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Is the Jewish Diaspora Unique? Reflections on the Diaspora's Current Situation*

The Jewish Diaspora, Israel, and consequently Israeli-Jewish Diaspora relations are all in the midst of ongoing intense transformations.[1] These profound changes, however, are of a chaotic nature. They are caused by contradictory trends and features. There is no wonder that such changes confuse many gentiles, as well as many in the Jewish Diaspora (hereafter the Diaspora) and in Israel. The main purpose of the present essay, therefore, is to contribute to the clarification of this situation.

This essay focuses on recent developments and the current situation of the Jewish people. Because of space limitations, it does not present the significant historical perspective on the fundamental changes and their results that have occurred in world Jewry during the last two centuries, and especially since the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, one of the most meaningful changes in this respect should be mentioned here: instead of an entity that primarily and deeply had been anchored in a national-religious culture, the Zionist movement, as well as related processes of emancipation and secularization, turned substantial segments of world Jewry into people who, to a large extent, are rooted in a secular national culture.

In any case, and more specifically, the purposes here are: (1) to discuss the uniqueness of the Diaspora, or its similarity to other diasporas; (2) to consider the possible implications of either of these possibilities for predicting the future of the Diaspora; (3) to review the main transformations occurring in the Jewish Diaspora; (4) to outline the consequent major critical issues facing it; and, (5) to suggest how all these developments influence the Diaspora's reciprocal relations with Israel.

To accurately grasp the deeper meanings of the changes currently occurring in the Jewish Diaspora and in Israeli-Diaspora relations, however—and consequently the problems that the Diaspora is facing—the

scope of the customary discussion about the Diaspora and its relations with its homeland should be expanded. As I have argued in some of my previous publications,[2] and as, for example, William Safran argues in his article in this issue,[3] it is advisable to examine the Jewish Diaspora's situation in general, and the Diaspora-Israeli reciprocal relations in particular, within the wider context of available insights into the general diasporic phenomenon.[4] It is regrettable that the number of general and specific studies of homelands (countries-of-origin) relations with their diasporas is inadequate; however, to apply theoretical and comparative insights to the Jewish Diaspora is particularly important in order to reach a realistic evaluation of the current trends that might impact on its future development.

There is, in fact, an increasing awareness that in many respects the Jewish Diaspora is similar to other ethno-national diasporas. Yet this notion is far from being widely accepted. Thus, more often than not, when gentile and Jewish publics at large—as well as politicians, journalists and some scholars—reflect on the Jewish Diaspora and its relations with Israel, the question of the uniqueness of these two segments of world Jewry and their relations still pops up. Mostly, the general public, the politicians, and the analysts in the Diaspora's host countries, as well as those in Israel, emphatically argue that the Jewish Diaspora and its relations with its homeland are unique. It is thus worthwhile to briefly and generally refer to this bewildering topic.

Whoever has examined the sensitive question of the uniqueness of any social-political formation, or the other side of the same coin—the similarities between social-political systems—is aware of the fact that there is no readily available and persuasive "yes" or "no" answer to the question of whether such formations are indeed unique. There are a number of reasons for this difficulty. First, most social-political formations are structurally and behaviorally highly complex, and it is usually difficult to determine the critical elements that could, or should, be compared; consequently, conclusions about their similarities or uniqueness are difficult to determine. Second, most of these complex formations experience rapid and chaotic processes of change. It is therefore difficult to find the most pertinent points in time when these systems may have been in a balanced situation that would allow adequate comparisons and conclusions about their uniqueness. Third, each of these systems has its own unique characteristics whose relative weights over time are difficult to accurately assess.

All these conceptual and theoretical difficulties, which are, as noted, present in any attempt to compare any social-political systems, apply equally to ethno-national diasporas, such as the Armenian, Greek, Irish,

Korean, and Palestinian, whose numbers are still increasing, and which are usually multifaceted entities that are undergoing chaotic changes. Thus, like all human formations, in addition to certain unique characteristics, each of these entities has certain characteristics that are similar to those of other diasporas.[5]

Moreover, it is also difficult to delineate the similarities among these entities because many diasporans—and first and foremost Jewish diasporans and Israelis—emphasize the uniqueness of their entities. Because this issue has not been adequately studied, this inclination should probably be attributed to their belief that the expression of their own sense of uniqueness, and consequently the image they want to project, are critical for maintaining their ethno-national identities, as well as for stressing the more essential (not essentialist) features of their national entities in a world that demonstrates antagonism toward "others," including ethnic minorities, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and ethno-national diasporas. In the same vein, in order to ensure their survival and continuity through implicitly and explicitly highlighting their uniqueness, diasporans underline their belief in their own cultural superiority in relation to other minorities and diasporas. In addition to the emphasis on these ethno-symbolic and social traits, diasporans emphasize the unique characteristics of their entities for instrumental purposes; that is, to persuade themselves and all others that there are also practical reasons to maintain their identity, and hence the maximal number of members.

In sum, culturally, socially, and instrumentally committed diasporans tend to minimize their entities' similarities to other ethno-national diasporas residing in the same, or in other, host countries. As implied above, this also applies to the Jewish nation, which from its very earliest days believed and claimed that it was the "chosen people," and hence unique. This attitude has further been buttressed by the equally traditional view, which is held not only by the Jews themselves, about the exceptional historical age of this diaspora, its singular traumatic experiences its singular ability to survive pogroms, exiles, and Holocaust, as well as its "special relations" with its ancient homeland, culminating in 1948 with the nation-state that the Jewish nation has established there.

Regardless of the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological problems, and the actual complications in accurately determining the unique characteristics of each of the diasporas in general, and of the Jewish Diaspora in particular, and like comparisons among other social-political formations, there are a number of methods for comparing diasporas to each other.

One of these methods, which is basically qualitative in nature, is that of focused comparison, whereby the most essential, supposedly relevant, factors are compared—for example, the essential elements of identity and identification, the interconnected reasons for diasporans' assimilation or integration into their host societies, or the issue of communal cohesion. A second possible method, which is more quantitative, is that of comparing the greatest possible numbers of relatively clearly defined components, such as the diasporans' demographic and geographic dispersal among and within various host countries, the numbers of their identified core and peripheral members, the number of their organizations and their formal functions, the financial resources at their disposal, rates of return to their homelands, etc. The third method is that of comparing a specific diaspora to a general model, or profile, of similar diasporas.[6]

None of these methods is exclusive. That is, in order to achieve the most reliable comparisons there is a need to use all these methods or a combination thereof. Accordingly, the following analysis pursues a combined approach.

As has been indicated above, I share the view that during the last few decades the Jewish Diaspora has experienced certain processes that have enhanced its "normalcy," namely its similarity to other ethno-national diasporas. To avoid repetition of the arguments made by other contributors to this issue, here only some main developments in this respect are mentioned.

First, like many other members of established diasporas, the vast majority of Jews no longer regard themselves as being in *Galut* [exile] in their host countries.[7] Perceptually, as well as actually, Jews permanently reside in host countries of their own free will, as a result of inertia, or as a result of problematic conditions prevailing in other hostlands, or in Israel. It means that the basic perception of many Jews about their existential situation in their hostlands has changed. Consequently, there is both a much greater self- and collective-legitimatization to refrain from making serious plans concerning "return" or actually "making *Aliyah*" [to emigrate, or "go up"] to Israel. This is one of the results of their wider, yet still rather problematic and sometimes painful acceptance by the societies and political systems in their host countries. It means that they, and to an extent their hosts, do not regard Jewish life within the framework of diasporic formations in these hostlands as something that they should be ashamed of, hide from others, or alter by returning to the old homeland. This is an important factor for both Diaspora Jews and Israelis permanently residing in various hostlands, who form a sub-diaspora or a diaspora in its own right.

It should, however, be noted here that among orthodox and ultra-orthodox Jews the perception about their exilic situation and the issue of return to their homeland is different, though even they do not rush to "return" to Israel.

This sense of a legitimate existence outside the homeland has been reinforced by the legitimacy granted to the Diaspora not long ago by large groups within Israeli society as well as by successive Israeli governments. Though not wholeheartedly, Israeli senior politicians, including prime ministers—even the late Yitzhak Rabin, who eventually changed his position concerning this issue—have accepted the Diaspora's existence and Israel's need to maintain close and continuous contacts with it.[8] The same process occurs now in the relations between other homelands and their diasporas—this changed attitude is evident in the case of the Mexican, Palestinian, Irish, Italian, and even the Japanese governments. All these and many other governments have established special ministries or agencies to deal with "their" diasporas and to establish closer connections with them.

Thus, many Israelis, including some, but not all, politicians, have discarded two of the most significant Zionist maxims—"diaspora negation" and the unqualified call for the return to Israel (*Aliyah*) of all Jews regardless of personal and collective costs. That is why many Jews and Israelis who permanently reside abroad do not hesitate to identify as members of the Jewish Diaspora, and even regard their membership in this entity as an "in" phenomenon. Among other things, this change has impacted on the main strategies employed by the various Jewish communities concerning continuity, further development in their host countries, and their relations with Israel.

During the last one hundred fifty years, there have occurred in various Jewish Diaspora communities very clear processes of secularization. Simultaneously, in various communities, changed attitudes toward the various religious movements within Judaism have also taken place. Thus, there has been a relative increase in the memberships in the Reform and Conservative movements, and, on a smaller scale, in the Reconstructionist movement, especially in the US. Again, as in other diasporas, these processes of secularization have not caused a marked desertion of the communities by these secularized Jews. The actual result is that orthodox and ultra-orthodox Jews now constitute minorities in most diasporic communities as well as in Israel. Yet, these groups have a very evident presence in both, and they wield a great deal of influence in Jewish entities all over the world. It should be noted that in many communities, synagogues serve as the main centers of Jewish activities. In Israel these two groups—the secular and the

orthodox—are important political and social actors, influencing various aspects of life there, including Israeli laws and politics.

Though there is no doubt that all five movements mentioned here are religious in most of their beliefs; nevertheless they operate within secularized environments.[9] Similar processes can be discerned in other diasporas, such as the Greek, Polish, and Irish. This article will further elaborate on these issues below.

Interconnected, but not less important, is the fact that more persons define themselves as "ethnic Jews," rather than what might be termed as "religious Jews." There is evidence, which is based upon public opinion surveys among Jews, that this has happened mainly in the US, Canada, and Australia; but there are also various indications that similar processes are underway in the Jewish communities in Russia and Germany. According to various estimates based on such public opinion polls and the 1990 Jewish census in the US, about 40% of American Jews regard themselves as ethnic Jews. In all likelihood, this process will continue and even strengthen.[10] Yet; this is still a contested issue, especially among those who believe that Jewish identity is primarily based upon cultural elements.[11]

In most countries where Jews reside, the much-enhanced processes of globalization, liberalization, and democratization create among them the need to rethink not only the deeper meanings of Judaism, but also about the meaning of permanently living in a diaspora.

In this context, Jews, as well as members of various other ethnonational diasporas residing in such hostlands, must cope with two contradictory developments: on one hand, they must relate to the fact that they permanently reside in open, pluralistic, but not necessarily multicultural, societies in their host countries, which is especially the case when these societies are ready to embrace members of such diasporas and condone their integration, but not necessarily their assimilation. On the other hand, they must deal with expressions of hatred, xenophobia, and enmity toward "aliens" and "others," which continues to occur in various societies, especially in Europe. This happens even in what have been regarded as penultimate liberal democracies such as Holland, Denmark, and Sweden.[12]

Despite these hostile expressions, the more "positive" changes in the situation of most diasporas in their host countries, including the Jewish and Israeli Diaspora, is the legitimacy that they receive, especially in democratic and democratizing states. This, and greater acceptance in their hostlands have led to a growing self-assertiveness among the members of the Jewish and Israeli Diaspora. Like other diasporic entities, such as the Turks, Tamils, Kurds, and Palestinians, Jews are not diffident about their

active involvement in politics. This applies to the situation not only on the trans-state and national levels in their hostlands, but also on local levels.

Organization and the regular operation of organizations are critical factors in the existence of all diasporas. In this context, the Jewish Diaspora has been noted for the multiplicity, quality, and efficacy of its organizations.[13] This critical aspect of the Diaspora's existence and functioning has been affected by the changes described above. Thus, a most significant result of these changes is the weakening of some venerable communal organizations on the state level in their host countries. This process is closely related to the general weakening of nation-state institutions and organizations in many democracies. Concurrently, during the last two decades there has been underway a process of the strengthening of local communal organizations, such as the Jewish Federations in the US, and of similar local communities and organizations in other democratic host countries.[14] These developments have significant ramifications for the Diaspora itself and for its relations with Israel.

Despite continuous ties and consultations between various large and central traditional Jewish organizations in the Diaspora, on one hand, and the Israeli government, the Jewish Agency, and other Israeli organizations involved in Israeli-Jewish affairs, on the other, members of the diasporic communities conscientiously and continuously autonomously examine their strategies, tactics, and operative steps. Ultimately, rather than according to "national interests," they take decisions according to their personal, groups, and communal interests. One of the more evident results of this ongoing reconsideration of priorities has been the reduction in unilateral financial transfers to Israel and the simultaneous increase in the mobilization and investment of resources in local communal needs in their host countries. This change of priorities is intended not only to ensure the continuity of Jewish communities, but also to promote their local cultural, social, and organizational revival.

In addition to their ties with their homelands, ethno-national diasporas, including the Jewish Diaspora, are now involved in three bilateral and multilateral systems of relationships: diaspora-host country relations; host country-homeland relations (including relations with other minorities and diasporas-diaspora and trans-state international and global interactions. Regardless of the complexity and multiplicity of these systems of relationships, as noted earlier, most academic attention has been given to diaspora-host country relations. Similar attention, however, must be given to homeland-diaspora relations. While politicians, activists, and scholars have regarded diaspora-homelands relations as unilateral processes, in

which the homeland has been the prominent partner, these relations should be further examined from two perspectives—that of the homeland and that of the diaspora.

There is another very significant process under way that is very relevant to our discussion here: an ongoing reevaluation of what has also been a controversial issue; i.e., where the "center" and the "periphery" are in the entire dispersed nation. Unlike previous periods—especially that from 1948 to the late 1960s, when demographically the Jewish population in Israel was less than 5% of the entire nation—now, when the Israeli Jewish population is about 50% of the entire nation, more Diaspora Jews think that Israel is certainly not the predominant partner in Jewish affairs. This is a result, however, of the spreading view, not equally held in all Jewish diasporic communities that the Jewish state is not the most creative entity in regard to the revival and redefinition of Jewish identity and culture. This is certainly true as far as the core members of the three largest Jewish communities—US, Russia, and France—are concerned.

Consequently, in these as well as in other smaller communities, there is an increasing demand for an equal standing with Israel and with other communities no matter what their size and human and economic capital. Similar processes occur in other ethno-national diasporas; in those cases, also, the issue of centrality intrudes into the discourse, and, in most of these cases the diasporas reject the notion of an undisputed centrality of their homelands.

These cumulative processes impact on the organization and utilization of available means and resources in diasporas. Thus, like other diasporas, the Jewish Diaspora makes an increasing use of electronic means of communication, particularly the Internet. This is intended to create and maintain the general trans-state networks connecting these communities with the homeland and other Jewish diasporic communities residing in other hostlands. Rather than "transnational," these activities create trans-state entities that maintain a certain degree of solidarity, potential for joint mobilization, and the possibility of mutual support.[14] Rather than on a national level, a great deal of work is invested, and, to an extent, this goal is accomplished on the communal organizational level.[15] In this context it should be noted that the increasing use of these means, which are pluralistic and post-modern, only enhances the inclination toward autonomy in the conduct of diasporic affairs and the catering for their specific needs.[16]

All these factors lead to a discussion of what is probably the most troubling issue concerning the Jewish Diaspora—that of its continuity;

or more bluntly put, that of the survival of the Jewish Diaspora. Quite understandably, this has become a highly controversial and debatable issue. Various writers on this matter have expressed views and made predictions that range from extreme pessimism to pessimism.[17] There are very few who are more optimistic about this existential issue.[18] Be that as it may, the development over long periods of other similar "historical" and "modern" ethno-national diasporas that are also experiencing the impact of globalization, regionalization, and internal processes in their host countries, shows that they nevertheless survive and even experience revivals.[19] In view of these experiences, it is quite safe to predict that a relatively large core of the Jewish Diaspora will not disappear. Moreover, it is likely that, again like in other diasporas such as the Polish, Greek, and Italian, a revival and further development of that core of the Diaspora, which would prefer to remain in their host countries while maintaining close connections with the homeland, is highly likely. Thus, contrary to the more pessimistic predictions suggested by demographers, anthropologists, and other analysts, who base their predictions on deterministic and extrapolative trends, it is highly probable that the Jewish core will not diminish, but may even grow.

In any case, the general analysis up to this point leads to two almost inescapable conclusions: First, the Jewish Diaspora has indeed been similar to other ethno-national diasporas; consequently, Israeli-Jewish Diaspora relations are also not unique. Second, in the foreseeable future, the Diaspora will not disappear.

Following is a more focused examination of the main changes occurring in the Jewish Diaspora and in its relations with Israel.

First are the impacts of globalization, liberalization, and the relative freedom of movements of members in the Jewish Diaspora's current situation. Most of these ramifications are pretty well-known and therefore only certain relevant factors will be discussed here.

Easy movement in and out of most host countries where Jews reside now, as well as in and out of Israel, naturally influences the geographical dispersal of the Jewish Diaspora. For example, this has enabled South African Jews to migrate to Australia and England, thus increasing the Diaspora there rather than going to Israel, Jews from the former Soviet Union to Germany and the US (again rather than to Israel), Jews from Argentina to Spain, and Israelis to various host countries (mostly where there are Jewish diasporic communities). As far as the implications for the Diaspora's situation and its relations with Israel are concerned, for example, this movement has created both possibilities and new organizational demands for

the communities and, indirectly, for Israel. Consequently, there has been a need created to revitalize veteran organizations, such as those in Germany, and organize new ones, such as those in Spain.

The availability of the new communications systems facilitates these migratory trends, on one hand, while, on the other, enables connections between Israel and diasporic communities that are located far away from each other. This facilitates the maintenance of constant ties between these communities, their mobilization during emergencies, and, paradoxically, their autonomy.

The new, relatively open, political and economic systems in most democratic and democratizing countries where Jews reside, which has been achieved thanks to globalization, enables the "regular" organization and maintenance of diasporic communities in host countries (such as the former Soviet Union) that in the past had prevented it. This new openness and liberalization also allows and enhances global economic activities of individuals, groups, and communal enterprises. Such activities create the capital for the support of Jewish communities in distress, as well as of Israel. It should be noted that, to an extent, these processes were disrupted by the terrorist strikes in the United States of 9/11 and by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These unfortunate events have led to the imposition of various restrictions on migration, free communication between various communities, and easy transfer of resources. Yet, such activities continue, and they influence the position of the Jewish Diaspora and its relations with Israel.

As far as perceptual, attitudinal, and behavioral patterns are concerned, globalization causes contagion and consequently the adoption of new ideas by all diasporas. Some of these ideas lead to assimilation and integration, on one hand, and to the use of more self-assured political actions, on the other. These processes, which augment the legitimization of multi-culturalism, the acceptance of "others" and "otherness," and the explicit demands for self-organization and respect for these organizations, promote the inclination toward autonomous decision-making and self-conduct of affairs in host countries. They also increase the Jewish Diaspora's similarity to other ethno-national diasporas, and have profound impacts on its relations with Israel and with other minorities and diasporas in their host countries.

In most host countries, therefore, the core Jewish Diaspora may experience continuity and even revival, on one hand, but also face severe problems, on the other. First, it is relatively easy to move from one host country to another, as well as to obtain citizenship in some new hostland. At the

same time, freedom of movement permits core members to maintain close ties with the homeland, as well as supporting return movements. All of these factors, which are part of the improvement in freedom of movement, have impacts on assimilation and integration patterns and on the possibility of maintaining an ethno-national identity outside of the homeland. Though under the prevailing conditions diaspora leaders face difficulties in preventing intermarriages, assimilation, and full integration that may lead to members' abandonment of their diaspora, yet, due to the very same factors, members of the Jewish Diaspora can maintain their identity and resist the temptations of assimilation and full integration. Therefore the argument, made by some authors, that sooner or later the Jewish Diaspora will disappear is vastly exaggerated.[20] The main reason is that the Diaspora is not a totally "imagined community."[21] In fact, as I have argued in my many publications on this issue, Jewish identity is based on a mix of primordial, mythical-psychological, and instrumental factors.[22] After a relatively long period when this view was out of fashion, it has recently been gaining more adherents. Hence, despite the demographic and geographical changes—including the shrinking of some Jewish communities because of the Diaspora core members' adherence to their ethno-national-religious identity, and to new trends of hostility in various host countries toward diasporas in general and the Jewish Diaspora in particular - it seems that the core Diaspora will not disappear. This of course does not mean that the leaders and activists should relax. Considerable cultural, ideological, and economic investments are needed to ensure continuity, particularly of the core in the Diaspora. Social, political and economic mobilization for achieving a cultural, social, and political revival in shrinking communities, such as that in Britain, is therefore essential.

Second, as indicated above, a growing numbers of Diaspora Jews regard Israel as an insecure and economically failing state. More important is the growing perception that Israel is a socially, and culturally mediocre state that does not serve as a dynamic source of inspiration for Diaspora Jews. It was this growing realization that gave birth to the view that the cultural revival of the Diaspora does not depend on Israeli contributions and the Hebrew language.[23] Upon becoming aware of these trends, many Jewish leaders now recognize that it is essential to spread the Jewish cultural heritage and inculcate it in the minds and hearts of younger Diaspora Jews. They have also realized that, under the present circumstances, it is preferable that educational materials and programs necessary for this effort be planned and implemented by diasporans in the Diaspora in the languages of the host countries. This is required mainly because of

the Jewish diasporans' preferences—they know that whenever books and other educational materials are written in the local language there is a better chance that more younger persons will show interest in them, and thus in the national origins, history, cultural inheritance, and development of Israel as the national homeland. This inclination has clearly been demonstrated by an increase in the number of children attending Jewish regular or day schools and by the proliferation of the departments, research institutes, and programs of Jewish studies in the Diaspora. For the sake of a balanced presentation, it should be mentioned that the views and interests noted here are not shared by all Diaspora Jews. There is, however, an increasing number of individuals, including wealthy persons and some organizations that believe and actively support the idea that Israel is still central, or even essential, to revitalizing a healthy Jewish identity, which, in turn, will contribute to the continuity and revival of the Diaspora and of its relations with Israel.

In this context, the issue of the role of the Jewish religion is relevant and should be briefly elaborated.[24] I approach this subject from a different angle than that presented by William Safran in his article in this issue. The prevailing view, and probably the actual situation, is that orthodox and ultra-orthodox Jews still regard their position as exilic, that they assimilate and fully integrate into their hostlands much less than secular Jews, that they are more loyal to the nation that they keep closer connections with their religious brethren in Israel, that they visit it more often, and that they extend various kinds of assistance more than other Diaspora Jews. It has also been argued that, during the last two decades, these two sectors are more vigilant in protecting Israeli interests abroad. Therefore, a majority of Israeli politicians think that Jewish continuity abroad depends on these two sectors. In view of the actual situation in various other ethno-national diasporas, this presumption is questionable. The fact is that secularization of these entities has only partly affected the size of core membership in most of these entities and their support for their homelands. Thus, among the cores of most diasporas, including the Jewish Diaspora, secular persons outnumber those who are religious.

Moreover, there is a growing understanding that, in many cases, the religious factor in peoples' identities only supports their ethno-national positions, and that it is not necessarily the most essential element for the maintenance of national identity. It is true that, in the Jewish case, synagogues served and still serve as significant centers for cultural activities, bases for social organization, locations where Jews meet and exchange views, and places where various resources are mobilized; but there is no

doubt that secular leaders and organizations also serve as sources for inspiration and providers of actual resources for the Diaspora's continuity as well as for Israel's needs.

Jewish Diasporans are active agents, and a great deal of what happens in the Diaspora should be attributed to them and to their own decisions and activities. Yet nobody should diminish the significance of the organizations that deal with both general matters of the Diaspora and its relations with its homeland. Especially, but not only, Jewish Diaspora members and leaders are fully aware that organization is an essential requirement for the survival of their community. Therefore they establish elaborate and sophisticated organizational systems and networks on the various levels and in all the main spheres of activity—defense, cultural and social affairs, external relations, and maintenance. There is no need to elaborate here on this issue: it is very well-known that the Jewish Diaspora has excelled in this aspect of its existence in most host countries.[25]

Making intensive use of the new communication systems, these organizations have created sophisticated trans-state networks that allow immediate contact between communities residing in distant geographical locations. Neither host countries nor homelands can prevent the establishment or operation of these networks and their resulting contacts. Among other things, these networks constitute channels for transferring various resources, including financial and morale support. Again, the Jewish Diaspora also excels in this respect, and the number of the organizations that it has established and the networks that it uses is large. When seen from an Israeli point of view, however, the existence and use of these networks only increases the Diaspora's autonomy rather than its dependence on Israel.

Though these organizations have access to various resources and perform valuable functions, presently they are encountering considerable problems, such as diminishing membership, less funding, and reduced influence. One of the reasons for these problems is the waning legitimacy granted to them by individual members and local communities in the Diaspora. This is especially true regarding older and venerable organizations whose goals have not been reformed, non-democratic organizations, and those controlled and operated by professionals rather than by lay leaders. The main criticism directed at such established organizations, as well as their leaders and professionals, is that they do not adequately represent their members that they are not very efficient, that their functionaries pursue their own views and sometimes selfish interests, that they do not adequately serve the entire community, and that some are too closely connected to Israel. These positions are expressed mainly by younger members aspiring

to leadership roles in the communities, and by persons with liberal views, whose numbers are growing.

The fact that the Jewish Diaspora is dispersed in various host countries in which different social and political conditions prevail makes their relations with Israel problematic. In this respect, their most pressing need—as well as desire—is to respond to Israel's demand that the Diaspora recognize its centrality. Notwithstanding certain perceptual and attitudinal changes over the years, many Israelis, including Israeli politicians and "professional Zionists," still expect the Diaspora to maintain constant connections with the homeland, demonstrate full loyalty to it, and supply it resources.

As long as their host countries' relations with Israel are reasonably friendly, a *modus vivendi* that is comfortable to all sides can be attained and maintained. Things tend to become complicated—and even embarrassing—when such relations are worsening, becoming unfriendly, or are actually in a state of crisis. It has always been a "given" that under no circumstances would Israel sacrifice the Diaspora in order to promote or protect its own interests *vis-à-vis* such host countries. Yet, as history has shown, when economic or political clashes occur between Israel and a host country of a Diasporic community, the former would prefer its own interests rather than those of the Diaspora. A well-known example for this pattern was Israel's clash with the US government concerning Israeli contacts with South Africa during the Apartheid period. Another example was the Pollard Affair.[26] In both cases, the American Jewish community was adversely affected by the incongruity between the policies of Israel and their hostland. These events left their imprints on the American-Jewish community.

Problematic relations between host countries, Israel, and Jewish communities bring to the fore the tangled issue of loyalty to host country vs. homeland. There are diasporas that show greater readiness to prefer the interests of their homelands over those of the host country. Such entities are seen to be submitting to the political manipulations of their homelands. In extreme cases, this pattern has given birth to total loyalty to the homeland, and in less acute cases it can result in either divided or dual loyalty to the host country.[27] Most diasporas, however, have become more assertive in their relations with both their homelands and host countries, tending to show greater readiness to oppose the governments of their homelands by rejecting demands to prefer their interests over those of the hostland. This applies also to the Jewish Diaspora.

In this connection it should be remembered that, until the 1990s, Israel officially adhered to the Zionist notion of Diaspora Negation,

proclaiming that the continued existence of the Diaspora was abnormal and hazardous for national survival, and that it was inferior to life in Israel. This notion provided the justification for Israeli demands that it be recognized as the predominant center of the nation, and for its frequent interventions in Diaspora affairs, thus raising the issue of where Diaspora loyalties lay. Similarly, Israeli demands for the provision of resources was anchored in this staunch ideological belief.

Recently, there has occurred a clear change in the Diaspora's attitude in these respects. More individual members and organizations reject the notion of Israel's predominance and related Israeli claims; consequently, they do not accept Israeli manipulations, they are not ready to demonstrate exclusive loyalty to Israel, and they direct most of the resources that they mobilize to the fulfillment of their own communal needs. As will be argued below, this most significant factor has deeply influenced the Diaspora's positions and interests, and thus also Israeli-Diaspora relations.

The more specific quantifiable changes that have occurred in the Jewish nation are in its main demographic features, geographical concentrations, views of Jews and Israelis concerning their identity and identification, and intra-national relations.

Though demography is not the only or most essential factor impacting on the changes occurring in world Jewry, nevertheless it contributes to changes in the viewpoints, ideologies, needs, strategies, and practical activities of various segments of the Jewish nation. These changes affect harmony and tension within world Jewry, the relations between the Jewish communities and the social and political systems in their hostlands, and the establishment of networks and organizations. Following are some demographic features that are most relevant to the discussion in this essay.[28]

The estimated number of those who declare that they are Jews is about 13 million (in 1945 the number was 11 million). From the 1970s onward, however, the natural growth, except in Israel, is near zero; that is, while the annual rate of natural growth of world Jewry is 0.06%, the annual rate of natural growth of the entire world's population is 1.7%).

Between 1989 and 2002, 1.8 million Jews migrated from their host countries. 63% of these Jews migrated to Israel and 37% migrated mainly to Western countries. This immigration considerably diminished the number of Jews in the former republics of the Soviet Union, Argentina, and South Africa (it is worth noting that the last two communities used to be very active and closely connected to Israel). As a consequence, the larger Jewish communities are, in descending order. those in the US, Israel, Russia, France, Britain, Ukraine, Canada, Germany, Brazil, and Australia. The

German and Australian communities have grown as a result of recent immigration from the former Soviet Union and South Africa, respectively. These changes also mean that the majority of Jews now reside in democratic or democratizing countries.

Other important demographic factors are that Jews live mostly in cities, that most of them have secondary school and college educations, and that they are employed in specialized professions.

The proportion of core to peripheral Jews varies in different countries—in Russia, the proportion is 89% core Jews, while in the US, this proportion is 74%. This ratio changes as a combined result of intermarriages and full integration into host societies. The ratio of intermarriages in Russia is the highest—70% of all women and 80% of all men marry non-Jews. In the US, where the largest Jewish Diaspora resides, and in what are known as western countries, where there are smaller communities, the ratio is 50% in France and 40% in Britain. In most communities in the west, there is an evident process of the aging of the communities. An even faster process of aging has occurred in Eastern Europe, including Russia and Ukraine.

In sum, the two largest Jewish communities are now those in the US and Israel (80% of the entire nation); 90% of world Jewry permanently reside in 20% of host countries rated highest in "human development," which is an index of quality of life. On the other hand, as a result of the Second Intifada and the economic recession, this index now rates Israel as only 22nd on the list—a fact that has implications concerning its image and position in world Jewry, as well as its potential attraction to Jews who reside in countries which are higher on this scale.

These demographic and geographical changes may have affected changes in identity and identification, mainly of secular Jews, as well as substantially impacted a variety of processes in the Jewish Diaspora and in its relations with Israel. Thus, the identification of core Jews has become multifaceted and based less on values agreed upon by large segments of world Jewry. As noted above, identification on the basis of religion is on the decline and world Jewry is becoming more secular. There are analysts who argue that Jewish identification is based on cultural rather than biological elements, and that there is a movement from identification on the basis of communal background to identification on the basis of individualistic and individual feelings and positions.[29] The increasing number of intermarriages contributes to the emergence of ambiguous identities and identification of parents and of their children; there are noticeable changes in Jewish family structure and in its weight as a determining factor in the

Jewish way of life, which used to be an important factor in maintaining the Jewish ethno-national as well as religious identity, and the attitudes of Jews *vis-à-vis* the organized Diaspora and Israel; the number of peripheral Jews is increasing; and there is an increase in the number of "ethnic Jews". As noted above, in view of these cumulative trends there is a growing pessimism concerning the future of Jewry. Yet, again, the situation of similar ethno-national diasporas that had been regarded as disappearing, such as the Polish, Greek, and Irish, indicate that Jewry's continuity, revival, and even renaissance should not be easily ruled out.

From the point of view of the geographical dispersal of world Jewry, the relevant facts are: the almost total disappearance of Jews from North Africa, Moslem, and Middle Eastern Arab countries, (the numbers of Jews in Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon are now negligible); as well as the continuing decline of the number of Jews in the former Soviet Union, Latin America and South Africa. This means that there is much less need to deal with Jews in distressed countries, and that there is a gradual decline of Jewish communities in the Diaspora that were closely connected to Israel, such as those in South Africa and Argentina. The latter development further hampers Israeli claims of the undisputed centrality in the entire Jewish nation.

Simultaneously, there have been fluctuations in the numbers of Jews in the larger western democratic host countries—notably the USA, Canada, Australia, and various countries in the European Union. Thus, in some of these countries, such as England and France, the numbers of Jews have declined, while in other countries the number has grown. This growth can be attributed to an ongoing process of "return" of Jews to countries where previously (most notably since World War II) there were only few Jews. This has been the case in countries such as Germany, Spain, Hungary, and even in Romania. It also implies that further changes should be expected in the organization and functioning of these Jewish communities.

An additional demographic-geographic factor influences various Jewish Diaspora—intra-hostland migration and the emergence of relatively new Jewish communities in locations where, in the past, Jewish presence has been insignificant. Examples are the relatively new communities in Arizona and New Mexico in the US, and the emergence of Jewish communities in former Eastern Germany. Like all other developments mentioned above, this trend also creates a structural and behavioral pattern that may give birth to a new orientation of Jewish organizations.

Older and better-organized communities are also experiencing some significant changes—reduction of membership in communal organizations,

less readiness of core members, and of course of peripheral Jews, to actively participate in communal activities, especially those that focus on Israel, and less willingness to mobilize resources to help Jews in other host countries, or to support Israel.

In this vein, a survey conducted toward the end of 2002 by the Jewish Agency's Department for Zionist Jewish Education concerning American Jewish positions *vis-à-vis* Israel has shown that only 31% said that they are "very attached to Israel," 41% said that they are "somewhat attached to Israel," 20% said that they "are not very attached to Israel," and 8% said that they are "not at all attached to Israel." Only 11% said that their attachment to Israel has increased somewhat during the second Intifada.[30]

The second closely interconnected factor is that of a marked increase in the inclination of members of Jewish Diaspora communities to foster their own autonomy in conducting their affairs and relations with Israel. Thus there has emerged an evident strong trend among Diaspora Jews and Israelis to keep their distance from old and largely inactive communal and national organizations. More lately there has emerged a growing desire to reform their patterns of activities and to establish alternative organizations. These inclinations are particularly evident in regard to fund-raising organizations, and to their allocation patterns. This trend has affected the United Jewish Appeal (which has been replaced by United Jewish Communities: an organization run by local and regional federations in the US. This tendency has also been clearly expressed in the changes in the venerable Jewish Agency initiated and introduced by Diaspora Jews.

The third factor, which is no less important, and which has already been mentioned in this essay, is the ideological changes concerning some fundamental issues, especially those related to making *Aliyah* to Israel. As is well-known, the demand for immigrating to Israel has considerably diminished. On the other hand, migration from one host country to other countries continues. Moreover, there is less hesitation to migrate to countries which previously hosted only a few Jews-a process that creates new challenges regarding Jewish identity and identification and relations with Israel.

In sum, there are now many ingredients that would create yet further changes in the governance of the entire nation and in Diaspora-Israeli relations.

The discussion about the Diaspora's current situation cannot be concluded without a short examination of the Israeli perspective. This is quite a problematic mission because the Israeli politicians, bureaucrats, and "professional Zionists" who are involved in these relations try to paint a

rosy picture of what transpires in this sphere. Hence, a critical examination of the idyllic and idealistic picture of Israeli-Diaspora relations is needed. In any event, even the relatively few publications on these issues have indicated that Israeli interests always came first, that Israel was zigzagging within this sphere, that it changed foci and positions without clear formal explanations, and that its policies were multifaceted and chaotic.[31]

The first aspect that should be examined here is that of Israeli attitudes toward the Diaspora. A preliminary observation, however, may also be made: there are at least five different groupings of Israelis that espouse differing views about relations between Israel and the Diaspora. The first group is that of Israelis who have relatives in the Diaspora, especially among the nearly three-quarter million Israelis residing in various host countries (those who in the past were called Yordim). The second group is that of Israelis who have relatives among Diaspora Jews whose grandparents, or parents, or they themselves, never resided in Israel. When considering these two groups, it seems that quite naturally their members would tend to keep closer relations with their relatives abroad. These Israelis also stand a better chance to get some remittances (although unlike the situation in other homelands, Israelis abroad remittances to Israel are pretty limited), to visit their relatives abroad, and to be visited by their relatives. Members of these two groups have a better knowledge, even if it is tainted, about the diaspora than other groups in Israel. Hence, they will show greater involvement in the Diaspora's affairs, and will be ready to adopt more determined positions concerning issues that necessitate decisions on the part of the Israeli government.

The third group is that of Israelis who have no relatives residing abroad, but who nevertheless show continued interest in the Jewish Diaspora. Many of these Israelis visit Jewish communities abroad, host Diaspora Jews during their visits in Israel, show a general interest in the Diaspora, and attentively follow developments there. They also tend to show sympathy toward the Jewish Diaspora, in general, and toward the communities with which they are in touch or acquainted, in particular. These Israelis are ready to participate in meetings and conferences concerning the present and future situation of the Diaspora and are active in various organizations on the behalf of the Diaspora.

The fourth group, which is the largest among these five groups, is that of those Israelis who are apathetic toward the Diaspora. Although some of them will express general concern about the fate of Diaspora Jews, in fact they lack solid and updated knowledge of what transpires in the Diaspora. Even if their statements about their general concern for Jewish communities

abroad are not necessarily insincere, they would not go out of their way to do much to help the Jewish Diaspora.

The fifth group is the smallest among Israelis, but it is the most active and vociferous in this context. These are the politicians, "professional Zionists," and other bureaucrats employed by the government and the "national institutions" dealing with the Diaspora. More than any other group in Israel, these Israelis are deeply involved in matters affecting the Diaspora and its relations with Israel. In most cases their motivations are mixed—on one hand, they are involved in these matters because of their ideological or emotional beliefs and by a genuine concern about the Jewish nation; but on the other hand, this concern is connected to their only or main occupation and source of income.

In addition to the qualitative evaluations of the various groups' attitudes toward the Diaspora mentioned above, there are some less impressionistic assessments about this subject. These are based on surveys conducted since the late 1960s. It should be noted; however, that the surveys were not conducted regularly by the same researchers and that questions posed to the participants were not the same. Nevertheless, the results are indicative of the attitudes of Israelis in this sphere.

Before presenting some results of these surveys, it should be noted that researchers in this sphere emphasize that only those who answer that their attitudes are "absolutely positive" should be regarded as really concerned with the Diaspora. Those who answer by saying "yes, we are concerned," or that they are "somewhat concerned," show either alienation or ambivalence *vis-à-vis* the Diaspora.[32]

Now to the results of some of these surveys. During the first week of the 1973 War 66% of Israeli Jews answered that they felt "absolutely positively" part of the Jewish Nation. After that war, a survey in April 1974 found that only 46% of Israeli Jews answered in the same vein. Seven years later, in January 1981, 58% answered that they felt absolutely positive toward the Diaspora; in 1986, 67% answered that they are "absolutely positive" about their connection to the Jewish nation.[33] In a survey commissioned by the World Jewish Congress and conducted in October 2001, showed that, again, a major decline had occurred in positive feelings *vis-à-vis* the Diaspora—only 48% of the Israeli Jews said that they felt absolutely positive about their connections to the Diaspora.

No less telling are the results that follow: a survey conducted in 1993 showed that only 46% of secular Israeli Jews were absolutely sure that they were part of the Jewish nation. Among those who regarded themselves

as religious, the number rose to 83%.[34] A survey performed in 2001 also showed that 85% of the ultra-religious and religious Israeli Jews felt full attachment to the Jewish nation, 57% among the traditionalists felt the same, but only 29% among secular Jews in Israel answered they were "absolutely positive" about their connection to the Diaspora. The same survey showed that the attachment was stronger among mature and older Israelis, which is a mirror image of the situation in the Diaspora.

During the same period, a noticeable gap existed between Israeli and American Jews concerning their connection to the nation: 70% among the latter said that they felt a very strong attachment.[35] In addition, these surveys found that in 1967, 55% said that there was a difference between Israelis and Diaspora Jews, in 1973, 63% agreed with this statement, in 1981, 43% indicated the same, and in 1993, 50 % said there was a difference.

It is quite widely accepted that the sense of attachment is closely related to various aspects of identity and identification, and to perceptions about Israeli-Diaspora relations. One of these aspects is the perception about the mutual dependence between Israelis and the Jewish Diaspora. In the early 1990s, about 75% of Israelis said that all Jews shared the same fate, 68% said that they thought or felt that Israel would not be able to continue to survive without close connections with the Diaspora, and 77% of Israelis said they were convinced that the Diaspora would not be able to exist on its own without help from Israel. In a 2001 survey, 76% answered that they regarded Diaspora Jews as committed friends of Israel. On the other hand, a survey conducted in June 2002, which was commissioned by the *Taglit* Project, showed that only 42% responded that they had a very positive position regarding Israel's responsibility to help Diaspora Jews in distress, while 36% said that they had only a "positive position" about this issue.

It is unfortunate that during the 1990s no surveys were conducted to examine Israeli positions concerning Israel's right to intervene and influence developments in the Jewish Diaspora. The surveys that were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s have shown that only about 40% agreed with the State taking such action. The results were similar concerning Israeli perceptions of the right of the Jewish Diaspora to intervene and influence developments in Israel.[36] These results indicate that the majority of Israelis supported the notion of autonomy for the two segments of Jewry. The October 2001 survey conducted for the World Jewish Congress showed that 49% of Israeli Jews said that Israel is acting properly in its attempts to protect the Jewish Diaspora, but only 31% said that Israel does not do enough in this respect. Another finding in this context was that in

the 1970s and 1980s 63% and 72% of the Israelis respectively thought that the Israeli government should take into account the implications for the Diaspora whenever it decides about Israeli foreign policy.

Though these figures are somewhat confusing in their inconsistency, the truth of the matter is that, as has been suggested above, Israeli attitudes are far from demonstrating an overwhelming commitment to the Diaspora.

To understand the current situation of Israeli attitudes toward the Diaspora—and hence the problems facing these two segments of the nation—one must very briefly also examine the history, especially the main changes in the attitudes and positions of the Israeli political elites in this respect since the establishment of the Jewish state.

The first period—from 1948 to the late 1960s—was characterized by the ideological negation of Diasporic life [*Shlilat Hagolah*]. During this period, ambivalence about these relations could also have been noted. The first element—"the diaspora negation"—had been one of the basic positions of the Zionist movement in general, and of its various parties in particular. It affected the views and practices of the *Yishuv* leadership, and later those of Israeli politicians during the first two decades after the establishment of the state.[37] The results of the "successful" 1956 and 1967 Wars only further buttressed this ideological position. It has gradually dissipated since the mid 1970s, however—especially because of the results of the 1973 War.

Until the 1973 War, most Israeli senior politicians, the "professional Zionists," and the majority of the Israelis not only negated Jewish life in the Diaspora, but also argued that Israel was the nation's epicenter. This attitude was expressed in many public statements made by senior Israeli politicians and in their direct contacts with activists in the Diaspora. With no great enthusiasm, however, they admitted the Diaspora's contribution to the establishment of the state and its support of Israel after 1948. Simultaneously, they repeatedly emphasized the Israeli-centric Zionist ideology, the significance of the 1948 War as the ultimate effort in the liberation of the entire nation, the establishment of the Jewish nation-state, and the importance of the Declaration of Independence as the constitutive document for the future existence of the Jewish people. In the best Zionist tradition, they also emphasized that the establishment of the nation-state normalized the situation of all Jews. They argued that Israel would be a safe haven for all Jews, and that it would be able to adequately protect the entire dispersed nation. They also claimed that the then large immigration to Israel signified that it really had become the epicenter of the entire nation, and that the

beginning of Israel's economic growth, which to a great extent was funded by world Jewry, could only help the entire nation. All these statements were intended to turn Israel into the undisputed national center. Yet there was also a sub-text: actually these politicians were ambivalent about Israel's role and its relations with the Diaspora.

At first it looked as if these Israeli politicians would succeed in their self-imposed mission to position Israel as the quintessential center of the nation. The initial reactions of the majority of the organized Jewish Diaspora to the Israeli success in the 1948 War and to the establishment of the state were qualified and hesitant, but they indicated readiness to reconsider their previous hostile or uncommitted positions *vis-à-vis* Zionism and the *Yishuv*. This, for example, was the position of the American Jewish Committee and the Joint Distribution Fund. The Zionists and pro-Zionist leaders in the Diaspora almost fully accepted Israel as the national center. Staunch supporters of Israel, however, never became an undisputed majority in the Diaspora. There have always existed anti-Zionist organizations as well as quite large indifferent groups. Moreover, the leaders of the non-Zionist organizations made it clear that Israel should not interfere in Diaspora affairs. This demand was intended to ensure their autonomy and prevent severe problems concerning their loyalty to their host countries.

Nevertheless the more positive attitudinal and behavioral positions *vis-à-vis* Israel on the part of significant segments in the Diaspora had some practical implications—readiness to mobilize and transfer to Israel money and human resources, and readiness to grant it political and diplomatic support. Initially that financial support was limited, and it increased only in the wake of the 1956 War. After the 1956 military victory, and especially after Israeli military success in the 1967 War, Israel's position was further strengthened and the Diaspora's financial support increased.

As noted above, during later periods the number of Diaspora Jews who became skeptical about Israel's centrality grew gradually. Some of these skeptics expressed grave doubts about Israel's power and its ability to overcome all social, political, and security difficulties that it encountered. No less important, these skeptics questioned Israel's cultural ascendance and its ability to maintain and cause Jewish revival.

Only when the memories about the Holocaust began to gradually fade, especially among younger Jews abroad—when the memories of impressive Israeli victories began to be forgotten, and when criticism about Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan heights percolated to wider groups in the Diaspora—did Israeli politicians started to understand the erosion of the Jewish State's position among Diaspora

Jews. They were, however, slow in internalizing the full meaning of these changes. This began to affect the views of some more sensitive Israeli politicians, but not the professionals, who continued to think and behave as previously.

This sense of ambivalence concerning the Diaspora was fostered by some deeper factors—the conceptual and practical difficulties encountered by Israeli politicians in their attempts to define the essence, position, and functions of the Jewish Diaspora. The main issue that was and still is unclear concerns the nature of Jewish identity. Some Israeli politicians became unsure about the applicability of the notion and term "exile" to the Jewish Diaspora. Similar questions were raised concerning the Diaspora's continuity, and about who should serve whom—the Diaspora, Israel, or vice versa. And doubts were expressed about the Diaspora's loyalty. As could have been expected, these issues bothered not only the Israelis, but also the Diaspora leadership.

The internal debates concerning Israel's positions *vis-à-vis* the Diaspora were reflected in the legislation about the status and functions of the Zionist Movement and the Jewish Agency that was passed by the Knesset in 1952. It was also reflected in the Accord between the Israeli government and the Jewish organizations that was signed in 1954. This Law and the Accord authorized the Zionist movement and the Jewish Agency to function as the formal representatives of the Diaspora in Israel, and of Israel in the Diaspora. Certain functions, which were more limited in scope than their functions in earlier periods, were assigned to these two organizations. In practice, however, the main actors in this sphere became the Israeli political parties and the governments that they established. More specifically, according to the compromise reached by these "national institutions" and the Israeli government, the former would continue to function as the providers of assistance to Israel in the spheres of development, settlement, immigration and its absorption, and coordination with Jewish organizations abroad. Because of disputes with assertive Diaspora Jewish leaders who were active in the Zionist movement, such as Nahum Goldman and Aba Hillel Silver, Ben-Gurion and his colleagues preferred to cooperate with the Jewish Agency rather than with the Zionist Movement. Accordingly, they decided that the funds raised by the Diaspora would be transferred to Israel through the Jewish Agency, and that the Zionist Movement would get its share through the Agency.

The ambivalence that characterized the positions of the founding fathers has impacted Israeli-Diaspora relations to this day. It created gaps between public statements made by the politicians and their actual policies

and actions. Even now, Israel expects the Diaspora to provide it with *Aliyah*, money, and political and diplomatic support. On the other hand, Israel has invested its own resources in rescuing Jews in distress and has granted assistance to communities that found themselves in crisis situations. In this context, the politicians have informally categorized the Jewish communities as follows: for obvious historical reasons, the American Jewish Community has been regarded as the most important entity. In the second category, there are the established and the well-organized communities of Britain, France, Australia, Canada, and South Africa. In the third category, they placed the Jewish communities in the Arab countries, North Africa, the former Soviet Union, and also, to some extent, certain Latin and South American communities. The Israeli politicians had expected support from the communities in the first category, but less in the second; and it was only in accordance with its capabilities and interests that Israel assisted Jewish communities in the third category.

The second aspect in the complex relations between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora was the degree of actual Israeli involvement in the Diaspora's affairs, especially during "normal" periods. Despite declarations and agreements concerning the autonomy of the Diaspora, there were no coherent guidelines for action or inaction in these spheres. The formulation of such guidelines was left to the Israeli professionals and their partners in Jewish organizations in the Diaspora. The result was that, during certain periods and in certain countries, the Israelis were involved in the Diaspora affairs and only infrequently refrained from doing so.

The third sphere whose boundaries remained unclear was that of the definition of Jewish identity. It was not clear who in Israel had the authority and capability to conduct the dialogue with the Jewish Diaspora about this critical issue. Similarly, it was not clear with whom this dialogue should be conducted: should it be with the veteran politicians, the professionals, or the younger activists?[38] It was not surprising that the Israelis preferred as their partners for such dialogues the more veteran and established leaders in the Diaspora who had become staunchly pro-Israeli. Hence during the 1950s and 1960s they conducted the dialogue about identity with the leaders of such Jewish organizations as the American Jewish Committee, the Joint Distribution Fund, and Hadassah.

This pattern did not modify positions and postures of other Jewish organizations very much, but only increased the confusion and tension. It gradually became clear that connections with the more established Jewish organizations abroad—which were motivated not only by inaccurate evaluations about the true weight of the various organizations, but also by

bureaucratic considerations—created accumulative adverse reactions and alienated other no less important leaders and organizations in the Diaspora. This was, as noted, particularly the case with younger and aspiring leaders who wanted to participate in the conduct of affairs, but were not welcomed by the older and more veteran leaders, activists and professionals. Despite all developments that occurred in Israel and the Diaspora in the meantime, these patterns did not change substantially until the second period (from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s) in Israeli-Diaspora relations.

This second period might be called "the period of gradual transformation." Retrospectively it seems that the traditional perception about Israel's centrality and the actual situation in the nation's governance indeed underwent major changes after the 1973 War. As in other spheres, changes in Israeli-Diaspora relations were gradual but growing. These changes also caused alterations in the standing of the organizations identified with Israel or supporting it, such as the Zionist Movement. These new perceptions percolated, as has been noted above, to wider groups, both in Israel and the Diaspora. The entire period was characterized by recurrent attempts to reevaluate Israeli-diaspora relations and the beginnings of actual changes in the relations of the two parts of the Jewish nation.

Israel's impaired image, caused by the military debacle during the first stages of the 1973 War—and to a great extent also by the outcomes of that war—only enhanced the relative ambivalence and indifference toward Israel. The sense that Israel was not a secure place, which became prevalent even among Jews who had been close to Israel and cared for it, gave birth to a reordering of priorities by many Jews and Jewish organizations abroad. These processes were further enhanced by the 1982 War in Lebanon, by the Israeli presence there, and later by the establishment of the security zone in southern Lebanon.

This was the period during which the question of the endurance and continuity of both Israel and the Diaspora was squarely put on the national agenda. This was not an abstract question; it had practical meanings and ramifications for all persons and organizations involved. Not surprisingly, it was accompanied by accelerated processes of change in the positions and status of the Jewish communities, on one hand, and of the Israeli government, the Jewish Agency, and the Zionist movement, on the other. Hence, not accidentally during this period various plans for far-reaching reforms in Jewish governance and organizations were put forward. Among others, Yossi Beilin, Daniel Elazar, Rabbi David Hirsh, Arik Carmon, and Avraham Burg prepared and publicized their plans for such reforms.[39]

These processes caused actual changes in the allocation of resources for the various purposes and needs of both the Diaspora and Israel. Difficulties in fundraising for Israeli purposes were evident already during the 1973 War. The UJA and Keren Ha'Yessod had no other choice but to combine the campaigns of 1973 and 1974. This joint campaign was successful and the amount of funds raised was impressive. But during the following years, though the entire sum raised for Jewish purposes did not decrease, there occurred a continuous decline in the sums transferred to Israel. In fact, from the mid-1970s to the present, there has occurred a reversal in the proportion of the donations transferred to Israel—from about 75 percent of all donations down to about 25 percent.

Additional changes have also occurred in this sphere: most of the donations still come from big donors (0.5 percent of all donors give about 50 percent of all donations); however, these big donors prefer to give money for very clearly defined purposes rather than to Israel in general. This has been accompanied by a process whereby some donors have been distancing themselves from established, traditional Jewish and Israeli organizations. Increasingly they prefer to earmark their donations to Israel for welfare and educational purposes. Recently, they also do not give donations for the solution of short-term problems; rather, they prefer to "invest" in long-range plans. They also criticize the large number of campaigns and prefer concentrated campaigns.

These changes have had far reaching implications for some of the Jewish organizations in the Diaspora and especially in Israel. In this context one should mention the increase in the importance of the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) and the meaningful decline in the position of the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) to the point where the UJA was "absorbed" by the above-mentioned United Jewish Communities (UJC). It should be added that donations to the Zionist movement have almost totally stopped. Simultaneously, there has been a sharp decline in the number of Jewish tourists to Israel. Here it should be noted that, between the first and second Intifadas, as well as more recently, there has been an increase in the numbers of Christian tourists to Israel. This means that the decline in the number of Jewish tourists coming to Israel is not merely dependent on unstable security conditions, but that it reflects an attitudinal change.

No less meaningful for Israeli politicians were the fluctuations in the political and diplomatic support granted to Israel by Diaspora Jews. These fluctuations were enhanced by the Likud's victory in 1977. On one side of the political spectrum, for example, rightist and religious leaders and

organizations supported Begin and his government, but not the evacuation of the Sinai or of the Jewish settlements in the Gaza strip in the wake of the peace treaty with Egypt. On the other side, liberal leaders and organizations reduced their support for Israel, and—mainly behind closed doors—criticized its government. Gradually, such criticisms were aired publicly. Such public criticisms of the Israeli governments' positions were a novelty. This was the result of the emergence of new groups of activists in the Diaspora. As has been noted, new groups and individuals emerged whose loyalty to Israel and its government was questionable. On the other side of the political spectrum, there emerged groups who were inclined toward the right and the Republicans in the USA. A similar phenomenon could have been detected in other host countries, such as England. To an extent, the decline in support for Israel was checked during the late 1990s and early 21st century. Support even increased for Sharon's government as a result of 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the second Intifada.

Coincidentally, there have occurred evident changes in the Israeli government's position *vis-à-vis* the Diaspora. Despite the problematic results of the 1973 and 1982 Wars and the first and second Intifada, Israeli leaders felt less dependent on the Diaspora's political support and mediation with host governments, especially that of the US. Since new direct channels of communication were established with American presidents and the administration, all Israeli prime ministers—Begin, Rabin, Netanyahu, Barak, and Sharon—felt less need for Jewish mediation. Since Rabin's first government in the 1970s, Israeli prime ministers personally conducted direct contacts with American and most European leaders. Some of them, especially Rabin, also felt that the American government's financial support was not essential for continued development in Israel. Similar change occurred in the Israeli government's position regarding the need for financial support for Jewish immigrants to Israel. This was demonstrated during the period of the large wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union. The Israeli government invested large sums in this immigration without depending on the Diaspora's financial support.

Concurrent with structural changes that have occurred in Diaspora communities that have considerably strengthened the power of the local federations and communities in the US and Canada (the situation in other Diaspora communities is different—in most of these communities the central organizations are still occupying central positions in the conduct of affairs), some profound social and political changes have occurred in Israel. In this context, it is not surprising at all that the 1973 War was regarded as "the earthquake." In the wake of this war, there has emerged a

strong inclination to join and vote for rightist and the ultra orthodox parties.[40] Generally, that period was characterized by, on one hand, tension created between the Israeli right, which opposed the "Oslo process," and the resulting agreements and peace initiatives, and, on the other hand, the Israeli dovish groups and parties that supported the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and pursued the chances for an agreement with the Palestinians.[41]

As could have been expected, all these transformations had further profound impacts on Israeli-Diaspora relations. In fact, these changes both propagated and enhanced the gaps between the two parts of the Jewish nation. One of the most obvious consequences was a reduction in mutual expectations.

Moreover, each of the two segments of the nation turned to deal with the problems and the challenges facing it. Since the 1980s, Israel concluded that it would be able to pursue its own economic and political interests without the massive support and mediation of the Diaspora leaders and professionals. Israeli politicians became convinced that they knew all the intricacies of the Jewish Diaspora. This perception, however, has proven tenuous. Among other things, it created mistaken perceptions about the possible reactions of the Jewish Diaspora to events affecting Israel.

On various occasions, Israeli politicians and governments adopted contradictory policies in this sphere. While Israeli policy-makers tried to promote Israeli goals, they tended to disregard the full scope of the needs and problems facing various Diaspora communities, especially concerning identity and loyalty. As also has been noted, this was the background to the Pollard Affair. It is true that this affair was primarily connected to the American Jewish community, to Israeli difficulties in the US, and to the continuous debates concerning the loyalty issue, but it had clear implications for other Jewish communities as well.

Yet other controversial policies of the state that exemplify the ambivalence inherent in its position *vis-à-vis* the Jewish Diaspora were Israeli demands that the emigration of Soviet Jews be exclusively funneled to Israel—a policy that was strongly rejected by the Diaspora, especially in the US. Another example was Israeli-South African relations during the Apartheid period, that to a large extent contradicted the interests and moral positions of Diaspora Jews—again mainly of the American-Jewish community. On the other hand, and for easily understandable reasons, there was an implicit agreement between the Israeli government and Jewish leaders and organizations concerning the immigration of the Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

Another growing problematic issue in Israeli-Diaspora relations has been that of the Israeli political establishment's disregard of the younger and less established leadership that had emerged in the Diaspora and that had developed new ideas and positions regarding the Diaspora and its relations to Israel. One example was that of the young Jews who founded and operated the New Israeli Fund, which has become a significant factor in the sphere of earmarked donations to Israel, and consequently is a role model for other aspiring young Jews. Out of inertia, however, most of the official contacts of Israeli politicians and bureaucrats continued to be conducted with established leadership and professionals in the Diaspora.

In the 1990s, a number of ideas and calls for reform in Israeli-Diaspora relations and in organizational patterns and behavior have emerged. Though no overall radical reform has been implemented, some of these ideas were actually put into practice. Thus, the intention of the established leaders of the American Jewish community to amalgamate fund-raising was accepted; one element of Beilin's proposal for reforms—the *Taglit* project—was launched; and, certain aspects of Elazar's plan for reorganization of the Jewish Agency and for greater efficiency in the way it conducts its affairs was also implemented.

These cumulative processes have led to the present period in Israeli-Diaspora relations. This period can be regarded as an important phase in the *restructuring* of these relations; however, this restructuring has been initiated and implemented mainly by Diaspora Jews and in the Diaspora, rather than by Israeli actors and in Israel. After the second period—that of "trials and transformations"—the Diaspora is strongly emphasizing the need to determine its own goals. As noted, some Israeli politicians, who became involved in Diaspora affairs, like Beilin and Avraham Burg, became aware of the cumulative changes that had occurred and are still occurring in the Diaspora, and they have therefore called for fundamental changes in Israeli-Diaspora relations and in the role of Israeli organizations. It seems, however, that the majority of Israeli politicians have not internalized the full meaning of these changes. In this respect, some of the most problematic and embarrassing issues are the wide gaps that still exist between declarations and actual policies, as well as the contradictions between the various positions, such as that between the call for massive Jewish immigration to Israel, made, for example, by prime minister Sharon, on one hand, and Israeli readiness to ensure the continuity of Jewish communities abroad through modest support for Jewish education in the Diaspora—a policy that has been implemented by the same Sharon government.

Unlike the prevailing situation in this respect in Israel, it seems that, among Diaspora core members, there are larger numbers of those who have accurately assessed the present situation. These individuals and groups have realized that Israel's centrality in the nation and its inability to significantly contribute to the Diaspora's continuity are highly questionable. They have equally realized that the source of any desirable change is and will be in the Diaspora itself, not in Israel, which is deeply engaged in the solution of its own tremendous problems. It means that these core members have very clearly realized that Israel would not be able to cause the cultural rejuvenation of the Diaspora, and to the substantially contribute to the solution of its main demographical, identity and identification problems.

In sum, the main processes occurring now in the Jewish Nation are those of demographic shifts in the various communities; new concentrations of Jews in and within host countries where in the past only relatively few Jews had lived; the ascendance of new social, economic and political forces in both Israel and the Diaspora; and, the emergence of new attitudinal, ideological, and practical behavioral tendencies. All these changes are occurring against the background of profound environmental changes on the global, state, and local levels.

These profound transformations have created eight major issues now facing the Jews in Israel and abroad:

1. An urgent need for a redefinition of Jewish identity and identification. Though the issue of identity and identification in the Jewish case is extremely complex, it has been discussed, but not in a concerted manner nor by the right (not rightist) publics, leaders, and organizations.
2. In view of a growing reciprocal apathy in Israel and the Diaspora, the need for intensifying Jewish education in Israel and the Diaspora has been recognized. As in other spheres, however, the efforts in dealing with this issue have not been focused or effective, and therefore results are meager.
3. Though the "return" of Diaspora Jews and Israelis to Israel is still promulgated, especially by senior Israeli politicians, the position of the Israeli and Diasporic communities is debated and the actual numbers of Jews making *Aliyah* fluctuate. The same also applies to the integration of Jewish immigrants into Israeli social, political, and economic systems.
4. There is a question how Israel and Diaspora communities should be dealing with the variety of reviving, established, prosperous communities, and with communities that face sever troubles.

5. Though the intensity of the recent waves of anti-Semitism, including in what have been regarded as the most liberal democracies, have been somewhat mitigated, the Jewish Diaspora and Israel are engaged in a reexamination of how to treat this recurrent phenomenon.
6. There is a need for a redefinition of the rights and positions of Israelis and those in the Jewish Diaspora with regard to personal restitutions and compensation for Jewish property.
7. It should be determined how to enhance communication and contacts in the Jewish nation as a whole and in Israeli-Diaspora relations in particular.
8. And finally, the question is what the needed structural and organizational reforms are, and how to implement such reforms.

As long as these major questions are not being adequately addressed, the Jewish Diaspora and Israel, as well as their mutual relations, will remain in their present chaotic and ambiguous situation.

Notes

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1. Yossi Shain, "Jewish Kinship at A Crossroads: Lessons for Homelands and Diasporas," *Political Science Quarterly*, 117(2) (2002) 279–309.

2. Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge and New York, 2003).

3. See William Safran's article in this issue.

4. See for example, Gabriel Sheffer, (ed), *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (London, 1986); William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora*, 1 (1991) 83–99; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic; Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA, 1993); John Clifford, "Diaspora," *Current Anthropology*, 9 (1994) 302–38; Gerard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau, *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas* (New York, 1995); Khachig Tololyan, "Rethinking Diasporas: Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment," *Diaspora*, 5 (1996) 3–36; Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas* (London, 1997); Steven Vertovec, and Robin Cohen (eds), *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism* (Cheltenham, UK, 1999); Gabriel Sheffer, *At Home Abroad: Diaspora Politics* (Cambridge, UK, 2003).

5. Sheffer, *At Home Abroad*.

6. For similar but non-identical "profiles," see Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies; Chaliand and Rageau, *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas*, *xiv–xvii*; Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, 24–6; Sheffer, *At Home Abroad*.

7. Arnold Eisen, *Galut* (Bloomington, IN, 1986); Eliezer Don Yehiya, "Galut in Zionist Ideology and in Israeli Society," Eliezer Don Yehiya (ed), *Israel and Diaspora Jewry* (Ramat-Gan, Isr, 1991) 219–57; John Clifford, Routes: *Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, UK, 1997); Lester Grabbe (ed), *Leading Captivity Captive: "The Exile" as History and Ideology* (Sheffield, UK, 1998); Howard Wettstein, "Coming to Terms with Exile," Howard Wettstein (ed), *Diaporas and Exile* (Berkeley, CA, 2002) 47–59.

8. Steven Gold, "Israelis in the US," *The Jewish Yearbook 1996* (New York, 1996), 51–101; Steven Gold, "Transnationalism and Vocabularies of Motive in International Migration: The Case of Israelis in the US," *Sociological Perspectives*, 40(3) (1997) 409–27; Gabriel Sheffer, "The Israeli Diaspora," *The Jewish Yearbook* (London, 1998).

9. For such a view see, e.g., S. Ilan Troen, and Dinah Dash Moore, *Divergent Jewish Cultures: Israel and America* (Yale, 2002).

10. Steven Cohen, *Religious Stability and Ethnic Decline: Emerging Patterns of Jewish Identity in the US* (New York, 1998).

11. See for example, Yossi Shain, Jewish Kinship at A Crossroads: Lessons for Homelands and Diasporas," *Political Science Quarterly*, 117(2) (2002) 279–309

12. See for example, Brend Baumgartel and Adrian Favell (eds), *New Xenophobia in Europe* (London, 1995); Robert Gibson, *The Growth of Anti-Immigrant Parties in Western Europe* (Lewison, NY, 2002).

13. See, e.g., Daniel Elazar, *Community and Polity. The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry* (Philadelphia, PA, 1995); Daniel Elazar, "Jewish Communal Structures around the World," Journal of Jewish Communal Service, 74 (2/3) (1997/1998) 120–131.

14. Linda Basch, Nina Glick, and Christina Szanton Blanc, eds. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-State,* (New York, 1994).

15. On the distinction between transnational and trans-state relations, see William Miles and Gabriel Sheffer, "Francophone and Zionism: A Comparative Study in Transnationalism and Trans-statism," *Diaspora*, 7 (1998) 119–48.

16. Michael Dahan and Gabriel Sheffer, "Ethnic Groups and Distance Shrinking Communication Technologies," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 7(1) (2001) 85–107.

17. One of these is Alan Dershowitz, *The Vanishing American Jew* (Boston, MA, 1997).

18. On these two categories of diasporas, see Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*.

19. Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics.*

20. Bernard Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora: The Jews in Europe Since 1945* (Cambridge, MA, 1996).

21. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1983).

22. After a relatively long period when this view was out of fashion, it has recently been gaining more adherents. For an interesting formulation of this approach, see John Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity* (New York, 1991).

23. *cf.* Safran's argument in his article in this issue.

24. Here I present a different angle of this issue than that presented by Safran in his article in this issue.

25. On the situation in the American Jewish diaspora, see Daniel Elazar, *Community and Polity. The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry* (Philadelphia, 1995); Daniel Elazar, "Jewish Communal Structures Around the World," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 74 (n.2/3) (1997/98) 120–131; and Yearbooks of the American and British communities, which include substantial information on Jewish Diaspora organizations.

26. P. R. Kumarswamy, "The Politics of Pardon: Israel and Jonathan Pollard," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 18(3) 1996 17–35.

27. For a more elaborate discussion on this issue, see Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics*.

28. These are dealt with in much greater detail in the article by Sergio DellaPergola, Uzi Rebhun, and Mark Tolts in this issue.

29. See, e.g., Sergio DellaPergola, *World Jewry Beyond 2000: The Demographic Prospects* (Oxford, 1999); The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, *Between Thriving and Decline: The Jewish People, 2004, Annual Assessment 1*, Executive Report: Project Heads: Sergio DellaPergola and Amos. Gilboa (Jerusalem, 2004).

30. Yair Sheleg, "[Jews'] Decrease Involvement, Do not Intend to Visit [Israel]," *Ha'aretz*, 30 January 2003.

31. See, e,g., Charles. Liebman, *Pressure without Sanction* (NJ, 1977); Howard Sachar, *Diaspora: An Inquiry into the Contemporary Jewish World* (New York, 1985); D. Vital, *The Future of the Jews* (Cambridge, MA, 1990); Yehuda Reinharz, Yossef Shalmon and Gideon Shimoni (eds), *Nationalism and Jewish Politics. New Perspectives* (Jerusalem, 1996); Daniel Elazar (ed), *Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and Its Contemporary Uses* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1996); S. Ilan Troen (ed), *Jewish Centers and Peripheries* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1999); Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Yosef Gorny and Yaacov Ro'i (eds), *Contemporary Jewries: Convergence and Divergence* (Leiden, 2003).

32. Shlomit Levi and Louis Guttman, *Report* (Jerusalem, 1987); Barry Kosmin, *Highlights of the CJP 1990 National Jewish Population Survey* (New York, 1991); Shlomi Levi, Hanna Levinsohn and Elihu Katz, *Beliefs, Observations and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews* (Jerusalem, 1993).

33. Levi and Guttman, *Report*; Levi, Levinsohn and Katz, *Beliefs, Observations and Social Interaction*.

34. Levi, Levinsohn and Katz, *Beliefs, Observations and Social Interaction*.

35. Steven Cohen, "Jews' Attitudes vis-à-vis Israel and Israelis," *Tefutzut Israel*, 1, spring, 1984 [Hebrew].

36. Levi and Guttman, *Report*.

37. Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *From Yishuv to State* (Tel-Aviv, 1977) [Hebrew].

38. See, e.g., Eliyahu Salpeter, "The New Leadership," *Ha'aretz*, 12 July 1997.

39. See Yossi Beilin, *On Unity and Continuity: A New Framework for Jewish Life in Israel and the Diaspora* (Jerusalem, 2002).

40. Alan Dowty, *The Jewish State a Century Later* (Berkeley, CA, 1998).

41. Asher Arian, *Elections in Israel* (New York, 1991); Abraham Diskin, *Elections and Voters in Israel* (New York, 1991); Shevah Weiss, *The Upheaval* (Tel-Aviv, 1979) [Hebrew]; Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (Oxford, 1991).