



USCJ
UOJCA

AIPAC URJ

AJC JRF

JDC USY

JCPA NCSY

UJC NFTY

JCCA JTS

A PRIMER ON THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

CRC RAC

ORT JESNA

NCJW CAJE

JLC PEJE

AZM NCSJ

RZA AJWS

JEROME A. CHANES

ARZA COEJL

ZOA JOFA

WJC YIVO

CLAL

A PRIMER ON THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

Third Edition

The mission of **American Jewish Committee** is:

- To safeguard the welfare and security of Jews in the United States, in Israel, and throughout the world;
- To strengthen the basic principles of pluralism around the world as the best defense against anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry;
- To enhance the quality of American Jewish life by helping to ensure Jewish continuity, and;
- To deepen ties between American and Israeli Jews.

To learn more about our mission, programs, and publications, and to join and contribute to our efforts, please visit us at www.ajc.org or contact us by phone at 212-751-4000 or by e-mail at contribute@ajc.org.

JEROME A. CHANES

Jerome A. Chanes is the author of *A Dark Side of History: Antisemitism through the Ages* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 2000) and *Antisemitism: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), and editor of *A Portrait of the American Jewish Community* (Westport: Greenwood/Praeger, 1998) and *Antisemitism in America Today: Exploding the Myths* (New York: Carol/Birch Lane Press, 1995). He has taught at Barnard College and at Yeshiva, Harvard, and Oxford Universities, and is a faculty scholar at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies of Brandeis University.

Copyright © 2008 American Jewish Committee
 All Rights Reserved.
 June 2008

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Preface | v |
| A Primer on the American Jewish Community | |
| Historical Background and General Overview | 1 |
| Religious Movements | 6 |
| Jewish Federations and Social Service Organizations | 14 |
| Politics, Defense, and Diplomacy | 17 |
| Educational and Cultural Organizations | 25 |
| The Agenda of the Jewish Community | 29 |
| Bibliography | 41 |
| Periodicals of Jewish Interest (An Annotated Selection) | 43 |
| Appendix of Jewish Communal Organizations | 44 |

Preface

In 2004-05, American Jewry celebrated the 350th anniversary of its first settlement in North America. The celebration provided the occasion for careful assessment of the meaning of the American Jewish experience and evaluation of the community's current role in Jewish history.

Clearly the uniqueness of the American Jewish experience needs to be underscored. No society in Diaspora Jewish history has been as welcoming of Jewish participation as has the United States. Over the past six postwar decades, the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, although by no means completely disappearing, has been relegated to the margins of American society. The eight years of the Clinton administration, in particular, signaled the collapse of whatever barriers may have remained to Jewish participation. The administration did not keep track of how many Jews it employed and really did not give it any significance. Beyond the citadels of government, university campuses embodied openness to Jewish participation. Jews represented less than 2 percent of the total population, but 5 percent of university students, 10 percent of university faculties, and as much as 20 percent of elite university faculties. Several Ivy League campuses, in fact, reported Jewish populations of 25 percent to 30 percent, and several employed Jewish presidents.

In such an open society, Jews have prospered as Americans. Their economic and educational attainments in many ways have made them the envy of other religious and ethnic groupings. Ironically, being a Jew constituted an enviable status in America, rather than a position to be avoided or hidden. Gone were the days of entertainment celebrities changing their surnames to hide Jewish origins. If anything, so well integrated were Jews in America that distinctive Jewish names no longer constituted evidence of personal Jewish status.

Judaism and Jewish culture also benefited from the encounter with America. By 2004, America could boast a tradition of academic Judaic scholarship virtually unmatched in Jewish history. Hardly a university of note lacked an impressive program of Jewish studies, suggesting the arrival of Jewish civilization within elite American

culture. Jews, in fact, had more opportunities to educate themselves Jewishly than ever before. By the twenty-first century, over 200,000 Jewish students were attending Jewish day schools—a number several times greater than the number during the 1950s baby boom.

Perhaps most surprisingly, Orthodox Judaism, once considered moribund in America, was experiencing a renaissance. Orthodox successes in securing Jewish continuity have reversed its image from one of nostalgia for a dying past to one of hope in a vibrant Jewish future. The determination of Orthodox leadership to rebuild on American shores after the Holocaust constituted an inspiring example of Jews refusing to surrender to the status quo and formulating instead an alternative vision of Jewish renewal in the United States.

These images of American Jewish life, to be sure, were hardly free of forebodings. The birthrate for American Jews was well below replacement level, connoting a decreased number of Jews in the fairly near future. Inter-marriage remained at extremely high levels (47 percent) and threatened to corrode Judaic distinctiveness and future Jewish continuity. American Jewish political influence could well be attenuated in the coming decades in an increasingly multicultural America, whose numbers were increasing exponentially while the number of Jews remained flat and their percentage was decreasing.

To meet these challenges and plan for the future, American Jewry constructed an incredible network of social service, defense, and educational institutions. Some critics, in fact, claimed that the Jewish community was overorganized. Others perceived the vast network as proof of what Jews can build in a truly free society.

To demystify what seems a complex and even arcane structure to both outside observers and many Jews, the American Jewish Committee thought it useful to prepare a “road map” of the community and its institutions. AJC commissioned Jerome Chanes, a longtime analyst of American Jewish life, to show the reader how the community evolved, how it is structured, and what issues constitute its agenda. His *Primer of the American Jewish Community*, now in its third revised edition, should help clarify the contemporary dilemmas.

Steven Bayme, Ph.D.
National Director
Contemporary Jewish Life Department

Historical Background and General Overview

Who Are We?

Who are American Jews? This seemingly simple question has bedeviled generations of historians, sociologists, psychologists, rabbis, and just plain folks. This publication explores the *number* of American Jews and what those numbers mean; reviews the *history* to explain how and why we came to be what we are; examines American political and cultural pluralism to understand how American Jews are *organized*; and, finally, surveys the *agenda* of American Jews—which issues are important to us, what we are involved in, and why.

How Many?

There has never been a complete census of American Jews in the United States. Estimates of the number of Jews have varied widely—precise estimates are impossible to come by—because of the difficulty of defining the boundaries of the core question: Who or what is a Jew? Estimates range from 4.2 million to as many as 6.4 million Jews in the United States. The authoritative *1990 National Jewish Population Survey* therefore developed seven Jewish-identity “constructs,” or categories, to spread as wide a net as possible. “Jews by Religion” included three subcategories: “Born Jews, Religion Judaism,” “Jews by Choice” (that is, persons who are currently Jewish, but were born non-Jews), “Jews Born with No Religion” (persons who identified as Jewish but who answered “none,” “agnostic,” or “atheist” when queried about their religion). Combining these categories, the 1990 survey found approximately 5.5 million in the “core Jewish population.” Beyond these core groups, the 1990 NJPS counted as well: “Born/Raised Jewish, Converted Out,” “Adults of Jewish Parentage with Other Current Religion,” many of whom consider themselves to be Jewish by ethnicity or background, and “Children under 18 Being Raised with Other Current Religion.”

A more liberal estimate of the “core” Jewish population of the United States in 2006 is the 6.4 million Jews determined by the *2006*

American Jewish Year Book, based on an aggregate of 535 local community estimates.¹ Major centers of Jewish concentration are New York (1.41 million), Los Angeles, Miami and South Florida, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

While the total fertility rate of American Jews has been rising, American Jews are still below “zero population growth.” Thus, the community is not reproducing itself. The modest growth in absolute numbers over the past half century has been achieved through immigration into the United States, primarily from the former Soviet Union, with smaller numbers of Jews emigrating from Israel, Iran, and other lands—an immigration that has ended.

The lack of growth in the American Jewish population is all the more striking when compared with population trends in the United States as a whole. In 1950, the American Jewish population was estimated at 5 million, some 3 percent of a general population of 151.8 million. The number of Jews has barely increased over a period of five-and-a-half decades, while the population of the United States has skyrocketed. Thus, by 2008, the percentage of Jews in the total population had declined to some 2.1 percent.

Where Did We Come From?

Sephardim and Ashkenazim

The history of the American Jewish community, like the history of the American people, is a narrative of immigration. Historians note four major waves of immigration: first, during the Colonial period, Jews were of mostly Spanish or Portuguese origin—Sephardim, “*S’pharad*” being the ancient Hebrew name for Spain; second, pre-Civil War through most of the nineteenth century, primarily Jews of Central European origin—Ashkenazim, “*Ashkenaz*” being the ancient Hebrew name for Germany. The third wave, between 1880 and the early 1920s, from Russia and other parts of Eastern Europe, transformed the Jewish community of America into a critical mass and shaped the community; between 1880 and 1900, 1.4 million

Jews had arrived on these shores, compared with between 100,000 and 200,000 during the period 1800-80. Most institutions of American Jewry and Judaism were established during this period. With the restrictive anti-immigrant legislation of the 1920s, this huge wave of immigration came to an end; it was the destruction of European Jewry that spurred the post-World War II immigration of survivors of the Holocaust, which infused new energy into American Jewry, especially into the Orthodox community. In a repetition of an earlier pattern, these immigrants were not warmly welcomed by their coreligionists and established their own communal organizations.

Many Jewish communities in America came into being during the nineteenth century. Until the 1830s, Jewish immigration to America consisted of individuals and isolated families. The immigration in the middle of the nineteenth century—the second wave—was the first mass migration, a movement of clans, groups of families, even large portions of communities from a single region or country. The newcomers arrived precisely at the time when the country was expanding geographically, economically, and socially, and they followed the country’s routes of expansion. Many of the immigrants began as peddlers in the West and South, and gradually moved up the economic ladder to become “merchants”—the humble origins of many of today’s major department stores. Most of the Jewish communities of the present-day United States were established by these small groups of German-Jewish peddler-merchants. Later, around the turn of the twentieth century, during the third period of migration—this from Russia—most immigrants stayed in the cities, where economic and social opportunities were to be found. This pattern laid the foundation for the present substantial urban Jewish population.

The social contrast between the new immigrants and the established Jewish community was stark. American Jewry in the early decades of the twentieth century was largely divided between “uptown” Jews—Americanized families of German-Jewish descent, so-called *Yahudim*—and “downtown” Jews, Eastern European immigrants, the Yiddish-speaking *Yid’n*. But most of the “uptown” Jews, while they could easily divide the world into “ours” and

1. Even more liberal is the estimate of 6.8 million, offered by Brandeis University’s Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.

“theirs” from a social perspective, realized that the Eastern European Jews were, in a real way, “theirs” too. The leadership of the German Jewish “uptown” establishment made an effort to set aside their reservations about the “downtown” *Yid’n* and acknowledged their communal obligations as brother and sister Jews. Out of this feeling of responsibility came the establishment of social service and early “defense” agencies.

Overall, the numerical and social impact of the Eastern European Jewish immigration was staggering. By 1927, there were 4.2 million Jews in the United States, 80 percent or more of Eastern European origin or ancestry.

Finally, recent Jewish immigrants have included approximately 400,000 Jews (as of 2007) from the former Soviet Union (FSU) and smaller numbers from Israel, Iran, and from other Jewish communities around the world. Jews from the FSU faced many problems—language, Jewish identity, unfamiliarity with democratic mores. The main issue for these immigrants, as for previous generations of immigrants, was making a living. But the problem for Soviet Jewish immigrants, who came with professional degrees and skills, has been less one of unemployment than of severe underemployment.

How Do We See Ourselves?

The Jewish population of the United States is heavily skewed toward the Northeast, with some 44 percent of Jews living in the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions. American Jews tend to be older than the general population. The percentage of foreign-born Jews is 14 percent, down from 23 percent in 1970, a figure that was itself considerably lower than earlier generations.

American Jews worry about intermarriage and the consequent loss of Jewish identification. Considerable doubt persists over whether the intermarriage numbers are as high as the more than 50 percent rate claimed in the *1990 National Jewish Population Survey* and the 47 percent rate reported in the *2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey*, and whether the intermarriage rate has increased dramatically over the past sixty years. Nevertheless, most observers

consider the rate of intermarriage unacceptably high, and it certainly is significantly higher than it was three decades ago. Mixed marriages, especially at a time when American Jewish fertility is below replacement level, portend a shrinking community.

Most American Jews, when given the choice of identifying themselves as members of a religious, ethnic, national, or cultural group, say “cultural.”² While American Jews largely perform Jewish practices and rituals such as attendance at a Passover Seder, lighting Hanukkah candles, and kindling Sabbath candles on Friday nights, the popularity of these practices masks the fact that relatively few Jews in the United States are functionally literate in carrying out these rituals.

Physical security and the ability to participate in American society have long been central concerns of American Jews. They continue to view anti-Semitism as a serious problem in the United States, notwithstanding the data that document the steady, long-term diminution of both behavioral and attitudinal anti-Semitism.

How Are We Organized?

Conventional wisdom has it that the American Jewish community is disorganized and chaotic, with multiple organizations expressing themselves raucously in a cacophonous cluster of voices. Is there duplication among Jewish organizations, with but a hairbreadth of nuanced difference between them? Many question whether the “establishment” Jewish organizations represent the Jewish grassroots. Is there, in fact, such a thing as a Jewish “electorate” in America? Should there be?

The model for American Jewish organizations is America itself, a society based on cultural and democratic pluralism. This pattern is something unique in history. The pluralist ideal—balancing individuals, groups, and the state, the interests of majorities and minorities—has created a society resembling not the “melting pot” ideal of the early 1900s, but a *cholent*, the traditional Jewish stew—lumpy,

2. The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey reports that some 70 percent of respondents reported “cultural.” Respondents could choose more than one category.

pungent, very tasty, gives you heartburn, and is very, very nourishing. It is precisely such a society based on pluralist principles that encourages voluntarism, the pillar on which Jewish communal organization rests.

The voluntary nature of the American Jewish community, combined with the principle of federalism,³ permits and even depends upon affiliation—with a synagogue, a federation, a community-relations agency, a Zionist organization—to a far greater degree than at any other time in Jewish history.

Religious Movements

Denominational groupings in American Jewish religion, known as “movements,” are generally grouped into four categories: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist. Approximately 8 percent of American Jews identify themselves as Orthodox Jews, 32 percent as Conservative, 38 percent as Reform, and 3 percent as Reconstructionist. A more meaningful statistic is that of affiliation. Of those American Jews who belong to synagogues, approximately 42 percent affiliate with the Reform movement, 33 percent with Conservative, 21 percent with Orthodox, 3 percent with Reconstructionist, and 1 percent “other.” Reform—the movement most open to the intermarried and the most liberal in practice—remains the fastest-growing in terms of synagogue membership and congregational growth.

Their Philosophies

Reform Judaism, originating in early nineteenth-century Germany as a religious response to modernity—specifically the struggle for Jewish emancipation in the aftermath of the Enlightenment—flourished in the United States because its stress on the autonomy of the individual, as opposed to the constraints of Jewish law (the *halakha*), fit well with the American ethos. Furthermore, by promoting itself as a dynamic Judaism responsive to social and technological change,

Reform seemed to be in the vanguard of progress. Also, classical Reform declared Jewish national consciousness obsolete and projected a Jewish identity based solely on faith. Reform Jews, then, could proudly declare that the United States was their Promised Land. So Americanized did Reform become that some Reform temples held Sabbath services on Sunday—they no longer do so—or even barred from membership Jews who kept kosher or espoused Zionism.

In the twentieth century, American Reform turned more traditional, especially after the early 1970s. The classical Reform of the past, with little Hebrew or ritual in the service, has gradually given way to a contemporary version that encourages Hebrew and ritual, as well as a greater emphasis on traditional texts in the service and in Jewish education. In the United States in the first decade of the twenty-first century, the public face of Reform is prominent in two areas: its continuing long-standing emphasis on social justice concerns and a new emphasis on spirituality.

The Reform movement has in recent years taken a pragmatic approach to relations with the other movements, a departure from its confrontational stance in earlier decades, when the positions of Reform were codified in “platforms.” One of the issues that separates Reform from the more normatively “halakhic” Orthodox and Conservative movements is Reform’s formal stance on mixed marriages, patrilineality, and other personal-status issues, which makes it increasingly difficult to tell Jew from non-Jew.

Like Reform, Conservative Judaism had its roots in nineteenth-century Europe, but it evolved as an American religious movement. Ironically, the early Conservative movement in America arose as an “Orthodox” reaction against Reform, although it differed from Orthodoxy in its understanding that religion evolves historically. There is more than one version of Jewish normative tradition, argues Conservative Judaism, and religious change can and should occur within the framework of *halakha*. Thus Conservative Judaism is distinguished from Orthodoxy, with its view of a binding authority of normative tradition on every matter, and from the liberal Judaism of Reform, which jettisoned *halakha*. Changes in *halakha* are justified

3. See page 14, in the discussion of the federation.

by Conservative Jews on the grounds of accommodation to historical development. While this view remains the ideology and practice of the movement's leadership, Conservative Judaism has not succeeded in creating a community of committed Jews who govern their lives in accordance with *halakha*, even a changing *halakha*. Conservative Judaism instead has taken on the character of an ethnic Judaism that practices those elements of the tradition that make its members feel part of the Jewish people.

While the number of Conservative synagogues has declined over the past forty years, there are some signs of vitality in the movement as it confronts such crucial issues as homosexuality in Jewish life. Enrollment is on the upswing in Conservative-sponsored supplementary schools—even as there continue to be problems in the schools' curricula—and there is a growing recognition that intensive day school education is a key to Jewish literacy. Gender difference is hardly a factor in the Conservative movement, as the great majority of synagogues are now egalitarian. Intermarriage poses a major challenge for the movement as synagogues seek to address the question of how to attract intermarried couples. On the question of religious pluralism in Israel, Conservatives (called the “Masorti” movement in Israel) have made common cause with Reform in opposition to the Orthodox monopoly on conversions to Judaism and other issues.

Withal, Conservative Judaism is a troubled movement, with demographic shrinkage, institutional weaknesses, and the age-old gap in observance between the official positions of the movement and the practice of the rabbis, on the one hand, and the lack of traditional observance by those in the pews on the other.

The American Orthodox community, so weak in the pre-World War II years (and immediately following the war) that many predicted its disappearance, found new life with the arrival of rabbinic and scholarly leadership in the late 1930s, during the war, and especially through the 1950s. This was precisely what had been missing earlier in the century, and these leaders provided the intellectual, educational, and communal underpinnings for health and growth. Numerous new Orthodox synagogues, and more importantly, yeshi-

vas and other educational institutions, were founded across the country, and thrived. The Orthodox community, over the last four decades, seems to have retained the bulk of its members and also attracted newcomers—the “*ba'al teshuva*” (“return to religion”) phenomenon. American Orthodoxy, however, has experienced over the past two decades a noticeable shift to the religious, social, cultural, and political “right,” including, among some groups, a shift away from engagement with American society. This trend is especially evident among the rabbis, and has led to some disquiet at the grass-roots level.

A fourth movement, Reconstructionism, was originally an offshoot of the Conservative movement. It is based on the teachings of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, one of the seminal Jewish thinkers of the twentieth century. Reconstructionism rejects a God-centered theology and instead emphasizes Judaism as a distinctive religious civilization, with a unique tradition, culture, and land. The movement, a tiny one for decades, has experienced some growth in recent years. Its influence transcends its numbers, as Reconstructionism's activist rabbinate and constituency give the movement a decidedly liberal cast as the movement engages in active debate over theology.

Their Structures

Relations between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox movements have been deteriorating as issues of personal status—marriage, divorce, adoption—become prominent and indeed conspicuous. The context for intracommunal conflict over the past two decades has been the growth of an Orthodox triumphalism increasingly dismissive of other movements, and the radicalization of the liberal movements on such issues as homosexuality, intermarriage, and criteria for defining “Jewishness.” Even as the sharpness of rhetoric has been modulated in recent years, with some form of “let's agree to disagree” characterizing some of the leadership in the Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities, conflict over personal status issues poses increasing dangers to intracommunal comity.

The local synagogue stands at the center of Jewish life. The syn-

agogue—in Hebrew, *beit k'nesset*, “house of assembly”—historically functioned not solely as a house of worship, but as an educational center and a focus for Jewish communal life. Yet while synagogue affiliation is the most widespread form of formal Jewish connection in the United States, it characterizes only 40 percent of Jewish households. This stands in striking contrast to the approximately 70 percent of American Christians affiliated with a church.

Each of the Jewish religious movements has umbrella organizations for its rabbis and congregations.

The professional rabbinic association of the “centrist” or Modern Orthodox community in America, the **Rabbinical Council of America** (RCA), represents those rabbis who were graduated from, or identify with, Yeshiva University’s Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS). The RCA, which reports some 1,000 members (approximately 800 in the U.S.), was founded in 1935 because the existing organization, the **Agudas Harabonim**, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, made up of Yiddish-speaking, European-born-and-educated rabbis, refused to accept rabbis who had been ordained at RIETS. The RCA today is the largest and most geographically representative of the Orthodox rabbinical organizations. The intellectual journal *Tradition* is published by the RCA.

A newer training-ground for Orthodox rabbis, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah in New York, was established in 1999 as an “Open Orthodox” response to Yeshiva University’s RIETS, which had been viewed by many as having moved in the direction of the sectarian right. When graduates of Chovevei Torah reportedly faced opposition to their membership in the RCA, YCT withdrew its application, and in 2008 a new group called the **Rabbinic Fellowship** was formed to encompass graduates of YCT and other liberal-leaning Orthodox rabbis.

Conservative rabbis are represented by the **Rabbinical Assembly** (RA), which was founded in 1900. The 1,200 rabbis who are North American RA members (the RA claims a worldwide membership of 1,600) were educated, for the most part, at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS), headquartered in New York. The West

Coast branch of JTS, located in Los Angeles, broke off some years ago to become an independent institution. In recent years, a good number of students have been educated at the University of Judaism, which merged with Brandeis-Bardin Institute in 2007, taking as its name the American Jewish University.

Two additional seminaries, transdenominational in approach, are the Rabbinical School of the Hebrew College, located in Newton, Massachusetts, founded in 2003, and the Academy for Jewish Religion in Riverdale, New York, founded in 1956.

The Reform movement’s rabbinical body, the **Central Conference of American Rabbis** (CCAR), dates back to 1889, and is the oldest rabbinical organization in the United States. The CCAR reports approximately 1,800 members. Its rabbis are educated at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, New York, Los Angeles, and Jerusalem.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, located near Philadelphia, was founded in 1968, and its graduates affiliate with the **Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association**.

Noteworthy is the fact that all four movements—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist—have newly installed professional leaders in their rabbinical seminaries.

Each of the movements has a corresponding lay organization that represents its congregations. These bodies address a broader range of issues—including community relations and public policy concerns—than do their respective rabbinical associations.

The **Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America** (UOJCA, Orthodox Union, or OU), established in 1898, claims a membership of 397 Orthodox synagogues, 374 of them in the United States. (The OU reports that it provides services to approximately 850 synagogues in North America.) Its prominence in the supervision of *kashrut*, the youth programs it runs through its **National Conference of Synagogue Youth**, and its involvement in public affairs (via the OU’s Institute for Public Affairs) make the Orthodox Union the closest thing to an Orthodox “address” in the United States. In the areas of youth and education especially, through the

Union's efforts at attracting youth from unaffiliated families, the OU is making a mark. The OU publishes a quarterly magazine, *Jewish Action*.

Two instrumentalities affiliated with the Modern Orthodox world are the Orthodox Caucus, which addresses a range of current issues and problems in Orthodox Jewry; and the Orthodox Forum, which functions as a "think tank" on issues implicating *halakha*, Jewish thought, and public affairs.

Parallel to the UOJCA is the **Young Israel** movement, founded in 1912 as a vehicle for attracting young Jews to traditional observance and to synagogue attendance. The National Council of Young Israel reports 150 member congregations. Today, Young Israel's leadership is noticeably to the "right" of the UOJCA, although the two organizations appeal to the same lay audience. The OU's periodic suggestions for a merger have thus far been rebuffed by Young Israel.

Representing the sectarian "yeshiva world" of the more strictly Orthodox, non-Hasidic community is the influential **Agudath Israel of America** (Aguda), founded in 1939, following a number of earlier abortive attempts. Over the past three decades, Agudath Israel has increasingly involved itself in a variety of issues of Jewish and general concern, such as the status of women, religious pluralism, and public sector support of religious education. Grassroots affiliation with Aguda numbers in the tens of thousands.

Aguda has developed a sophisticated network in the public policy world, and it is visible and effective on the Washington scene. Agudath Israel experienced some organizational problems following the death of its long-time charismatic leader, Rabbi Morris (Moshe) Sherer; in recent years the agency has been run by a combined leadership of senior professionals. Aguda has been unusually effective in its grassroots efforts, such as its *Daf Yomi* ("a daily page" of Talmud) program. Agudath Israel publishes a monthly magazine, *Jewish Observer*.

The **United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism** (USCJ) was founded in 1913 as an organization of synagogues affiliated with the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Over time, it became the

congregational arm of Conservative Judaism. This body, with 760 member congregations—together with the well-organized Women's League for Conservative Judaism—is increasingly involved in public affairs. The Conservative youth organization is **United Synagogue Youth** (USY). The United Synagogue publishes *Conservative Judaism*.

The congregational body for Reform Judaism, the **Union for Reform Judaism** (URJ, formerly the Union of American Hebrew Congregations), is the prime force behind the movement's significant social-action activity, whose main vehicle is the highly effective URJ/CCAR Religious Action Center (RAC) in Washington. The URJ, founded in 1873 and with 900 members in 2007, is a vocal proponent of civil rights, civil liberties, and other social-justice issues, as well as promoting Jewish literacy in its member congregations. It is a self-consciously liberal and activist force. Affiliated with the URJ and the CCAR is the **National Federation of Temple Youth** (NFTY). Among the URJ and CCAR publications is *Reform Judaism*.

The Reconstructionist congregational association is the **Jewish Reconstructionist Federation** (formerly the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot).

The religious expression of American Jews has been influenced by the "Jewish Renewal" movement, or more broadly, the Jewish counterculture, which began in the last 1960s with the founding of three *havurot*—prayer fellowships—in Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C., and achieved widespread recognition through the publication of the *Jewish Catalog* series. The innovations of Jewish Renewal—a renewed emphasis on communal Jewish study, and an intimate, innovative, usually egalitarian worship service—have been incorporated into the mainstream of religious practice in a number of congregations, particularly among the non-Orthodox movements. The past decade has witnessed the appearance of a number of "congregations of renewal" in all of the movements and as a transdenominational phenomenon.

Jewish Federations and Social Service Organizations

The **federation** is the central agency for the coordination of Jewish activities at the local level in North America. In America, Jews—like everyone else—relate to society as individuals. It is a cardinal principle of pluralism that no one is required to be a member of a group, as is the case in some other countries. In the United States, the choice to affiliate is voluntary, a fact that is crucial to understanding how the Jewish community is organized. The “federal” idea is that of a contract—a covenant—whereby individuals and institutions voluntarily link themselves to each other, creating partnerships that benefit all the parties. This federal ideal, embodied in concrete institutions, has become embedded in American Jewish political culture to the point of serving as the basis for the “civil religion” of American Jews.

Jewish federations passed through three distinct historical stages. The first federation, the Boston Federation of Jewish Charities (established in 1895), was an association of volunteers that linked philanthropic institutions with Jewish social services. The purpose was *joint fundraising*, with a centralized budget. This model was adopted by federations in other communities around the country over the next half-century.

Before too long, an *allocations* function was added to the federation, as federation leaders began making decisions about where the money ought to go.

Over time, the growth and increasing complexity of the community brought a third stage of federation development. Today, federations are responsible for *communal and social planning* and for the *coordination of social services*—child welfare, services for the aged, family services, employment and guidance—in addition to fundraising and allocations.

This concentration of functions gives the federations and their leadership considerable power, to the point where federation is recognized as the Jewish “address” in a community. Collectively, federations around the country raise close to \$900 million per year.

In order to be part of the federation system in a community, beneficiary social-service agencies must agree not to engage in inde-

pendent fundraising other than from their own leadership. National agencies, local boards of Jewish education, and national umbrella organizations are among those that receive federation allocations, in addition to the allocations to local social services. In terms of fundraising for Israel—a major activity in every Jewish community—the merger of the local federation and the local United Jewish Appeal campaign became a reality decades ago. The local campaign channels money to the Jewish Agency in Israel via the United Israel Appeal and to Jewish communities abroad via the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. (See below for a discussion of the dissolution of the United Jewish Appeal.) The federation system was so successful that it became the model for the United Way.

For most of the twentieth century, the umbrella body for the more than 200 local federations in the United States and Canada was the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF), which viewed its basic mission as guiding federations in their community planning and budgeting, and as representing the federation movement in the United States and Canadian capitals, and in Israel. For many decades CJF was a significant voice in the community. Its influence derived from two sources: the CJF leadership, which was the top Jewish leadership of the community federations, and by extension constituted much of the top Jewish leadership in North America; and its annual forum, the General Assembly (GA), convened annually by CJF. The GA was much more than just the annual convention of the federations. Held every November, the GA became *the* gathering place—the nexus—for individuals and groups at every level of decision-making in the Jewish community, locally, nationally, and internationally. It was the forum for decisions on the broadest range of issues affecting Jewish communities worldwide. In many ways, the collective Jewish communal agenda was set at the GA.

After more than four years of discussion, a partnership was effected in 1999 between CJF and the United Jewish Appeal (UJA), the agency that had been responsible for receiving and disbursing funds from community campaigns for Jewish needs in Israel and overseas. The impulse to integrate the principal fundraising and federation structures came from the recognition of changing condi-

tions. The fact was that an increased proportion of the funds raised by the Jewish community was flowing outside the federations, and in many cases these funds were specifically targeted to discrete projects of interest to donors. The creation of a new entity out of CJF and UJA—in effect, CJF and UJA voted themselves out of business—was seen as a step toward greater cohesiveness and coherence.

The new entity, the **United Jewish Communities of North America** (UJC) formally came into being in 1999, and serves 155 federations and 400 independent Jewish communities in North America. UJC, in the vision of its creators, represented a long-sought-after alignment of a national federation structure, divided into overseas and domestic components, with what over the years had become a unified federation presence locally.

The discussions leading up to the formation of UJC reflected a shift in Jewish communal ideology from national to local (that is, federation) “ownership” of decision-making, in which intermediary agencies such as UJA became increasingly irrelevant; and the recognition of the increased role played by “megadollar” donors and family foundations in the American Jewish polity.

A decade after the discussions that created UJC, it continues to be primarily an arm of the federations; the focus has been one of serving the federations, and UJC has become an instrument for the federations to exercise national leadership. From its beginnings, the dilemma that plagued UJC was that the umbrella had a muddled mission and was trying to be a “grand planner” for any number of communal issues. (It identified four “pillars” for master-planning around Jewish communal needs.) In this latter role, it had only partial success. UJC has therefore refocused on being a service arm for the federations. The mission that characterizes UJC and the federation system is community-building, an imperative not duplicated, in the view of UJC leadership, by any other Jewish organization or institution; and facing the challenge of the need to adapt to an increasingly mobile Jewish population. UJC’s challenge is to translate this mission into action.

One dimension of the federation system that became evident over the past fifteen years is a reflection of the shift of the “center-

of-gravity” in the Jewish community from national impact to local. Large-city federations, on more than one occasion, have played leadership roles in addressing national and, indeed, international problems, such as the pauperization of Jews in the former Soviet Union and the crisis of the Jews of Argentina in the aftermath of the collapse of that country’s economy.

Politics, Defense, and Diplomacy

How does the Jewish community relate to the external world? How does it develop and advocate on behalf of a public affairs agenda? Such matters are addressed by a number of community-relations agencies—once known as “defense” agencies, reflecting a time when counteracting anti-Semitism was the number-one item on the Jewish agenda.

American Jewish Committee (AJC), the oldest of these agencies, was formed in 1906 in response to a series of pogroms in czarist Russia, particularly the 1903 Kishinev pogrom. American Jewish Committee was a small, self-selected group from the established German-Jewish community. For many years, American Jewish Committee was precisely what its name suggested, a committee with a membership of some fifty individuals. Enlarged after 1943, with local chapters around the country, AJC developed into a highly respected organization that provides an effective voice for American Jews on public affairs issues. AJC has long had a special interest in ethnicity, pluralism, and Jewish continuity, and its work in intergroup and interreligious affairs and human rights over the decades is particularly noteworthy.

AJC’s focus, especially during the 1990s and into the 2000s, has become more global. It maintains eight international offices as well as partnership agreements with dozens of Jewish communal umbrella groups around the world. Over the last two decades, AJC has become deeply involved in international diplomacy and Israel advocacy. It also maintains the only department for gathering and interpreting open source intelligence on terrorism in the Jewish organizational world.

At the same time, AJC has also become a more particularistic *Jewish* organization, demonstrating a programmatic commitment to Jewish identity and continuity, and to strengthening the critical mass of Jews interested in living creative Jewish lives.

AJC's orientation has been thoughtful and deliberative. In addition to its sponsorship of a range of scholarly and public affairs studies and conferences, it annually publishes the *American Jewish Year Book*—the document of record for the Jewish community. (*Commentary*, an influential monthly long published under AJC auspices, but editorially independent, is now completely independent.)

American Jewish Congress (AJCongress) was founded in 1918 by Jews of Eastern European origin who felt that the “aristocratic” German-Jewish leadership of the American Jewish Committee, self-appointed and self-perpetuating, had no mandate from American Jewry. The specific matter in dispute was the establishment of a “congress” that would represent American Jewish interests at the peace conference following World War I. An ad hoc congress was set up for this purpose. While AJC wanted the congress to go out of business after the peace conference—and it did formally dissolve itself in 1920—the pressure for a permanent representative organization resulted in the creation of the present American Jewish Congress in 1922. Originally a council of agencies, AJCongress evolved into a membership organization during the 1930s.

American Jewish Congress is the only community relations agency that has been pro-Zionist throughout its history. On a number of significant issues, such as the boycott of German goods it sponsored in the 1930s, it claimed to represent the views of grassroots Jews. After World War II, over the objections of many in the Jewish community, AJCongress pioneered the use of law and social action to combat prejudice and discrimination. Viewing itself as the lawyer for the American Jewish community, AJCongress pioneered Jewish involvement in landmark Supreme Court cases dealing with church-state separation and civil rights. The American Jewish Congress publishes an intellectual journal, *Judaism*, and *Congress Monthly*.

The **Anti-Defamation League** (ADL) was created as a commission of B'nai B'rith⁴ in 1913 in reaction to the lynching of Leo Frank, falsely convicted of murdering a Christian girl and then dragged from a Georgia prison and hanged after the governor commuted his sentence. ADL has consistently seen its role as combating anti-Semitism, which, in ADL's view, can and does appear in new forms and guises. ADL thus focuses not only on monitoring discrimination against Jews, but also on anti-Israel activity, left- and right-wing radicalism, and violations of church-state separation, as well as interfaith work and Holocaust education.

A number of other community relations and public affairs agencies are active in the American Jewish community. They include **B'nai B'rith**, an international fraternal and social organization, which has reshaped the contours of its activity over the years to become more active in the public policy arena; the **National Council of Jewish Women**, which functions both in the public affairs and social service spheres; **Women's American ORT**, a membership organization that supports the worldwide ORT network but also addresses social concerns in the United States; the **Jewish Labor Committee** (JLC), which played a historically important role during the war in rescuing Jews, and, with its close ties to the trade union movement, had an impact on Jewish public affairs for many years; and the congregational bodies of the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist movements. (The Zionist organizations are discussed below.)

The umbrella body for the national organizations and the local Jewish community relations agencies is the **Jewish Council for Public Affairs** (JCPA). For decades known as NJCRAC—National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council—JCPA's mandate is the coordination of the public policy work of these disparate agencies.

The word “coordination” suggests a sensitive question: “Who speaks for the Jews?” Prior to the end of World War II, the American Jewish community did not seek to play an active role on public

4. Although a legal relationship with B'nai B'rith remains, the two agencies have been independent for decades.

policy issues. For one thing, deep internal divisions made it difficult to reach a consensus. Also, the persistence of anti-Semitism in a Depression-racked society made American Jews feel exposed, vulnerable, and insecure. Finally, the Jewish community did not yet have a network of national and local agencies that could articulate Jewish needs and address them in a coordinated manner.

Until the 1930s, local federations had been content to satisfy their community relations needs by allocating some funds to the three “defense” agencies. Nazi anti-Semitism, however, was something new and terrifying. Communities were no longer content to leave the battle against anti-Semitism entirely in the hands of national organizations that rarely consulted with local leadership or with one another, and which had weak regional-office networks. The Council of Jewish Federations in 1944 created the National Community Relations Advisory Council (NCRAC)—the agency now known as the Jewish Council for Public Affairs—for the purpose of coordination on the national level, and hammered out an agreement whereby, on the local level, the federations would delegate responsibility for community relations to community relations councils (CRCs). CRCs were then a new phenomenon, initially created as a countermove to federations, which were viewed as the autocrats in the community. The strength of NJCRAC (the Jewish “J” was added in the 1960s) was the crucial addition of the communities to the coordinated system. For decades NJCRAC provided the effective forum for the debate on and formulation of policy on Jewish public affairs.

But the question of “Who speaks for the Jews?” in a pluralistic society has never been settled. There remains today a tension among (1) the federations, whose fundraising, allocations, and community coordination fuel much of the activity in the Jewish community, and whose leaders tend to be the most effective in the community (indeed, in recent years the federations have moved more aggressively into the public-policy sphere, heretofore the province of JCPA/NJCRAC and the CRCs); (2) the national “defense” agencies, which traditionally did most of the “heavy lifting” in public policy; and (3) the coordinating bodies, such as JCPA, who view

themselves as the “voice” of the community on public affairs. The role of JCPA in the coordination of community relations has been, therefore, diminished over the years. This tension is not necessarily a bad thing, since, despite or perhaps because of it, the coordination of national and local agencies and activity is one of the triumphs of American Jewry.

American Jews ask: Why so many defense agencies? Are they not duplicating each other’s efforts? Observers suggest that it is the multiplicity of Jewish organizations that is the strength of the American Jewish community. In part, this is a matter of history; in part, it is a function of American pluralism, which ensures a range of “voices”; in part, it is a testimony to the vigor of the largest and most successful Diaspora community.

Zionist Organizations

American Zionism was an important force leading up to the creation of the State of Israel, but since then it has dwindled in significance. The role of American Zionist groups as spokespersons for American Jews on Israel-related issues has been taken over by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee, a lobbying group), the national defense agencies, and JCPA.

Most American Zionist organizations today are affiliated with Israeli political parties or political movements (some of which have gone out of business), either through direct or informal relationships. These include: Meretz USA, representing the Meretz Party in Israel, itself a merger of left-of-center parties, with the old Mapai Party as its lynchpin; Herut USA, representing the old Zionist-Revisionist Herut Party in Israel, which went through successive reconfigurations and mergers as Gahal and today is the Likud; the Religious Zionists of America (RZA), an outgrowth and the American voice of the religiously centrist Mizrachi and Hapoel Hamizrachi (now the National Religious Party) in Israel; the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA), the Zionist arm of the Reform movement, active on religious pluralism issues; Mercaz USA, ditto for the Con-

servative movement. Most of these groups are rooted historically in their counterpart parties in Israel, even as the recent Israeli political experience has been one of severe weakening of the party system. Another group, the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), was originally the American voice of the General Zionists, but in recent years has been a vocal advocate of Likud policies.

Fourteen Zionist organizations comprise the **American Zionist Movement** (formerly the American Zionist Federation), a nonpartisan umbrella that acts as a coordinating body for the promotion of Zionist programming and public information.

The State of Israel is an autonomous entity, and does not “take orders” from American Jewry. Nevertheless, the controversy over religious pluralism in Israel has stimulated the Reform and Conservative movements to create vibrant Zionist affiliates—ARZA and Mercaz, respectively—which advocate for the cause of religious pluralism in the Jewish state, and have demonstrated considerable organizational strength in elections to international Zionist bodies. Notwithstanding the activities of ARZA and Mercaz, the power of Orthodox groups in Israel over Israeli Jewish life, especially in matters involving personal status, remains strong.

An exception to the pattern of decline in American Zionist organizations is **Hadassah**, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America, whose reported membership, in excess of 300,000 (down from 385,000 in 2000), makes it the largest Jewish membership organization in the United States and arguably the largest women’s organization in the world. While in recent years Hadassah has had to address the dilemmas that come with an aging membership, it remains a potent force, able to mobilize its members to advocate on issues, thereby enhancing its effectiveness on Israel-related matters.

Newer voices on the center-left of the Israel advocacy arena have emerged. The Israel Policy Forum, founded in 1993, is an agency devoted to advocating on behalf of a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict through active diplomatic means. J Street is a newly-founded (2008) lobby advocating policies calling for stronger American leadership in peace negotiations. It is too early to assess its impact.

Despite the weakening of most American Zionist organizations, the traditional pro-Israel consensus in the community persists. Through the shifting contours of geopolitics of the Middle East, Israel continues to give American Jews a sense of pride, and the very fact of a Jewish national home adds concrete meaning to the religion and culture of the American Jewish community.

The Presidents Conference

One of the most important—and least understood—groups in American Jewish life is the **Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations** (the “Presidents Conference”). The formal mandate of the Presidents Conference is to express the collective voice of American Jewish organizations on international affairs—particularly those related to Israel—to the American administration. It has also taken on the reciprocal function of occasionally carrying messages from the administration to the Israeli government.

The conference was founded in 1954 to fill two separate needs. Since Israel-related issues were not then prominent on the American Jewish agenda—they did not become so until the Six-Day War in 1967—and there was no umbrella organization representing the American Zionist groups, the Israelis were eager to have a forum where they could communicate with the collective American Jewish community. For its part, the U.S. Department of State did not want a multiplicity of Jewish organizations petitioning its offices, and therefore reacted favorably to the idea of a single Jewish body that would represent the organized Jewish community on Israel. World Jewish Congress leader Nahum Goldmann and B’nai B’rith leader Philip Klutznick were instrumental in getting the conference off the ground.

The conference consists of representatives of fifty-one American Jewish organizations (the number is not static) comprising all spheres of communal activity. It meets on a regular basis to receive briefings from Israeli and American officials, the contents of which are useful for the leadership and constituents of member organizations.

In recent years the Presidents Conference has expanded its man-

date from that of being a spokesman on behalf of American Jewish groups on Israel issues to the administration to playing a more active role in the formulating of policy.

American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)

The **American Israel Public Affairs Committee** (AIPAC), founded in 1950, is arguably the most influential voice in Washington on Israel-related issues. From its very beginning, AIPAC was a highly effective instrumentality, even though in its earlier years it maintained a low public profile. Since 1975, AIPAC has been a very high-profile agency.

AIPAC is an officially-registered lobby headquartered in Washington, but with a growing network of regional offices, whose function is to develop support for the State of Israel in the American government. (As a lobbying organization, contributions to AIPAC are not tax-deductible.) Its activities include research of high quality, legislative liaison, and public information.

AIPAC, unlike other Jewish organizations in America, is a single-issue agency; its agenda is limited to Israel and Israel-America relations. It normally presents the case for Israeli government policies, and there is significant respect paid in the Administration and the Congress to AIPAC's acumen. AIPAC remains an agency with substantial impact on American Jewish public affairs. Its strength lies in its grassroots organization and in the high quality and skills of the lobbyists on its professional staff.

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

The **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee** (JDC or “the Joint”) is the main instrument of American Jewry for providing for the social-service needs of Jews outside the United States. The founding of the JDC in 1914 was an example of Jewish communal response to a crisis situation—in this case, hardships (including reported starvation) of Jews in Palestine—in which the “Joint” pulled together and took over the fundraising and relief operations of three ideologically different organizations.

In 2007 JDC was operating in sixty countries—the “Joint” has provided services in as many as eighty-five countries—in missions of rescue, programs of relief, and initiatives of reconstruction of beleaguered Jewish communities (for example, in the former Soviet Union). JDC has a number of nonsectarian programs as well; these are not supported by Jewish communal funds.

A smaller agency, the **American Jewish World Service**, is also engaged in nonsectarian relief efforts worldwide.

World Jewish Congress

The **World Jewish Congress** (WJC) is an umbrella of Jewish public-affairs groups representing Jewish communities outside the United States and Israel. The WJC came to prominence after World War II, when it played a central role in the crafting of Jewish policies with respect to peace treaties, the prosecution and trial of Nazi war criminals, the adoption of plans for indemnification and reparations to Jewish victims of the Holocaust, and the rehabilitation of Jewish life after the war. In recent years, the WJC has been especially visible on such issues as the Nazi war record of Kurt Waldheim, who served as United Nations secretary-general and a chancellor of Austria; and the disposition of Holocaust-era Jewish assets in Switzerland and other countries.

The past few years have been a period of transition in the World Jewish Congress, resulting in leadership changes in the organization. Still open is the question of WJC's mission and mandate—what is its function in twenty-first century Europe?—and ultimately that of WJC's efficacy in European lands.

Educational and Cultural Organizations

The **Jewish Education Service of North America** (JESNA) and the **Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education** (CAJE) are national bodies dealing with Jewish education. JESNA's original mandate was the coordination of the central agencies for Jewish education (sometimes known as boards of Jewish education—BJEs) in communities around the country, acting as a resource for the

agencies and for communities. CAJE, which originally grew out of the “Jewish renewal” movement with “Alternatives” as its original middle name, is a membership organization of Jewish educators. Its annual national conference and its innovations in curriculum development have had an impact on Jewish educators at every level.

The **Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education** (PEJE) is one of a number of Jewish communal responses to the functional illiteracy crisis facing American Jewry. Founded in 1997, PEJE is a national organization of Jewish philanthropists seeking to strengthen the Jewish day school movement in North America. PEJE makes grants, provides expertise, and advocates for the day school movement. It has been a model for other such initiatives.

On the college campus, **Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life** (formerly B’nai B’rith Hillel Foundations) serves as a network, programming agent, and coordinating body for Jewish student organizations. Long plagued with financial and organizational problems, Hillel reenergized itself in the 1990s as an agency for Jewish renewal, addressing critical campus issues, such as Israel and anti-Zionist activities, and related reports of campus-based anti-Semitism.

American Jewish culture is enhanced by the **Foundation for Jewish Culture** (formerly the National Foundation for Jewish Culture), whose mandate is to promote and enhance an indigenous American Jewish culture through the support of scholarship and the arts. The foundation was founded by CJF in 1960.

Among the agencies that explore issues and provide educational services to Jewish groups—in effect, “think tanks”—is **CLAL—The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership**, which for many years provided leadership and Jewish literacy training for Jewish communal professionals and lay leadership, and convened symposia and conferences. CLAL is currently engaged in a reevaluation of its mission.

The **Wexner Foundation**—comprising the programs of the former Wexner Heritage Foundation and the Wexner Foundation—offers services to Jewish communal leadership, aimed at creating a cadre of Jewishly-literate professional and lay leaders. Wexner’s

Graduate Fellowship Program for rabbinical, communal service, Jewish education, and Jewish studies students; the Israel Fellowship Program at the Kennedy School, for public officials; and the Wexner Heritage Program, an intensive Jewish-literacy initiative, are responses to the dilemmas of Jewish literacy on a number of levels, and aim to strengthen the “Jewish civil service”—the rabbinate, the cantor, and Jewish communal professionals—in America and Israel.

The **Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture** was founded by Nahum Goldmann, a leading Jewish statesman of the twentieth century, in 1965 with a mandate to reconstruct Jewish culture after the Holocaust. Its present mission is the renewal, reconstruction, and enhancement of Jewish culture worldwide through the support of scholarship and research. Included in its activities is an international training program for Jewish communal activists.

The academic renaissance of Yiddish language and culture—if not a popular revival—has been spearheaded and fueled by organizations such as the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, whose mission is to research and preserve the Yiddish record of prewar Eastern Europe, and the Folksbiene Yiddish Theatre in New York, a venue for classical and contemporary Yiddish theatre.

Jewish Community Centers

Jewish community centers (JCCs) have long served a range of constituencies in virtually every community in North America, providing health and fitness services, early-childhood and adult Jewish education, Jewish cultural activities, teen groups, camping programs, and crafts. Aside from the synagogue, no other Jewish institutional network attracts as many participants as do the JCCs, which number more than 350 (including “Y”s and campsites) in the United States and Canada. Long regarded as “the *shul* with a pool,” the JCC movement has over the past two decades embraced the Jewish continuity agenda and has provided resources for Jewish education and Jewish culture as central to its mission. In this regard, the JCCs anticipated the findings of the *1990 National Jewish Population Survey* with regard to the centrality of these areas.

The national umbrella organization for the JCCs is the **Jewish Community Centers Association of North America** (the JCC Association, formerly the National Jewish Welfare Board, later JWB), which provides services and resources to individual JCCs and to the “center” field as a whole.

Formerly under the auspices of JCCA, but today autonomous, is the Jewish Book Council, which serves as a clearinghouse for Jewish-content literature, helps local Jewish communities arrange Jewish book fairs, and sponsors the National Jewish Book Awards. It publishes a quarterly magazine, *Jewish Book World*.

Other Organizations

Reflecting the dynamism of American democratic and cultural pluralism, the American Jewish community is constantly creating new agencies to respond to changing needs. Indeed, the pattern of agency creation and development is one in which the “gadfly” and alternative agencies of yesteryear are part of the “establishment” of today. Examples abound: the **New Israel Fund**, which uses innovative approaches to Israel-based philanthropy; **Mazon**, which combats hunger in America; the **American Jewish World Service**, providing social services and relief efforts on a nonsectarian basis internationally; the **Jewish Fund for Justice**, ditto domestically, with a number of grant programs; the **Simon Wiesenthal Center**, highlighting intolerance, extremism, and anti-Semitism; and the **Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life**, which seeks to mobilize Jews and develop coalitions around environmental issues.

A new generation of alternative groups has arisen in recent years. Notable are **Heeb Magazine**, a cutting-edge, indeed edgy, periodical; *Presentense*, ditto on the magazine, but with a summer institute in Israel and a web presence aimed at young Jewish activists; **AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps**; the **Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations**; **Drisha Institute**, a vehicle for in-depth study of Jewish texts for women; **Reboot**, developing networks to explore a range of Jewish concepts and activities; **Ma’yan: The Jewish Women’s Project**; **JOFA, the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance**; **Dor Chadash**, an organization of Israelis and American Jews,

doing cultural and social programming; **JDub Records**, producing innovative Jewish music through which young Jews can connect to their Judaism; and dozens of other projects and initiatives.

A major change in American Jewish life over the past two decades has been the immense growth of Jewish family foundations, which provide financial assistance for a range of Jewish individual and communal initiatives. Groups such as the **Andrea and Charles Bronfman Foundation** and the **Koret Foundation** are supplementing and, in some cases, supplanting federations as sources of financial support. Many of these foundations support initiatives to enhance Jewish connections for young adults, or to improve the quality of life in Israel, Jewish education, the environment, and Arab-Jewish cooperation and coexistence.

The family foundations participate in an advisory umbrella group, the **Jewish Funders Network**.

Federations, partly in response to the growth and impact of the family foundations, have in many communities organized federation foundations (or federation endowment funds), which provide an outlet for “donor-directed” giving. In 2007, federation endowment funds totaled more than \$13.5 billion.

The Agenda of the American Jewish Community

From the early twentieth century through the early 1950s, the primary agenda of the Jewish community was combating anti-Semitism and discrimination against Jews, at home and abroad; and assisting Jews in the acculturation process—that is, enabling Jews to become Americans. From the early 1950s to the mid-1960s, the Jewish communal agenda shifted to focus on the civil rights movement, on the assumption that Jews would be secure only if all groups in American society were secure.

Two events occurred in the mid-1960s that radically altered American Jewish priorities: the emergence of the Soviet Jewry movement in 1963-64 and the Six-Day War in 1967. The preoccupation with Israel and Soviet Jewry, and the Black separatist rhetoric that began emanating from the civil rights movement in the late 1960s, led many in the organized Jewish community to reorder their

priorities away from domestic social and economic concerns in favor of more particularistic concerns. The Jewish agenda became much more *Jewish*, and the domestic issues that have maintained their importance for Jewish organizations tend to be those, such as the strict separation of church and state, that relate directly to the security and welfare of Jews. This is not to say that the earlier domestic agenda was abandoned in the late 1960s and during the 1970s; the issues it encompassed were simply no longer the top priorities for American Jews.

The 1980s was a period in which the issues on the domestic agenda were again salient, with challenges to a range of social and economic justice issues and church-state protections perceived as potentially damaging to Jewish security.

Now, as the first decade of the new century draws to a close, American Jewry is again reevaluating its situation and selecting those issues it considers crucial to its survival and security. These are the issues that are likely to occupy the community's attention over the course of the next decade.

Israel

The two Palestinian uprisings (“intifadas”), especially the second, which began in 2000, together with the events of September 11, 2001, created new challenges for American Jews in terms of a changing mind-set vis-à-vis the State of Israel. Since its emergence as a central issue for American Jews in 1967, when the Jewish state was under the threat of annihilation (Israel had been nowhere on the agenda, except for periodic flash-points, from 1948 to 1967), Israel has remained a top priority in four areas: United States-Israel relations, which includes aid to Israel and arms sales; the peace process; Israel and the international community; and the Middle East arms race. In each of these areas, there have been changing conditions.

The never-ending meetings that have characterized the peace process over the past two decades—Madrid, Camp David, Oslo, and most recently, Annapolis—have not brought the parties closer. With some parties increasingly radicalized— Hamas, for example,

on the ascendancy—and in the aftermath of the 2006 Hezbollah campaign in Lebanon, prospects for peace are bleak. U.S.-Israel relations are haunted by the specter of an American administration that might conclude that Israel was no longer in America's strategic interest, and might diminish American economic, diplomatic, and moral support as a result. This concern is especially critical in light of the ongoing conflict and instability in Iraq, a clear result of which has been the strengthening of Iran, with its potential nuclear capability, as a key actor and danger in the region and globally.

Internationally, Israel-related issues intersect with anti-Semitism, with the intellectual assault on Israel and pro-Israel advocacy, and with the call for a “one-state solution.” Related are the many flash points on America's campuses, triggered by pro-Palestinian activity, and the prospects for enhancing Israel advocacy on the campus.

Concern as well surrounds efforts to build coalitions with “Christian Zionists” on behalf of Israel, for many years implicating the question of American Jewish relations with Evangelical Christians, whose agenda on a variety of topics may not always be parallel to Jewish interests.

One flash point in Israel-American Jewish relations is the Orthodox monopoly on Jewish religion in Israel. Salient in this respect are the “personal status” laws, by which the Israeli rabbinate exercises hegemony over matters of marriage, divorce, and conversion. The question of sectarian hegemony has broad implications for the economy of Israel, its army, and the fiber of its society.

Other questions under discussion are the Jewish character of the State of Israel, the civil rights of Arabs, and the general state of civil liberties—as well as the diminution of attachment to Israel on the part of young American Jews. These issues are critical for many American Jews and therefore could have implications for fundraising on behalf of Israel.

Anti-Semitism

When questioned in surveys, American Jews overwhelmingly and consistently assert that that they feel “comfortable” in America.

Yet a majority of American Jews, over a period of more than two decades, have stated that anti-Semitism is a “serious” problem in the United States. In the San Francisco Bay Area, more than one-third of those questioned in 1985 said that Jewish candidates could not be elected to Congress because of anti-Jewish bias. Yet at the time the poll was conducted, three out of the four congressional representatives from that area, as well as the two U.S. senators, the mayor of San Francisco, and a number of city council members, were, in fact, well-identified Jews.

While this “perception gap” among American Jews may be explained by a wariness rooted in Jewish history, especially in the recent experience of the Holocaust, the reality of the Jewish condition in post-World War II America is that of a steady and dramatic decline of anti-Semitism. Studies clearly indicate that levels of both behavioral anti-Semitism—what people do—and attitudinal anti-Semitism—what people think—have declined.

Salient in terms of anti-Jewish sentiment and activity is anti-Semitism related to anti-Israel activity, crossing the line from legitimate criticism of the policies of the government of Israel to blatant anti-Zionism, which is anti-Semitism in that it denies to Jews the right of self-determination. The “new” anti-Semitism, fueled by the radicalization of Islam and by the application of a double standard when it comes to judging the activities of Israel, is a challenge to American Jews.

There remains anti-Semitic expression in the United States, but Jews are fundamentally secure in America because democratic and pluralistic institutions have deep roots in this country. Whatever anti-Semitism does exist—and it does—has little impact on Jewish security, the ability of Jews to participate in the workings of American society, which is strong. Ours is the first era in which the discussion of anti-Semitism is not the same as the discussion of Jewish security.

Nonetheless, we do live in an era of intergroup conflict, when some of the taboos against prejudiced expression have broken down. Jewish organizations seek to address this problem through sponsor-

ship of “prejudice-reduction” programs, some of which may not be efficacious; support for the passage of hate-crimes laws; and the elimination of economic and social barriers to opportunity. This last approach presupposes that the improvement of social and economic conditions generally results in a diminution of prejudice, including anti-Semitism.

Jewish Communities in Distress

The American Jewish community has long sought to promote the safety and welfare of fellow Jews around the world, especially those held captive by unfriendly regimes. The most notable such efforts over the past four decades have been on behalf of the Jews of the Soviet Union and Ethiopia. These campaigns—especially the drawn-out struggle for Soviet Jewry—galvanized the community, as Jews reached out for support from non-Jewish groups and political figures. Noteworthy in this regard was congressional passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which linked the granting of “most-favored-nation” status to the Soviet Union to its allowing the emigration of Soviet Jews. In 1989, virtually all Jews seeking to leave the USSR were granted visas, and two years later the Soviet Union collapsed. That same year, 1991, Israel, with the help of the United States, conducted “Operation Solomon,” which transferred almost all the remaining Ethiopian Jews to the Jewish state.

The unsettled political and economic conditions in the former Soviet Union, which could lead to an anti-Semitic upsurge and economic distress for Jews in the area, particularly under the current regimes in Russia and Belarus, ensure that the issue of endangered Jews will remain on the American Jewish agenda. Alive as well is the matter of the Falash Mura in Ethiopia, who were originally part of the Beta Israel Ethiopian Jewish community, but whose ancestors had converted to Christianity, and who now seek to immigrate to Israel. It is not clear how many Falash Mura remain in Ethiopia; the Jewish Agency suggests that the number is approximately 1,500.

In terms of public policy, the emphasis has shifted from advocacy for emigration to addressing the cultural, economic, political, and

social dislocations and other needs of the Jews from these countries, who have settled in Israel and, in the case of the Russians, in large numbers in the United States. Additionally, for those Jews striving to build Jewish communities in the FSU, organized American Jewry provides material aid, political support, and tactical, cultural, and religious guidance.

Separation of Church and State and Other Constitutional Issues

A central tenet of American Jewish life has been that Jewish security depends on those American traditions and institutions that protect individual freedom, an open society, and pluralism. Paramount among these is the separation of church and state, guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. The organized Jewish community believes that a strong “wall” between religion and state not only bolsters religious freedom, but contributes to the creative flowering of diverse religious groups, such as the Jews. For well over half a century the Jewish community has been heavily involved in court cases and legislation on a range of church-state issues, most notably religion in public schools and the presence of religious symbols in public places; and, in the obverse, cases of inappropriate intervention of government in religion, which limit the free exercise of religion.

Nevertheless, there are differences within the Jewish community about exactly how to interpret the religion clauses of the First Amendment, especially since most cases in this area that now reach the courts deal with subtle questions. No longer, for example, do we confront arguments for blatant open prayer or Bible reading in public schools, but over a “moment of silence” or religious clubs meeting during club hour or after school. Sometimes the cases involve conflict between two constitutionally-protected rights: Is the distribution of religious literature in public schools, for example, protected as freedom of expression, or rejected as a violation of church-state separation?

Furthermore, the Jewish community’s emphasis on “Jewish continuity” has increased its interest in Jewish education, resulting in calls for vouchers, tax relief, or other forms of public-sector sup-

port for religious education, in order to assist parents sending their children to Jewish day schools or *yeshivot*. Many feel that, in an era when most Jews are functionally illiterate in Judaism, Jewish education must have priority over church-state concerns. Others hold the view that the “quick fix” offered by relatively meager vouchers is not the solution—and is illegal—and that the solution lies in the federations going down the difficult road of reallocation. A new generation of church-state cases is coming up, which will present new challenges for American Jews.

The larger issue is that, while there is yet today a general consensus that the separation of church and state is essential to Jewish security, the issue no longer has the salience for many in the grass roots—and even for some Jewish agencies—that it had in the 1950s and 1960s, and again in the 1980s.

Beyond the legal questions involved in church-state separation, there is also a growing debate over the larger question of religion’s role in American society. There has been, over the past decade and more, a general sense of a “values crisis” in American society, but there is no consensus on how it might be resolved without breaching the “wall of separation.”

In addition to church-state separation, the events of September 11 raised a host of security questions that have implicated constitutional issues such as rights to privacy and freedom of expression. While the Jewish community has had a long tradition of support for constitutional protections, there continues to be vigorous discussion surrounding the extent of recalibration of these protections necessary to ensure our collective security and at the same time ensure the protection of our means of and the nature of free expression.

Jewish Identity and Continuity

The American Jewish communal agenda, over the past decade, has struggled between an emphasis on survival and security—the external agenda—and looking inward, to its own values, indeed, to its very continuity. Concern over rates of intermarriage, massive Jewish functional illiteracy, and low fertility rates have forced an agenda of

Jewish identity and continuity on the organized community.

Programmatically, the continuity agenda is expressed through education, religion, and Israel. New initiatives in Jewish education, especially the all-day school, have been expanded in all the religious movements, and experimental programs in the teaching of Hebrew language and text are being tested. Summer camping has been recognized as an excellent vehicle to enhance Jewish continuity. Jewish communal support in massive doses has been provided for Birthright Israel and other programs to ensure that teenagers have the opportunity to have an Israel experience, and the questions of follow-up to such programs are being addressed. The practices of Jewish tradition are being promoted even—perhaps especially—in the liberal movements. And since the *1990 National Jewish Population Survey* found that most American Jews say that being Jewish in America means being a member of a “cultural group,” culture—in the form of Jewish art, film and theatre, literature, museums, music, and Jewish scholarship—has also been viewed as a key element in Jewish continuity.

As the American Jewish community moves further into the twenty-first century, it is shifting its priorities more and more toward strategies for guaranteeing Jewish continuity, with Jewish organizations rethinking their missions and retooling their operations. A number of federations have raised their allocations to Jewish education, and a second generation of Birthright Israel-type programs is being planned. It remains to be seen whether the emphasis on Jewish continuity can be accomplished in coexistence with the community’s traditionally broad public affairs agenda.

Holocaust Remembrance

Another central issue for American Jewry is remembrance of the Holocaust. The proliferation of various means to commemorate the destruction of European Jewry—the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington; the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York; the Shoah Foundation, which collects survivors’ oral histories, and a similar archive at Yale; Holocaust museums around the country; Holocaust memorials; research facilities at a number of

universities; and inclusion of the Holocaust in public school curricula—attests to the place of the Holocaust in the consciousness of American Jews, which rivals their commitment to Israel. There are, in fact, those who worry about the Holocaust being the centerpiece of American Jewish life, replacing Jewish values, Jewish observance, and Jewish literacy.

New aspects of the issue keep coming to the fore; in recent years the matters of looted art and insurance for survivors have been salient. The overarching concern is that, with each passing day, there are fewer living survivors.

The **American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and their Descendants**, established in 1981 as an umbrella organization for a number of Holocaust survivor groups, is the central coordinating body for Holocaust-related activity in the United States. The International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, also founded in 1981, has provided the means for “second-generation” individuals and groups around the world to have a voice in Jewish affairs.

Jews and American Politics

Many observers have long been fascinated by the political behavior of American Jews. In the words of the late American Jewish Committee analyst Milton Himmelfarb, “Jews earn like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans.” This formulation of the classic positioning of liberal American Jews bears some scrutiny. Jews have, indeed, voted for Democratic candidates in both national and local elections, and Jews’ support of the social and economic justice agenda has often run counter to their economic interests. Clearly, Jews do not vote simply on the basis of their pocketbooks. They also take into account the Jewish tradition of social responsibility and concern for Jewish security, embodied in the traditions of *tzedaka* (charity) and *kehilla* (community).

Recent data confirm that these trends continue, albeit with some “bumps.” According to the American Jewish Committee’s *2007 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion*, American Jews are more likely (43 percent as compared to 28 percent) to describe them-

selves as “liberal” than as “conservative,” and 31 percent describe themselves as “moderate,” which may be characterized as a variation of “liberal.” In terms of political affiliation, the *Annual Survey* reported that 58 percent of American Jews identified as “Democrat,” 26 percent as “Independent,” and 15 percent “Republican.” Jewish disapproval of the war in Iraq and on the handling of the economy suggests that the pattern will continue in 2008.

But there have been clear divisions between the religious movements in the last two presidential elections. While Democratic candidates received the majority of Jewish votes by wide margins, the Orthodox community gave George W. Bush their vote—a departure from traditional patterns, in which the Orthodox were Democratic.

American Jews likewise espouse stances on controversial social issues that are broadly liberal. Jews strongly support legalized abortion and a generous immigration policy. The only issue on which American Jews have consistently parted company with a liberal posture (and, interestingly, with their own leadership!) is on the death penalty, with some 80 percent of American Jews favoring capital punishment for persons convicted of murder. While the majority of American Jews do not favor giving women and African-Americans “special consideration” in hiring and promotion, most do not believe that equal rights have been “pushed too far” in the United States.

Where Are We Going?

Social scientists and communal leaders have for decades pondered how to evaluate the massive changes in American Jewish life. Are American Jews disappearing through Jewish illiteracy, low population growth, and intermarriage, or is the Jewish community transforming itself to fit the unique American scene, creating a Jewishness different from, but not inferior to, what came before?

The debate on these issues, sharpened during the 1980s, was between “transformationalists” and “assimilationists.” The transformationalists, who averred that things were changing, but not deteriorating for American Jews, were discredited by the stark data of the 1990 *National Jewish Population Survey*. But, to complicate mat-

ters further, within the assimilationist camp—those who believe that Jewish assimilation into American society is indeed what’s happening, and that’s bad—there are two different perspectives.

One view is that the organized Jewish community ought to accept the reality of assimilation and intermarriage and adopt “out-reach” as a communal policy, with strategies and programs to serve that policy. Intermarriage, rising divorce rates, prolonged singlehood, and low fertility rates cannot be fought, and therefore should be accommodated in order to keep young Jews in the fold. The other view, while agreeing that these demographic trends are a reality, asserts that the American Jewish community can and should counteract them. This would entail a range of programs, emphasizing core issues and values, specifically targeted to the marginally affiliated to keep these individuals and families in the Jewish camp.

Undoubtedly, the way the organized Jewish community addresses the continuity issue will be influenced by its approaches to other key questions. What will be the impact on American Jewish morale when there will be more Jews in Israel than in the United States⁵ and, to be sure, more Jews in Israel than worldwide? Will the Jewish world continue to be defined by the dichotomy of “Israel” and “Diaspora,” or will a global Jewish view develop? Are Jews moving toward a transnational Jewish culture? Will the deep religious divides that characterize our era—we are a single people divided by a common religion—continue and indeed deepen from fault-lines to fissures? How will the Jewish religious world flourish in an age of increasing secularization? Conversely, how may Jews create and nurture an authentic Jewish *secular* culture, deriving from religious tradition, which can survive and thrive in an America that values religious identification more than ethnic particularism?

In Conclusion

What will the American Jewish community look like ten or twenty years from now? What is the community all about today? The boundaries of the American-Jewish body-politic are not preset; nor

5. There are some demographers in Israel who report that this is already the case.

is the Jewish community a classical Greek polity, in which every citizen automatically has a vote. In the Jewish community, while everyone is born into eligibility, affiliation requires some voluntary action, albeit nominal—giving twenty bucks to the federation campaign, joining a *minyan*, for example—which represents a conscious decision on the part of the individual to be part of the community.

A good measure of how well the American Jewish organizational structure represents the community is that, over the years, the policies adopted by a range of national Jewish organizations virtually parallel the views found in the periodic polls that measure the attitudes of grassroots American Jews, and that are consistently expressed in the voting patterns of American Jews.

In reality, no group in the United States offers as many institutional forms for providing means of expression as does the American Jewish community. The criterion for representativeness is not direct elections. Rather, if people feel that there is a vehicle for them, through affiliation, to cast a “vote” on policy issues, then the community is representative. The multiplicity of Jewish organizations is therefore the *strength*, not the weakness, of the Jewish community.

Although some perceive the Jewish community in America, with its multiplicity of organizations, as chaotic, the reality is that the disparate forces do work together. A measure of consensus exists on a range of issues; but dissensus is always welcomed as invigorating the debate. The resultant voice of American Jewry is an effective one. This was the collective voice that has ensured U.S. support for Israel over the last half-century, and secured administration and congressional backing for a tough stand in favor of the emigration of Soviet Jews. This voice immeasurably improved American society by playing a central role in the shaping of the civil rights movement, repealing the National Origins Quota System for immigration, maintaining separation of church and state by participating in numerous Supreme Court cases as *amicus*, and providing a model for social service—the Jewish federation system—that changed the face of American society. This collective voice and the results achieved by it have been used as models by other groups. The vitality demonstrated by this coordinated activity bodes well for the future.

Bibliography

American Jewish Year Book. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1899-present. Note especially the annual articles, since 1988, on “Jewish Communal Affairs.”

Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion (“Market Facts Survey”). New York: American Jewish Committee.

Bayme, Steven. *Understanding Jewish History: Text and Commentaries*. New York: KTAV/American Jewish Committee, 1997.

Ben-Sasson, H.H., ed. *A History of the Jewish People*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Chanes, Jerome A., ed. *Antisemitism in America Today: Outspoken Experts Explode the Myths*. Secaucus, NJ: Carol Publishing/Birch Lane Press, 1995.

_____. *Antisemitism: A Reference Handbook*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004.

_____, Norman Linzer, and David J. Schnall, eds. *A Portrait of the American Jewish Community*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.

Cohen, Steven M., and Arnold M. Eisen. *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000.

Elazar, Daniel J. *Community and Polity: The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995.

Farber, Roberta R. and Chaim I. Waxman, eds. *Jews in America: A Contemporary Reader*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999.

Fein, Leonard J. *Where Are We? The Inner Life of American Jews*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.

Friedman, Murray. *What Went Wrong? The Creation and Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance*. New York: Free Press, 1995.

Gerstenfeld, Manfred, ed. *American Jewry's Challenge: Conversations Confronting the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Gilbert, Martin. *Israel: A History*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1988.

Glazer, Nathan. *American Judaism*, Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Goldberg, J.J. *Jewish Power: Inside the American Jewish Establishment*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Heilman, Samuel C. *Portrait of American Jews: The Last Half of the Twentieth Century*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995.

Hertzberg, Arthur. *The Jews of America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Alliance: A History*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.

Kosmin, Barry, et al. *Highlights of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey*. New York, Council of Jewish Federations, 1991.

Liebman, Charles S. *The Ambivalent American Jew: Politics, Religion, and Family in American Jewish Life*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1973.

_____, and Steven M. Cohen. *Two Worlds of Judaism: The Israeli and American Experiences*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Mittleman, Alan, Jonathan D. Sarna, and Robert Licht, eds. *Jewish Polity and American Civil Society: Communal Agencies and Religious Movements in the American Public Square*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.

_____, eds. *Jews and the American Public Square: Debating Religion and Republic*. Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 2002.

_____, eds. *Religion as a Public Good: Jews and Other Americans on Religion in the Public Square*. Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 2003.

_____. *The National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01: Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population*. New York: United Jewish Communities/Mandell L. Berman Institute—North American Jewish Data Bank, 2003.

Sarna, Jonathan D. *American Judaism: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Susser, Bernard, and Charles S. Liebman. *Choosing Survival: Strategies for a Jewish Future*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Waxman, Chaim I. *Jewish Baby Boomers: A Communal Perspective*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.

Wertheimer, Jack. *A People Divided: Judaism in Contemporary America*. New York: Basic Books, 1993.

_____. *Jews in the Center: Conservative Synagogues and their Members*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000.

Whitfield, Stephen J. *In Search of American Jewish Culture*. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1999.

Periodicals of Jewish Interest

(An Annotated Selection)

CCAR Journal (quarterly). Central Conference of American Rabbis. Semi-scholarly journal on religion, text, and history.

Commentary (monthly). Independent; originally published by the American Jewish Committee. Articles on public affairs and culture, some fiction and poetry.

Congress Monthly. American Jewish Congress. House organ, with articles on public policy and public affairs.

Hadassah Magazine (monthly). Hadassah. General interest, on a range of Jewish affairs and Jewish culture.

Jewish Action (quarterly). Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. Articles of general interest, representing the “centrist” Orthodox perspective.

Jewish Book World (quarterly). Jewish Book Council. Reviews of books of Jewish content.

Jewish Observer (monthly). Agudath Israel of America. General interest, representing the sectarian Orthodox view.

Judaism (semi-annual). American Jewish Congress. Semi-scholarly journal; broad range of articles.

Midstream (bimonthly). Theodor Herzl Foundation. A journal exploring a range of Jewish affairs, with a focus on Israel and Zionism.

Moment (bimonthly). Independent. Articles of general interest on Jewish affairs and culture.

Reconstructionist (quarterly). Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Semi-scholarly journal on matters of faith, text, theology.

Reform Judaism (quarterly). Union for Reform Judaism. General interest, with a Reform perspective.

Tradition (quarterly). Rabbinical Council of America. Semi-scholarly journal from an Orthodox perspective on *halakha*, religion, and Jewish affairs.

Appendix of Jewish Communal Organizations

The following are key Jewish communal organizations:

Public Affairs/Community Relations

| | |
|--|---|
| American Jewish Committee 165 East 56th Street New York, NY 10022 (212) 751-4000 | Anti-Defamation League 605 Third Avenue New York, NY 10158 (212) 490-2525 |
| American Jewish Congress 825 Third Avenue, Suite 1800 New York, NY 10022 (212) 879-4500 | Jewish Council for Public Affairs 116 East 27th Street, 10th Floor New York, NY 10016 (212) 684-6950 |

Social Services

| | |
|---|--|
| American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 711 Third Avenue New York, NY 10017 (212) 687-6200 | United Jewish Communities of North America 111 Eighth Avenue New York, NY 10011 (212) 284-6500 |
|---|--|

Religious

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Orthodox</i> Agudath Israel of America 42 Broadway New York, NY 10004 (212) 797-9000 | <i>Reform</i> Central Conference of American Rabbis 355 Lexington Avenue New York, NY 10017 (212) 972-3636 |
| Rabbinical Council of America 305 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1200 New York, NY 10001 (212) 807-7888 | Union of Reform Judaism 633 Third Avenue New York, NY 10017 (212) 650-4000 |
| Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America 11 Broadway, 14th Floor New York, NY 10014 (212) 564-9058 | |

Conservative

Rabbinical Assembly
3080 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
(212) 280-6000
United Synagogue of
Conservative Judaism
155 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010
(212) 533-7800

Reconstructionist

Jewish Reconstructionist
Federation
7804 Montgomery Ave., Ste 9
Elkins Park, PA 19027
(215) 782-8500
Reconstructionist Rabbinical
Association
1299 Church Road
Wyncote, PA 19095
(215) 576-5210

Israel/International

| | |
|---|---|
| American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) 440 First Street, NW Washington, DC 20001 (202) 639-5200 | Jewish Council for Public Affairs 116 East 27th Street, 10th Floor New York, NY 10016 (212) 684-6950 |
| American Zionist Movement 633 Third Avenue New York, NY 10017 (212) 318-6100 | World Jewish Congress 501 Madison Avenue, 17th Floor New York, NY 10022 (212) 755-5770 |
| Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations 633 Third Avenue New York, NY 10017 (212) 318-6111 | |

Educational/Cultural

| | |
|--|---|
| American Jewish Historical Society 15 West 16th Street New York, NY 10011 (212) 294-6160 | Contemporary Jewish Museum 736 Mission Street San Francisco, CA 94103 (415) 655-7800 |
| Center for Jewish History 15 West 16th Street New York, NY 10011 (212) 294-8301 | Foundation for Jewish Culture (formerly National Foundation for Jewish Culture) 330 Seventh Avenue, 21st Floor New York, NY 10001 (212) 629-0500 |

Jewish Community Center
Association of North America
15 East 26th Street
New York, NY 10010
(212) 532-4949

Jewish Education Service
of North America (JESNA)
111 Eighth Avenue, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10011
(212) 284-6950

The Jewish Museum
1109 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10128
(212) 423-3200

Leo Baeck Institute
(for German Jewry)
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011
(212) 744-6400

Memorial Foundation
for Jewish Culture
50 West Broadway, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10004
(212) 425-6606

Museum of Jewish Heritage—
A Living Memorial to the
Holocaust
36 Battery Park Plaza
New York, NY 10004
(212) 968-1800

Museum of Tolerance
of the Simon Wiesenthal Center
9786 W. Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035-4792
(310) 553-8403

National Museum of American
Jewish History
Independence Mall E.
55 N. Fifth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 923-3811

Spertus Museum
618 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 322-1747

United States Holocaust
Memorial Museum
100 Raoul Wallenberg Pl., SW
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 488-0400

YIVO Institute
for Jewish Research
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011
(212) 246-6080



American Jewish Committee

*The Jacob Blaustein Building
165 East 56 Street
New York, NY 10022*

The American Jewish Committee publishes in these areas:

- Hatred and Anti-Semitism*
- Pluralism*
- Israel*
- Human Rights*
- American Jewish Life*
- International Relations*
- Law and Public Policy*

www.ajc.org

June 2008

\$2.50