

**TIES AND TENSIONS:  
AN UPDATE**

**The 1989 Survey  
of American Jewish Attitudes  
Toward Israel and Israelis**

Steven M. Cohen

The Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations, an arm of the American Jewish Committee, undertakes programs and activities in the United States and Israel designed to enhance the collaboration between the two largest and most important Jewish communities in the world.

The Institute was grounded on these premises:

1. The American Jewish community is a creative and viable community with a positive future in the United States.
2. American Jewry's commitment to Israel's security and survival is strong and irrevocable; for many, Israel is a major ingredient of their Jewish identity.
3. Israelis realize the importance of the existence of strong and viable Jewish communities in the Diaspora and, in particular, of the American Jewish community, for the future of the Jewish people.
4. Events that affect either community are likely to affect other Jewish communities.

This survey of American Jewish attitudes toward Israel and Israelis updates a previous survey conducted by Dr. Steven M. Cohen in 1986. It is our hope that its findings will provide new understanding and insights into the complex web of American Jewish-Israeli relations.

Bertram H. Gold, Director

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## 1. THE INTIFADA, THE "WHO IS A JEW?" CONTROVERSY, AND AMERICAN JEWISH ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL

As several surveys of American Jews over the last decade have well documented, large segments of the American Jewish public are deeply attached to Israel. Not a few, but numerous behavioral and attitudinal indicators point to both deep and widespread commitment to Israel and her security. A significant minority have quite remarkable ties to and involvement with Israeli society. Over a third of American Jewish adults have been to Israel; over a third have family and over a third have friends in Israel. Over two-thirds, in various ways, claim to feel passionately committed to Israel. Support for Israel is at the heart of American Jewry's centralized fund-raising campaign, which annually raises hundreds of millions of dollars in contributions and hundreds of millions more in sales of Israel Bonds. Pro-Israel lobbying in Washington is so effective only because sizable numbers of politically active pro-Israel Jews are found in almost every state and a vast number of congressional districts. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, pro-Israel political action committees (PACs) raised and donated more money to candidates and campaigns in 1988 than any other type of PACs, with the sole exception of the real-estate industry. News about Israel dominates the pages of hundreds of local Jewish newspapers and national periodicals. These are only the most visible, most obvious, and most indisputable signs of pro-Israel feelings and involvement among large portions of American Jewry.

Notwithstanding all this evidence of deep and broad American Jewish commitment to Israel, throughout 1988 Jewish communal leaders, journalists, and other observers wondered whether American Jews were becoming less involved, less attached, and generally less positive about Israel. Two sets of events provoked the speculation that Israel's appeal to American Jews was on the decline. One, of course, is the Palestinian uprising, or *intifada* as it is known in Arabic. The Palestinian demonstrations, violence, and rioting that sharply escalated in December 1987 provoked vigorous Israeli military responses. These in turn came under sharp criticism from all quarters, including many well-known American Jewish communal leaders. Then, in November and December 1988, Israel's newly elected political leaders, engaged in coalition bargaining, considered acceding to demands by Orthodox parties that troubled, if not deeply offended, a wide range of American Jewish leadership. These demands centered on changing Israel's immigration laws so as to, in effect, withdraw automatic official recognition of conversions to Judaism performed by non-Orthodox rabbis in the Diaspora. The crisis over "Who is a Jew?" (some called it the "Who is a rabbi?" issue) provoked an unprecedented outpouring of protest and lobbying by American Jewish leaders of almost all ideological and organizational backgrounds. Never before had so many American Jewish leaders traveled to Israel in such large numbers to advocate their position. Never before had they constituted such an important factor in shaping the makeup of Israel's ruling coalition.

Not only were Israelis acting in ways that many American Jewish public figures found disturbing. It seemed to many American Jews that Israel had become less popular in the eyes of other Americans, be they politicians, journalists, intellectuals, or the public at large. (Indeed, a recently released *Washington Post* poll documents the decline of the image of Israel among Americans generally.) Independent of the direct effects on American Jewry of the *intifada* and the "Who is a Jew?" crisis, the perception of a less popular Israel could only serve to weaken American Jews' enthusiasm for Israel. Some have suggested that Israel became popular among American Jews in the late 1960s and early 1970s because it was a source of ethnic pride. If so, by the same reasoning, if the Jewish state becomes less popular among the wider American public (or even if Jews simply think it has become less popular), then Israel may become a source of embarrassment rather than pride, further diminishing its attractiveness to American Jews.

The events of the last year or more may have affected not only the support of American Jews for Israel but their thinking about the Arab-Israeli conflict as well. Previous surveys have provided evidence of a dovish tilt in American Jewish political attitudes. How did the *intifada* and the opening of a U.S.-PLO dialogue in December 1988 affect these attitudes? The answer is not immediately obvious. On the one hand, these developments may have hardened American Jewish attitudes, making Jews more suspicious of Palestinian intentions and more dubious of American support for a beleaguered Israel. On the other hand, the events may have softened those attitudes by making American Jews more cognizant of the burden the occupation places on Israel and more open to a PLO leadership that has received qualified endorsement by U.S. government officials. Either a retreat from American Jews' previously documented dovish tilt or an intensification of that tilt is a plausible consequence.

The objective of this report is to assess the current state of American Jewish feelings and thinking about Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict in light of the historic and dramatic events that took place over the last year or so. Among the more important specific questions it asks are:

- (1) Did the *intifada*, the "Who is a Jew?" crisis, and Israel's perceived drop in popularity among non-Jews demonstrably weaken American Jews' attachment to Israel?
- (2) How did American Jews react to the *intifada*? How widespread were the misgivings so frequently reported in the press? What do they think of Israeli behavior in response to the *intifada*?
- (3) How upset were they with the "Who is a Jew?" affair and why?
- (4) In light of recent events, where do they stand with respect to many issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict? What is their image of the Palestinians, of the PLO, and of Israel? How do they feel about several potential Israeli policy initiatives? Which garner the most support, and which are rejected?
- (5) How do all these attitudes differ by key social cleavages within American Jewry? In particular, how do the old differ from the young, the more religiously traditional from the less traditional, and the more organizationally involved from the unaffiliated?

To answer these questions, this report draws primarily upon a nationwide survey of American Jews conducted in January and February 1989, as well as more selectively from a survey of the same respondents fielded in April 1988. Obviously, the data from the 1989 survey are quite new; but those from the 1988 survey are also reported here for public consumption for the first time. (An earlier public release of the 1988 data in October 1988 focused exclusively on the political attitudes of American Jews and the upcoming American presidential election.) Wherever possible, the analysis compares results with earlier surveys of American Jews sponsored by the American Jewish Committee. These surveys were conducted every year between 1981 and 1986. The last such survey (1986) also focused heavily on attitudes toward Israel and, hence, its findings figure fairly prominently in the comparisons presented below.

## 2. DATA AND METHODS

The principal survey data analyzed below are derived from a mail-back questionnaire completed by 944 Jewish respondents nationwide, in a survey fielded in January and February 1989 by the Washington office of Market Facts, Inc., a national survey research company. These respondents are members of the company's Consumer Mail Panel, which consists of individuals who have agreed to be surveyed from time to time on a variety of concerns.

The 944 individuals who returned usable questionnaires constitute more than 75 percent of the 1,250 potential respondents who received the survey. These 1,250 comprised all those who had returned the survey that was administered in April 1988. At that time, they represented almost three-quarters of the 1,700 potential respondents who received the 1988 questionnaire.

How representative is this sample of all American Jews? Except for the underrepresentation of Orthodox Jews (a problem corrected by post hoc weighting in the analysis), the sample seems to correspond to a reasonably accurate profile of the full spectrum of American Jews (see Appendix). The underrepresentation of the Orthodox emerges clearly when the sample is compared with Jewish population studies of several metropolitan areas. These studies have determined that the Orthodox constitute roughly 10 percent of all American Jewish households. As in earlier surveys using the Market Facts Consumer Mail Panel, the proportion Orthodox in the sample (roughly 5 percent) is below the 10 percent estimated for the actual population. To correct for this underrepresentation, weighting procedures roughly doubled the Orthodox respondents. Doing so produced a sample whose demographic and Jewish-identity characteristics largely resemble those found in several local Jewish community studies that use far more expensive sample techniques (primarily Random Digit Dialing), as well as in other sources, such as the April 1988 survey of American Jews sponsored by the *Los Angeles Times*. As the Appendix reports in some detail, the distributions of age (from 25 up), education, income, region, Jewish denomination, ritual practice, and communal affiliation variables approximate very closely those found in more rigorous, complex, and expensive local and national surveys of American Jews.

(To illustrate the fiscal dimensions of the sampling problem, the Council of Jewish Federations is now contemplating spending nearly \$400,000 to locate and interview a representative national sample of American Jews. Such a financial outlay is well beyond the budgetary capability of the American Jewish Committee. The far more reasonably priced alternative embodied in the Market Facts Consumer Mail Panel makes feasible public-opinion research on American Jews while, at the same time, offering an adequately high standard of representativeness and coverage of most segments of the American Jewish population.)



The AJC-sponsored public-opinion studies of American Jews cited below that were conducted prior to 1986 used a different sampling method. These earlier studies drew upon nationwide samples of households with Distinctive Jewish Names listed in the nation's telephone directories. The 1986, 1988, and 1989 studies, in contrast, used the Consumer Mail Panel.

### 3. STABLE ATTACHMENT TO ISRAEL

Since 1981, AJC surveys of American Jews have repeated several items that measure attachment to Israel in diverse ways. Over the years, these questions have demonstrated that, by any reasonable standard, large numbers of Jews say they are deeply attached to Israel; at the same time, the intensity of that attachment varies from near neutrality to passionate commitment. Thus, generalizing from several surveys, roughly three-quarters regularly agree that "Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew," and even more reject the idea that they are "sometimes uncomfortable about identifying as a supporter of Israel." In other words, not only are they supporters of Israel, but apparently they are willing to let others know about their pro-Israel position. Repeatedly, almost two-thirds agree that "If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest personal tragedies in my life." From one survey to the next, about three-fifths report that they "often talk about Israel with friends and relatives," the same number who claim they intend to visit Israel at some point. Three-fifths also characterize their feelings toward Israel as either "very close" (one-fifth) or "fairly close" (another two-fifths).

The consistent and repeated results for this set of questions suggest that there is a solid majority (i.e., roughly two-thirds, more or less, depending on the question) who identify as pro-Israel, as well as a smaller inner group that is even more intensely and actively pro-Israel. About a third of American Jewish adults have been to Israel and about one in eight have visited at least twice. On the last three surveys, about a quarter claimed to "intend to visit Israel within three years," the same number who called themselves "Zionists." The 1986 survey also identified other indicators of intense attachment that embraced about a quarter to a third of the population. These include having Israeli friends, having relatives in Israel, recently communicating with Israelis, and wanting one's children to spend a year in Israel at some point.

Summarizing and synthesizing these findings, we may divide American Jews into three strata of roughly equal size. One-third is largely indifferent to Israel. This least pro-Israel stratum includes a small number (about 10 percent) who may be termed hostile. The middle stratum are sentimentally pro-Israel, but they are not particularly active for or connected to Israel. The most pro-Israel stratum (also about a third of the population) is most passionately committed to Israel and displays that commitment actively in one or more visible ways. The survey results indicate that this tripartite division seems to have remained fairly stable since 1981 when the surveys were first instituted.

When asked directly whether their feelings toward Israel have changed, most respondents claimed to feel just as close to Israel now (at the time of the survey) as they did three or four years

earlier. Hardly any (6 percent in 1986 and 8 percent in 1989) said they had grown more distant from Israel in recent years; vast majorities reported stable feelings and some even reported growing closer. Even the *intifada* did not seem to shake their professions of caring for Israel. On the 1988 survey (fielded in April, at the height of American Jewish criticism of Israeli handling of the *intifada*), just 13 percent said, "Because of the recent violence, I feel less warmly about Israel than I used to." At the same time, as many as 82 percent agreed and only 8 percent disagreed with this statement: "Even when I disagree with the actions of Israel's government, that doesn't change how close I feel toward Israel."

Clearly, despite the *intifada* and the "Who is a Jew?" issue, American Jews think of themselves as just as close to Israel as ever. Do the over-time comparisons substantiate this self-conception? For the most part they do.

*Viewed over several years, the various measures of attachment to Israel have generally held steady right through the most recent (1989) survey. Some measures have declined slightly, but others have increased. These offsetting trends indicate overall stability in pro-Israel attachment. (As an aside, from these data, one could make a case for a drop in pro-Israel sentiment between 1983 and 1986. Most indicators fell between 1983 and 1986; but they remained at or near the 1986 levels in 1988 and 1989. Unfortunately, the shift in sampling techniques from Distinctive Jewish Names [through 1985] to the Consumer Mail Panel [in 1986] makes such a conclusion suspect. We can say with relative certainty that pro-Israel feelings have not grown since 1983, but we cannot be sure whether the small decline between 1983 and 1986 is genuine or merely a methodological artifact due to the change in sampling techniques.)*

Not surprisingly, attachment to Israel is very much tied to one's Jewish involvement. Both traditional religious affiliation and Jewish communal affiliation are closely associated with higher levels of pro-Israelism. Using a composite index of Israel attachment that ranges from 0 for no attachment to 100 for the highest attachment, the Orthodox score an average of 86, compared with 78 for Conservative Jews, 57 for Reform, and 52 for those who identify as "just Jewish." (The Israel-attachment index combined the questions on caring for Israel, on seeing Israel's destruction as a personal tragedy, on closeness to Israel, and on talking about Israel.) The ordering of the major denominations with respect to pro-Israel feelings is consistent over almost all individual questions (i.e., Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and nondenominational, in descending order). On questions that tap somewhat less intense aspects of pro-Israel feelings or involvement (such as a single visit to Israel or declaration of concern for Israel's security), Conservative Jews tend to score closer to Orthodox than to Reform Jews. On questions that measure a more intense or active commitment to Israel (such as -- on the 1986 survey -- speaking Hebrew, contemplating living in Israel, repeated visits to Israel, having close Israeli friends or family), the Orthodox significantly outscore Conservative Jews, who in turn only modestly surpass the Reform population in these terms.

As much as denominational affiliation seems to be linked to pro-Israel feelings, organizational involvement exhibits an even greater statistical association. Several questions permitted the division of the 1989 sample into three groups: the "unaffiliated" (a quarter of the population that lacks any formal attachment to synagogues, the UJA campaign, or Jewish organizational life), the "affiliated" (the half of the population that belongs to some Jewish institution but, apparently, is not all that active in those institutions), and the "activists" (those who belong and claim to be somewhat active). The activists qualified as such if they reported at least four of the following six items: belong to a synagogue, belong to another Jewish organization, contribute to the UJA/Federation campaign, contributed to a pro-Israel candidate or political action committee in 1988, devote at least "some" time to Jewish organizational activities, and serve on a board or committee of a Jewish institution.

The organizationally unaffiliated, affiliated, and activists differ markedly with respect to their typical levels of pro-Israel sentiment. On the Israel-attachment index, the unaffiliated score 46, the affiliated average 65, and the activists attain a mean of 86. These results suggest that on any given pro-Israel question, an activist will respond positively about 40 percent more often ( $86-46 = 40$ ) than an unaffiliated Jew.

As one might expect (and as is reported further below), political liberals have been more critical of Israelis' treatment of Arabs generally and of Israel's handling of the *intifada* particularly. Owing to the hard-line policies of the Israeli government that have only intensified in recent years, one might expect that liberals would be more distant from Israel than conservatives. Indeed, several surveys of the American population at large show more sympathy for Israel among American gentile conservatives than among liberals. Despite the apparent cogency of these arguments, Jewish liberals in the 1989 sample were, in fact, more attached to Israel than those who described their political leanings as "middle of the road" or "conservative." The difference between liberals and others was small. While the conservatives scored a mean of 62 on the Israel-attachment index, those in the middle of the road averaged 65, compared with 67 among self-described liberals. If recent events had provoked a decline in Israel attachment, then one would expect more remoteness from Israel among liberals than among others. The absence of such a finding suggests that involvement with Israel has held steady.

Further evidence of the stability in pro-Israel feelings over time is found in comparisons between 1988 and 1989. Within groups (be they denominations or levels of Jewish involvement), the 1988 scores on Israel attachment were nearly identical to the 1989 scores. In the population as a whole, the two scores were highly correlated ( $r = .78$ ) -- that is, the great majority of respondents who had high (or low) scores in 1988 had equally high (or low) scores in 1989. But, to reiterate, while support for Israel varies by Jewish organizational involvement or traditional religiosity, it does not seem to have varied much over the last few years.

A more detailed analysis revealed no substantively significant association of any important demographic or attitudinal variable with either increases or declines in pro-Israel feelings over the time separating the two surveys (April 1988 to January-February 1989). In other words, neither old nor young, neither organizational activists nor unaffiliated, neither Orthodox nor Reform, neither holders of graduate degrees nor high-school graduates, and neither liberals nor conservatives were especially likely to report increases or declines in their levels of pro-Israel feelings in the period between the 1988 and 1989 surveys.

This evidence of stability in pro-Israel attachment among American Jews certainly flies in the face of the impression created by the widely publicized adverse reaction of many American Jews to the *intifada* and the "Who is a Jew?" issue. One might think that the evidence of undiminished pro-Israel feelings derives from a sample that somehow was unaffected by the disturbing events of 1988. Perhaps this sample, or perhaps even American Jews generally, were not all that upset by the *intifada* or the "Who is a Jew?" controversy. But, as this report shortly demonstrates, large numbers of respondents (and, by inference, American Jews as well) were indeed upset or offended by these two developments. The 1989 survey identified considerable evidence of all sorts of negative reactions to Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising and its politicians maneuvering around the issue of non-Orthodox conversions. Nevertheless, notwithstanding these adverse reactions, comparisons of the 1989 findings with those from previous years depict no noticeable distancing from Israel in the American Jewish population at large. Apparently, disgruntlement over the *intifada* and the "Who is a Jew?" controversy coexists with continued and sustained high levels of support and caring for Israel.

ATTACHMENT TO ISRAEL  
(percent)

Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	73	15	13
1988	77	14	9
1986	63	24	14
1983	78	9	13

If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest personal tragedies in my life.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	65	17	18
1988	65	21	15
1986	61	21	18
1983	78	9	13
1981	83	13	5

I am sometimes uncomfortable about identifying myself as a supporter of Israel.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	9	84	7
1988	14	79	7
1986	8	84	9
1983	9	85	6

How close do you feel to Israel?

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>
Very close	20	28	22
Fairly close	42	42	40
Not very close	33	28	--
Fairly distant	--	--	24
Very distant	--	--	7
Not sure	5	4	8

Compared to three or four years ago, do you feel closer to or more distant from Israel, or about the same?

	<u>1986</u>	<u>1989</u>
Closer	24	14
More distant	6	8
About the same	65	75
Not sure	6	3

Do you often talk about Israel with friends and relatives?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	60	37	4
1988	55	42	3
1986	64	32	4
1983	73	27	--
1981	68	30	2

Do you intend to visit Israel within three years?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	23	50	28
1988	28	49	23
1986	24	42	34

Do you intend to visit Israel ever?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	62	14	24
1986	60	10	26

Do you pay special attention to articles about Israel when you read newspapers or magazines?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1988	75	21	4
1989	85	13	3
1983	92	8	--

I am often troubled by the policies of the current Israeli government.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1988	45	26	30
1986	40	25	35

Even when I disagree with the actions of Israel's government, that doesn't change how close I feel toward Israel.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1988	82	8	10

Because of the recent violence, I feel less warmly about Israel than I used to.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1988	13	72	15



#### 4. YOUNGER ADULTS LESS ATTACHED TO ISRAEL

The finding of gross stability in pro-Israel sentiment is one that ought to reassure Jewish communal leaders concerned about support for Israel among American Jews. However, a closer inspection of the data points up a statistical relationship that ought to feed communal anxieties about the future of pro-Israelism -- to wit, fewer younger Jews report pro-Israel feelings than their elders.

The 1986 survey was the first to report lower levels of attachment to Israel by younger adults. This finding withstood controls for previous visits to Israel. In other words, having been to Israel is associated with higher levels of attachment; since more older Jews have been to Israel than younger ones, one might suspect that older people's higher pro-Israel scores derive from their more frequent direct exposure to Israel. But even among respondents who had never been to Israel, the elders in 1986 outscored the younger adults on a composite index of Israel attachment similar to one utilized in this study. Moreover, the age-linked differences in pro-Israel feeling are not attributable to any disproportionate "assimilation" of younger Jews. Younger people are not, for the most part, less Jewishly involved than older Jews. Age is not related to ritual practice, faith in God, and feelings of Jewish familism. In these respects, younger adults were no less Jewishly identified than their elders, although they did report less frequent organizational affiliation. Thus the somewhat lower levels of pro-Israel sentiment among younger adults was a fairly isolated phenomenon, not accompanied by declines in other measures of positive Jewish feelings.

The 1986 report clearly noted the lower levels of pro-Israel feeling among younger Jews. However, the report stated those data in rather low-key fashion so as not to overstate a possibly important finding of a single survey. The reemergence of the relationship between age and pro-Israel sentiment in the 1988-89 surveys (the same 944 respondents were interviewed in 1988 and 1989) suggests that the 1986 data were not a fluke. The findings also prompted a reexamination of the 1983 data. Here also, older respondents reported more frequent pro-Israel attitudes than younger respondents. *We can now conclude, on the basis of several surveys, and with a substantial degree of confidence, that younger Jews are indeed less pro-Israel than older Jews.*

In the 1989 results (which are almost identical with those from 1988), the mean score on the pro-Israel index declines with every transition from an older to a younger cohort. Those 65 years old and over average 74 on the index, those under 35 report a mean of 55. In other words, nineteen points on the index separate the mean scores of the oldest and youngest cohorts, corresponding roughly to a decline of almost five points for every ten years of age. To get some perspective on this gap, we can refer back to the findings on Israel attachment and Jewish



involvement. The gap between the oldest and youngest group is about the same size as that distinguishing Jewish organizational activists from the merely affiliated, or the affiliated from the unaffiliated.

The old-young difference seems even greater when we present the results a little differently. Scores on the Israel-attachment index can be divided arbitrarily into high, medium, and low. Upon doing so we learn that those most passionately committed to Israel (the "high" group) shrink dramatically in number as age declines. Among the elderly, almost three-fifths score high, as compared with less than half of those 55-64, over two-fifths of those 45-54, under two-fifths of those 35-44, and just a quarter of those under 35. In other words, the proportion highly pro-Israel is over twice as great among the elderly as it is among the youngest adults.

Why younger Jews should care less deeply about Israel than their elders is not entirely clear, but the data allow us, in effect, to disprove some seemingly compelling hypotheses. One obvious suggestion focuses on discomfort with Israeli policies of one sort or another. But none of the data support this suggested cause. Younger people were not much different from their elders in their endorsement of a dovish Israeli foreign policy, in their preference for dovish Israeli leaders and parties over hawkish personalities and groups, or in the extent to which they were critical of Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising. At the same time, older Jews were more upset than younger Jews over attempts to revise Israel's law on "Who is a Jew?" Younger people see Arabs and Palestinians as less implacably hostile to Israel than do their elders, and they are more ready to see Israelis as racist or otherwise unfair to Arabs. Yet these positive views of Arabs and negative views of Israelis may be as much (if not more) a result of a more distant feeling toward Israel than a cause of such distance.

In two areas young people differ from their elders in ways that may influence their attitudes toward Israel. First, as noted earlier, more older Jews have visited Israel. Second, more older Jews are active in Jewish organizational life. It is clear that both sorts of experiences are bound to positively influence feelings toward Israel, even as they also often derive from positive attitudes toward Israel specifically and Jewish life generally. A trip to Israel breeds better understanding of Israel's security needs and a greater sympathy for the importance of Israel in Jewish life and history. Involvement in Jewish organizations imparts and reinforces positive feelings about Israel, which, after all, are found in abundance in the Jewish communal world, as the data reported earlier on Jewish activists and the affiliated clearly indicate.

If Israel travel and organizational involvement totally explain the old-young gap in pro-Israel sentiment, then a multivariate equation incorporating these factors ought to eliminate the gap. Unfortunately (for this hypothesis), over half the relationship between age and Israel attachment remains even after controls for Israel visiting and organizational involvement are introduced. Translating this statistical finding into the colloquial, about half the reason that younger people are less pro-Israel than older people derives from the fact that younger people have less often visited Israel and less often belong to or are active in Jewish organizations. But even taking these differences into account, a noticeable (though less substantial) gap still separates older from younger Jews' levels of attachment to Israel. In other words, even were younger people to eventually match their elders' higher level of involvement in Jewish life, and even were they to travel to Israel in greater numbers, their positive feelings about Israel would still fall short of those of their elders.

One can only speculate on the root causes of the differences between old and young in Israel attachment, differences that remain even after variations in Israel travel and Jewish organizational involvement are factored out. One explanation focuses on recent events, or perhaps even the general thrust of Israeli policy over the last few years. After all, the *intifada* and the wrangling over "Who is a Jew?" are only the most recent in a series of events extending back several years that

have portrayed Israel as conservative in foreign policy, culture, and religious life. The rightward turn began with the elevation of Menachem Begin to leadership in 1977 and was underlined by several subsequent events: the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the invasion of Lebanon, the election of Meir Kahane to the Knesset, street violence between ultra-Orthodox and secularist elements, the response to the *intifada*, and the 1988 Israeli elections. As the 1988 report and U.S. presidential election demonstrated, American Jews remain liberal politically, and perhaps even more so in cultural matters. Israel's increasingly conservative image certainly rubs against the grain of American Jewish liberalism and could help explain the disaffection of younger American Jews.

As compelling as this explanation may seem at first, the data fail to lend it much support. First, as we saw earlier, self-defined liberals are no less pro-Israel than political conservatives and moderates. Second, if the recent rightward turn (or, more precisely, the appearance of one) is responsible for the declining affection for Israel among younger American Jews, then we should observe a sharp decline in pro-Israel sentiment among the youngest adults. After all, very basic political views are generally shaped in adolescence and young adulthood; for aggregates, they remain relatively stable over the life course. In American history, for example, the Depression, World War II, and the Vietnam War all left lasting imprints on successive birth cohorts. But instead of a sudden drop in pro-Israel sentiment, as an explanation centering on the post-1977 developments in Israel would predict, the erosion in attachment to Israel is fairly steady and uniform over the entire age spectrum. A more subtle historical process may be operating.

Another explanation that is more consistent with the data focuses on events associated with Israel's history dating back to World War II. According to this explanation, the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel in the 1940s generated powerful pro-Israel feelings. Today's elderly Jews remember these events vividly. These events were followed by the Six-Day War (1967), whose lesser impact exceeded that of the more complex and indecisive Yom Kippur War (1973-74). Today's middle-aged and elderly can recall these two wars quite clearly. In their own way, these wars cast Israelis in a far better light than have more recent events. Perhaps these more recent events, combined with the commonplace reality of the state, have served to slowly diminish the positive feelings toward Israel that are more frequent among older than among younger Jews. A 30-year-old today (born in 1959) would have no personal recollection of the Holocaust and the War of Independence. He or she would have only a child's memory of the Six-Day War and a 14-year-old's impression of the Yom Kippur War.

A more speculative explanation focuses on the distinctions between the worldviews of older and younger Jews. The 1988 and 1986 surveys established that older Jews perceive more anti-Semitism among certain American groups than do younger Jews. Undoubtedly, this finding is but one part of a much larger approach to gentiles and being Jewish generally. Symbolically, Israel plays an important role in Jews' understanding of their place in the world. According to a widely shared conviction (one held more by older than by younger Jews), the world is a potentially very dangerous place for Jews. In this context, Israel has served for many as the one reliable refuge in a hostile world. Moreover, in this view, Israel itself is threatened by implacably antagonistic Arab neighbors who are morally, diplomatically, and militarily supported by an international community whose attitude toward Jews ranges from neutral to anti-Semitic. (Pointedly, as we see below, older respondents feel that Israel is more threatened by Arabs than do younger respondents.) In such a world, Israel can depend only upon itself and faithful Jews in free societies to protect it from destruction.

As was reported earlier and is detailed below, younger Jews are less likely to see Arabs and Palestinians as threatening Israel's survival, and they are also less likely to regard many or most members of particular groups of American gentiles as anti-Semitic. In general, they have a friendlier view of the world than do older Jews. In a friendly world, Israel is less of an absolute necessity to

Jews everywhere and is less needy (and deserving) of unquestioned Jewish loyalty.

Clearly, we cannot be sure of the explanation for the slide in pro-Israel sentiment. But whatever its cause, the phenomenon ought to command the attention of Jewish policymakers, particular those involved in Jewish education of young people.

ISRAEL-ATTACHMENT INDEX  
(mean scores)

Year	1988	1989
Total	65	65
Under 35	56	55
35-44	60	59
45-54	60	63
55-64	71	70
65+	74	74
Orthodox	84	86
Conservative	77	78
Reform	57	57
Just Jewish	53	52
Unaffiliated	46	46
Affiliated	65	65
Activist	84	86
High school	68	69
Some college	67	66
College degree	61	61
Grad school	63	65
Liberal	66	68
Middle Road	64	65
Conservative	63	62

## 5. LITTLE COMMITMENT TO CLASSICAL ZIONISM

As the 1986 survey of American Jews and parallel research on Israel demonstrated, "Zionism" has different meanings to the two groups. To Americans, Zionism refers to a deep commitment to Israel. To Israelis, Zionism is inextricably linked to a commitment to live in Israel, which in turn derives from the conviction that life as a Jew is better, richer, fuller, and ultimately more secure in Israel than anywhere else.

For the most part, American Jews -- even very pro-Israel American Jews -- have declined to identify with the Israeli version of Zionism. Three items on the 1989 survey, repeated from earlier surveys, once again document the small number of Jews committed to classical Zionism.

First, only a quarter of the sample identified as Zionist. The number was about the same in 1988 and 1986, and slightly higher (36 percent) in 1983. The slide from 1983 may be attributed to the change in sampling methods described earlier. Alternatively, it may be attributed either to the waning impact of the attack on Zionism highlighted by the United Nations' "Zionism is racism" resolution of 1975 or to an actual decline in pro-Israel sentiment.

The proportion of respondents in 1989 who claimed to have seriously considered living in Israel remained at around 14 percent. To some observers, this number may seem high, but we need to note that the majority of those so responding were Orthodox. Orthodox Jews have developed extraordinarily close ties to Israel and Israelis, and they are regularly exposed to prosettlement norms in their liturgy and holiday celebrations. The remainder included non-Orthodox Jews who have felt drawn to Israel or who experienced a fleeting emotion to settle there during a visit.

Last, only one respondent in ten accepted the basic Zionist premise that they "can live a fuller Jewish life in Israel than in the U.S." This principle has, for decades, sharply divided even organized American Zionists from their Israeli counterparts. If the American Zionist movement has opposed this principle for decades, it is no surprise to find that the vast majority of American Jews today reject it as well.

Israelis and others interested in promoting aliyah (settlement in Israel) may well find these figures distressing since they indicate a general lack of enthusiasm for classical Zionism. However, the figures may be viewed in another way. Only a very small number of American Jews now make aliyah, far less than the 10-15 percent who have entertained the idea of doing so. Thus advocates of aliyah can be heartened to learn that the number of potential *olim* (settlers in Israel), though small, is still sizable and, indeed, constitutes a significant population worthy of cultivation.

COMMITMENT TO CLASSICAL ZIONISM  
(percent)

Have you ever seriously considered living in Israel?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	14	82	5
1986	14	79	7
1983	15	85	--

Do you consider yourself a Zionist?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	25	61	15
1988	24	64	13
1986	27	57	16
1983	36	64	--

I feel I can live a fuller Jewish life in Israel than in the United States.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	10	74	16
1986	10	73	17

INDEX OF COMMITMENT TO CLASSICAL ZIONISM  
(mean scores)

Year	1989
Total	30
Under 35	27
35-44	29
45-54	32
55-64	31
65+	51
Orthodox	54
Conservative	37
Reform	25
Just Jewish	21
Unaffiliated	17
Affiliated	30
Activist	45

## 6. AMBIVALENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL'S POLICIES ON THE OCCUPATION AND INTIFADA

The Palestinian Arab uprising (or *intifada*, as it is known in Arabic) began in December 1987. Televised and printed reports of Palestinian youths throwing rocks at Israeli troops and of Israelis vigorously responding occasioned some pointed criticism of Israel by well-known commentators, including several Jewish leaders and public figures. What many regard as an unprecedented wave of criticism of Israel by leading Jews raises interesting questions: How has the Jewish public reacted to the *intifada* and the Israeli response to it? Do the views of critical Jewish leaders mirror those of the public at large? To what extent, in fact, is the public critical of Israel, and to what extent do the Jewish rank and file feel that Israeli officials and soldiers responded appropriately? Which sorts of Jews (in terms of age, denomination, organizational involvement) are more critical and which more supportive of Israel's handling of the *intifada*?

The 1989 questionnaire included several items on these issues. The responses suggest a very mixed reaction on the part of the American Jewish population. The portion of the sample who may be seen as deeply disturbed by Israel's behavior ranges from a low of 12 percent on one question to as much as a slim majority on another. In other words, the extent to which the American Jewish public can be said to have "misgivings" or be "critical" of Israel depends on one's definition of these terms and how one interprets the significant fluctuations in critical responses over the several questionnaire items.

With that said, we can proceed to examine the results. In both 1988 and 1989, we asked respondents whether they agreed with a statement that encapsulated what may be called the "official" organized Jewish community's understanding of the *intifada*. The statement read: "Aside from a few regrettable incidents, Israel has used a reasonable and appropriate level of force in countering recent Arab violence on the West Bank and Gaza." Almost two-thirds agreed with this view and only 12 percent disagreed; the rest (almost a quarter) were undecided. Almost the same distribution was found when the same sample was asked this question in April 1988.

From the point of view of organized American Jewry, these results may be viewed from a "sanguine" or an "alarmist" perspective. The sanguine way to interpret them is as an endorsement of Israel's conduct during the *intifada*. Of respondents with clear opinions, those reasonably satisfied with Israel's actions heavily outnumbered those who were overtly critical. This interpretation implicitly sees the bulk of "not sure" answers as deriving from respondents who were ill-informed about or uninterested in Israel. It also assumes that all of the two-thirds who voiced support for Israel were accurately conveying their true feelings. However, an "alarmist" interpretation would note that "only" two-thirds could express support even of this highly qualified endorsement of Israel's



conduct. Those who said "not sure" may, in fact, have been reluctant to translate their private misgivings into outright and overt criticism of Israel.

Indeed, when the tenor of the questions shifts from a blanket evaluation of Israeli policies to an expression of inner feelings, more doubts about Israeli responses to the *intifada* emerge. The questionnaire asked respondents to recall the extent to which they experienced certain feelings during the months when "television news broadcasts featured pictures of Israeli soldiers beating Palestinian rioters and protesters." (Note that the wording of the question makes no attempt to downplay either the severity of the soldiers' actions or the violent character of the Palestinians they faced. The question uses the charged words "beating" and "rioters" rather than such neutral terms as "responding" or "demonstrators.")

In Israel's favor, so to speak, are the large number of respondents (79 percent) who, at least "to some extent," felt "that the press treated Israelis unfairly." This finding is consistent with the impressions of many observers of American Jewish life. To expand upon this finding a bit, it is fair to say that both the Jewish public and communal leaders often express resentment of the American press -- particularly what they regard as the entertainment-oriented television broadcasters -- for showing Israel in the most unfavorable light. Many feel that journalists hold Israel to a higher moral standard than other countries, and that Arabs commit far worse human-rights offenses with far higher death tolls without suffering the public-relations damage inflicted on Israel. Some Jews who feel this way ascribe anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist, or excessive left-liberal motives to members of the press who focus unduly on tough Israeli responses to violent Palestinian protests.

What is noteworthy, though, is that even as the vast majority of respondents saw the press treating Israel unfairly, most (although not quite as many) recalled feeling critical of Israel in one way or another. Evidence of widespread doubts is found in the small number (21 percent) who said that "to a great extent" they felt "totally comfortable with the way Israel responded to the Palestinian violence." The plurality (41 percent) were "comfortable" only "to some extent." Three other questions asked about negative feelings toward Israel's actions. Most respondents (54 percent) said "that Israelis were acting wrongly" at least "to some extent." Under a third (29 percent) rejected that characterization entirely. A little fewer than half (45 percent) said that they felt some embarrassment because of Israel's actions, and as many said that they were "not at all" embarrassed. While most (51 percent) totally rejected the idea that they felt "morally outraged at some of Israel's actions," still a third (35 percent) felt that way at least "to some extent."

Combining these results, it seems fair to divide the American Jewish population into thirds with respect to their reactions to Israel's handling of the *intifada*. About a third are genuinely untroubled by Israel's actions; they feel that Israel is doing the right thing yet is getting a "raw deal" from the press. At the other end of the spectrum is a third with severe moral objections to Israel's actions; they cannot say that Israel is acting reasonably and appropriately, they are embarrassed by Israel, and they are not sure that Israel is being mistreated by the press. In the middle is the third who voice public support for Israel's actions, who feel that Israelis are victims of slanted reporting, but who also privately feel some misgivings about Israeli behavior.

In view of this portrait of a divided Jewish community, reports of criticism of Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising are entirely believable. About a third of the respondents reported they spoke critically of Israel to friends or family, and even more (43 percent) said they heard friends or family members making such comments.

Of course, criticisms of Israel's handling of the uprising are by no means evenly spread throughout the Jewish population. Some groups are significantly more upset than others. To examine this issue, the analysis utilized an index measuring the level of misgivings over Israel's

handling of the Palestinian uprising. Those scoring high on the index rejected the idea that Israel's level of force was "reasonable and appropriate," were not "comfortable" with Israel's response, criticized Israel in conversation, and felt "embarrassed," "morally outraged," that "Israelis were acting wrongly." The index ranges from 0 to 100, reflecting varying degrees of criticism of Israeli conduct.

According to the analysis of this index, misgivings about Israeli responses to the *intifada* were somewhat higher among those under 35 than among those 35 and over. (The youngest group reported a mean of 40 as compared with 32-36 among all the other age groups.) Those who were unaffiliated with any Jewish organizations were slightly more upset than the affiliated (scores of 38 versus 34), who were in turn slightly more upset than those most active in synagogues, organizations, and philanthropy (mean = 31). The largest systematic variations were linked to denomination. The highest levels of misgivings were found among Reform and nondenominational Jews (mean = 38), followed by Conservative Jews (31) and the Orthodox (23). Education was directly related to critical views of Israel's handling of the *intifada*. Those with graduate degrees scored highest (39), those who never attended college scored lowest (28), while the rest were in between. The differences between political liberals (mean = 40) and conservatives (mean = 29) are in the expected direction: more liberals expressed misgivings than did conservatives. In sum, those most upset with Israeli behavior tended to be under 35, organizationally unaffiliated, Reform or nondenominational, holders of graduate degrees, and politically liberal. Those least upset tended to be older, active in Jewish life, Orthodox, high-school graduates, and political conservatives.

As we saw earlier in this report, the *intifada* apparently had little impact on the distributions of responses to most questions that have been repeated over the years. One exception consists of the two questions that tap concern with the adverse impact of the occupation on Israel's future. In 1986 only 6 percent of the sample thought that the occupation would "erode Israel's Jewish character." In 1988, that number increased to 20 percent, but in 1989 it slipped back to 16 percent. On a parallel question, in 1986 only 11 percent thought that the occupation would "erode Israel's democratic and humanitarian character." By 1988, that figure had risen to 30 percent, but then it also dropped slightly in 1989 to 26 percent. A plurality (38 percent) disagreed with the statement and over a third were not sure.

Thus, while a clear plurality continues to reject the idea that Israel's democracy and humanitarianism will be injured by continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the *intifada* obviously brought about an increased concern in this area. By February 1989, when news of Israeli-Palestinian clashes on the West Bank had largely moved off the front pages and the nightly television news broadcasts, anxieties about the possible deleterious consequences of the occupation receded somewhat. Nevertheless, the anxieties remained at levels much higher than they were in 1986.

ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAELI POLICIES  
ON THE OCCUPATION AND INTIFADA  
(percent)

Aside from a few regrettable incidents, Israel has used a reasonable and appropriate level of force in countering recent Arab violence in the West Bank and Gaza.

	<u>Agree</u>	Dis- <u>agree</u>	Not <u>sure</u>
1989	65	12	23
1988	66	14	21

Several months ago, television news broadcasts featured pictures of Israeli soldiers beating Palestinian rioters and protesters. Do you recall the extent to which you had any of the following feelings during that period?

	<u>To a great extent</u>	<u>To some extent</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
I felt that the press treated Israelis unfairly.	31	48	9	12
I felt that Israelis were acting wrongly.	6	48	29	18
I felt comfortable with the way Israel responded to the Palestinian violence.	21	41	18	20
I felt embarrassed by Israel's actions.	6	37	45	12
I felt morally outraged at some of Israel's actions.	7	28	51	15

Over the last twelve months, have you heard any of your close friends or family members speaking critically of Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	Not <u>sure</u>
43	51	6

Over the last twelve months, in conversation with any of your close friends or family members, have you spoken critically of Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	Not <u>sure</u>
33	62	5

Continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank will erode Israel's democratic and humanitarian character.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	26	38	35
1988	30	41	29
1986	11	52	37

Continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank will erode Israel's Jewish character.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	16	52	32
1988	20	56	24
1986	6	63	31

INDEX OF NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD  
ISRAELI POLICY ON THE INTIFADA  
(mean scores)

Year	1989
Total	34
Under 35	40
35-44	34
45-54	36
55-64	32
65+	32
Orthodox	23
Conservative	31
Reform	38
Just Jewish	38
Unaffiliated	38
Affiliated	34
Activist	31
High school	29
Some college	33
College degree	33
Grad school	39
Liberal	40
Middle road	33
Conservative	29

## 7. DOVISH TILT ON ISRAELI FOREIGN POLICY

The questionnaire contained several items about Israeli foreign policy and related issues. Most began with the words "Israel should" and continued with a variety of options, all of which are receiving serious consideration within Israel. In fact, each of the policies included in the questionnaire (even those securing little American Jewish support) is advocated by at least a few members of the Knesset elected in November 1988.

The instrument listed three decidedly hawkish options, all of which were rejected by the sample. (The terms "hawkish" and "dovish," while colloquial and imprecise, are convenient ways of referring to both policies and individuals.) Hardly any support was found for the forcible transfer of Palestinians out of the West Bank; only 7 percent agreed with this policy as contrasted with 62 percent who were opposed. By far smaller margins, the sample also rejected Israeli annexation of the West Bank (22 percent in favor, 31 percent opposed) as well as expansion of Jewish settlements on the West Bank (25 percent in favor, 35 percent opposed). Expansion of Jewish settlements is advocated by all political parties on the Israeli right and opposed by all on the left. Parties to the right of Likud have expressed support for annexation in various ways, and one such party (Moledet) won two Knesset seats by making the transfer of Arabs out of the territories its central campaign theme.

On the annexation and transfer items in particular, but on the other items reported below as well, a substantial fraction of respondents responded "not sure." Clearly, many American Jews feel uncomfortable expressing a position on how Israel ought to achieve peace and security. Their hesitation probably derives from three sources: (1) genuine ignorance of the problems and options; (2) conflicted feelings about the right course of action; and (3) feelings of lack of moral standing in presuming to tell Israelis what to do when Israeli and not American Jewish lives are at stake.

*While respondents who did voice opinions rejected hawkish policies, those with a definitive stance tended to endorse most (though not all) of the dovish policies offered them.* The questionnaire asked whether respondents agreed that "Israel should offer the Arabs territorial compromise in the West Bank and Gaza in return for credible guarantees of peace." Territorial compromise has served almost as a key policy slogan of Israel's Labor party; it is the stance that most clearly distinguishes the left-of-center camp from the Likud and other parties on the Israeli right. A plurality of 38 to 30 percent endorsed this view, almost replicating the margin for the same sample in 1988. In the 1985 and 1986 surveys of American Jews, pluralities opposed territorial compromise; in 1983 and 1984 pluralities favored it.

By a two-to-one plurality, the 1989 sample agreed that "Palestinians have a right to a homeland on the West Bank and Gaza, so long as it does not threaten Israel." American Jewish support for this view has been highly stable. Four times between 1983 and 1988 national surveys found roughly two-to-one margins agreeing with this statement. Here, the key to American Jewish support is the proviso that the homeland not threaten Israel. But, as we shall soon see, few American Jews currently regard Arabs, Palestinians, or their hypothetical state as nonthreatening. If by some stretch of the imagination such were the case, a very sizable number of American Jews would appear to have little objection to a "homeland" for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Three questions asked about the advisability of talking with the PLO. In December 1988, then secretary of state George Shultz opened an official American dialogue with the PLO. He announced that PLO chairman Yassir Arafat had met the minimal conditions for such a dialogue by recognizing Israel and renouncing terrorism. Most official spokespeople for organized Jewry expressed either hesitant support or muted opposition to the Shultz initiative.

Against this background, it is not surprising that a plurality of the sample endorsed the opening of U.S.-PLO talks (38 to 28 percent), although more than a third were undecided. While seeming to endorse U.S. dialogue with the PLO by a small margin, the sample decidedly opposed (69 to 14 percent) the idea that "Israel should talk with the PLO without any further preconditions." The nature of the preconditions the respondents may have had in mind emerges in the favorable response to the following statement: "If the PLO recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism, Israel should be willing to talk with the PLO." A very solid majority (58 to 18 percent) endorsed this view, as did a somewhat greater number in 1988 and a comparable number on a similarly worded question in 1986.

Striking parallels between Israeli and American Jewish public opinion are noteworthy. A recent survey of Israeli Jews sponsored by the *New York Times* (see the edition of Sunday, April 2, 1989) found that 18 percent of Israelis said that "negotiations [with the PLO] should be started on the basis of Yassir Arafat's recent declarations" (much like the 14 percent on the 1989 survey of American Jews). Meanwhile, 58 percent of Israelis would talk with the PLO if it "officially recognizes Israel and ceases terrorist activity" (just as 58 percent of American Jews agree with a similarly worded question, as noted above). Thus, for both Israeli and American Jews, the perception of the PLO is crucial for its credibility as a negotiating partner. Jews in both countries are not unalterably opposed to talks with the PLO; but they are opposed to dialogue with enemies they regard as terrorists bent on destroying Israel. As we shall see, the PLO continues to suffer from this highly negative image among American Jews (and, obviously, among Israelis as well). Nevertheless, on the Israeli political spectrum, even conditional support for talks with the PLO places one in the dovish camp. Likud leaders have been publicly adamant in their refusal to deal with the PLO or even its outspoken sympathizers in the territories. The Israeli left has long advocated the conditional posture, that is, opening talks in return for PLO recognition of Israel and renunciation of terror. For this reason, if not others, *it is fair to characterize American Jewry as tilting in the dovish direction.*

IEWS ON ISRAELI FOREIGN POLICY  
(percent)

Hawkish questions

Israel should expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
25	35	41	

Israel should annex the West Bank.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	22	31	47

Israel should forcibly transfer Palestinians out of the West Bank.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	7	62	31

Dovish questions

Israel should offer the Arabs territorial compromise in the West Bank and Gaza in return for credible guarantees of peace.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	38	30	31
1988	42	33	26
1986	29	36	35
1985	30	44	26
1984	43	37	20
1983	40	36	25

Palestinians have a right to a homeland in the West Bank and Gaza, so long as it does not threaten Israel.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	47	23	30
1988	46	26	28
1986	48	21	31
1985	51	24	25
1983	47	26	28



It is good that the United States decided to talk with the PLO.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	38	28	38

If the PLO recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism, Israel should be willing to talk with the PLO.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	58	18	24
1988	67	17	16
1986	57	18	25

Israel should talk with the PLO without any further preconditions.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	14	69	18

Israel should be more understanding of Palestinian national aspirations.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1988	32	43	26

## 8. PREFERENCE FOR LABOR AND DOVES OVER LIKUD AND HAWKS

Further reason for inferring a dovish tilt in the American Jewish community is found in the answers to questions on Israeli political parties and camps. When asked to state their Israeli party preference, most respondents (60 percent) could express no view. Of the minority who did, most (26 percent) said they would have voted for Labor or the parties of the left in the last Knesset elections; a far smaller number opted for their opponents, the Likud (12 percent) or the Orthodox religious parties (3 percent).

The preference for the Israeli left also emerges in responses to questions on images of different sorts of Israelis. Almost half the respondents had no clear impressions of Israeli doves or hawks. Among those with impressions, respondents favorably disposed toward doves outnumbered respondents unfavorably disposed better than two to one (36 to 17 percent). (Significantly, those with "very favorable" impressions of Israeli doves outnumbered those with "very unfavorable" impressions by three to one -- 12 to 4 percent.) Meanwhile, of those with opinions of Israeli hawks, respondents having unfavorable impressions almost equaled respondents with favorable impressions (28 percent favorable, 26 percent unfavorable); among those with strong impressions, the two points of view were held almost equally.

In short, 1989 respondents having opinions of Israeli hawks or doves were almost evenly divided on hawks but favorably inclined toward doves. This pattern represents a clear shift from 1986, when similar questions produced a roughly even split with respect to both doves and hawks. In terms of image, Israeli doves have gained, while hawks have remained where they were in 1986.

Taken together with the policy positions, these results suggest that *American Jews do tilt toward the Israeli left on foreign policy and that they have moved perceptibly (if slowly) toward the dovish left in the last three years.*

Of course, support for hard-line or compromising policies varies considerably among American Jews. The several policy questions were combined into a single index measuring support for dovish foreign policies. Respondents scored high on the index if they opposed transferring Palestinians, annexing the West Bank, and expanding Jewish settlements; they scored high if they endorsed talks with the PLO (by the United States, by Israel with no conditions, by Israel with conditions) and if they favored territorial compromise and a conditional Palestinian right to a homeland. The three questions on party preference and images of doves and hawks were also combined into a second index measuring preference for Labor and doves over Likud and hawks. The first index, then, measured policy preference, and the second measured leadership preference.

Old and young had very similar views on Israel's foreign policy and on its political leaders. While age was an unimportant factor here, denominational lines sharply divided respondents on the hawk/dove questions. With respect to policies, on the hawkish side were the Orthodox, and on the dovish side (about twenty points away) were Reform and nondenominational Jews. The Conservative population was, on average, between the Orthodox (to their hawkish right) and the Reform (to their dovish left), but they lay somewhat closer to the Reform-dovish left. Distinctions in terms of Jewish organizational involvement were similar but not as marked. The unaffiliated were the most dovish; the vast middle of the population (those who were affiliated but not very organizationally active) were intermediate in their foreign-policy views; and the most active were also the most hawkish. In fact, on policies, the distance between the activists and the affiliated was twice as great as that between the affiliated and the unaffiliated. That is, the activists were substantially more hawkish than most respondents. Political self-identification (as liberal, middle-of-the-road, or conservative) bore little relationship to people's policy preferences; however, liberals were far more likely than conservatives to hold favorable images of Israeli doves and unfavorable impressions of Israeli hawks. Similar relationships characterized education. That is, the better educated held foreign-policy views similar to those with lower levels of education; at the same time, the better educated held more favorable images of Israeli doves and more unfavorable images of Israeli hawks. These results suggest that many respondents felt they knew enough about the issues to distinguish between doves and hawks; but, apparently, questions on foreign-policy options were too sophisticated for many respondents to handle intelligently. In other words, an inclination toward hawks or doves was not always translated into support for the specific positions articulated by Israelis on either end of the political spectrum.

The hawkish tendencies of the religiously traditional and the organizationally active (often the same people) or the dovish tendencies of the religiously modern and the organizationally unaffiliated (characteristics that are also correlated) are relatively easy to understand. The more Jewishly involved tend to be more attached to Israel (as we have seen) and view the world as more antagonistic to Jews and Israel (as we shall see below). It is likely that those who care more deeply about Israel and see Israel gravely threatened will take less compromising positions on the peace process.

The absence of a relationship between age and dovishness is difficult to explain. After all, younger people are less attached to Israel, and less likely to perceive high levels of anti-Semitism or Arab threat to Israel. Yet their views on particular policies are, on average, not much different from those of their elders. But while the policy views of old and young are similar, their views on several important issues related to the Israel-Arab conflict are far from uniform. In fact, younger people may be more critical of Israel than their elders and less fearful of the Arab threat to Israel.

POLITICAL PREFERENCES  
(percent)

If you were an Israeli voting in the 1988 elections in Israel, for which party would you have voted?

Labor (or its allies)	21
Likud (or its allies)	12
A religious party	3
Not sure, don't know, another party	60

What is your impression of each of the following Israeli groups?

		<u>Don't</u> <u>know</u> <u>them</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>sure</u>	<u>Very</u> <u>favor-</u> <u>able</u>	<u>Some-</u> <u>what</u> <u>favor-</u> <u>able</u>	<u>Some-</u> <u>what</u> <u>unfavor-</u> <u>able</u>	<u>Very</u> <u>unfavor-</u> <u>able</u>
Ultra-Orthodox	1989	16	13	2	6	28	35
	1986	31	--	2	6	29	33
Modern Orthodox	1989	18	16	13	29	20	4
	1986	37	--	12	31	17	3
Secular Jews	1989	22	19	20	29	7	2
	1986	44	--	12	31	10	3
Doves	1989	24	23	12	24	13	4
	1986	55	--	5	18	15	8
Hawks	1989	20	23	8	20	19	7
	1986	60	--	6	14	14	6

INDEX OF SUPPORT FOR DOVISH FOREIGN POLICIES  
AND THE LABOR PARTY  
(mean scores)

	<u>Dovish</u> <u>policies</u>	<u>Labor</u> <u>party</u>
Total	61	54
Under 35	64	55
35-44	60	53
45-54	63	54
55-64	60	54
65+	60	53
Orthodox	42	45
Conservative	58	52
Reform	65	56
Just Jewish	68	56
Unaffiliated	67	57
Affiliated	62	54
Activist	53	52
High school	59	53
Some college	59	53
College degree	61	52
Grad school	62	57
Liberal	61	60
Middle road	60	52
Conservative	59	48

## 9. NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF PALESTINIANS

The hesitation of American Jews to endorse an Israeli posture of compromise with its enemies derives in large part from their negative image of Arabs, Palestinians, and the PLO. Most survey respondents in 1989 saw the Arabs as deeply hostile to Israel. A huge majority (62 to 8 percent) agreed that "The PLO is determined to destroy Israel." An even larger majority (86 to 2 percent) saw the PLO as "a terrorist organization."

The 1989 survey (fielded in January and February) took place after more than a year of Palestinian demonstrations in the West Bank and Gaza. The *intifada*, it may be presumed, projected a more hostile image of Arabs. Have American Jews' impressions of Arabs changed in recent years? On the issue of Arab trustworthiness, no softening of American Jewish perceptions can be detected. In fact, the reverse appears to be the case. In 1989, almost half (49 percent) of the sample agreed that "You can never trust the Arabs to make a real peace with Israel" (only 20 percent disagreed). Distrust of Arab intentions has risen since 1986, the first year the question was asked. In 1986, 44 percent agreed with the above statement, in 1988 46 percent.

This skepticism emerges clearly in answers to two questions on the implications of a Palestinian state for Israeli security. Particularly since the Arafat declaration in December 1988, Israelis and their supporters have been concerned that the PLO campaign for a small Palestinian state living peacefully alongside Israel is, in fact, a subterfuge. According to this line of thinking, such a state would represent the first stage in a drive to supplant Israeli with Palestinian Arab sovereignty in all the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. A more trusting view has been offered by some strategic analysts in Israel (and elsewhere). In recent publications, Yehoshafat Harkabi, former chief of military intelligence in Israel, argues that the PLO has made a clear distinction between grand design and policy. Just as the Soviet Union maintains a long-range goal of undermining Western capitalism, yet pursues a policy of competitive coexistence, so too, Harkabi argues, has the PLO in practical terms given up its goal of destroying Israel.

Not many American Jews accept this sanguine view of the PLO. By a three-to-two margin (33 to 21 percent), respondents rejected the idea that "The PLO may dream of more, but it is ready to settle for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza." A very solid plurality (over five to two) believed that "Even with international guarantees and an Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty, a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza would be used to threaten the very existence of Israel."

From these and earlier surveys we learn that *American Jews continue to see Arabs, Palestinians,*

*and the PLO as hostile and threatening, while they also see Israel as vulnerable and insecure. Recent events apparently have done little to alter the essentially suspicious view of Israel's Arab adversaries, at least among the Jewish rank and file.*

While all major segments of the Jewish population maintain this negative image of Arabs, not all share it equally. To measure varying perceptions of Arab hostility, an index combined responses to the items on whether the PLO intends to destroy Israel, whether it is a terrorist organization, whether it will settle for less than all of Israel, whether Arabs can be trusted to make peace, and whether a Palestinian state would threaten Israel. Perceptions of the Arab threat to Israel increased slowly with age; on a scale of 0 to 100, the elderly scored 76 compared with 64 for those under 35. It also increased with denominational traditionalism. More Orthodox (with a mean of 85) saw Arabs as threatening than did Conservative Jews (mean = 76), who in turn outscored Reform (66) and nondenominational Jews (65) on this dimension. Consistent with this pattern of results, those active in Jewish organizational life saw Arabs as threatening Israel far more than the unaffiliated (79 versus 63), while those who belonged but were not very active reported an intermediate score (71). In short, people who care more deeply about Israel and who were more involved in pro-Israel activities in the United States (the older, more traditional, and more organizationally active) were also more suspicious of Arabs' professed peaceful intentions and their reliability as partners in the peace process.

The close relationship between suspicion of Arabs and support for dovish policies is rather easy to demonstrate. The analysis divided the respondents into three groups based upon their assessments of the Arab threat to Israel. The cross-tabulation of this measure against the index of dovish policies (incorporating support for talks with the PLO and for compromise and opposition to several hawkish policy alternatives) produces predictable results, but patterns that are dramatic and striking nonetheless. Those most trusting of Arab intentions -- that is, those least fearful of an Arab threat to Israel -- were the most ready to negotiate with the PLO and consider territorial compromise; conversely, those who were most dubious of the Palestinians' proclaimed interest in peace were also those most likely to take a harder line toward the peace process. To illustrate, of those respondents most convinced of Arab interest in real peace, 66 percent scored high on the dovish-policy index; at the other extreme, among those most fearful of the Arab threat to Israel, only 6 percent scored high on the dovish-policy index; of those with an intermediate view, just 25 percent scored high on the dovish-policy index. In other words, only among those with a relatively trusting and benign view of Arab intentions did we find substantial support for talks with the PLO and territorial compromise.

PERCEPTIONS OF PALESTINIANS  
(percent)

The PLO is determined to destroy Israel.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	62	8	31

The PLO is a terrorist organization.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	86	2	12

Even with international guarantees and an Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty, a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza would be used to threaten the very existence of Israel.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	46	17	37

You can never trust the Arabs to make a real peace with Israel.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	49	20	31
1988	46	24	30
1986	44	23	33

The PLO may dream of more, but it is ready to settle for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	21	33	45



INDEX OF HOSTILE PERCEPTION OF PALESTINIANS  
(mean scores)

Total	71
Under 35	64
35-44	69
45-54	68
55-64	74
65+	76
Orthodox	85
Conservative	76
Reform	66
Just Jewish	65
Unaffiliated	63
Affiliated	71
Activist	79
High school	74
Some college	71
College degree	69
Grad school	70
Liberal	68
Middle road	72
Conservative	73

## 10. SOME PERCEIVE ISRAEL AS UNFAIR TO ARABS

Since the founding of the State of Israel, its leaders have gone to great lengths to portray their country as treating its Arab minority in a fair and decent manner, notwithstanding the ongoing conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and notwithstanding Israel's *raison d'être* as the homeland of the Jewish people. Since the Six-Day War, Israelis have also claimed that they have been extraordinarily fair in their treatment of the Palestinians residing in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. While many Israelis view the occupation as an unavoidable necessity, they argue that it is relatively benign, one that permits the population greater freedom, security, and economic opportunities than any other occupation in history. Obviously, the acceptance of these claims is a central element in support both for Israel generally and for its government's policies in particular.

Three items in the 1989 survey assessed the extent to which American Jews do, in fact, accept the Israeli claim of fairness to local Arabs, whether in Israel proper or in the occupied territories. When asked how fairly each of several groups is treated in Israel, a very healthy majority of respondents saw Israeli Arabs as being fairly treated. Almost three-fifths (59 percent) thought they were being treated at least "somewhat fairly," while less than one-fifth (19 percent) believed the Arabs in Israel were being treated at least "somewhat unfairly." Almost a quarter were unsure how to answer the question.

Although among American Jews Israel's image with respect to Israeli Arabs is relatively positive, the same cannot be said for its image with respect to "Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza." Here, only a four-to-three plurality gave Israel high marks for fairness. While 44 percent thought Israel's treatment of these Arabs was fair, 32 percent took the opposite view. Again, a quarter was undecided. The contrast of these answers with those for "Israeli Arabs" is striking, particularly with regard to the number who answered "very fairly." Over a quarter responded "very fairly" in connection with Israeli Arabs, but just 10 percent did so with respect to West Bank and Gaza Arabs.

Even greater signs of discomfort with Israel's treatment of Arabs is found in another question. A very slim plurality (36 to 30 percent) actually agreed with the statement "I feel that many Israelis' attitudes toward Arabs are racist." (It is noteworthy that many Israelis would also agree with this assessment. Following the election of Meir Kahane to the Knesset in 1984 and some disturbing surveys among Israeli Jewish adolescents, many public figures -- including President Herzog -- called for renewed emphasis on tolerance and democracy in public life. The Education Ministry responded by instituting a number of programs in the country's schools around these themes.)

The extent to which respondents regarded Israel's treatment of Arabs as fair and proper varied

markedly across population groups. The perception of Israeli fairness was measured as a composite of the three questions discussed immediately above (treatment of Israeli Arabs, treatment of West Bank and Gaza Arabs, and Israelis' racist attitudes). The resulting index, ranging from 0 to 100 averaged 53 for the entire sample. Higher numbers indicate greater perceived levels of unfairness or racism toward Arabs. Respondents over 65 years of age scored a mean of 46 on this index, while those under 35 years averaged 62. The results on the racism question are particularly striking. Of those 55 years and over, a clear plurality (about 37 to 30 percent) rejected the view that "many Israelis are racist." In contrast, among those under 45, an even more lopsided plurality (44 to 24 percent) accepted this idea. Clearly, *younger American Jews are more critical than their elders of Israeli attitudes toward Arabs.*

Religious traditionalists are more sympathetic than others to Israeli treatment of Arabs. On the fairness index, a full twenty points separate the Orthodox from Reform and nondenominational Jews, with the Conservative segment scoring midway between them. With respect to Jewish organizational involvement, the gap between the unaffiliated and the activists is almost as substantial (fifteen percentage points). The average score on the fairness index of the relatively inactive affiliated was intermediate between the two other groups.

College graduates tended to be more critical of Israel's treatment of the Arabs than respondents who never went to college.

Last, political liberalism is associated with a greater readiness to see Israelis as treating Arabs unfairly. Ten points on the index separate the liberals from the conservatives (46 versus 36), with the middle-of-the-road group scoring between the two. As was noted earlier, even though liberals are more likely to be critical of Israeli behavior, they are no less attached to Israel than centrists or conservatives.

In sum, those who are younger, Reform or nondenominational, organizationally unaffiliated, and politically liberal are far more likely to believe that Israelis are treating Arabs in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza in an unfair fashion and with a measure of racism to boot. In contrast, older Jews, the Orthodox, the most organizationally active, and political conservatives tend to believe that Israel treats Arabs fairly and in a nonprejudicial fashion.

PERCEPTION OF ISRAEL AS UNFAIR TO ARABS  
(percent)

I feel that many Israelis' attitudes toward Arabs are racist.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	36	30	34

Israel treats its Arabs better than most Arab countries treat their citizens.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1988	71	7	22

In your view, how fairly is each of the following groups being treated in Israel?

		<u>Very fairly</u>	<u>Some- what fairly</u>	<u>Some- what unfairly</u>	<u>Very unfairly</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
Israeli Arabs	1989	26	33	15	4	23
	1986	13	29	20	8	30
West Bank/Gaza Arabs	1989	10	34	24	8	25
Sephardim	1989	22	28	10	2	38
	1986	19	27	11	1	43
Conservative and Reform Jews	1989	15	24	24	15	21
	1986	14	23	22	9	31

INDEX OF PERCEPTION OF ISRAELIS AS UNFAIR TO ARABS  
(mean scores)

Year	1989
Total	53
Under 35	62
35-44	57
45-54	56
55-64	49
65+	46
Orthodox	38
Conservative	49
Reform	59
Just Jewish	58
Unaffiliated	60
Affiliated	53
Activist	45
High school	33
Some college	41
College degree	47
Grad school	46
Liberal	46
Middle road	42
Conservative	36

## 11. WIDESPREAD FEAR OF AMERICAN ANTI-SEMITISM

Fears of American anti-Semitism in general and of anti-Israel forces in particular play important roles in shaping American Jewish attitudes toward Israel. The connections between concern for Israel and perception of a hostile world are numerous and operate on several levels. First, many American Jews (and Israelis) see part of Israel's mission as serving as a refuge for victims of anti-Semitism. Indeed, most of Israel's population are refugees from persecution (in czarist Russia, Nazi Europe, or the Arab Middle East) or their descendants. Second, Israel is seen by American Jewry as a defender of endangered Jews. One lesson Jews learned from the Holocaust is that Jews could not be saved because they lacked state power; today's Israel provides an army and a state diplomatic apparatus that could help defend Jews in the Diaspora should they ever again be subject to persecution. (The rescue of airline passengers at Entebbe airport in 1976 certainly fortified this view.) Third, American Jews take seriously the possibility that Israel itself could be destroyed. Fourth, as they are anxious over threats to Israel's very continuity, they are anxious over threats to continued American economic and diplomatic support for Israel, and tend to see opponents of a pro-Israel American policy as motivated by anti-Semitism. For all these reasons, understanding American Jewish perceptions of anti-Semitism is relevant to understanding the population's approach to Israel and its conflict with the Arabs.

Since 1983, AJC surveys have asked two questions measuring the extent to which Jews are concerned about American anti-Semitism. In 1989 (and 1988) roughly three-quarters (73 percent) disagreed with the statement "Anti-Semitism in America is currently not a serious problem for American Jews"; only 14 percent agreed. Almost as many (59 percent) disagreed with the view that "Virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews"; only a quarter (25 percent) agreed. In other words, *a solid majority expressed concern about anti-Semitism in America and believed that it bars the advancement of Jews to important positions.*

Comparison of the 1989 survey with earlier studies reveals that Jewish concern with American anti-Semitism is near a peak for the past decade. Between 1983 and 1986, the average level of disagreement with the two items quoted above (indicating a serious concern with anti-Semitism) hovered around 50 percent. In 1988 and 1989, the level of disagreement rose to 72 percent and 66 percent. Before 1986, about a third of the respondents dismissed concerns about anti-Semitism (by agreeing with the items); in 1988 and 1989, agreement fell to almost half the pre-1986 level.

The sample's concern about anti-Semitism varied by several critical population characteristics. Younger people were less concerned than their elders. To take one striking example, those under 35 were almost split down the middle about whether almost all positions of influence were open

to Jews (42 percent agreed and 46 percent disagreed). In sharp contrast, there was virtual consensus among those 55-64 that not all positions were open. Among these middle-aged adults, a four-to-one majority (68 to 18 percent) rejected the statement alleging widespread tolerance of Jews in positions of influence. Why should older and younger Jews differ in their assessment of American anti-Semitism? An extensive literature documents the decline in anti-Semitic prejudice and discrimination in the United States. That decline may well account for the diminished anxieties of younger Jews; after all, older Jews are the ones who are more likely to recall the barriers that once limited Jewish entry to leading American universities, hospitals, resorts, law firms, and major financial organizations.

Not only were perceptions of the seriousness of American anti-Semitism related to age; they were also related to Jewish organizational involvement. Respondents who were organizationally active perceived more American anti-Semitism than those who were not, although the difference is modest.

One can only speculate on the causes for the increased anxiety over anti-Semitism in 1988 and 1989. We know from the 1988 survey (and from other sources as well) that the vast majority of American Jews viewed Jesse Jackson as anti-Semitic and a sizable minority saw Pat Robertson as an anti-Semite as well. The presidential candidacies of these men probably contributed to the rise in Jews' anxieties in 1988, while the fading of their candidacies from the public's consciousness may help explain the slight decline in concern about anti-Semitism apparent in the 1989 survey. The ADL's annual audit reported an unusually large number of anti-Semitic incidents in 1988. The incidents could have prompted the rise in concern in 1988, and the well-publicized report itself may have kept Jewish concerns at a relatively high level in early 1989.

But beyond these and other domestic developments, the *intifada*, the Israeli response, and the American coverage thereof may have added to American Jews' nervousness about the friendliness of American non-Jews. Consistent with this inference are responses to two questions measuring the perception of America's support for Israel. On the 1988 survey, a two-to-one majority (57 to 28 percent) agreed that "When it comes to the crunch, few non-Jews will come to Israel's side in its struggle to survive." The percentage agreeing with this pessimistic statement was eleven points higher than in 1986. In 1989, by a similar margin (57 to 32 percent) most respondents agreed that they were "worried that the U.S. may stop being a firm ally of Israel." As recently as 1986, a plurality disagreed with that item.

The pattern of responses to both questions indicates a decline in worry about American support for Israel between 1983 to 1986 and an increase between 1986 and 1988-89. What accounts for the fall and rise of anxiety? We may recall that in 1983 Israeli forces were still engaged in sporadic hostilities in Lebanon, and the memory of the Lebanon war of 1982 was fresh in people's minds. By 1986, Israel had largely extricated itself from the fighting in Lebanon, and news reports of clashes in the West Bank and Gaza were few and far between. In 1988 and 1989, by way of contrast, the *intifada* was the frequent subject of television news broadcasts and front-page newspaper stories. As noted earlier, the vast majority of American Jews (79 percent) regarded press coverage of Israel's handling of the *intifada* as unfair. In this context, it is not at all surprising that American Jews' concerns about other Americans' impressions of Israel seem to rise and fall with the level of Arab-Israeli violence. The continuation of violent encounters in the West Bank and Gaza, especially if reported widely by the news media, can only serve to maintain Jewish concerns about the firmness of American popular and official support for Israel.

FEAR OF AMERICAN ANTI-SEMITISM AND INDIFFERENCE TO ISRAEL  
(percent)

Anti-Semitism is currently not a serious problem for American Jews.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	14	73	13
1988	14	76	10
1986	26	54	20
1984	40	45	13
1983	35	45	20

Virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	25	59	15
1988	24	66	10
1986	37	50	13
1984	31	58	11
1983	26	55	19

When it comes to the crunch, few non-Jews will come to Israel's side in its struggle to survive.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	57	28	15
1986	46	33	21
1983	54	24	22

I am worried the United States may stop being a firm ally of Israel.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	57	32	11
1988	54	33	13
1986	40	43	17
1983	55	32	14



## 12. MIXED ATTITUDES TOWARD CRITICISM OF ISRAEL

Particularly since the late 1970s, prominent American Jews have publicly objected to one or another aspect of Israeli foreign policy. This public criticism has on occasion provoked bitter debates among Jewish thinkers and organization leaders. Proponents of criticism claim that open criticism provides Israelis with important information about American Jews and the U.S. government. If certain policies cannot be "sold" to American Jews, they will encounter even stiffer resistance among American foreign-policy influentials. The advocates of criticism also claim that their criticism lends American Jewry credibility when its representatives lobby on Israel's behalf with U.S. officials. An occasionally critical American Jewry will be taken more seriously than a community given to knee-jerk support for everything Israel does. Finally, the defenders of criticism claim that criticism is a necessary part of a healthy involvement of American Jewry with the Jewish state. Only those indifferent to Israel would have nothing to say by way of criticism or support. Opponents of public criticism, in turn, argue that the critics, living as they do in the physical security of the United States, lack the moral standing to comment on the life-and-death issues confronting Israelis. They also contend that criticism detracts from the image of world Jewish unity that, they claim, is so important for influencing the American government.

Criticism of Israeli government policies by American Jews varies in several ways. Some of it comes from the political right, but undoubtedly more is lodged by dovish segments of American Jewry. Some criticism takes place within the confines of the Jewish press and community, but some appears in the pages of the *New York Times*. Much of it is offered by people who profess a deep pro-Israel attachment, but some of it arises from individuals who make no claim to prior Jewish, Zionist, or pro-Israel involvement. The sharply divergent varieties of public criticism make interpretation of the questionnaire data presented below somewhat ambiguous. "Criticism of Israel" may mean one thing to one respondent and something quite different to another. Its meaning may have changed over the months or years.

With these words of caution in mind, we can proceed to examine the findings. As they have in the past, a large majority of respondents to the 1989 survey supported their right to openly criticize Israeli policies. We offered the statement "American Jews should not publicly criticize the policies of the government of Israel." Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) rejected this statement (thereby supporting the right to criticize) and only a quarter (23 percent) agreed with it.

This item has appeared in every survey since 1981 with largely the same results. Support for public criticism has fluctuated in a relatively narrow range, between 49 percent in 1982 and 63 percent in 1986 and 1989. The dips in support for criticism occurred in 1982 and 1988. These were

times when Israel was engaged in violent conflict with Palestinians (in Lebanon in 1982 and in the territories in 1988) and was subjected to an unusual amount of criticism in the news media. Under such circumstances, the instincts of some American Jews were to close ranks behind Israel and to discourage public criticism.

In 1989 we offered the statement "Jews who are severely critical of Israel should nevertheless be allowed to speak in synagogues and Jewish community centers." As in 1986, an overwhelming majority (73 percent) supported such a policy and only 13 percent were opposed. The responses to this item point to a larger phenomenon first uncovered in the 1983 survey. Jews regard Israel as a family matter. Criticism of Israel, in their view, ought to be handled within the family. Accordingly, the more internal the source or context of criticism, the more is it acceptable to a larger number of American Jews. To take two contrasting examples, an Israeli general speaking critically of Israeli policies in a synagogue would receive a far better hearing from most American Jews than a non-Jewish foreign-policy analyst saying the same things on a college campus.

Despite their support for the right to criticize, American Jews are divided on whether such criticism is a good idea. In 1988 we asked respondents whether they agreed with the statement "Recently there has been too much criticism of the Israeli government by American Jews." A slight plurality (41 to 38 percent) favored this view, even though in the same survey a clear majority of the sample endorsed the right to criticize Israel publicly. The hypothetical respondent in the political center seems to be saying to Jewish critics of Israel, "I support your right to criticize, especially if you do it in my synagogue or Jewish community center where gentiles won't hear you, but I am not sure that I want you to exercise that right." We may surmise that the principal hesitation about public criticism derives from the fear of lending aid and comfort to the enemies of Israel, be they Arabs or anti-Israel gentiles.

Support for criticism varied among groups within the sample. Generally, it was stronger among those who shared the following characteristics: completed college, Reform or nondenominational, not active in Jewish organizational life, politically liberal, and young.

CRITICISM OF ISRAEL  
(percent)

American Jews should not publicly criticize the policies of the government of Israel.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	23	63	14
1988	32	56	12
1986	22	63	16
1985	36	55	10
1983	31	57	12
1982	43	49	8
1981	38	57	17

Jews who are severely critical of Israel should nevertheless be allowed to speak in synagogues and Jewish community centers.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1989	73	13	15
1988	72	14	15

Recently there has been too much criticism of the Israel government by American Jews.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
1988	41	38	21

### 13. ADVERSE REACTIONS TO THE "WHO IS A JEW?" ISSUE

Israel's Laws of Return accepts converts to Judaism as Jews eligible for immediate Israeli citizenship. For years, the Orthodox parties have sought to amend the law to exclude those who converted under the auspices of non-Orthodox rabbis.

The bargaining among Israeli politicians over the "Who is a Jew?" issue in November and December of 1988 provoked an unprecedented response on the part of American Jewish leaders. Heads of national organizations in every major sphere of activity and from almost all ideological persuasions except some of the Orthodox announced their opposition to changing Israeli law. Most organizations sent their top leaders to Israel to lobby against the changes. Almost all passed resolutions and sent letters condemning the initiative by Orthodox religious parties in Israel to, in effect, withdraw Israeli government recognition of conversions to Judaism supervised by non-Orthodox rabbis in the Diaspora.

To what extent were these leaders supported by the wider Jewish public? Was this issue one that touched only the organized community, or did it reach down to the less Jewishly involved rank and file? The 1989 survey addressed these and related questions.

We introduced the topic to the respondents with a rather lengthy question, one that stated the complex issue in highly simplified terms: "Israel's 'Who is a Jew' law currently recognizes conversions to Judaism overseen by Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis. Should Israel change its laws so as to recognize only those conversions performed by Orthodox rabbis?" An overwhelming majority, 86 to 6 percent, opposed this sort of change in the law.

Of course, to state that a majority felt one way or the other -- even if the majority was quite large -- says little about the intensity of feelings on the issue. When asked how upset they would feel were Israel to change its "Who is a Jew?" law, a majority (56 percent) chose the most intense response ("very upset") and an additional 20 percent said they would feel "somewhat upset."

The depth of feelings can be gauged by another set of questions. The instrument asked whether respondents would be likely to withdraw their support for Israel in various ways were Israel to change its laws as noted. Significantly, in such a circumstance, about a third said they would be "less likely" to "make contributions to the UJA or Federation" (37 percent), "travel to Israel" (30 percent), or "make contributions to pro-Israel political candidates" (31 percent).

These findings suggest that with respect to the "Who is a Jew?" issue, the 1989 sample could

be divided into three unequal groups. About a quarter were relatively indifferent toward (and a few even supported) the idea of changing the Israeli legislation. Just under half were moderately to extremely upset with the proposed changes, but were not so upset that they would have withdrawn financial or political support for Israel if the changes were adopted. About a third were so deeply chagrined that they said they would take concrete action distancing themselves from Israel if the Knesset adopted the objectionable amendments.

Many Israelis were mystified by the American Jewish protest. After all, only a dozen or so converts who migrate to Israel annually would be affected by the proposed amendments. Given this limited number, why were American Jews so offended by the proposed legislative changes? Part of the answer is tied to the special place Israel occupies in the consciousness of American Jews. Sample members who were less attached to Israel were less offended by the "Who is a Jew?" affair than were those who were more attached. Of those scoring low on the Israel-attachment index, just 40 percent recalled having criticized Orthodox Israelis on this issue; of those scoring high on the attachment index, as many as 66 percent said they had spoken critically in private conversation with friends or relatives. (Incidentally, with respect to the *intifada*, the reverse is true; those more distant from Israel were more critical of Israel's handling of the *intifada* than were Israel's more passionate supporters.) Israel exerts considerable authority in the religious lives of American Jews. Hence an action -- even a seemingly trivial one -- that would seem to strike at the acceptability of conversions by non-Orthodox rabbis was interpreted more broadly to impugn the authenticity of non-Orthodox Jews and Judaism.

The personal dimension of the issue is demonstrated by the fact that a majority of the respondents (51 percent) said that they have "close friends or relatives" who "consider themselves Jewish even though they had a Gentile mother and were never converted by an Orthodox rabbi." This wording refers to the principal category of individuals whose Jewish identity would have been called into question had the changes in the "Who is a Jew?" legislation been adopted.

Indeed, three-fifths (60 percent) of the sample confirmed that, if the laws were changed, "some of your close friends or relatives who consider themselves Jewish would be considered non-Jewish by the State of Israel." An even larger number (64 percent) felt that "Israel would be declaring Conservative and Reform Judaism illegitimate." Still more (three-quarters, or 76 percent) had yet another reason to oppose the proposed changes. They felt that the amendments would mean that "Israel would be taking a big step toward becoming a country ruled by narrow-minded Orthodox rabbis."

The theme running through these responses is one of fear of potential rejection by Israel. *Respondents felt that, by passing the proposed legislation, Israel would be rejecting their brand of Judaism, their family members, their friends, and their claim to a special attachment to the Jewish state, which they regard as a center and refuge for all Jews, not just the Orthodox.* Indeed, the depth of anti-Orthodox resentment emerges in the very sharp distinctions made between ultra-Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, and secular Israelis. One item elicited the respondents' impressions of several Israeli groups. With regard to the "so-called 'ultra'-Orthodox," those reporting unfavorable images vastly outnumbered those with positive images (63 to 8 percent). The image of the Modern Orthodox was somewhat more positive. Here, those with favorable impressions clearly outnumbered those with unfavorable impressions (42 to 24 percent). But of all three groups, secular Israelis enjoyed the most positive image among respondents. Favorable impressions outnumbered unfavorable 49 to 7 percent, almost the reverse of the response to the ultra-Orthodox. Put simply, among American Jews, secular Israelis are very popular, Modern Orthodox somewhat popular, and ultra-Orthodox very unpopular. Undoubtedly, these images were reinforced by the "Who is a Jew?" controversy, and they helped shape American Jews' response to the issue as well.

The answers to the questions on the "Who is a Jew?" controversy suggest that the level of discomfort with Israel over that issue is deeper and broader than that associated with Israel's handling of the *intifada*. Such an inference is difficult to make conclusively because few questions allow explicit comparisons of reactions to the two issues. However, we did ask whether respondents offered or heard criticism of Israel on these two matters in private conversation. While a third said that they themselves had spoken critically of "Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising," many more, a clear majority of 54 percent, had spoken up against "Orthodox Israelis' attempt to change the 'Who is a Jew?' law." Similarly, while 43 percent had heard some of their "close Jewish friends or family members speaking critically of" Israel's response to the *intifada*, even more (57 percent) had heard criticism of the attempt to amend the "Who is a Jew?" law. Apparently, just as Jewish organization leaders' reactions to the *intifada* were mixed or muted, while their opposition to the "Who is a Jew?" amendments was united and loud, parallel trends can be noted among the Jewish public.

Although those particularly exercised by the "Who is a Jew?" affair were found more often among those close to Israel than those indifferent to Israel, the Orthodox (as one would expect) were far less likely to object to changing the law than were Conservative or Reform Jews. While even Orthodox Jews tended to reject the proposed amendments (and here it is important to note that this sample very likely excluded the most traditional Orthodox), the center of opposition to change in Israel's laws was found among Conservative and Reform Jews, particularly those who felt especially close to Israel. On an index of opposition to change in the "Who is a Jew?" legislation that ranges from 0 to 100, the Orthodox scored 45, compared with 79 for Conservative respondents, 78 for Reform respondents, and 68 for nondenominational Jews in the sample. (The index combined three items: opposition to changing the law, degree of upset if the law were changed, and report of criticism in private conversation.) Although overall it seems that Conservative and Reform Jews were about equally upset by the "Who is a Jew?" controversy, it turns out that, holding Israel attachment constant, Reform Jews were even more upset. As a group Reform Jews are less attached to Israel than Conservative Jews; but, of those Reform and Conservative Jews who claimed to be highly attached to Israel (as measured by the index of Israel attachment), it was the Reform respondents who more frequently expressed disgruntlement over the controversy. Of those highly attached to Israel, 68 percent of Conservative respondents criticized Orthodox Israelis in private conversation, but 78 percent of their Reform counterparts did so.

Strong feelings about the "Who is a Jew?" issue were also associated with education and political liberalism, although the strength of the relationships here was rather limited. To a small degree, the better educated were more upset with the prospective change in Israel's law than were the less well educated. Moreover, political liberals were somewhat more upset than political conservatives (mean scores on the index were 77 and 66). The composite portrait of the person most upset at the prospect of change in the "Who is a Jew?" law was a Conservative or Reform Jew, deeply committed to Israel, who was highly educated and a political liberal.

The "Who is a Jew?" controversy may have been responsible for somewhat more critical impressions of the treatment of Conservative and Reform Jews in Israel. In both 1986 and 1989, we asked respondents for their impression of how these sorts of Jews were being treated in Israel. In 1986, 37 percent answered at least "somewhat fairly" while 31 percent responded "somewhat unfairly" or "very fairly." By the 1989 survey, the balance had shifted. Those with positive views were matched in number with those having negative views of treatment of Conservative and Reform Jews in Israel (each 39 percent). Of course, we cannot be sure that the "Who is a Jew?" controversy affected this shift, but the speculation does seem warranted.

REACTIONS TO THE "WHO IS A JEW?" ISSUE  
(percent)

Israel's "Who is a Jew?" law currently recognizes conversions to Judaism overseen by Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis. Should Israel change its laws so as to recognize only those conversions performed by Orthodox rabbis?

Yes 6                      No 86                      Not sure 8

If Israel changed its "Who is a Jew?" law to recognize only Orthodox conversions, how would you feel?

Very upset                      56  
Somewhat upset                      20  
A little upset                      9  
Not upset                      9  
Not sure                      7

If Israel changed its "Who is a Jew?" law to recognize only Orthodox conversions, would you be more likely or less likely to . . .

	<u>More likely</u>	<u>Less likely</u>	<u>No difference</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
Make contributions to the UJA or Federation	3	37	52	8
Travel to Israel	3	30	61	7
Make contributions to pro-Israel political candidates	3	31	53	14

Do any of your close friends or relatives consider themselves Jewish even though they had a gentile mother and were never converted by an Orthodox rabbi?

Yes 51                      No 41                      Not sure 14

If Israel changes its "Who is a Jew?" law to recognize only those conversions performed by Orthodox rabbis, would that mean that . . .

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
some of your close friends or relatives who consider themselves Jewish would be considered non-Jewish by the State of Israel?	60	22	18
Israel would be declaring Conservative and Reform Judaism illegitimate?	64	16	20
Israel would be taking a big step toward becoming a country ruled by narrow-minded Orthodox rabbis?	76	11	14

Over the last twelve months, have you heard any of your close Jewish friends or family members speaking critically of . . .

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising?	43	51	6
Orthodox Israelis' attempt to change the "Who is a Jew?" law?	57	37	6

Over the last twelve months, in conversation with any of your close friends or family members, have you spoken critically of . . .

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising?	33	62	5
Orthodox Israelis' attempt to change the "Who is a Jew?" law?	54	42	4



INDEX OF NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO THE "WHO IS A JEW?" ISSUE  
(mean scores)

Year	1989
Total	72
Under 35	65
35-44	67
45-54	70
55-64	77
65+	77
Orthodox	45
Conservative	79
Reform	78
Just Jewish	68
Unaffiliated	64
Affiliated	74
Activist	75
High school	68
Some college	69
College degree	73
Grad school	76
Liberal	76
Middle road	71
Conservative	66

#### 14. LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF ISRAELI SOCIETY

American Jews have a deserved reputation for strong attachment to Israel, for extraordinary involvement with the news media (both as producers and consumers), and for very high levels of secular education. All of these characteristics suggest that they should be rather well informed about Israel.

To examine this proposition, the questionnaire asked five factual questions about Israeli society and history. While any standard for what constitutes "well informed" or "ill informed" is arbitrary, it does seem that many respondents lacked rudimentary information about Israel. Fewer than two-thirds (64 percent) knew the year of Israel's declaration of independence (1948). Even fewer (62 percent) knew (or guessed) that the Likud's Yitzhak Shamir and Labor's Shimon Peres are from different political parties (although this figure is far greater than the 34 percent who knew in 1986 that Peres and Menachem Begin were from different parties). Just 39 percent knew the year in which Israel took control of the West Bank (1967). Just over a third knew that Arab and Jewish Israeli schoolchildren generally go to different schools (about the same number as in 1986). And, in light of the "Who is a Jew?" controversy, it is surprising that only a quarter (26 percent) knew that Conservative and Reform rabbis cannot officially marry couples in Israel (down from 34 percent in 1986).

Knowledge of Israeli society, limited as it may be, varied closely with predictable variables. It increased somewhat with secular education; it increased sharply with trips to Israel; it was positively associated with denominational traditionalism; and it was associated with Jewish organizational involvement. In other words, activists seem to know a lot more about Israel than the unaffiliated, and the Orthodox know far more than do typical Reform Jews.

KNOWLEDGE OF ISRAELI SOCIETY  
(percent)

As far as you know (without checking with others) . . .

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
Are Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres from the same political party? (Begin and Peres?)	1989	4	62	34
	1986	10	34	56
Can Conservative and Reform rabbis officially marry couples in Israel?	1989	38	26	36
	1986	23	34	43
Do Arab Israeli and Jewish Israeli children generally go to the same schools?	1989	23	35	41
	1986	19	31	50

In what year did Israel declare its independence?

"1948" (correct) 64

In what year did Israel take control of the West Bank?

"1967" (correct) 39

## 15. CONCLUSION: MUCH STABILITY, SOME CHANGE

Perhaps the most striking theme to run through these findings is their stability relative to previous years. Despite the *intifada*, despite the "Who is a Jew?" controversy, American Jews remain firmly attached to Israel. Moreover, those who can be expected to express the strongest attachment continue to do so: the Orthodox, repeat visitors, organizational activists, and older people. Developments in recent months have certainly complicated American Jews' relationship with Israel. Many find themselves in sharp opposition to some Israeli government policies; but this opposition does not seem to undermine basic support for Israel (at least not yet).

This basic conclusion is supported by numerous anecdotal reports by regular observers of Jewish life. To take one example, Gary Rubin, program director for the American Jewish Committee, writes in a personal communication:

It seems to me that American Jews are very disturbed by events in Israel. Reports of human rights violations and perceived threats of fundamentalist legislation match neither their own values nor their perceptions of what Israel is or ought to be. They want an opportunity to discuss their feelings about these issues in an atmosphere that will not produce guilt or pressure if they reveal their doubts and concerns.

But once these doubts are expressed, there almost always emerges a strong sense of support for Israel. Rather than resulting in a turning away from Israel, their doubts tend to lead to questions of how they can act positively to help groups in Israel that share their values on peace (whichever side of the spectrum they happen to support) and [religious] pluralism.

If there is a perceptible change in Jews' attitudes toward Israel over the years, it primarily takes the shape of an increased preference for dovish foreign policies. American Jews still regard the Arabs and Palestinians as threatening, but there is far less support for this view among younger people than among older adults. They still see Israel as acting fairly to Arabs, but, again, this view is less prominent among younger Jews than among their parents.

The major driving force behind American Jewish attitudes toward the Israeli-Arab conflict is a quest for security for Israel. They appear to oppose a Palestinian state because they fear it will constitute a mortal danger to Israel. On the other hand, they favor a Palestinian homeland on condition that it not endanger Israel. They welcome the opening of a dialogue between the United States and the PLO, yet they think Israel should not talk to the PLO as things now stand. However, were the PLO to recognize Israel and renounce terrorism, they would welcome Israel-PLO talks as well.

If this report contains a particular cause for concern (if not alarm) for Jewish organization leaders, it lies in the increasingly lukewarm feelings for Israel reported by younger Jews. The slide in pro-Israel sentiment down the entire age ladder is slow but steady. It does not appear to be directly connected with recent events (although one cannot be sure). Rather, chronological distance from the earlier events in Israel's history seems to explain the long-term erosion in Israel attachment.

How can this trend be countered? On a broad scale, Jewish involvement of any sort is associated with closer ties to Israel. Thus efforts to recruit Jews to Jewish organizations, synagogues, schools, and religious life also have the side benefit of improving their Israel attachment. More pointedly, though, visiting Israel seems to exert a powerful impact on Israel attachment, and more trips result in even higher levels of pro-Israel sentiment. (The statistical association between prior trips to Israel and pro-Israel sentiment may be due to a self-selection process; that is, more pro-Israel individuals are more predisposed to visit Israel. Nevertheless, the differences between visitors and nonvisitors in pro-Israel feelings and knowledge is so large, and the evidence from studies of short-term effects of Israel travel is so massive, that one must conclude that Israel travel substantially increases pro-Israel sentiment.)

The policy implication is quite clear. In light of the decline in pro-Israel sentiment among young people, in light of the probable powerful impact of Israel travel upon those sentiments, policies and programs to encourage travel of younger American Jews to Israel should occupy a prominent place on the Jewish communal agenda.

One final note is in order. The absence of significant change in attitudes toward Israel over the last several years is no guarantee that sudden and dramatic change is impossible. There are many reasons to anticipate change.

First, the considerable age-related differences in pro-Israel sentiment suggest declines in pro-Israel commitment as younger adults inevitably replace their elders.

Second, public-opinion research has identified "sleeper effects" -- that is, the immediate impact of certain events may be far different from their longer-range impact. To take one example, the Lebanon war occasioned an immediate tough response among both Israelis and American Jews in the summer of 1982. By the spring of 1983, both populations' perspectives on the conflict had softened considerably. We have no idea what "sleeper effects" were produced by the *intifada* and the "Who is a Jew?" controversy.

Third, survey research inevitably measures a combination of genuine inner feelings and respondents' perceptions of socially acceptable answers. In part people say what they really think, in part they say what they think they are supposed to think. To take an example, in 1986 the vast majority of Jewish respondents said they got just as upset with terrorist attacks on non-Jews as on Jews. The actual reactions of American Jews to the bombing of the U.S. Marines in Beirut versus the Munich massacre in 1972 or the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship stands in stark contrast with the survey responses. It may well be that many respondents in the 1989 survey felt uncomfortable about translating their misgivings about Israel into survey answers that could be subject to misinterpretation.

Fourth, public-opinion researchers report a two- (or more) step flow of information and opinion change. Leaders do influence the public, and changes in elites do precede changes among the less well informed. Here the dovish tendencies among many national Jewish leaders is critical. Many leaders seem to be saying privately that Israel ought to talk with the PLO and that a demilitarized Palestinian state is an inevitability with which Israel must cope. If these sentiments eventually filter

down throughout the American Jewish population, they will, of course, further strengthen the dovish tilt and dovish movement already noticeable in the 1989 survey.

Finally, the course of politically critical events is unpredictable. Despite numerous precedents and indicators, no serious policymaker in Israel or in American Jewry in 1987 was planning for the *intifada*, for the "Who is a Jew?" controversy, or for the U.S.-PLO dialogue. In like manner, it is impossible to predict the important turning points that lie ahead. Leaders of parties, movements, regional states, and superpowers are mortal, to point to just one source of unpredictability. Will the *intifada* escalate? Will it be suppressed? Will the Israeli government survive its full term of office? If not, who will the Israeli electorate put in office? Will the apparent moderation in the PLO position strengthen or weaken? These are just some of the unknowables. And just as they are unknowable, so too is the exact contour of American Jewish public opinion several years, or even several months, down the road.

## APPENDIX: COMPARISON WITH OTHER SAMPLES OF AMERICAN JEWS

To test the representativeness of the national sample of Jews from the 1989 survey from which the data for the present report were obtained, the following tables compare distributions of key variables from this and other sources. The first column in all tables reports distributions from this survey (NSAJ89 = National Survey of American Jews 1989). The *American Jewish Year Book* (AJYB) collects estimates of local Jewish populations from Jewish federations and provides estimates of Jewish population distributions across the ten regions defined by the U.S. Census. NFO refers to National Family Opinion, Inc., a market-research firm that has amassed a list of Jewish households in a fashion similar to that used by Market Facts. 7-CITY refers to an amalgam of Jewish community studies conducted 1981-86 in seven major metropolitan areas (Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Miami, Chicago, and Cleveland). The data set was weighted to take into account variations in population size. LA TIMES refers to the national telephone survey of 1,108 Jewish households conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* in April 1988. The households were identified over several months of Random Digit Dial telephone surveys which queried over 50,000 households nationwide. TELENATION refers to an amalgam of Jewish households located through several months of national Random Digit Dialing by Market Facts, Inc.

The NSAJ89 sample's geographic distribution is very similar to that reported by the other sources.

Its Jewish-identity characteristics also largely resemble those reported by the other sources. Insofar as the NSAJ89 sample differs from the 7-CITY data set, it seems to include somewhat more uninvolved (what some may call "assimilated") Jews. The NSAJ89 sample contains more respondents who failed to report most of the rituals listed, but the 7-CITY data set includes more respondents without any Jewish schooling as well as those who never attend synagogue services. We should note that, owing to the location of the seven cities (it excludes smaller cities and communities west of the Mississippi), the 7-CITY sample appears to be more observant than the true national average. If so, then the NSAJ89 sample's somewhat larger number of less-involved Jews may be closer to the true national proportion than to that found in the 7-CITY sample.

The distributions of NSAJ89 sociodemographic characteristics resemble those reported by the three other sources. In most instance, the figures for the NSAJ89 fall within the ranges provided by the other data sets. Two exceptions are the high proportion earning over \$50,000 and the low proportion of elderly individuals aged 75 and over.

COMPARISONS WITH OTHER SOURCES

NSAJ89 = National Survey of American Jews, 1989

AJYB = American Jewish Year Book

NFO = National Family Opinion, Inc.

LA TIMES = Los Angeles Times Survey of American Jews, April 1988

TELENATION = Market Facts, Inc.

Geographic Distribution

<i>Region</i>	NSAJ89	AJYB	NFO
New England	9	7	8
Middle Atlantic	42	45	41
East North Central	9	9	8
West North Central	1	2	2
South Atlantic	17	16	20
East South Central	1	1	1
West South Central	4	2	4
Mountain	3	3	3
Pacific	15	15	14

Jewish Background

<i>Denomination</i>	NSAJ89	7-CITY	LA TIMES
Orthodox	10	10	11
Conservative	31	37	35
Reform	25	31	26
Other	33	22	28
<i>Been to Israel</i>			
No	64	63	
Once	24	24	
Twice or more	12	13	
<i>Jewish education</i>			
Day school	6	10	
Hebrew school	51	47	
Sunday school	21	15	
Tutor	5	6	
None	14	23	
<i>Synagogue attendance</i>			
Never	18	26	
1-4 times a year	39	29	
5 or more times a year	43	45	



	NSAJ89	7-CITY	LA TIMES
<i>Observance</i>			
Attended Passover seder	79	90	
Lit Hanukkah candles	81	79	
Fasted on Yom Kippur	59	68	
Have separate dishes	20	26	
Had Christmas tree	16	14	
Most close friends Jewish	71	89	

Sociodemographic Background

	NSAJ89	7-CITY	NFO	TELENATION
Married individuals	72	71	71	74
<i>Education</i>				
Graduate degree	29	28	37	24
B.A.	22	25	22	29
Some college	27	19	22	20
H.S. or less	23	28	19	28
<i>Income</i>				
Under 20,000	19	29	24	17
20,000-30,000	13	20	17	20
30,000-40,000	14	16	17	14
40,000-50,000	16	61	31	2
50,000 or more	39	30	29	37
<i>Age</i>				
Under 25	1	6	1	12
25-34	18	20	19	20
35-44	24	18	26	22
45-54	17	17	13	11
55-64	19	19	16	13
65-74	17	14	18	13
75 or older	4	7	8	7

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