Rechts*) whose regulations are binding upon all its member communities. As

acceptance by the public authorities now requires Jewish communities to belong to this body it can effectively prevent groups breaking away and forming new and rival communities. Even though this restructuring does not conform to the Israelitengesetz, no Austrian public body has yet contested it.

b. Demographic structure and development

The official census of March 22, 1934, registered 191,481 Jews in Austria (3 percent of the Austrian population), with 176,034 Jews in Vienna alone (10 percent of the Viennese population) (Gilbert 1993, p. 22). On March 13, 1938, the Jewish communities in Austria counted 181,882 members (Vienna: 167,249) from a total of about 206,000 Jews living in the country[3].

After the *Anschluss* (the integration of Austria into Nazi Germany) in 1938, about 130,000 Austrian Jews had succeeded in emigrating and about 65,000 were deported, murdered or committed suicide.

In December 1945, 3,955 Jews were left in Vienna; 1,977 survived because they had special protection (e.g. members of the *Ältestenrat der Juden* [Council of Elders of the Jews], or because they had non-Jewish spouses), 200 as *U-Boot* (in hiding), 1,727 returned from concentration camps and 251 from abroad (Oertel, 1999, pp. 118-119). Additionally, a few hundred Hungarian Jews who had survived the forced marches to the West were still in Austria.

Only few former Austrian Jews returned to Vienna from their countries of exile. By April 1947, 700 Austrian Jews had returned from England (where most of them were sent in children's transports), 800 from Shanghai, 200 from Palestine and 350 from Karaganda in Russia (Adunka, 2000, p. 56). Much like Germany, Austria, too, was divided into a British, a French, a Soviet and an American zone and governed by the Allied Commission for Austria until 1955; Vienna was equally divided into four occupational zones.

However, largely owing to the setting up of a Provisional Government by Karl Renner as early as April 27, 1945, there was a subtle difference in the treatment of Austria by the Allies (Johnson, 1989, pp. 135-136). Austria, in general, was treated as if it had originally been

invaded by Germany and liberated by the Allies, and the Austrian government was recognized and tolerated by the Four Powers. This Austrian government did not invite the emigrated Austrian Jews to come back, and in many cases even explicitly urged them to stay away from the country. In October 1945, for instance, the Austrian president Karl Renner alluded to the shortage of physicians but did not ask for the return of exiled Jewish doctors, but for a relaxation of the de-Nazification regulations. Those Austrian Jews who did come back were discouraged from settling, and were either denied the right to restitution, especially of apartments, or had to engage in lengthy fights for their aryanized assets, since the Austrian government's policy on this issue was "to drag it out" (Knight, 1988). Bureaucratic harassment was particularly severe for Jewish emigrants who tried to return in larger groups, such as the emigrants from Shanghai. Neither the Austrian population nor the politicians hid their anti-Semitic attitudes, which were reinforced by economic considerations such as fear of losing their 'legally acquired' (aryanized) property. "Jewish emigrants who returned from their countries of exile were confronted with the slogan '*Rückkehr unerwünscht*—no place for emigrants'. Newspapers related to emigrants as an 'evil'" (Reinprecht, 2000, p. 206). Furthermore, the conservative foreign minister Leopold Figl, in order to justify the refusal to permit and support the return of Austrian Jews, "expressed in public that it had been more comfortable for the emigrants to sit in their 'cosy' leather seats than to fight for the country" (Reinprecht, 2000, p. 206).

Another stumbling block to the return of Jews was the legislation concerning the regaining of Austrian citizenship. In 1945, the expatriation by the Nazi law was rescinded, but the re-enacted Citizenship Law of 1925 prohibited double citizenship. Many expatriates, out of necessity, had acquired the citizenship of their country of exile and were thus precluded from regaining their former Austrian one. Even a more lenient form of deposition valid for a limited time in 1949 was of little help because of the lack, at that time, of Austrian diplomatic representations abroad where information could be obtained and legal procedures initiated.

These negative attitudes towards Jews settling in Austria, as well as Jewish policies and attitudes abroad condemning such settling, led to the small size and low population increase of Viennese Jewry from 1945 to 2007 (see table 1). Despite the various immigration waves of Jews from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the membership of the IKG did not grow beyond 10,000–12,000[4].

Table 1: IKG Membership after 1945

1945	1951	1961	1971	1981	1988	1991	1995	2001	2007
3,955[a]	11,224[b,c]	8,354[b]	7,747[b]	6,527[b]	6,069	7,103	6,841	6,614	7,014

Source: Official IKG numbers received from the IKG member service.
a. Oertel, 1999, p. 118.
b. Not yet verified numbers received from the IKG member service.
c. The number is assumed to have been significantly lower.

The small number of Viennese Jews were joined by Displaced Persons (DPs) from Central and Eastern Europe who fled anti-Semitism and pogroms in their countries. From 1945 to 1953 a total of about 170,000 DPs had their first stop in Vienna – most of them in the DP camps of the Western allies. The majority never registered with the community. They never intended to stay and generally continued to other countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia and Israel. By 1950, when the mass migration of DPs had come to an end and the Jewish Agency for Palestine responsible for moving DPs to Israel withdrew from Austria and all the Jewish voluntary agencies, such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Central Committee of Liberated Jews and ORT significantly reduced their staffs, about 3000 DPs registered with the IKG (Hyman, 1951 pp. 308-310).

In 1956, the aborted Hungarian uprising brought a significant influx of refugees into the Viennese Jewish community[5]. They were generally younger than the local average. In 1968, the incursion of the armies of the Warsaw Pact into Czechoslovakia brought another, but smaller wave[6] of new members to the community. “Nevertheless, the future of the Vienna Jewish Community was insecure in the early 1970s, since the majority of its population was old, the gap due to the extermination under Nazi rule was big (almost no Jews born between 1935 and 1945) and the number of post-war-born Jews relatively small” (Friedmann 2007, p. 88). In 1976, the IKG predicted a Jewish community with no more than 3,500 members by the year 2000[7], mainly because of high death and low birth rates and the emigration of young Jews because of the dearth of eligible potential marriage partners.

The decrease in the number of IKG members was halted with the arrival of emigrants from the former Soviet Union. In the 1970s and 1980s, around three hundred thousand Jews transmigrated through Austria. “95 percent of them went to Israel, the others mostly to the USA. 3000 former Soviet Jews remained in Austria or came back from Israel” (Friedmann, 2007, p. 88). After 1990 this immigration stopped because of Austria’s restrictive immigration policy. This immigration also altered the age pyramid in the IKG since these

mainly Sephardic[8] immigrants "came as whole families, showing mostly three generations and had at least three, in some cases even more than five children" (Friedmann, 2007, p. 89).

The growing number of Ashkenazi[9]-Sephardic mixed marriages also reduced the emigration of young Jews. In 2007, 7,014 Jews were registered in the IKG. The actual number of Jews living in Vienna is, however, assumed to be around 15,000-20,000. Among those unregistered are elderly Jews who because of their experiences from the Shoah are afraid of being affiliated with the Jewish community; Jews who define themselves as secular and do not want to join the religiously oriented community; ultra-Orthodox Jews who do not see any need to belong to the IKG since they have their own institutions; communist Jews; marginal Jews; and some who qualify as Jews according to the Halacha but do not know it.

Recently there has been some natural increase: in 1990, the IKG counted for the first time since 1945 more births than deaths, and the majority of the members were under the age of 50; statistics from January 25, 2008, show that of the 7,018 IKG members about 59 percent are under the age of 50 (see table 2).

Table 2: Age Statistics of IKG Members from 25.1.2008

Age group	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100	101-110
Members	727	757	996	951	758	1,078	672	478	517	82	2

Source: Official IKG statistics.

Even so, the Viennese Jewish community must still cope with the problems associated with its small size, and seemingly has little prospect of growth in the near future because of the restrictive Austrian immigration policy. The current IKG president Ariel Muzicant is working to convince the Austrian government to enact a Jewish immigration policy enabling the immigration of young educated Jews; but for the time being without success.

c. Starting from scratch

After the war the members of the Ältestenrat became the target of persecution. Whether they used their influence for their own sake or that of other Jews, they were accused by their fellow Jews of cooperation with the Nazis and even jailed by the Russian occupier. So the community was deprived of the only people who could organize its rebuilding from scratch.

The first heads of the community were installed by Ernst Fischer, the communist member of the provisional Austrian government responsible for religious matters. Their main qualification was more the affiliation with the Austrian Communist Party than their ability to cope with the needs of the Jews and the fight for restitution and effective management of the Jewish assets.

Finally on April 7, 1946, the Viennese community had its first elections with about 3,550 eligible voters – out of 4,418 IKG members with only 23 percent under the age of 25 (Adunka, 2000, p 39). Two groups campaigned, a Unity List (*Einheitsliste*), aiming at representing all trends and movements but in reality composed mainly of Jewish communists, and the Association of Jewish War Victims (*Verband der jüdischen Kriegsopfer*), composed of former Jewish soldiers of World War I. Some 2,643 votes were cast of which the Einheitsliste got 92 percent (Adunka, 2000, p. 31).

The representatives of the Jewish community who met an Anglo-American Commission for Palestine were described as "shrill and pathetic, self-assertive and broken", fostering the impression that the "Jewish community of Vienna would not flourish again" and that "in Europe the Jewish communities have been so thoroughly destroyed that it is impossible anyway to rebuild them" (Crossman, 1947, pp. 103-104).

Nevertheless, the years 1945 to 1949 saw the (re-)establishment of many Jewish institutions (e.g. *Hakoah*, the famous Austrian sports club; *Chevra Kaddisha*; the Austrian Zionist Association; and the Zionist youth organizations *Bnei Akiva* and *Hashomer Hatzair*). Jewish students without roots in Vienna and without parents founded the Jewish Students Union (VJHÖ), which became their surrogate home and was used to make contact with the Jews in Vienna.

Also in 1946 restoration of the Central Viennese synagogue (Stadttempel), the only one that survived the *Reichskristallnacht* (the pogrom of November 9, 1938), but was vandalized inside, was initiated with financial support of the JDC and a loan of the Austrian government – against the vote of the predominantly communist (and therefore non-religiously oriented) IKG board[10]. During the vacancy of the Viennese Chief Rabbinate from 1945 to 1948, Isidor Oehler, a religion teacher in Vienna since 1901, acted as rabbi, catering to religious needs, but was also responsible for the distribution of meals. Nevertheless, religious teaching

provided by the IKG was still deficient. Jewish education was provided mainly by Orthodox groups, especially Agudas Israel, which organized themselves separately from the post-war IKG. In 1948, Rabbi Akiva (Bela) Eisenberg from Hungary was appointed Chief Rabbi of the community.

Thus in the immediate post-war years, the Jews got no support from the Austrian authorities and could only rely on foreign Jewish humanitarian aid. Yet even this little 'advantage' of the Jews exacerbated anti-Semitic feelings in the populace and among some politicians (see IIb.).

The rise of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and its allies contributed greatly to the vanishing of the communist majority in the IKG. The Social Democrats left the Einheitsliste and created the *Bund Werktätiger Juden* (Union of Working Jews, BWJ). Even so the Einheitsliste won the relative majority (43 percent of the votes; 11 mandates) in the elections of 1948 with five campaigning parties and with a participation of 75 percent of the electorate of about 7000 (Adunka, 2000, p.77). After extremely long negotiations the Zionist *Jüdische Föderation* (Jewish Federation, JF), which came in second, and the Bund formed a coalition that took over the IKG leadership. The exclusion of the communists from its governance caused a stir; they termed the partnership of the JF and BWJ an undemocratic coup that "is not only unjust, not only immoral, but in the truest sense of the word un-Jewish"[11].

However, the coalition under the presidency of David Shapira of the JF was only short-lived because of disagreement on how to react to the Austrian People's Party criticizing the third Austrian restitution law. New elections were scheduled for November 11, 1949. Facing increasing anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism from the *Verband der Unabhaengigen* (VdU), the predecessor of the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreich* (the nationalistic and right-wing Austrian Freedom Party, FPÖ), the representatives of the IKG again made an effort to unite in one party. The *Gesamtjüdische Liste* (combined Jewish list) composed of the communist *Einigkeit* (unity), the BWJ and the JF won 29 out of 30 mandates. The *Verband jüdischer Kaufmannschaft* (Union of Jewish Merchants), the only splinter group left, won the other mandate. According to the pre-election agreement the presidency rotated: first David Shapira, then Emil Maurer of the BWJ, and finally Kurt Heitler, the last communist president of the IKG. Heitler was an outspoken communist seeking close relations with the Austrian Communist Party (KPÖ), prompting the majority of socialist and Zionist board members to

remove him from office after only eight month; he was succeeded by the Zionist Wolf Herzberg.

The years 1950-1952 were characterized by political controversies between the communist and Social Democrat groups. Towards the 1952 elections these controversies intensified, as the BWJ highlighted accounts of anti-Semitic behavior and attitudes in communist regimes.

The 1952 elections, in which it won with 12 out of 24 mandates, signaled a long period of BWJ domination of the IKG which lasted until 1981. The BWJ was closely connected with the Austrian Socialist Party (SPÖ), and often its compliance with the policies and wishes of the federal and local authorities left the impression that it was more the advocate of the national party in the Jewish community than of the IKG towards the Austrian authorities.

In the 1981 elections, which had a turnout of some 57 percent, the BWJ still came first (8 mandates) but lost more than half of its support, and as a result governance of the IKG passed into the hands of the allied parties *Die Alternative* (AL) (7 mandates) and *Junge Generation* (Young Generation, JG) (4 mandates). Other competing parties were the Mizrachi (2 mandates) and the Orthodox parties Khal Israel, Osse Chessed (the party of the Jews praying in Tempelgasse 3) and the bloc of religious Jews (of Machsike Hadass) (each with 1 mandate). Ivan Hacker, a Shoah survivor from Hungary and party leader of the AL, became the first non-socialist president since 1952. The AL was established in 1975 (its original name was United Jewish Party – independents, Zionists and religious), its main goal being the independence of the IKG from Austrian political parties. Hacker had earlier promoted this goal as a board member of the *Bund Jüdischer Verfolgter des Naziregimes* (Association of Jewish victims of the Nazi Regime, BJVN) established by Simon Wiesenthal in 1963. The JG was established in 1980 by younger members of the AL who had been born after WWII. Ariel Muzicant, the leader of JG was elected vice-president of the IKG.

The 1981 elections marked the entry into its leadership for the first time of members of the post-Shoah generation. They stood for a more Jewishly self-confident policy, in which physical self-defense as well as the defense of Jewish values and interests, an improvement of Jewish education and more critical involvement in Austrian politics received high priority, even if these were viewed negatively by and generated tensions with the surrounding non-Jewish society.

In the 1985 elections, which also included for the first time a Sephardic party (1 mandate), the AL again led with 8 mandates. However, Hacker resigned in 1987 after he was criticized by the IKG board for his weak stand in the Waldheim affair, and was succeeded by Paul Grosz, a Shoah survivor from Vienna.

Again in 1989, the AL was the leading party with 8 mandates. However, in 1993, it fused with the JG to form *Jachad-Jüdische Einheit* (Jewish Unity), which won 12 mandates, and Paul Grosz remained president of the IKG until 1998.

Before that year's election Ariel Muzicant left Jachad and established *Atid*. It won the simple majority with 5 mandates and for the first time, an individual born after 1945 – Muzicant – became president of the IKG. With this attainment of its leadership, control of the IKG and its affairs passed into the hands of members of a post-Shoah generation of Austrian Jews, who exemplified the profound changes in Jewish identity in that country over previous decades.

Atid maintained its leadership also after the elections of 2002 (11 mandates) and 2007 (10 mandates). However, the latter election may be indicative of future changes at the helm of the IKG: the Sephardic party came second with 5 mandates, and two new contestants entered the IKG politics, the Georgian party (1 mandate) and *Gesher* (2 mandates) representing members of the second post-Shoah generation.

d. Vienna and its many facets of Jewish life and identity

As noted, the IKG was reestablished in 1945 as a *Religionsgemeinschaft,* a religious association, which not only conformed to the historic Israelitengesetz but also reflected the broadest common denominator within an immediate post-war Viennese community composed of Jews with varying Jewish identities, nationalities and religious denominations (Hodik, 2007).

Among the pre-1938 Viennese Jews who survived the war in Vienna or returned immediately thereafter were religious and secular Jews who identified themselves as Jews before the war, as well as Jews who had been living on the periphery of Judaism before the Shoah and moved to its center only because of the historical events. Among the Jews returning from exile many

were Marxists, and did not feel Jewish out of religious sentiment but out of the feeling of heredity or even the definition by others. Jews, who were religious, but not necessarily nationally minded before the Shoah, generally emerged from it with an ethnic Jewish identity. In contrast, Jews with weak or no Jewish identity, who generally were 'made to' be Jews by the Nazis, perceived Judaism thereafter as a religion only and their identity as secular-Jewish; the stigma of being Jewish had become an intrinsic part of their own personal identity. The Jewish identity of many of the latter was mainly a feeling of belonging to a community of fate imposed upon them by the Shoah, and a substitute for social acceptance denied to them because of their being Jewish.

The mainly traditional and religious DPs had a strong religious and ethnic Jewish identity in terms of identification with the Jewish people, culture, traditional family life and religion – similar to that of the *Ostjuden*, the Jews from Eastern Europe, before the Shoah. It was very important for them to preserve this Jewish identity in the DP camps and thus immediately set up prayer houses and other religious institutions which enabled them to keep and spread their East European Yiddishkeit. In 1946, the *Hebräische Schule* (Hebrew school) was established with the financial assistance of the JDC and the IKG. The school served the DPs' children as well as the Viennese Jewish children, who attended Viennese public schools and could receive religious education twice a week at the Hebräische Schule. The school was closed down in 1967 by the Social Democrat leadership of the IKG, officially because of the low number of pupils (see Adunka, 2000, pp. 111-118).

The Orthodox groups, and especially Agudas Israel, also had a strong religious and ethnic identity, and in contrast to before the Shoah, a Zionist one as well. Their pre-Shoah anti-Zionist ideology had changed into a pragmatic Zionist position towards the state of Israel. In 1948, Rabbi Ehrmann of Agudas Israel stated that "political sovereignty, the sovereign nationalism and its state were the first steps on the way to the actual goal, the state ruled according to the Torah" (Adunka, 2000, p. 222). In the post-war years Agudas Israel catered especially to the DPs, seeing itself as the successor and continuation of the pre-war Aguda organization. By 1949, Agudas Israel had set up a Talmud-Torah school, the girls' school Beth Jakob with boarding school, a section of Aguda's women and youth organization as well as a free kosher-meal service, restaurants and a guesthouse (see Adunka, 2000, p. 220). These Orthodox circles, which organized themselves separately from the post-war IKG, stood in conflict with and were at times even ignored by its Social Democrat leadership (see Adunka,

2000, pp. 219-230) because of their different perceptions of Judaism, religious requirements and views of the IKG's role as leader of Viennese Jewry.

The differing approaches to Jewish identity in post-war Vienna are revealed clearly in the contrasting stances of Bruno Kreisky, an assimilated Jew who survived the Shoah in Swedish exile and was chancellor of Austria from 1970 to 1983, and Simon Wiesenthal, the Ukrainian-born 'Nazi-hunter'. Kreisky, who parted from the IKG already before the war, declared in the late 1980s: "Without thinking much, I would say, that the knowledge about Auschwitz is the only thing that unconditionally ties me to my Jewish origin.… Auschwitz is the destiny of the Jews, which even those for whom their Jewish ancestry is more or less significant cannot escape. We were all thrown into one pot through a peculiar mood of history" (Koebl, 1989, p. 142). For him Judaism was a matter of ancestry, but he did not have "any special feeling of belonging" (Kreisky, 1981, p. 50) to the Jewish people. Moreover, he asserted that "my [Jewish] origin, which I never hid, does not give any Zionist the right to request my solidarity with a Jew, just because he is a Jew" (Kreisky, 1985, p. 26) and even less with Israel. He rejected Zionism as a form of nationalism that was built upon a lie, since the Jews were "neither a race nor a people" but "a religious association that was turned into a community of fate" (Kreisky, 1985, p. 25). He always strove to be perceived as an Austrian and not as a Jew.

Simon Wiesenthal, conversely, was a proud Jew with a strong religious and ethnic Jewish identity, and a Zionist, who felt it was his duty to serve the Jewish people through his active membership in the IKG, his opposition to what he saw as mistaken decisions by the leadership of the IKG, and his efforts to obtain restitution for survivors from the Austrian state. In particular he devoted himself to documenting the crimes of the Holocaust and hunting down the perpetrators still at large, despite many obstacles the Austrian government, especially under the leadership of Kreisky, put in his way. The conflicting approaches of these two prominent public figures to their Jewish identity gave rise to controversies in the media and court battles during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Religious life in Vienna was boosted by the immigration from Hungary in 1956 which brought Jews identified with various streams within Orthodoxy, ranging from Mizrachi to a group of stringently anti-Zionist Satmar Hasidim.

For some three decades after 1945, the Viennese Jewish community remained almost entirely Ashkenazi. This changed with the immigration from the former Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s which added a new element: Sephardic Jewish identity and culture. Initially these Jews, mainly from Bukhara and Georgia, but also from Russia and Caucasia came to Vienna on their way to America, Canada or Israel, or on their way back from Israel. Some, however, settled, established themselves economically and brought more family members to Vienna.

Most are traditional Jews with a strong religious and ethnic Jewish identity who grew up in an environment with strong ties to the tradition. Even if they are non-observant, kosher food and Shabbat candle lightning are widely maintained.

In contrast to the situation in 1945 (see previous chapter), sixty years after the Shoah, Viennese Jewry is characterized by cultural, ethnic and religious diversity and various Jewish-identity perceptions. Even the new immigrants from the former Soviet Union are not a monolithic group (see table 3).

Table 3: The Different Parts of the Viennese Jewish Community in 2006

Local community		Immigrants from former USSR			
		West-USSR	Georgia	Caucasia region	Central Asia
Numbers	5000	~150	~750	~100	~2000
Religious type	Ashkenazi	Ashkenazi	Georgian-Sephardic	Gorski-Sephardic	Bukhara-Sephardic
Average religiosity	+++	+	++++	++++	+++++
Traditionalism	+++	+	++++	+++	++++
Cultural background	European Urban Christian	Russian Urban Orthodox Communist	Georgian Urban Orthodox	Caucasic Partly urban Azeri-Turkish Muslim	Asiatic Partly urban Farsi/Turk/Mongolian Muslim
Average age	50.3	59.8	44.8	39.0	31.3
Av. family size	3.8	3.2	7.2	5.1	10.3
Languages	German English Language of country of origin	Russian Some Yiddish	Russian Georgian Hebrew	Russian Chechen Some Hebrew	Russian Bukhara Some Hebrew

Source: Friedmann, 2007, p. 89.

Viennese Jewry is also characterized by its heterogeneous religious landscape. In 2007, Viennese Jewry was made up of six ultra-Orthodox groups – Agudas Israel (Khal Israel), Ohel Moshe, Machsike Hadass, Agudas Jeshurun, Khal Chassidim and Chabad-Lubawitsch; the Modern Orthodox Zionist Mizrachi; the community around the Modern Orthodox *Stadttempel*; the traditional Bukhara and Georgian communities; the Chabad-linked Bukhara community; and the progressive Or Chadasch. Viennese Jewry in general is Orthodox-oriented, even if a majority is more traditional than observant.

The foundation of a Progressive Jewish community in 1990 was something new for Vienna, where even before WWII no liberal houses of prayer existed.With the increasing international community in Vienna which became a UN site, the number of Jews affiliated with Reform or Conservative movements in their home countries became significant enough to warrant the creation of the congregation *Or Chadasch*, a member of the World Union of Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). In March 2008, the European region of WUPJ held its biannual conference in Vienna with an official opening ceremony at the city hall on the invitation of the major of Vienna. The IKG, which is officially Orthodox, recognized Or Chadasch as an organization (and not as a religious community), and those of its members who are halachic Jews are often also members of the IKG. In all, they constitute only a small percentage of the members of the Viennese community.

A considerable infrastructure supports the development of the many facets of the Viennese community and of Jewish life in general. This infrastructure includes, among other things, eighteen synagogues and prayer rooms, four Jewish schools, Talmud-Torah schools, the Wiener Jeshiwah, a Jewish business school, a Jewish teachers' academy and further educational institutions, the psychosocial center Esra, two ritual baths and three kashrut authorities – Ohel Moshe, Khal Israel and the Rabbinate of the IKG (the latter, however, only grants certificates for Austrian products destined for export).

e. Fashioning and maintaining communal unity within Viennese Jewry

The IKG is "probably the most heterogeneous [community] in the world: under a common roof there are Ashkenazim and Sephardim, atheists and agnostics, Chassidim and Mitnagdim, ultra-Orthodox and less ultra-Orthodox, people with various rites and people without rites, reformists, liberals, conservatives, Orthodox".[12] This unity despite the pluralism was not

always evident, but was preserved because the various players understood its importance for improving Jewish life in the already small Jewish community and for increasing its political and social influence within Austrian society and politics. A divided IKG would permit the Austrian authorities to play off one side against the other.

The post-war process of attaining unity within the IKG encountered a number of major hurdles. Its first years were marked by conflicts between the communist, socialist and Zionist parties (see Adunka, 2000, pp. 138-165), but these declined following the BWJ victory when many communists left the IKG. So, too, the conflicts between the Orthodox groups and the IKG leadership in the 1950s threatened the continued existence of the Einheitsgemeinde. Thus, in 1954 Agudas Israel threatened to bring about the division of the IKG into two religious communities (see Adunka, 2000, p. 219). In order to prevent the division the IKG leadership decided to negotiate on religious affairs with the entire orthodoxy. To increase their power vis-à-vis the IKG leadership, the Orthodox groups united in 1955 and established Khal Israel, the central organization of the Orthodox union in Austria, with the aim to establish an Orthodox Kultusgemeinde. The conflict between Khal Israel and the IKG was finally resolved in 1958 with the signing of a contract according to which the IKG would raise subsidies to the Orthodox, especially in the form of a price support for kosher meat, and leave the religious agendas to Khal Israel[13].

Conflicts between the IKG and the ultra-Orthodox part of the Orthodoxy later erupted again and led to the previously mentioned court ruling of 1981 legally approving the establishment of a separate Orthodox IKG. But, yet again, negotiations between the parties succeeded in halting the threatened division of the IKG. In the 21st century, two new conflicts also arose concerning the IKG. One revolved around the plans of the Reform group Or Chadasch to participate in the 2002 IKG elections, which led the Orthodox groups to threaten to leave the IKG and establish a separate community. The other was a dispute between the leadership of the IKG and Chabad over financial issues. This led the latter to directly approach Austrian public offices, which till then had traditionally been the sole prerogative of the IKG, and to draw up an application for the establishment of a second community.

Yet, despite the difficulties the IKG managed to settle these conflicts. Or Chadasch did not seek political representation in the IKG and Chabad did not submit the application. Today, it is universally acknowledged that the Einheitsgemeinde fosters cooperation among all diverse

religion and identity groups within Viennese Jewry. The IKG is accepted by both registered and non-registered Jews as the sole representative body of Viennese Jewry, and its executive bodies cooperate with all the various groups and support their educational institutions and social organizations. According to former (1982-2006) IKG secretary-general Avshalom Hodik, one of the IKG's most important tasks is to foster 'plurality in the unity' both to improve its functioning and its ability to contribute to the promotion of Jewish life, and to attract the many unregistered halachic Jews in Vienna.

In general it seems that Jewish Vienna, long afflicted by disputes between and within its religious groups – the Orthodox community split four times in the 1970s and 1980s– is today characterized by strong feelings of solidarity and a heightened awareness of the importance of cooperation and cohesion, both to foster Jewish life and to enable the community to appear in the public arena as a united and strong Jewish community.

This solidarity and unity is manifest in common participations in Jewish public events, such as the active involvement of IKG officials at the Chanukah candle lighting in the center of Vienna organized by Chabad, in well-conducted and quiet election campaigns (in contrast to Berlin and Prague) and in the widespread general agreement (and the absence of opposition by any of the rabbis) to the establishment of an *Eruv*[14] – even though some Orthodox Jews might not actually make use of it (in sharp contrast to the conflicts surrounding the Eruv in London).

Furthermore, in January 2007, the rabbis from all religious groups in the IKG unanimously agreed to the extreme step of issuing a *Cherem* (excommunication) against the self-proclaimed rabbi, Moishe Friedman[15] for his "rude harmful behavior, especially his contacts with revisionist, anti-Semitic circles and relevant declarations"[16] at the Holocaust-denial conference in Teheran and at demonstrations against Jewish institutions and activities in Vienna.

Another recurrent challenge for the IKG was that of incorporating and bringing together ethnic and national groups. Initially each successive immigrant group encountered rejection and exclusion before efforts were made to integrate them. For instance, in 1956, the year of the Hungarian immigration, the IKG introduced the *Steuerparagraf* (tax paragraph), which linked the right to vote in IKG elections to payment of IKG taxes. This measure rested

primarily on the assumption that very few immigrants would be able to meet this requirement. Only in 1983 was this restriction lifted.

Again the immigration from the Soviet Union presented a new challenge: the integration into the community of a different ethnic group. In the 1970s and 1980s there were significant divisions between the Viennese Ashkenazi and Sephardic (the Bukhara and Georgian) Jews. According to Raimund Fastenbauer, the IKG's general secretary of Jewish affairs, the IKG initially had a negative attitude towards the 'Russian' Jews, taking the view that 'we do not need them, they should go to Israel'. Consequently, the IKG was not eager to invest in these Jews. Furthermore, its initial unawareness of the fact that the immigrants were Sephardic, and not Russian Ashkenazi Jews, and hence its ignorance about their different religious and customary expectations further hindered the process of integration and generated feelings of alienation among many of them. For example, the IKG and even the rabbis were not familiar with the Bukhara and Georgian Jews' Sephardic prayer customs and requirements. "Initially, we told them to come and join us in the *Stadttempel*, only later we realized they were not Russian Ashkenazi but Sephardic Jews" (Rabbi Eisenberg, 2005).

However, with financial, social and educational assistance from the Chabad organization after the arrival of Rabbi Biderman in 1980, and later from the IKG, the Bukhara and Georgian Jews have since the 1990s succeeded in integrating into the Viennese Jewish society while at the same time preserving their particular cultural traditions. In 1992, the Sephardic Center with two synagogues was opened. In 2005, the Vienna city hall hosted the ceremony '30 Years of Bukhara Jews in Vienna' where they proudly presented the social, cultural and scientific achievements of their members to guests from all Jewish organizations and Viennese and Austrian officials.

Today, ethnic and cultural differences are becoming less of an issue, especially among the second generation of immigrants and their Viennese counterparts, who went to the same schools and youth organizations. 'Mixed marriages' among Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews are no longer an exception.

In general, the Viennese Jewish community consists of several more or less cohesive national groups, in which the first immigrant generation feels strongly bound to their country of origin but feels 'Viennese' when confronted with later Jewish immigrants or non-Jewish society. A

prominent example is that of the 1956 Hungarian immigrants who built strong national ties within Viennese Jewry. This 'Hungarian clique' continues to use and perpetuate the Hungarian language, has established strong internal social ties and actively encourages intra-Hungarian Jewish marriages. Nevertheless, when confronted with immigrants from the former Soviet Union, their Viennese consciousness comes to the fore.

The earlier immigrants tend to distinguish themselves from those who come later. They have a proprietary sense with regard to the Jewish community, view themselves as the bearers of the legacy of the pre-1938 community, and feel threatened by the influence of new immigrants on Viennese Jewish culture and identity which they embody. These national divisions within Viennese Jewry are still apparent among second-generation immigrants but are significantly attenuated. The second generation generally already has a strong Viennese-Jewish identity and increasingly intermarries across Jewish ethnic lines.

Youth organizations, too, underwent a process of consolidation. Since their establishment in 1947 and 1949 respectively, the Zionist youth organizations Bnei Akiva and Hashomer Hatzair have played a significant role in Jewish-identity formation and integration. "Their combined membership included a large majority of the Jews who grew up in post-war Vienna" (Bunzl, 2003, p. 157). Over the years relations between these two organizations were characterized more by ideological conflicts and divisions than by cooperation.

At the beginning of the 21st century, however, the IKG recognized the need to coordinate the community's youth organizations of which there were now five – Bnei Akiva, Hashomer Hatzair, Jad Bejad (pronounced Yad Beyad), the Jewish students' organization (renamed JÖH) and Moadon (an organization for Jews in the twenties and thirties) – by bringing them under one roof, and hiring an executive officer for youth affairs (in 2005) whose function is to conduct activities aimed at strengthening their Jewish roots and identity and improve their organizational cooperation. To date, these efforts have produced the desired results, at both the individual and collective levels, and given the IKG and its leaders an opportunity to heighten and shape the Jewish identity of the younger generation.

The importance of preserving unity in the form of the Einheitsgemeinde and maintaining the cooperation between the various groups within the IKG was a major issue in the contestants' platforms in the IKG elections of 2007. Atid emphasized the need to keep the "relative

peace" even if it required "strenuous internal discussions" and called the Einheitsgemeinde "a treasure to be protected"[17]. Likewise, Gesher stated that "In the spirit of the Einheitsgemeinde we want to represent all the different groups, to preserve the cultural and religious variety…."[18]

In sum, Viennese Jewry in the 21st century is characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity under a common roof and a growing unity and discipline despite a considerable pluralism and diversity. The various players in the IKG strive to act collectively and cooperatively in the internal as well as external policy arenas.

How, given considerable internal diversity, did such communal cohesion and consolidation come about? What developments among Viennese Jewry raised the awareness of the prime importance of unity in this heterogeneous community? And what factors influenced its reconstruction from a small and broken group of survivors to a flourishing Jewish community with an extensive Jewish infrastructure that caters effectively to the varied needs of an increasingly heterogeneous population? As shown in the next chapter, the answers to these questions lie in the distinctive pattern of development of Jewish identity in Viennese Jewry after 1945.

III. Unity despite plurality in a growingly self-confident IKG

a. Jewish identity

Identity is a complex subject. Although the term identity is widely used across the social sciences, it has no single common usage and no agreed meaning. Instead, concepts of identity vary considerably and the term is applied to a multiplicity of empirical phenomena. A brief elaboration of how the term Jewish identity is understood and used here is therefore necessary.

In sociology and political science, the notion of identity refers to the individual's self-perception as a member of a certain group. The people in this group feel that "they have important things in common and that they differ so much from other large groups that they constitute a distinctive and self-contained society" (de Beus, 2001, p. 292). Thus, while members of this group feel part of the surrounding society with the same rights and duties as

others in it, at the same time they feel ‘different from the others’. Basic to their individual group identity is the need for group recognition – the full social and political acceptance by the surrounding society of the group and its members, and of group difference.

Jewish identity thus refers to the common identification with the Jewish group. Jewish group identity, the group’s definition of itself, is characterized by the pluralism of Jewish-identity perceptions of its individual members. Jewish identity can at the same time be based on religion, ethnicity, culture, the identification with other Jews or a ‘feeling Jewish’, and common roots and history – such as the Holocaust. Jewish identity is “differentiated rather than monolithic” (Kelman, 1998, p.19) – enabling the individual to choose from its various elements – and ‘voluntary’ in the sense that Jews are free to choose how to define and express their Jewish identity (Pinto, 2002). These differing perceptions of Jewish identity stem from the fact that an individual’s sense of self-identity is constantly affected by the various social influences – communal and national – to which he is exposed during his life. “Out of these influences [people] draw beliefs, attitudes, values and expectations that, when added to their personal core, make up their emerging identity” (Kelman, 1998, p. 5). Since it is “variable rather than fixed in meaning” (Kelman, 1998, p. 19), Jewish identity is in an ongoing formation process that permits adaptation to changing realities. Similarly, according to Kelman (1998), Jewish group identity may have both permanent, or fixed, elements and elements that develop and change over time – or new ones that arise in particular circumstances (e.g. Holocaust memory and the state of Israel which did not exist before 1945 and 1948 respectively). What individuals choose to emphasize among the elements of group identity, what they incorporate of it – how they as individuals see the place of the Jewish group in the universe whether in past, present or future – becomes part of the core of their personal identity; in other words it is the group-identity component of their personal identity.

The research will focus on Jewish group identity, rather than on individual Jewish identity, because of its impact on communal life and reconstruction. For example, the strengthening of the Jewish identity in a particular locality is likely to lead to organizational flowering and community building. So, too, this is likely to affect the community’s internal and external politics.

My research shows that Jewish group identity in Vienna has been influenced significantly by three distinctive elements: the Shoah, Israel and the place of the Jews in Austria.

b. The Shoah in the Jewish identity

The Jews in post-war Vienna were initially driven powerfully by the memory of their lost relatives and friends, by the memory of the extinguished glory of the pre-1938 Viennese Jewish community or their other lost communities, by the need to share Shoah memories and by the imperative of ensuring their own physical and material survival. The first issues of the IKG magazine, *Die Gemeinde,* which appeared monthly from September 1948 to December 1949, and then again after February 1953, reveals a broken Jewish community that focused on trying to find a way to survive after the Shoah. The subjects dealt with in 1948 and 1949 mainly concerned destroyed and stolen Jewish properties, facilities for sick children, returnees to Vienna and recent deaths within the community.

The Shoah that so radically separated the Jews from the gentiles reinforced their sense of group belonging. Many Jews who began to feel Jewish only because of the Shoah, now shared a common recent past with Jews who always felt Jewish. These war-generation Jews felt that they were united by a common past, their memories and the struggle for survival as Jews, and that these bonds differentiated them significantly from the rest of the population. Indeed, the Shoah drew an uncrossable line between the Jews and the gentile population. The Jews in Austria saw themselves as the victims in the land of the hangman who not only disavows any responsibility for the Shoah, but also founded its Second Republic on the myths of being the 'first victim of Nazi Germany'[19]. Moreover, it reintegrated former Nazis (including killers) into Austria's public service, politics and universities, and ignored de-Nazification.

In this situation the Jews found themselves in a vulnerable position. A significant proportion of Austrians continued to espouse anti-Semitic views and held firmly to the notion that Jews were not part of Austrian society. They also perceived the presence of the Jews as a threat to their positive self-image of suffering victims. This hostile socio-political situation strengthened bonds among the Jews. The Jews were tied together by the fear of anti-Semitism, the urge to share memories and the need for help in rebuilding their lives. The Shoah became a binding link among the survivors and the central element in their Jewish group identity; and for some the memories of the Shoah and its apotheosis as a singular event in world history were even elevated to the rank of a substitute religion.

This centrality of the Shoah in Viennese Jewish identity began fading in the post-war generation. The Jews who were born after 1945 and grew up with an awareness of the State of Israel perceived the past differently. The very existence of Israel and its dramatic victory in 1967, and the image of heroic Israeli soldiers strongly counterposed to the Jews who went silently to their deaths, alienated many in the post-war generation from the 'weak Jews' of the Shoah period who happened to be their parents. While critical of them, if only privately in order not to cause hurt to the survivors, they began to say in public what their parents only dared to think, namely, that Jews had to stand up and fight publicly, both against those who sought to harm them and in order to secure what was necessary to ensure the Jewish future. For this generation, too, the Shoah served as a key element in their group identity and as a binding link, but unlike their parents, their leitmotif was 'Never Again'[20]. Their outrage at the ongoing injustices Austrian Jews had faced since 1945 exacerbated their ire over what had taken place during the Shoah, and, together with the desire to prove themselves courageous, fueled, since the 1970s and especially the 1980s, the resolve and the self-confidence to fight publicly to secure a better Jewish future. In doing so, they reversed the pattern of non-confrontational behavior vis-à-vis the Austrian state and society that since 1945 had characterized the Austrian Jewish community and its leadership (Weisz, 2004).

Members of the second post-war generation (the children of those born after WWII), however, have been openly critical of the central role of the Shoah in Jewish identity. For them, Jewish identity should be based not on a past catastrophe, but rather on positive and attractive components connected to life and not death, to Jewish continuity and the Jewish people rather than fear. In short, they sought to "move Jewish culture, Jewish heritage and modern Jewish life into the foreground" (Grünberger[21]). Put differently, Jewish identity "combines a tendency of laughing and crying, and the young second generation sees the importance in developing from the laughing while remembering the crying" (Y. Feiger, 2007). A citation from the campaign platform of Gesher corroborates these findings: "[The community] has to present itself as an active and vital community and draw a positive picture from the flourishing Jewish life in Austria, without defining itself solely through the horrors of the past"[22].

c. Israel in the Jewish identity

Significant Zionist activities were undertaken in the DP camps established in Vienna right at the end of WWII. Underground organizations trained and organized DPs for legal and illegal immigration to Palestine. The withdrawal of the British and the proclamation of the State of Israel in 1948 intensified these activities. As noted above, hundreds of thousands of Jews passed through Vienna on the way to Israel, before the DP camps were closed down in the Kreisky era. Austria was regarded as a transit country and its Jewish community perceived itself as a Liquidationsgemeinde, a community that would liquidate itself once the Zionist goal had been achieved. Thus, in the early years, many communal properties were sold for a pittance to finance immediate needs, and communal records and libraries were transferred to Israel. The expected self-liquidation of Viennese Jewry never occurred, however, and today more than sixty years after the Shoah a flourishing Jewish community exists in Vienna. Zionism contributed to this communal strengthening.

Now the Jew is no longer the '*vaterlandslose Geselle*' (the fellow without a homeland), but, like members of other Diaspora national groups, he can turn to a real national homeland. Awareness of the existence of a state that would always accept Jews and its creation of conditions for an autonomous and viable Jewish existence played an important role in the post-war Jewish-identity formation. Israel became a synonym for Jewish future, and the Jews came to feel that they were now living in a Diaspora rather than in exile, with the possibility of moving to their spiritual homeland at a time of their own choosing.

The year 1967 was particularly significant for the post-war generation, which, as described above, did not want to identify with the weak and murdered Jews. Israel's victory and its emergence as David overcoming Goliath, led Viennese Jews to feel that they were 'little Davids' in their fight against anti-Semitism and in their conflicts with the Austrian government. It also gave rise to new and strong feelings of solidarity with Israel: many young Jews heeded calls to volunteer in kibbutzim and cities, and went to Israel – often against the wishes of their parents (S. Feiger, 2007).

The significance of Israel in Viennese Jewish life is also manifest in various issues of *Die Gemeinde*. "Through the mid-1960s, about a third of the articles…addressed Israeli matters. By the late 1960s, the average was well above 50 percent and, in the course of the 1970s and

1980s,…rarely…less than 60 percent" (Bunzl, 2003, p. 157). These articles dealt with the security situation as well as with daily life and scientific, technological, social and cultural developments, enabling the Jews to identify with a new and modern Jewish state, to be proud of it and to follow its achievements. Thus, the post-war generation grew up as Israel was built up, and for them its existence was a kind of miracle, its military successes gave them inner support, and they were ready to fight for its right to exist (S. Feiger, 2007).

The situation changed again, however, in the aftermath of the First Lebanon War in 1982 and especially after the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000. Israel no longer seemed to be in existential danger and was thus taken somewhat for granted. In addition, it appeared in the non-Jewish media as the aggressor state, which influenced the opinions and attitudes of both gentiles and Jews, especially members of the second post-war generation. In the past, Jews stood unconditionally behind Israel, irrespective of how critical they were of the politics of the Israeli government. In recent decades, however, Israel is more likely to be criticized openly. The fading of the ideal image of Israel and the lessened impact of ideology in general led to a change in the perception of Zionism. The dream of moving to Israel was replaced by support for Israel from abroad, while strengthening Jewishness outside of Israel. *Die Gemeinde* reflects this new emphasis on strengthening local Jewish life. Even though Israel is still the subject of much of its issues, the "Insider", the part dealing with the Viennese community grew from a single page in the mid-1980s to four pages in 1995 and eighteen pages in 2007, before appearing for the first time in July 2007 as a separate publication of twenty pages, reflecting the increased number of institutions and level of activity in Jewish Vienna. To be sure, Israel was still important, but far greater weight was now attached to the need to strengthen Jewish life in Vienna, independent of Israel, and this is now viewed as a critical element in shaping the identity and ensuring the future of Viennese Jewry. While Israel is perceived as the spiritual homeland, Vienna is the physical one.

The platform of Gesher shows this wish for independence from Israeli politics, and their strong local Jewish identity: "We view a separation between Israeli politics and the IKG agenda as suitable for counteracting the equating of all the Jews with Israel. The renaming of the IKG (*Israelite* religious community) to 'Jewish community' is therefore not only reasonable, but also up-to-date, since it takes into account the Jewish self-confidence".[23]

d. Austrian politics towards its Jews

In the 1950s and 1960s, Austria sought to keep quiet issues such as the involvement of Austrians in Nazi crimes, its subsequent unwillingness to face up to its past and its behavior towards the Jewish population. The requests of the IKG for restitution and Simon Wiesenthal's campaigns against Nazis holding significant political positions were portrayed by the Austrian politicians and population as disturbing the social order and undermining the population's positive self-image. The situation worsened after the 1975 United Nations 'Zionism is Racism' resolution, which influenced the "anti-Israel actions of Bruno Kreisky" (Gerstenfeld, 2005). He played a crucial role in making Yasser Arafat and the PLO respectable in the West. Kreisky insisted "on presenting terrorist leaders like Gaddafi and Arafat as admirable 'patriots' and 'freedom-fighters'" (Wistrich, 2007, p. 14) and at the same time called Israel a semi-fascist state[24]. The Jewish community was irritated by his attitude towards Israel and his decision to hold talks with the PLO, as well as his acceptance of the promotion of known – but mostly not convicted – former Nazis to prominent public positions, and his fight against Wiesenthal. Nevertheless, the Jewish community remained quiet out of fear that criticizing the popular chancellor would heighten anti-Semitism. Further contributing to this quiescence was the fact that the IKG leadership was Social Democratic and strongly linked to Kreisky's party, the SPÖ.

The situation changed in the 1980s, when the Austrian population began to discuss publicly the period of the National Socialist (NS) regime. The series *The Holocaust* directed by Marvin J. Chomsky, which was broadcast by Austrian TV in 1979 and seen by millions of Austrians was the catalyst of this new public discourse, which peaked in the mid-1980s in the Waldheim affair. During the campaign for the 1986 Austrian presidential elections, the ÖVP (the Christian-oriented, conservative Austrian People's Party) candidate Kurt Waldheim was accused by the World Jewish Congress (WJC) – most probably instigated by the SPÖ – of having concealed or, at least, incompletely disclosed his membership in the *Sturmabteilung* (paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party) and NS student federation, as well as his role as liaison officer in the German *Wehrmacht*. Waldheim justified himself by stating that "I just performed my duty", and that after more than forty years it had slipped his mind. The WJC accused – but without ever providing any proof – Waldheim of having committed war crimes in the Balkans while he was a German-army lieutenant in Greece and Yugoslavia at a time of brutal campaigns against Yugoslav partisans and the large-scale deportation of Jews

to death camps. These accusations moved the IKG unwillingly to the center of Austrian politics and forced Israel to downgrade its diplomatic representation to avoid the spectacle of an Israeli ambassador presenting his credentials to a person suspected of Nazi crimes.

The accusations triggered the Austrian government's establishment of a commission of historians (see below) to research Waldheim's role as a Wehrmacht officer in the occupied Balkans and Greece. Even before the official publication of the commission's results, its work and findings gave rise to extensive public discussions in Austria concerning Waldheim's past, the validity of his self-exoneration and the acceptability of Nazi perpetrators in influential political positions, and split the Austrian population into two camps: those who wished to continue to remain silent about the past and those who wanted the past, including Austria's post-war denial of guilt, to be examined critically. The Waldheim affair also brought young Jewish and non-Jewish Austrian intellectuals to form protest groups such as *Neues Österreich* to try and change deeply ingrained Austrian attitudes. For the first time since WWII, the Austrian public and politicians discussed and criticized the 'first victim' theory as a problematic element of the national ideology. This polarization of the Austrian population strengthened the Jewish community, since, in contrast to the previous post-war years, it was not alone in its fight against Waldheim and, more important, against the country's failure to face up to its past and its attempt to whitewash the guilt of a non-negligible part of its population.

During the election campaign, for the first time since 1945, anti-Semitism, mainly cautiously formulated, was used as a political weapon. Anti-Semitism did not increase but became more manifest. Anti-Semitic political speeches were followed by an immediate increase in anti-Semitic statements in the media – "Formerly Joseph Goebbels agitated against Austria. Today it is Edgar Bronfman"[25] – and incidents on the streets. Rabbi Biderman reported that "previously I had been verbally attacked once or twice a month, now two to three times a week"[26]. These anti-Semitic outbursts spread a certain panic among the Jews and an increased consideration of emigration, but also enabled the community to fight back more effectively (Weisz, 2004).

To the dismay of the Jewish community, Waldheim was elected Austrian president in May 1986. Nevertheless, "since 1987, the federal government and municipal authorities have sought to improve relations with Austrian Jews, world Jewry, and Israel" (Wistrich, 2000).

The government and the authorities increasingly supported the construction and renovation of synagogues, research projects on the Shoah, Jewish cultural activities, scholarly conferences on Jewish topics and Holocaust memory projects. They launched further educational programs – which had already begun in the Kreisky era – and asked for the rewriting of school textbooks, to counteract anti-Semitism and improve the understanding and knowledge about the Holocaust. Moreover, they seriously entered talks about restitution. In 1986, the mayor of Vienna, Helmut Zilk, announced the establishment of a Jewish museum, and the fiftieth anniversary of the Anschluss in 1988 was marked by several high-profile public commemoration ceremonies. The same year, the commission published its findings: though no concrete evidence could be found that Waldheim was guilty of explicit war crimes, it was proven that, contrary to his assertions, he was placed high enough to know about the crimes committed by the Nazi occupier in the Balkans and Greece, that given his education in legal matters he must have been aware that some of the actions of the German army and other German paramilitary groups were defined as crimes even by the German military law of the time, and that no document contained any indication that he opposed such crimes or even tried to hinder their execution. As a result of the findings, which were partly made public already before the official publication, and the public discussion they aroused, Waldheim became internationally isolated: he was banned from entering the United States, Canada and Israel, and many other countries declared a state visit unwanted; only in the Vatican and the Arab states was he a welcome visitor.

However, more important, Austria admitted for the first time its *Mitschuld*, co-guilt for what had happened during the Holocaust. In his speech at the parliament in June 1991, Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky qualified the official 'first victim' thesis, acknowledged the co-responsibility of the Austrian population for the suffering they inflicted on other individuals and peoples, and apologized to the survivors and the descendants of the victims. In June 1993, Vranitzky, who more than compensated for Waldheim's inability to represent Austria abroad, became the first Austrian chancellor to visit Israel. In a speech at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, he repeatedly acknowledged the role of Austrians in the Nazi machinery and spoke about the responsibility of each and every Austrian to remember and to seek justice.

In 1995, Austria created the *National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism*, which makes direct payments to Austrian victims of Nazism and supports research

and remembrance projects concerning the Holocaust. And in 1998, sixty years after the Anschluss, the Austrian government created an official commission of historians to research the issue of Jewish property confiscated during WWII. “New legislation passed by the Austrian parliament on stolen art objects still in Austrian museums and collections places Austria ahead of most other countries on this issue” (Wistrich, 2000).

As a result of this radical turnabout in the attitudes and public stance of the Austrian government and populace, the Jews began to anticipate social integration despite or because of their being Jews, and to foresee a better future for themselves in the country. Even many of the former émigrés and communists, who hid their Judaism and facts about their life during the Shoah, or even left the IKG soon after the war, declared themselves publicly as belonging to the Jewish community and many of them and their descendants joined the IKG (Lappin, 2007). Furthermore, the Jews were now eager to present their culture and Judaism itself to the non-Jewish population, and were ready to give public expression to their Jewish identity and to live their Jewish life more openly. In addition, the IKG gained a good standing within Austrian public opinion, as was manifest at the festivities for the 150-year jubilee of the IKG in 1999, in which the entire ‘official Austria’ – the governing elite – and people from all spheres of Austrian social life were present.

Had those festivities taken place “a year later, only the ‘other Austria’ would have been there, but not the governing one, since in 2000, Haider’s Freedom Party and the People’s Party joined to form a coalition government” (Rabinovici, 2007). IKG president Muzicant and other European and American Jewish representatives now positioned themselves against the new government. The speeches of Muzicant and other Jewish and non-Jewish, Austrian and other European public figures at the demonstration against the coalition government under the title “Nein zur Koalition mit dem Rassismus” (No to the Coalition with Racism) at the Heldenplatz in Vienna in January 2000 had their effects on the Viennese Jews, and dampened the good mood of the 1990s. Furthermore, Muzicant was now portrayed by the rulers as an enemy of the state since he opposed the Austrian government’s position on restitution negotiations, which, as in the past, was to seek to drag the issue out and reach agreements on class-action suits in the United States at the expense of Austrian Jewry. This the IKG could not accept.

Jews again began to suffer from anti-Semitic activities, such as 'Jews out' graffiti, desecration of Jewish tombstones, and verbal and physical attacks (see the section "Rechte Ecke" [right corner] in each publication of *Die Gemeinde*). This anti-Semitic eruption was triggered by the racist and pro-SS (Schutzstaffel, a major Nazi military organization) statements of Haider and the FPÖ, which gave sections of the Austrian population the legitimacy to reveal their deep anti-Semitic roots. Jews again began to feel they might have to pack their suitcases; some even bought apartments in Israel. As a consequence the Jews felt separated, if not excluded from Austrian society and an urge to meet in Jewish circles, leading to increased activities at the community center (Rabbi Pardes, 2005).

This tense situation relaxed after the elections in 2006 which ended the ÖVP-FPÖ (since 2005 its offspring BZÖ) coalition government. This led to some improvement in the relationship between the IKG and the government, but it did not bring about a return to the situation of the 1990s. Public expression of anti-Semitism declined with Haider's removal from federal power. Restitution negotiations continued in a quarrelsome manner, but concluded successfully.

Talk of emigration died down. Moreover, the IKG leadership, with the financial support of the Austrian government, engaged in constructing a large compound which will include the communal school, the new old-age home of the IKG and the Hakoah sports and leisure center. The latter was inaugurated by Austrian governmental and IKG leaders in March 2008 as part of the high-profile public ceremonies commemorating the seventieth recurrence of the Anschluss. On the eve of the parliament's commemoration session the IKG, the federal and Viennese governments reached an agreement on the location and financing of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies hosting Simon Wiesenthal's archives.

e. 'We, the Jews, are here and will stay here'

In the immediate post-war years, the Jews believed that they were living in Austria only temporarily. They saw no future for Jewish life in Austria and certainly did not feel part of an Austrian society that itself was in search of its national identity. The survivor generation in Vienna did not regard Austria as its homeland; on the contrary, many survivors hated Austria but stayed in the country for various personal reasons. Often they felt guilty for having stayed and passed on these feelings to the next generation. Their sense of guilt was heightened by

the universal Jewish condemnation of Jews who chose to live in the land of the murderers. A good indication of this belief was their unwillingness to donate funds for the reconstruction of Jewish infrastructure in Vienna, while contributing to Israel.

Furthermore, the populace perceived the Jews as a collective entity, 'the Jews', and thus distinct from themselves, 'the Austrians'. Among other things this made it extremely difficult for Jews to acquire a distinct sense of Austrian identity, and more often than not they developed an emotional ambiguity towards it. Only a small minority of Jews, among them Bruno Kreisky, had "a Jewish identity, which, despite the Holocaust, began to dissolve into a general Austrian identity" (Pelinka, 1997 p. 262).

This began to change in the late 1970s. The construction and inauguration of the *Gemeindezentrum* (communal center next to the main synagogue) in 1980 reflected a growing feeling that 'we, the Jews, are here and will stay here'.

But an intra-Jewish discourse on the Austrian identity of the Jews began and gathered momentum following the Waldheim affair, promoted on the one hand by the active dealing of the Austrian population with its own history and the place of the Jews in it, and on the other hand by the conscious desire of many members of the post-war Jewish generation to live in Vienna and build their future in the city as Viennese.

These discussions on the question of Austrian identity were conducted primarily as an intra-Jewish affair so as to avoid being stamped 'non-Austrian' by the Austrian population. In general, Jews have difficulties defining the Austrian component of their identity: most Jews feel loyal Austrian citizens, yet in intra-Jewish discourse still refer to the gentile population as 'Austrian'. Depending on the context of the discussion, they define themselves as Jews in Austria, as Jews with Austrian citizenship, as Austrian Jews, meaning that they are part of Austrian Jewry, or feel Austrian but not patriotic. It should be noted that since the Austrian identity is itself a development of the Second Republic, many gentiles also do not feel patriotic; a 1993 survey found that only 61 percent of Austrian citizens indicated that they were proud Austrians (Bruckmüller, 1994, p. 26).

Moreover, Viennese Jews' identity is Viennese rather than Austrian, echoing the rather weak commonality between persons living in the different provinces, reflected in the federal nature

of Austria's constitution. Furthermore, for many local and international Jews, Vienna which stands for culture and beauty has a more positive connotation than Austria which is commonly associated with the Shoah, Waldheim or Haider. A 'Viennese Jew' therefore has higher status than an 'Austrian Jew'. Thus, in Austria they are Viennese, and abroad they emphasize the Viennese and Viennese-Jewish elements of their identity.

Many Jews see Israel as their spiritual homeland in parallel to their connection to Vienna as their physical place of abode. Some gentile circles have used this argument to cast doubt upon the Jews' loyalty to Austria. The emotional attachment to more than one country is unknown to most of the Austrian gentiles but is becoming a general phenomenon in Europe due to the increased proportion of migrants and the growing importance of a new European identity.

Most of the Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union lived in Israel before moving to Vienna. They did not experience the trauma of the Shoah and the post-war years in Vienna, and thus have a more open attitude towards Austrian identity than the Jews of Viennese and Central European origin. They feel thankful to the state for having accepted them and given them the opportunity to build new lives (Gilkarov, 2007). They see Austria alongside Israel as their homeland – the Soviet Union is only part of their memories (Ascherov, 2007). The Austrian identity is thus more easily adopted by the Jews from the former Soviet Union than it was for the Shoah survivors and partly their descendants, and is added to their Bukhara or Georgian and Israeli identities.

In contrast to the Jews arriving after WWII and in migration waves thereafter, these immigrants came to Vienna intending to settle and build their future in the country. By the end of the 1990s, they had enriched Vienna's Jewish infrastructure by establishing the Sephardic center with a Bukhara and a Georgian synagogue; the Bukhara youth organization Jad Bejad; two associations representing the Bukhara Jews, one of which is linked to Chabad; the Jehuda Halevi Zentrum, a music and cultural center for Jewish children and youth; and an array of Sephardi-owned kosher shops, butchers and restaurants (see the yearly service booklets of the IKG).

These religious and cultural developments indicate that the Sephardic Jews feel settled and envision their future in the country. They also have made the Jewish presence more conspicuous.

All in all, the additions to Vienna's Jewish infrastructure – from eating to learning – have made it a more interesting center for Jews, which offers them the prospect of living in a vibrant Jewish environment within a city with great cultural and environmental amenities.

f. The IKG leadership

The significant changes that Viennese Jewry underwent since 1945 – among them, the strengthening of its self-confidence, the increase in desire to stay and build a Jewish life in Vienna that sees its future there rather than looking back to the period of the Shoah, yet continues to regard Israel as the spiritual homeland – are clearly reflected in the changes in the membership, objectives and patterns of operation of the IKG's leadership group over the years.

The national politics of the IKG in the immediate post-war years reflected low Jewish identity and self-confidence. Until the late 1970s the IKG, led first by communists and then by Social Democrats, kept a low profile in order not to arouse anti-Semitism, and complied fully with the wishes of the federal and regional governments. They sold or leased communal real estate for almost nothing, and even gave away properties of religious importance, such as the remains of unused synagogues and cemeteries (Weisz, 2004). They adopted a non-confrontational stance in an effort to ensure tolerance for the Jews in Austria and gain state support. For the first four decades representatives of the Jewish community absented themselves from Vienna's public spheres. The IKG focused solely on internal religious administration and made itself 'invisible' publicly.

This changed after the mid-1980s when the IKG leadership began to assert their Jewish identity in public, as evidenced by their determined battle in the 1990s for restitutions, and currently for the Eruv project. Initially the restitution negotiations were conducted quietly by the old IKG leadership in order not to arouse anti-Semitism. The new leadership, however, believes that it is its duty to fight publicly for the rights of the robbed victims, and is of the opinion that openness and a self-confident public stance will enhance the gentile public's

respect for and acceptance of Jews. It is not surprising therefore that in order to receive the needed approval for building an Eruv, the IKG embarked on a campaign to explain the need for an Eruv to various Austrian institutions and the public[27], an action unthinkable two decades earlier.

The leadership and the Jewish population have also sought to make Jewish culture an integral part of Vienna's cultural landscape. The many public Jewish events, such as the yearly Jewish street festival and the *Chazzanut* (Jewish liturgical chanting) concerts have become cultural highlights for Jews and gentiles alike, and the Chanukah candle lighting next to St. Stephan Cathedral in the very heart of Vienna, as well as the opening of the *Jüdisches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung* (Jewish Institute for Adult Education) in 1989 that caters mainly to non-Jewish students, are all evidence of this strengthened self-confidence and new public self-understanding.

The IKG politics around the Waldheim affair in 1986 reveal the differences between the different post-war generations. Before the Austrian presidential elections, IKG president Hacker preferred to "follow a strategy of non-partisanship in the hope that a low profile would aid the country's progressive forces" (Bunzl, 2000, p. 166). The IKG did their best to avoid anything that could be understood as an electoral endorsement, and issued a general and mild declaration that appealed to the candidates' campaigns not to let themselves be tempted to stir up destructive emotions[28]. Hacker believed that the fight against anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism had to be coordinated with and assisted by the Austrian government – "not the IKG and not the Austrian Jews have to take a stand against anti-Semitism, but the non-Jews"[29] – and that the IKG was not a political forum. As a reaction to this non-confrontational policy, the JG introduced a no-confidence motion against Hacker in 1987. The generation of Jews born after the Shoah was unwilling to continue with the strategy of appeasement and sought to articulate a clear Jewish position independent of the expectations of the country's political leaders. The young generation refused to accept the victim role, opposed suffering in silence and head-in-the-sand policies and was determined to stand up for the rights of the Jews, even if this meant criticizing Austrian politicians and politics. They advocated a publicly outspoken Jewish community with "more Jewishness and more Jewish self-confidence" (Muzicant, 2007, p. 1).

The journal of the students' organization published articles accusing some ÖVP politicians of agitating personally against the Jewish people. "Pitiless, blind from craving for the long-awaited electoral victory they offended, insulted and fought us Jews and cared rather little about our feelings and security".[30]

Thus, after the 1999 elections when the ÖVP and the FPÖ were negotiating to form a coalition government (which eventually materialized in February 2000), the official Jewish response was forthright and militant rather than muted as it had been during the Waldheim affair over a decade earlier. The Viennese community went to the street to protest the formation of the new government. Symbolically, the demonstration was held at the Heldenplatz, the place were Hitler held his first speech after the Anschluss in 1938.

The controversies between Muzicant and Haider provide a good illustration of the changes in IKG leadership style. Ariel Muzicant personifies the self-confidence of the post-war generation. He openly criticizes Austrian politicians and politics and makes frequent and outspoken media appearances. Thus he did not remain silent in the face of Jörg Haider's declarations that the Third Reich had a "reasonable employment policy" (1991), that the members of the Waffen-SS were "respectable persons with character" (1995), and his reference to the concentration camps as "detention camps" (1995). At a press conference in March 1999 before the election for the prime minister of the state of Carinthia, in which Haider was a candidate, Muzicant declared, "I do not agree to this, I am not going to keep my mouth shut". He recalled the situation in 1938 and asserted that democracy also includes the right to self-protection[31]. In contrast to Hacker during the Waldheim affair, Muzicant thus sought openly to influence national elections. He also campaigned openly against Haider in the 2001 Viennese municipal council elections. In an IKG publication, Muzicant writes that Haider's politics of racism and anti-Semitism discredits Austria and that "only the voters can put an end to this spook"[32]. Muzicant confronted Haider in the media and the courts, and sued him for various statements he made during the run-up to the Vienna elections, such as that he could not understand how anyone called Ariel – also the brand name of a well-known washing powder – could have so much "dirt on his stick" – equivalent to the English 'to have a skeleton in the closet'.

Muzicant's determination to combat the FPÖ also came to the fore in the case of Moishe Friedman against the Machsike Hadass school. Friedman appealed to the courts after the

school expelled his children following his attendance at the Teheran Holocaust-denial conference and his public desecration of the Shabbat (e.g. by speaking into a microphone at the anti-Israeli Al-Quds rally in Berlin on October 21, 2006). The FPÖ declared that Friedman's lawyer, a party member, would give up the case if Muzicant agreed to engage in talks with its leadership. Its rationale was that without an FPÖ-linked lawyer, Friedman's chances of winning the case would have been greatly diminished as many judges were affiliated with that party (Mandel, 2007). Nevertheless, Muzicant would not agree.

The impact of the changes in Austrian-Jewish identity on communal objectives first became apparent at the end of the 1970s. Till then the IKG leadership's main concern was the physical survival of the Jews and their relation to the ruling politicians – who did not have any interest in a strong Jewish community. Therefore, the IKG established only the basic infrastructure needed for a religious association, such as synagogues, religious education, youth organizations and an old-age home, to maintain the Jewish community physically and spiritually until the last Jew had left the country. Before the IKG election in 1972, the Zionist bloc published a list of what was lacking, which included a Jewish school, a kindergarten, cultural programs, a real understanding of the needs of the youth, and the upkeep of Jewish memorials (Adunka, 2000, p. 348).

With their entry into IKG politics in the late 1970s, the generation born immediately after the war was committed to altering the Viennese community's self-perception as a Liquidationsgemeinde. They focused particularly on building in Vienna a sound Jewish infrastructure beginning with the establishment of Jewish educational institutions. Their proposal that the IKG set up such a school – private ultra-Orthodox schools existed already since 1946 – became a major point of disagreement between the old and the young leadership generation (Hodik, 2007). This generation, which had grown up in Vienna and chose freely to live there, and whose parents had already succeeded in ensuring their physical and economic survival, saw the establishment of a Jewish school as "an axiom for Jewish thinking" (Hodik, 2007), critical for Jewish-identity formation and for securing future Jewish life in Vienna. In many cases, the young adult Jews whose Jewish identity was formed and whose leadership skills were honed in Jewish youth and student organizations in the 1960s and 1970s were those who now pushed for and established a kindergarten (1973), a Jewish school (1980) and a Jewish professional development center, the JBBZ (1998) under the auspices of the IKG.

The new leadership elected in 1981 (see IIc.) also changed the IKG's self-perception as a religious community to that of a community that is part of the Jewish people. Immediately after the elections the IKG changed its long-standing policy and practice of excluding Jews who were not IKG members from religious rites, for example, denying them a Jewish burial. According to Hodik, the IKG after 1981 regarded itself as responsible for *all* the Jews in Vienna, and its conception of Judaism was based on the three pillars of Torah, the Jewish people and the State of Israel. For the new leadership, which was fighting not only against political and popular anti-Semitism but also to promote a stronger Jewish identity among the Jews in Vienna it was obvious that 'being part of the Jewish people' was now no longer in accordance with the Israelitengesetz. The IKG and the Jewish organizations – e.g. the youth organizations as well as Chabad, Zehut, which operates in coordination with the IKG, and Mizrachi – have been very involved in stimulating the formation of a strong Jewish identity, albeit each in its own particular way and image. Nevertheless, all believe in the importance of strengthening Jewish identity through the study of Judaism, associating with other Jews, creating an ongoing and well-rooted local religious and cultural leadership, and promoting communal cooperation and institutional consolidation, as noted above (see IId.).

Although the second post-war generation had not yet entered the IKG leadership, its approach to and sense of Jewish identity and Austrian-Jewish identity foreshadowed the future direction of the IKG. The immediate post-war generation's main contribution to the process of Jewish-identity formation was institutional – building up a Jewish infrastructure – and psychological – a new-found personal and group self-confidence. The second post-war generation's distinctive contribution to the process came via the renewal of interest in Judaism as a religion and a new look at Jewish identity, and via the further strengthening of Jewish self-confidence in Vienna. Having grown up in a secure economic environment and in a Jewish community with an infrastructure, the members of the second post-war generation continue to examine their Jewish identity in depth and to promote study and discussion of Judaism among the youth, as evidenced by the increase in the number of sites of teaching and a manifest tendency towards greater personal religiosity. In addition to the Talmud-Torah school and other ultra-Orthodox educational institutions, lessons are offered daily for ultra-Orthodox as well as for Modern Orthodox to secular youth and adults by rabbis and teachers from various Orthodox groups which in general are well attended (S. Feiger 2007).

This generation displays its Jewishness more openly than their parents. They are not afraid to wear kippot (skullcaps) in the street, in contrast with their parents who generally wear caps or hats in public. Similarly, the previous generation's habit of using the expression *mishelanu* (one of us) to refer to Jews in public, so as not to attract the attention of non-Jews, has largely given way to the self-conscious public use of the word Jew. Such self-confidence and feeling of being responsible for their fellow Jews has led many young people to volunteer to train and serve as security guards in front of synagogues during services. This solidarity and the conviction that "we protect the Jewish people" (Rabbi Eisenberg, 2005) has generated a significant degree of group pride that has become a major element in their Jewish identity and contributed greatly to its overall strengthening.

This turnabout from aged, apprehensive and insecure Shoah survivors to young, trained and armed Jewish defense guards is emblematic of the development of Jewish self-confidence in Vienna. In the 1960s and 1970s, people felt uneasy about displaying their Jewishness openly and even ultra-Orthodox Jews removed their head coverings on entering government offices (Mandel, 2007). Today, however, the ultra-Orthodox Jews wear their traditional garb in public and most Jews do not seek to hide or disguise their Jewishness.

IV. European-Jewish identity and cooperation – the future direction of Viennese Jewry?

a. European identity and European-Jewish identity

The debate over the Austrian EU membership in 1995 revealed the pro-EU attitudes of politically engaged Jews. "The percentage of Jews in the various parties answering the question about joining the EU affirmatively was significantly higher than among their gentile counterparts. Non-Jews in the green party (*die Grünen*) were very EU skeptical, while the Jews were not" (Rabinovici, 2007). Furthermore, the journal *Das Jüdische Echo*, published annually by the Austrian Jewish academics and the Jewish Student's Union, named its 1996 issue 'Vision Europe'. The aim of this issue was to foster a European identity among Vienna's Jews. Leon Zelman, the editor of the journal, emphasized that "the vision of Europe was formed in Jewish minds long ago…in lowly rooms of the ghettos and the glamorous salons of the big cities", and that the people of today had the obligation to honor the mission of these Jewish pioneers (1996, p. 9).

In the European countries, in general, Jews are more European-minded than gentiles; and this is also the case in Austria. This stems from the fact that the Jews are, and always were, more cosmopolitan than the rest of the population in their respective countries. Moreover, many Jews perceive the European Union as more dependable than their national governments, which could, as in the past, become less protective of them. The Austrian Jews saw the EU membership referendum as a vote against nationalistic and narrowly provincial voices in the country and against Haider's xenophobic agenda that could "easily be turned against the Jewish community"[33]. Furthermore, European identity is more acceptable to Austrian Jews and to Jews abroad than Austrian identity. European identity may thus be seen as an alternative to Austrian identity, which is stained by the events of the past. Over the post-war years, as noted, the Viennese Jews built a strong Jewish national or even Zionist identity. In the last decade, however, a process of European-identity formation has occurred within Viennese Jewry especially among the young generation. Significantly, this European identity is perceived as connecting them to European values and culture, giving rise to feelings of being European as distinct from Americans or Israelis – "we are in Europe, they are in the Orient" (Bunzl, 2003, p. 155). Accordingly many young Viennese Jews move to London rather than to cities in America or Israel. This does not mean necessarily that they feel part of the EU or of a European people. The notion of the EU and of EU citizenship is still abstract, and the individual Jew, in general, does not feel that his daily life is influenced by his country's membership of the EU. As Muzicant (2005) put it, "we are Europeans, but define ourselves in Europe first of all as Jews".

This is also the case in the European-Jewish context. The majority of Viennese Jews, like Jews in other European countries, has not (yet) developed a sense of European-Jewish identity; they do not perceive themselves as part of a European Jewry. Rather, they place Israel at the center of their concerns and evince little interest in other European Jewish communities except when anti-Semitic incidents occur. As is true of European populations in general, differences in culture, language and identity are a major obstacle to a common identity among European Jews. For example, the Viennese Jews are separated from Jews in East and Central European countries by their varying approaches and attitudes to Judaism and Jewish identity: Viennese Jewry is very traditional and Orthodox-minded whereas Jews in the Central and East European countries generally base their Jewishness on ethnicity and common history rather than religion, and in some instances accept patrilinear descent as a criterion for membership. But this is not all. Identification with other European Jews is also

rather weak even when they share similar religious attitudes and a common language because of historical and national-cultural differences.

Furthermore, while European Jews may feel European as distinct from the American or Israeli Jews, the latter are not perceived as 'other' in stark contrast to the salience and centrality of the non-Jew as 'other' in Jewish identity. In the absence of such an 'other', European-Jewish identity will have to be built, if at all, primarily on similarity and solidarity among European Jews. Under such conditions, ignorance and the lack of interest in other European Jewish communities are hurdles that must be overcome. The idea of a European-Jewish journalistic network, to enable the dissemination of information about the various Jewish communities died even before the first significant meeting (S. Feiger, 2007).

In addition, the mass of the Jewish population does not feel affected by Jewish activities at the European level and knows little or nothing about the agendas or decisions of European-Jewish organizations in which only the leaders of the community participate. Thus most Viennese Jews are unaware that many developments within their own community are the result of European-Jewish organizational decisions and actions, as is made clear in the newsletters of the European-Jewish organizations (described in the next sub-section), readily available on the Internet.

Nevertheless, the idea of the European-Jewish identity exists and persists, propagated and elaborated mainly by those Jews active in European-Jewish organizations, as well as by Jewish intellectuals. Within the communities, it is most common among young Jews involved in common activities with their counterparts from other countries, whether within youth organizational frameworks or Europe-wide singles activities.

Apart from the intellectuals who are interested in the question of European-Jewish identity *per se* (see, e.g. Pinto 1996 and 2000), the meetings and cooperative efforts of Jews from different countries, during which they come to know each other, discover similarities and work together on common issues, are a significant catalyst for the formation of European-Jewish identity. In interviews which are part of this research project individuals from all spheres of Jewish politics and Jewish life emphasized that European-Jewish cooperation is almost always built solely on personal contacts, and that the promotion and spread of the feeling of belonging to a European Jewry requires the further proliferation of such contacts.

b. European-Jewish cooperation

Since the 1990s the extent of European-Jewish interaction and cooperation has increased significantly among Viennese Jewish youth. Youth organizations had for some decades been involved in joint activities with their counterparts in other European countries but these now became more frequent. Thus, for example, members of the religious-Zionist youth organization Bnei Akiva (BA) used to meet primarily for two weeks at the pan-European camp Sayarim and a few days at the Avoda camp in Israel, and some of them went on a year of *Hachshar*a[34]. Today, however, throughout the year, there are additional seminars, *Shabbatonim* (weekends) and an annual song contest. These interactions have led not only to personal friendships but also to the creation of an effective network of European-Jewish cooperation.

Similarly, the Weinberg-Danube region project of the JDC is aimed specifically at developing and empowering Jewish leadership in Central Europe by bringing together students and young adults, providing them with different multicultural Jewish experiences and the opportunity to learn more about their Jewish identity so as to enhance cooperation between them (Diener, 2006). In Vienna, the JDC conducts a similar program.

Such meetings and common activities, however, involve mainly Viennese Jewry's youth. The adult majority has few opportunities and stimuli to foster European-Jewish awareness, since there are not enough influential persons within the Viennese community who promote it (Allerhand, 2004). To be sure, over the years anti-Semitic or anti-Israeli activities have tended to heighten solidarity among European Jews and led to the organization of common demonstrations, as well as of simultaneous demonstrations in different European cities according to a common agenda. But this is far from the degree of solidarity and ongoing mutual identification required for European-Jewish identity.

Furthermore, the explicit aim of these various manifestations of European-Jewish cooperation and congregation are the formation and strengthening of Jewish identity in general and not the creation of a European-Jewish identity. Thus, it is still the prevailing view in Vienna that the community needs first and foremost to build up Jewish life in Vienna before opening up to Europe. Nevertheless, the investment in the youth and in leadership development may yet

lead to a strengthening of European-Jewish cooperation and the emergence of a sense of common identity.

European-Jewish organizational and communal cooperation and European-Jewish identity are closely connected and mutually reinforcing. Cooperation contributes to the creation of a European-Jewish identity since it enables the Jews from various countries to deepen their knowledge about one another and thus promotes recognition of similarities and feelings of solidarity among the European Jews, thereby strengthening the sense of belonging to a single European-Jewish group. In turn, this identity fosters cooperation since a common identity is necessary to overcome personal, regional and national interests, and increase willingness to pool resources to attain collective goals that are beyond the reach of any single community. A common identity among European Jewry is necessary for the establishment of a supra-national entity that will be listened to by European institutions (Parliament, Commission and Council). Once established, such a supra-national European-Jewish representative body will seek to unite and strengthen Jewry in each of the participating countries, if only to maintain and heighten its own effectiveness.

European rabbis grasped the importance of continent-wide contacts and cooperation and established the Conference of European Rabbis (CER) in 1956, well in advance of the European Economic Community, and in that sense it was “a forerunner of the EU” (Rabbi Eisenberg, 2005). Today the CER is one of three main European-Jewish organizations, the others being the European Jewish Congress (EJC) and the European Council of Jewish Communities (ECJC). With the establishment of the EU, “the most successful example of institutionalized international policy cooperation in the modern world” (Moravcsik, 1993, p. 473), cooperation and networking became common and necessary to set agendas and influence policy processes. In the European arena, therefore, these organizations act as public policy networks seeking to influence the political, social and economic decision-making in EU institutions in favor of European Jewry. In the Jewish arena, these organizations serve as the leading decision-making bodies of European Jewry, akin to EU institutions vis-à-vis the member countries.

The CER brings together all European Orthodox Chief Rabbis and senior rabbinical judges under one roof. It holds consultancy status as an international non-governmental organization at the Council of Europe and within EU institutions[35]. Internally, the CER deals mainly with

Jewish religious and educational issues, as well as seeking to counter assimilation, foster cooperation between the communities, gain support for Israel and combat anti-Semitism.

The European Council of Jewish Communal Services was established in 1968 as a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe, but following the political developments of the 1990s that accelerated the process of European unification, it was re-organized in 1999 as the ECJC. Its official aim is to "strengthen Jewish life in Europe"[36] by planning and coordinating activities and enhancing partnership between the communities in the fields of social welfare, formal and informal Jewish education, leadership training and culture. It includes communal professionals in these fields.

The EJC was established in 1986 and serves as a platform for political cooperation at the level of the presidents of the various Jewish communities. Its tasks are to represent the European Jewish communities at the EU and national levels and to international organizations, to fight anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism and to foster Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Cooperation among the European Jewish communities occurs within single organizations as well as between the organizations since some issues are field-crossing, such as attempts in different countries and at the EU level to ban kosher slaughter, ostensibly on animal-protection grounds. But for the European-Jewish organizations the political issues raised by the attack on kosher slaughter were much broader and were interpreted as "the attempt of the Christian-dominated society in the EU to change traditions, secularize lifestyles and to subordinate other religions under their *Leitkultur* [leading culture]" (Kramer, 2007), and hence in violation of Article 10, § 1 (Freedom of … religion) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union[37].

Cooperation also occurs among individual countries within an organization. Also within European Jewry, some communities have more common issues (e.g. language) than others, thus fostering regional cooperation. Austrian and German Jewish communities are considering a common religion-teacher training, e.g. master's studies at the University of Heidelberg with a curriculum leading to ordination as rabbi. The two countries have a similar history and vision of Jewish education, which differs significantly from that of Israeli teachers actually working in the two countries (Muzicant, 2005).

Reflecting European Jewry's newfound self-confidence, the European-Jewish organizations have sought to foster and maintain a degree of independence from Israeli and American organizations.

Unlike the CER and the ECJC which from the onset were established by European Jews to serve European Jewry, the EJC was spun off from the European branch of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in 1986 as a new body with independent structures. But while its members continued to see their organization as part of World Jewry's institutional network, they believed that they were more competent than the American Jews to handle European matters because Europe's distinctive political culture and issues and Europe-specific manifestations of universal problems, such as anti-Semitism, could best be dealt with in a 'European way'.

Recent developments, however, raise the two questions 'What is the extent of Europe?' and 'What is the European way?'. In 2007, Moshe Kantor of Russia was elected president of the EJC. Kantor, who declared that he was a "true believer in European Jewry"[38], ran on a platform of supporting Jewish communal activities education in Europe, strengthening Jewish identity and counteracting anti-Semitism and xenophobia. He defeated the former president Pierre Besnainou of France who emphasized the importance of fighting anti-Semitism, anti-Israeli propaganda in the EU and the Iranian threat. This electoral contest ignited a "simmering battle over control of the EJC between some of the Western European nations involved in founding the congress and the Russian president"[39].

As a consequence, there has been a recent development whose impact on European Jewry it is still too early to assess. At an extraordinary session that was held in Paris on February 10, 2008, the General Assembly of the EJC had to vote on a new constitution that had been many years in drafting, the extension of mandates for elected officers, the establishment of a working committee to re-assess the demographic figures of European Jewry and the granting to Hungary of a permanent seat on the EJC Executive. The draft constitution was adopted 63-22[40]. However, after the delegates voted 51-34 to extend the term of the current EJC executive board to four years from two, France, Austria and Portugal suspended their membership. Muzicant argued that a retroactive extension of EJC president Kantor's term was unacceptable especially since the latter, because of his close ties to Russian president Putin, sought to derogate the EJC's efforts to fight the Iranian threat, which in his view should be an EJC priority. The seceding delegates announced that they intended to establish a

"European Union Jewish Congress" (EUJC) (Muzicant, 2008) whose membership would be restricted to Jewish communities in EU countries[41].

According to Muzicant who, as IKG representative, for many years has been active and prominent on the European-Jewish organizational scene[42], European-Jewish cooperation rests on Jewish identity within the European context rather than on European-Jewish identity. Thus, while the EU institutional framework influences the structure and pattern of activity of European-Jewish organizations, these relations exist because Jews in European countries have common goals and face common problems (some of which are distinctively different from those faced by Israel and American Jews), for example, large concentrations of Muslim immigrants creating new sources of anti-Semitism (see Rauscher, 2004), fighting attempts at the EU level or by individual European countries to ban kosher slaughter or as in some Scandinavian countries, the traditional method of circumcision. In this view, "this is what holds us together and not the fact that we are Europeans" (Muzicant, 2005).

Thus, European-Jewish interaction and cooperation have been fostered by the members of the post-war generations, some of whom have been very active in European-Jewish organizations. Nevertheless, at all levels this interaction and cooperation are based mainly on the fact that the actors are Jews, rather than European Jews. Only the future will tell whether increasing European-Jewish cooperation – or European Union-Jewish cooperation – will generate an integrated European-Jewish, or European Union-Jewish, identity or whether the Jews in the European countries will continue to define themselves in terms of the country of citizenship.

V. Conclusion

Despite the predictions in 1945 that the Viennese Jewish community would soon disappear, since the 1970s it has developed a new self-confidence that is at the base of the birth of a new – not the rebirth of the pre-1938 – Jewry. It has built up a democratic community uniting under one roof a high degree of Jewish heterogeneity, and established a remarkable educational, social and religious infrastructure. In all, it is characterized by a multi-faceted and flourishing Jewish life that accommodates varying expressions of Jewish identity both ethnic and religious, and distinctive sense of Viennese-Jewish identity which fosters cooperation between the various parts of Viennese Jewry.

These developments reflect significant demographic, psychological and cultural changes within Viennese Jewry. In the 1970s and 1980s, the generation born after the Shoah, unlike its predecessor, began to view positively the possibility of a Jewish future in Vienna. The legacy of the Shoah, the victory of the state of Israel, as well as changing national politics and better attitudes towards the Jews strengthened their search for identity. They decided to stay and live an active Jewish life in Vienna. Therefore, they promoted the establishment of Jewish educational institutions, stood up for the right to self-defense and adopted a new outspoken and sometimes even militant policy towards the Austrian state and public. The subsequent arrival of the Jews from the former Soviet-Union further strengthened this community's numbers, enriched its Jewish tradition and diversified its Jewish infrastructure.

The following (second post-Shoah) generation feels even more self-confident, takes its Jewish identity, culture and religion seriously and has begun to look beyond its national borders to enhance trans-European-Jewish contacts and cooperation. This cooperation is however restricted to only a minority of the Viennese Jews. The majority is not aware of the existence and outcomes of these European-Jewish activities and hence of their importance for communal life. Furthermore, while the actors in the European-Jewish policy arena are Jews who differ from American and Israeli Jews, they are not European Jews; the interests and cultures of the various countries and national societies tend to prevail over the vision of a European Jewry. These obstacles are still to be resolved, but some Europe-minded Jews are already elaborating practical ideas. A common assumption is that European-Jewish identity will develop top-down as an outcome of European-Jewish organizational cooperation. For example, it is argued that the process could be enhanced by the establishment of a 'European-Jewish Union' with a European-Jewish leadership and effective institutions, such as a European-Jewish university (Bodenheim, 2007), a European Beit Din (religious court) bestowing a European Kashrus certificate (Weisz, 2006) and a – at least virtual – building with the inscription 'European Council of Jewish Communities' with departments for education, social issues, European-Jewish culture, communal administration, public relations – towards the Jewish communities and the non-Jews –, and others (Serotta, 2007). Such a 'community building' could become a locus for cooperation, brain-storming and common identity formation, and the catalyst of a critical mass fulfilling the vision of European Jewry as a "third pillar" of world Jewry alongside the Jewries of Israel and America as expressed at the first general assembly of the ECJC in 1999[43].

"The European Jews need a bigger table to sit down to communicate and get to know each other; this table still has to be constructed" (Serotta, 2007). And it seems that the small Viennese Jewish community is both playing a part in this table's construction and is on its way to having a seat at it.

Notes

The citations taken from the interviews as well from printed sources written in other languages than English were translated by the author.

Statistics of IKG membership were sent to the author by email from the director of the member service of the IKG.

[1]Unsigned, Special Report, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 15.5.1948.
[2] "European-Jewish" refers to a distinctive identity pattern in which both European and Jewish components are present, as opposed to "European Jewish" identity which applies to the Jewish identity of European Jews that may or may not have a European component.
[3] Data taken from the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, http://www.doew.at/projekte/holocaust/shoah/demo2.html.
[4] The exact numbers of IKG members are still largely unknown. According to the member service of the IKG, various historians presented different numbers and also IKG statistics often counted only cases of births and deaths. Only at the beginning of 2000 did the IKG engage in retroactively constructing new statistics also taking into account departures, which were numerous because of emigration. The project is anticipated to be finished by 2012; official IKG statistics are available only for the time period after 1988. Furthermore, also representatives of the IKG occasionally provide the Austrian media higher estimates than the official IKG statistics (in 2007 Muzicant spoke about 7,500 Jews ["Muzicant: Jüdische Gemeinde verdoppeln", *Die Presse*, 6.11.2007]).
[5] Estimated numbers for Hungarian Jewish refugees are not available.
[6] Estimated numbers for Jewish refugees from Czechoslovakia are not available.
[7] Alternative Nr. 3, 1976
[8] Sephardic Jews are a subgroup of Jews originating in the Iberian Peninsula.
[9] Ashkenazi Jews are descendants of the medieval Jewish communities of the Rhineland.
[10] As revealed in the letter of Bernhard Braver (the first acting director of the IKG until 1947) to Wilhelm Krell (general secretary of the international committee of Jewish former concentration camp inmates and refugees on transit through Austria), 5.4.1967, file 137, XXX, archive of the IKG.
[11]*Der Neue Weg*, Nr. 10, Mai 1948.
[12]*Jüdische Einheit*, Nr. 28, Mai 1994.
[13] *Die Gemeinde*, 21.2.1958.
[14] An Eruv is a symbolic fencing of parts of a city which allows observant Jews to carry (e.g. babies in a pram) on Shabbat within those areas.

[15] Moishe Arye Friedman is the self-described 'Chief Rabbi of the [nonexistent] ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist Jewish community of Vienna'. He was seen taking part in anti-Israeli demonstrations on Shabbat, speaking into a microphone thus desecrating the Shabbat on various occasions. Furthermore, in December 2006 he took part in the Holocaust conference in Teheran organized by the Iranian government where he declared the Zionists to be among the planners and war criminals of the Shoah and disavowed the number of murdered Jews.
[16] "Moishe Arye Friedman ist kein anerkannter Rabbiner, lediglich ein Selbstdarsteller – IKG erstattet Anzeige bei der Staatsanwaltschaft und schließt Moishe Arye Friedman als Mitglied aus", *Die Gemeinde*, Januar 2007 – Tewet/Schwat 5767, p. 20.
[17] *ATID***,** April 2007/Nissan 5767, p. 2.
[18] http://www.gesher.at.
[19] The declaration of independence of April 27, 1945, which is the founding document of the Second Republic, describes Austria as "the first free country, which fell victim to Hitler's aggression" (Republik Österreich, 1945) and depicts the Anschluss as occupation.
[20] 'Never Again' is an international phenomenon that appeared at the same time throughout the world.
[21]Interview with Janki Grünberger in *Jüdisches Wien – Erbe und Auftrag*, Stadt Wien.
[22] http://www.gesher.at/index.html.
[23] Ibid.
[24] "Chancellor Kreisky on Saddat/Israel", *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1984, pp. 143-151 (citation from p. 148).
[25] Staberl, *Neue Kronen Zeitung*, 2.2.1988.
[26] "Österreichs Juden haben wieder Angst", *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 28, 1987.
[27]All of Austria's broadcast channels and printed media dealt with the Eruv project e.g. "'Eruv' soll Innenstadt symbolisch umzäunen", orf.at (website of the Austrian broadcasting corporation ORF), 14.12.2007; Egerer, Thomas, "Wien erhält symbolische Stadtmauer", *Die Presse*, 24.11.2007; "Orthodoxe Juden wollen City 'umzäunen'", *Kurier*, 14.12.2007.
[28] *Die Gemeinde*, 9.5.1986.
[29] Hacker in an interview in the *Jüdische Rundschau*, 10.7.1986.
[30] *Noodnik*, Nr. 3, 1987.
[31] "Demokratie heißt auch, dass man sich wehrt", *Die Gemeinde*, 1999, http://www.hagalil.com/austria/gemeinde/artikel/99/muzicant.
[32] "Muzicant: Haider läuft Amok", *Online-Standard*, 22.03.2001.
[33] "Victory of Reason", *Illustrierte Neue Welt*, June-July 1994, p. 1.
[34] After graduating from high school, BA members from various countries meet in Israel for a year of Hachshara (preparation). The Hachshara program, which also is being organized by other youth organizations in the Diaspora, aims for personal and ideological development, experience and training, such that participants would either remain in Israel as a form of ideological fulfillment or return to their Diaspora communities and movements in a leadership capacity.
[35] http://www.cer-online.org/en/index.asp.
[36] http://www.ecjc.org.
[37]Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, 2000/C 364/01, 18.12.2000.
[38] Barkat, Amiram, "Putin Ally Elected New President of European Jewish Congress", *Haaretz*, 27.06.2007.
[39] Spritzer, Dinah, "West Battles East as France, Others Quit Russian-Led EJC", *JTA*, 11.2.2008, http://www.jta.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/article/20080211120080211paris.html.

[40] "EJC Adopts Constitution during GA Extraordinary Assembly", *European Jewish Congress*, 11.2.2008, http://www.eurojewcong.org/ejc/news.php?id_article=1056.
[41] See [39]
[42] At the time he was a vice-president on the elected board of the EJC. Reelected onto the executive board in 2007, he returned his mandate immediately after Kantor's election to the EJC presidency (Muzicant, 2008).
[43] Gruber, Ruth E., "Jews from 39 Countries Meet to Form European Entity", Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 4.6.1999.

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Muzicant, Ariel (August 2005; February 2008), President of the IKG and a former EJC vice-president

Rabbi Pardes, Josef (August 2005), Rabbi of Mizrachi in Vienna

Rabinovici, Doron (July 2007), politically engaged Jewish writer

Serotta, Edward (July 2007), Director of the Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation

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