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## American Jewry Confronts the Twenty-First Century

American Jewry, like the America of which it is a component, in the years following World War II perceived itself as poised to undertake global responsibilities. By far the largest community in world Jewry, untouched by the horrors of the Holocaust, and closely identified with the world's leading superpower, American Jewry prepared itself to undertake relief and reconstruction work, to bury longstanding divisiveness over Zionism, and to tend to its own internal needs of preserving Jewish security and enhancing Jewish vitality.

Generally, American Jews were proud of their position within American society, particularly their intellectual influence. One of the reasons that Will Herberg's 1955 study, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, resonated so well among Jews was its celebration of the fact that Jews, comprising less than 3 percent of the overall population in America, exercised one-third of the religious influence in the country. To be sure, few read or remembered Herberg's concluding jeremiad—that in becoming so much a part of American society, the distinctive voice of Judaism had become too bland to have much of an impact.<sup>1</sup>

Specifically, six major assumptions dominated American Jewish self-understanding in the immediate postwar period:

First, Jews defined their identity through affiliation with their synagogue. Close to two-thirds of American Jews paid synagogue dues, primarily to Conservative and Reform temples. Orthodoxy was regarded as weak and essentially an expression of nostalgia for a bygone world. In joining synagogues, Jews were not necessarily becoming more religiously observant. Instead they were defining the synagogue as the central Jewish address. Much as America had become a nation of churchgoers, the Jews, enjoying the benefits of postwar suburban affluence, happily engaged a project of synagogue growth and construction.

Second, news of the Holocaust had made anti-Semitism disreputable within American society. Where the wartime years had witnessed increased anti-Semitism, the postwar years saw its rapid decline. At a minimum, survey respondents consistently repudiated sentiments of anti-Semitism. At a maximum, Jews were enjoying unprecedented security in an America eager to prove itself receptive of and welcoming to Jews.

To be sure, many, if not most Jews, rejected this hypothesis. They maintained that anti-Semitism remained rife in American society, but that it now lurked

beneath the surface. Whether those sentiments were a further illustration of Abba Eban's doctrine that the Jews are the only people unwilling to accept good news or whether it represented a realistic foreboding of American Jewry would be tested time and again over the course of the postwar decades.

Third, American Jewry attained its newfound predominance almost precisely at the moment of the birth of Israel and the return of the Jews to sovereignty and statehood for the first time in two thousand years. The relationship between these two Jewish communities would be initially distant, become especially intensive in the 1960s–1970s, and then undergo serious transformation in the 1980s. Clearly American Jews realized that in the birth of Israel they had a new agenda item—cultivating relations between their government in Washington and the Israeli government in Jerusalem.

Fourth, these two seminal events—the Holocaust and the birth of Israel—as the dominant events of contemporary Jewish history, became the symbols of postwar American Jewish life. Especially after 1967 these two symbols in effect became the civil religion of American Jews. Rabbis might lament the relative absence of God-talk among Jews, but few could deny the power that Holocaust memory and the image of the self-reliant Jewish state held in formulating postwar American Jewish identity.

Fifth, in terms of expectations of Jewish continuity, American Jews assumed that Jews would continue to marry other Jews. Endogamy remained normative, and the few studies of intermarriage that existed suggested that intermarriage rates remained at historic lows. Within individual Jewish families intermarriage may have connoted a personal tragedy, but the phenomenon itself seemingly posed little threat to the collective Jewish future.

Less noticeable but at least as important was the expectation that Jewish families would have three or more children representing a net gain in Jewish population growth. The postwar years were the years of the baby boom in America, and the perception was that Jewish families shared in the overall fertility patterns of population growth.<sup>2</sup> As a result, American Jewry appeared to many to be on the cusp of numerical expansion, benefiting both from a positive birthrate and the prospect of continuing immigration, especially of Holocaust survivors.

Last, American Jews assumed that Jewish education formed the key to the collective Jewish future. Whereas in the prewar years probably only half of American Jews received any form of Jewish education, by the postwar years Jewish education in some form, usually in the pre-*bar* or *bat mitzvah* (coming-of-age ceremony) years had become normative. What type of Jewish education would work would become a contentious issue, but few disputed the value of Jewish education per se as key to Jewish continuity.

These assumptions need to be traced historically. Initially formulated in the 1950s, they evolved in the 1960s and 1970s into a crescendo of optimism about the Jewish future by the 1980s. In the 1990s, these assumptions were sorely tested, and in the first decade of the twenty-first century in some cases had been

shattered. To understand American Jewry's self-perception as it confronted the challenges of the twenty-first century, then, the paradigms by which American Jews perceive themselves require revisiting and in some cases revision.

### **Concerns of the 1950s**

The 1950s do represent a useful point of departure. American Jewry at the time numbered approximately five million out of a total American population of 150 million. In 1950, American Jewry comprised both the largest Jewish community anywhere in the world and the highest percentage of the general population that Jews enjoyed anywhere in the Diaspora.

Moreover, by historical standards, Jews appeared to be doing very well. Affiliation rates with synagogues exceeded 60 percent. Conversely, intermarriage rates stood at a relatively negligible 6 percent. Actual attendance at synagogues was relatively weak. Where 40 percent of Protestants in America attended church on a weekly basis as did almost three-quarters of Catholics, only 18 percent of Jews did so, suggesting that American Jews felt it important to belong but less necessary to participate actively. The synagogues they were joining were largely Conservative and Reform—both paralleling the rise of Jewish suburbia with the synagogue rather than the urban neighborhood serving as central Jewish address and signaling the gradual eclipse and future disappearance of Orthodoxy in American Jewish life. Almost six hundred new synagogues opened their doors in the 1950s, primarily Conservative and Reform.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, given the political atmosphere of the Cold War, Americans asked Jews to join in distinguishing Western culture from “Godless communism.”<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding weak regular attendance at synagogues, so astute an observer of the Jewish scene as Herberg confidently predicted a religious revival among American Jews. Returning GIs generally wanted more religion rather than less—another indication of the adage that there are no atheists in foxholes—even if the religion they desired was noticeably devoid of theological ferment. More generally, Herberg perceived America as a triple melting pot in which Jews were not assimilating into America generally, but rather joining the American mainstream by identifying with one of its three major faiths. Religion in effect gave voice to feelings of ethnicity. Jews were by no means necessarily more religious, but to affirm membership within a major faith of America constituted a critical component of their identity as Americans. President Eisenhower stated explicitly the centrality of religion in America by claiming that “our government has no sense unless it is founded on a deeply-felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is.”<sup>5</sup>

American Jews, therefore, could be among the most religious and secular of Americans at the same time. To be sure, Herberg uttered some prophetic cautions about these trends. Jews quickly embraced his model of the triple melting pot

because it celebrated Judaism as one of America's three primary faiths. Generally, however, they ignored Herberg's concluding twenty pages in which he warned that religion in America had become excessively man-centered with little focus on faith. Herberg questioned what had become of the prophetic image and message—the willingness to challenge the status quo rather than affirm it. Absent this distinctive prophetic stance, Herberg argued that the centrality of religion to American society mattered little because the message of these three faiths had become simply too bland to make much of a difference.<sup>6</sup>

For Jews specifically, Herberg warned of the limits of liberal theology. For Judaism to be meaningful, he argued, it needed to affirm much more than good American values. Herberg asked what was the distinctive message of Judaism that would challenge American culture and mores. Liberal theology in his view had eliminated the Divine encounter. Herberg sought to restore that sense of Divine encounter by translating for American audiences the theologies of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig with their emphases on Divine revelation to human beings.<sup>7</sup> Formerly a Marxist, by the 1950s Herberg had become very much a Jewish religious thinker and a critic of the tendency of American Jews to identify with all good things American. Much as Herberg had provided American Jews with validation of their status as Americans, and his book had become one of the few bestselling works on religion in 1950s America, few took to heart his warnings that absent Jewish distinctiveness there might be little worth preserving about American Judaism.

Yet even as Jews warmed to Herberg's celebration of the place of Jews in American culture, they remained quite skeptical of the most surprising trend of the 1950s—the consistent decline of anti-Semitism within American society. In 1964, a conference on anti-Semitism sponsored by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) documented the retreat of anti-Semitic opinion among Americans generally since the conclusion of World War II.<sup>8</sup> Beyond the survey data, which at times was derided as providing politically correct responses to questions, several test cases of potential anti-Semitism suggested how relatively weak it had become in American political culture.

The Rosenberg case provided one such example. The conviction of two Jews on charges of espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union gave rise to enormous fears of an anti-Semitic backlash. Occurring at the height of the Cold War, the trial featured a Jewish judge, a Jewish attorney, and the Rosenbergs themselves whose espionage network included a number of fellow Jews. Jewish organizations made great efforts to distance themselves from the Rosenbergs, some going so far as to advocate capital punishment (which even as outspoken an anticommunist as FBI director J. Edgar Hoover opposed in the case of Ethel Rosenberg). By contrast, communist sympathizers and fellow travelers had a field day in depicting the Rosenberg case as an example of American anti-Semitism even while blithely ignoring the very real anti-Semitism evident in the Czechoslovakian Slansky trials that occurred at approximately the same time.<sup>9</sup>

Seen retrospectively, the Rosenbergs were convicted fairly and were in fact true believers in their cause. Remarkably, however, their case was accompanied by a notable dearth of anti-Semitism. Jewish organizations maintained that their outspoken stance against the Rosenbergs had prevented an anti-Semitic backlash. But few could deny that Americans generally had reacted with fairness. They viewed the Rosenbergs and their crime as appalling, but they did not extend the guilt of the Rosenbergs to American Jews generally.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps equally noteworthy was the McCarthy phenomenon of the 1950s. Senator Joseph McCarthy clearly was a demagogue who embodied the worst features of American political culture. Jews naturally feared McCarthy because he embodied so many of the attributes usually associated with anti-Semitism—conspiratorial thinking, rabid anticommunism, resentment of the eastern establishment, especially the intellectuals, and so on. The Anti-Defamation League, to be sure only in 1956, retrospectively charged that McCarthy was “effectively an anti-Semite.”<sup>11</sup>

Without question McCarthy was both reckless and malicious—willing to destroy lives and careers without evidence. However, he appears to be innocent of the charge of anti-Semitism. Even so fierce a critic of McCarthy as historian David Oshinsky exonerates him of the charge, noting that the senator praised Israel, underscored Soviet anti-Semitism, and even urged the retention of Hebrew-language programs within the United States Information Agency. Perhaps mindful of the fact that many would suspect him of anti-Semitism and perhaps realizing how disreputable anti-Semitism had become, McCarthy employed two Jewish attorneys on his staff, Roy Cohn and David Schine.<sup>12</sup>

Somewhat more tangential to Jewish consciousness in the 1950s was the place of Israel as a Jewish state. To be sure, Jewish leaders understood that helping Israel develop and safeguarding its security constituted vital concerns for the American Jewish community. The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations was created in 1954 so as to provide a unified voice in support of Israel in addressing the administration in Washington and thereby avoid the divisiveness among Jewish organizations, which was understood as undermining the case for rescue of Jews in the 1930s and 1940s. Similarly, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) was created that same year to lobby Congress on Israel’s behalf. In 1950, the AJC secured the Ben-Gurion-Blaustein Agreement pledging support for Israel coupled with promises to refrain from interfering in each other’s internal concerns, whether they be those of American Jewry or Israel. For the historically non-Zionist AJC to endorse Israel connoted the Jewish state’s acceptance by virtually all sectors of American Jewry. Already the Reform movement had repudiated its anti-Zionist past, and the American Council for Judaism found itself almost completely marginalized in American Jewish public life.<sup>13</sup>

Surprisingly, however, only occasionally did Israel enter the consciousness of American Jews. Few Jews had actually visited Israel. Study programs within

Israel touched only a tiny fraction of Jewish young people. Only rarely did Israel enter the curriculum of Jewish schools or the liturgy of synagogues. Sadly, the narrative of the return of the Jews to sovereignty and statehood—perhaps the most inspiring of Jewish stories of the past two thousand years—had failed to penetrate Jewish self-understanding in the 1950s. It was this absence of attachment to Israel coupled with the apparent decline of Orthodoxy that appeared to be the primary weak links in the otherwise optimistic portrait of American Jewry in the 1950s.

### **The Optimistic 1960s**

Many of the trends of the 1950s continued into the 1960s albeit with significant modifications. Affiliation rates continued to exceed 60 percent. By 1965, the number of Conservative synagogues had risen to 800 and the number of Reform to 656, compared to 250 and 300, respectively, in 1945.<sup>14</sup> The baby boom persisted until 1964 but then came to an abrupt halt. Over time Jewish birthrates would fall consistently below replacement level. In the post-baby boom era, a total population in excess of five million American Jews could be maintained only via incipient immigration from abroad, primarily the Soviet Union.

Few, however, were then prepared to worry about declining birthrates. By contrast, intermarriage had begun its path to becoming a dominant Jewish communal concern. In 1964, sociologists Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in their landmark study *Beyond the Melting Pot*, described Jews as “highly endogamous.”<sup>15</sup> Intermarriage rates themselves remained relatively modest but had increased to 17 percent by the mid-1960s. Marshall Sklare, dean of American Jewish sociologists, was perhaps the first to sound the alarm that although the overall intermarriage rate remained fairly low, outside the major urban concentrations of Jews intermarriage had become a clear and present danger.<sup>16</sup> A widely cited article titled “The Vanishing American Jew,” published in the popular magazine *Look*, sounded a note of panic.<sup>17</sup> To be sure, in the decades since that publication, historians have often noted that *Look* magazine has since vanished twice and the Jews are still here!

But the most pronounced change in the patterns of American Jewish life in the 1960s concerned the intensification of relations between American Jewry and Israel. In many ways the month of May 1967 cemented bonds between the two communities. Daily threats to eliminate the Jews accompanied by the silence of the churches and the apparent neutrality of the liberal powers reawakened all the memories of the Holocaust years and convinced many that Jews could rely only on one another. By contrast, Israel’s June victory indicated that today the Jewish people was different—able to protect itself and no longer dependent on gentile goodwill.<sup>18</sup>

For American Jews, Israel post-1967 became a major focal point of attention and a source of pride in Jewish achievement. Study programs in Israel for post-

high school and college students proliferated—either at the Hebrew University or in various Israeli yeshivot. Arthur Hertzberg, the noted historian and rabbi, argued in *Commentary* that the Six-Day War had changed the map of Israel-Diaspora relations in profound and irrevocable ways.<sup>19</sup> Visits to Israel, once rare, now became an exciting opportunity that increasingly Jews would seize.

Last, notwithstanding Jewish forebodings, anti-Semitism, although never disappearing, appeared quite marginal to American society. By the 1960s quotas for Jews in American universities had virtually disappeared. The 1968 presidential campaign of George Wallace, an arch-exponent of racial segregation, was remarkably free of anti-Semitism. Jews naturally assumed that someone like Wallace must despise Jews. Indeed, less than 2 percent of Jews gave him their votes. Yet Wallace and his campaign steered clear of anti-Semitism, a sure sign of its marginality in mainstream American politics.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Jews feared an anti-Semitic backlash in light of the prominence of Jews within the student New Left.<sup>21</sup> Groups such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Weathermen in fact contained many Jews in leadership positions and by the close of the 1960s had become perversely destructive. Remarkably, however, no anti-Semitic backlash ensued.

What did rightly concern Jews were relations in the longstanding civil rights coalition of blacks and Jews. The 1968 New York City schoolteachers strike was a case in point, inflaming tensions and giving voice to anti-Semitic sentiment within the black community. Jewish pride in fighting for the civil rights of blacks began eliciting charges of paternalism. Jews responded by evoking the myth of a golden age of black-Jewish relations even as they began to confront the reality that forces of discord existed within both communities.<sup>22</sup>

Thus by the end of the 1960s Jews remained generally optimistic in their self-assessment even as they were giving expression to incipient forebodings. Israel's 1967 triumph had awakened Jewish identity among many who had been previously silent and evoked pride among Jews everywhere. The Soviet Jewry movement, one of the great foreign policy successes in twentieth-century Jewish history, in some respects was inspired by new-found Jewish pride and assertiveness post-1967.<sup>23</sup> Vatican II augured a new era of Jewish-Christian understanding. Jewish education appeared poised for new successes and Jewish day schools now existed in virtually every community with at least 7,500 Jews. Where as recently as the 1940s Jewish day schools barely existed outside of the major metropolitan centers, by the 1960s they enrolled about 10 percent of all Jews receiving some form of Jewish education. Last, although Jews could never ignore anti-Semitism, their overall position in American society continued to appear stable and secure.

Yet Jews also did not lack for worries. Inter-marriage appeared a looming danger. The much-heralded black-Jewish alliance appeared to be fraying. Some were even beginning to argue that absent a critical mass of Jews interested in leading a creative and intensive Jewish life, efforts at Jewish defense at most were ultimately transitory in significance. Yet Jews confronted these new challenges

with an optimistic and “can do” mentality perhaps best captured in the ethos of the popular 1960s television program *Star Trek*, which attained cultlike status in subsequent decades. *Star Trek* portrayed a universe without Jews but one in which Jewish ideas, optimism, faith in science and technology, and mutual tolerance between races prevailed. That ethos of the *Star Trek* “Federation” soon translated into the mood and mindset of Jewish federation leaders of the 1970s.

### **The Growth of the Federations**

Previously understood primarily as a fundraising and social service arm of the Jewish community, federations grew exponentially in significance in the decades post-1967. Providing economic assistance to Israel eclipsed Jewish social service agencies as prime purpose and target of federation fundraising. In turn, as Israel increasingly assumed center stage on the Jewish communal agenda, federations became the central address for local Jewish communities. On the local level, federations now stood alongside synagogues as the most critical grassroots Jewish institutions.

Moreover, federations broadened their agendas locally, increasingly funding Jewish educational institutions, including day schools. In the 1950s, local Jewish philanthropists in Boston had rejected the request of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, dean of American Orthodoxy, for a modest grant of \$40,000 to purchase a building for his day school.<sup>24</sup> By the 1970s, the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston was partially funding, on a per-student basis, all day schools in the Boston area. Similarly, for local planning purposes, federations assumed responsibility for conducting demographic studies of local Jewish communities. Last, the growing importance of federations transformed the major gathering of North American federation activists, the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, today known as Jewish Federations of North America, into the dominant event on the annual Jewish calendar.

To be sure, federation predominance in Jewish communal affairs meant leadership by consensus, generally avoiding controversial stands. Thus, Yehuda Rosenman, long-term Jewish communal affairs director for the AJC, in 1980 criticized federations as “ideologically bland.”<sup>25</sup> For example, Rosenman pointed to the growth of mixed marriage, perhaps the most controversial item on the Jewish agenda, as an issue that federations had studiously avoided lest it give offense to key constituencies on different sides of the issue.

Although acknowledging these limitations, federation leaders did strive to enhance the Judaic content of federation programming. Jonathan Woocher, then a professor of Jewish communal studies at Brandeis University, described federation leaders as practicing a “civic Judaism” of *tzedakah* (charitable giving), Jewish peoplehood, *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), support for Israel, Judaic study, Holocaust memory, and affirmation of American culture as a value in itself.

Rabbis often did decry “civic Judaism” as “checkbook Judaism” in which God was strangely absent. Woocher and others, however, praised civic Judaism both as a pronounced improvement in the Judaic culture of federations and as a practical ideology for Jewish survival.<sup>26</sup>

In turn, the federations began looking to Jewish religious leaders to provide Judaic content for their meetings and to serve as spiritual guides. The critic and author Irving Howe, in fact, had proclaimed an elegy for secular Jewish identity in his bestselling 1976 book *World of Our Fathers*. Howe challenged American Jewry to remember a glorious secular Jewish culture even as he held out little hope for a future revival of it.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, founder and president of CLAL (the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership), emerged in the 1970s as unofficial rabbi of Jewish federations. Few had done more than Greenberg to cement Holocaust memory into Jewish historical consciousness. He praised federations as practicing a “holy secularity”—that is, demonstrating that the very secular work federations were performing on behalf of the Jewish people and humanity generally represented the “*kedushah*” or holiness of Jewish spirituality. Greenberg’s personal and spiritual impact on federation leaders was profound, inspiring the involvement of Jewish leaders in virtually every federation in ongoing Jewish study and sensitizing them to the critical importance of Jewish education as key to the Jewish future.<sup>28</sup>

The twin symbols of Holocaust and Israel became the dominant banners of federation activities and served as calls to arms for unstinting sacrifice on behalf of the Jewish people. The Saturday-evening *havdalah* ritual, marking the end of Shabbat, became a spiritual banner for Jewish unity. The culture of the annual General Assembly was greatly intensified Jewishly, featuring kosher meals, a plethora of Shabbat *minyanim* (prayer groups) representing all streams of Judaism, and noted scholars-in-residence, who brought the fruits of Jewish academic scholarship into Jewish communal discussion.

Some criticized these developments as public Jewish expressions that were in effect replacing the Jewishness of the home—an ironic inversion of the nineteenth-century slogan “Be a Jew at home and a man in the street.” Frequently the very same individuals who so vigorously asserted their Jewish commitments in Washington and the American public square generally lacked the language to explain to their own children in the privacy of their own homes why leading a Jewish life might be important. Few could deny, however, that federations had become the dominant institutions of Jewish life and, in the process, had enhanced significantly the Jewish quotient and texture of Jewish communal life.

### **The 1970s: Continuing Optimism**

The 1970s also presented American Jewry with a clear-cut laboratory to test the thesis of declining anti-Semitism. The 1973 oil embargo, accompanied by

a virtually overnight tripling of the price of gasoline alongside long lines at the pumps to purchase limited supplies, was designed to punish America for its support of Israel. Gratifyingly, however, Americans did not respond with anti-Israel or anti-Semitic sentiment. Beyond a few bumper stickers—widely reported but rarely actually seen—Americans blamed the oil crisis on the OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) monopoly rather than on Jews advocating for American support for Israel.

On the more private level, however, American Jewry was beginning to face a crisis of continuity. The Council of Jewish Federations in 1970 had sponsored the first national study of American Jewry. This study reported that the mixed marriage rate had increased to 31 percent, nearly doubling the rate of the previous decade. Some local communities were in fact reporting rates that were much higher, usually owing to the small number of Jews in the community that limited the pool of available Jewish dating partners.<sup>29</sup>

Although these findings caused considerable hand-wringing, Jewish leaders did believe they had the appropriate response. In a landmark address to the Reform movement, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (today the Union for Reform Judaism), urged revision of the age-old Jewish reluctance to seek converts and return to the Talmudic support for proselytizing of potential converts to Judaism. Schindler hoped to convert the “unchurched.”<sup>30</sup> In practice his proposals operated primarily to encourage the conversion of the non-Jewish partner in mixed marriages. American Jews remained uncomfortable with proselytizing beyond the parameters of mixed marriage.<sup>31</sup> Surprisingly, Conservative and even Orthodox leaders, notably Rabbi Soloveitchik, tended to agree on the importance of conversion to Judaism so as to create a wholly Jewish home albeit insisting that conversions be *halachic* (according to Jewish law).<sup>32</sup> Quickly the norm became accepted that in cases of mixed marriage the single best outcome was the conversion to Judaism of the non-Jewish spouse.

Initial results were encouraging. Although estimates varied, some reported that as many as one-third of non-Jewish partners in mixed marriages were converting to Judaism.<sup>33</sup> Conversely, conventional wisdom held that few Jews were converting to Christianity—if anything there was greater concern about Jews converting to eastern faiths such as Buddhism. Studies by the AJC reported that converts to Judaism were enhancing Jewish identity within the home, a finding that led the AJC’s director of research, Milton Himmelfarb, to quip, “Our imports [are] better than our exports.”<sup>34</sup> Hopefully, Jewish leaders argued, if the trend toward conversion to Judaism could be strengthened, what appeared to be a loss to the Jewish people could be transformed into a net gain. If nothing else, this optimistic forecast provided considerable solace to Jewish parents who expressed remorse and guilt over the intermarriage of their progeny.

Thus by the close of the 1970s the optimism of Jewish leaders appeared to be holding. Israel had survived the existential threat posed by the 1973 Yom

Kippur War, and American Jewish leaders prided themselves on their role in advocating successfully for American military assistance to Israel during the course of the war itself. By 1979 Egypt, the leading Arab nation, had signed a formal peace treaty with Israel, and ambassadors of the two countries had taken up residence in Tel Aviv and Cairo, respectively. Jewish public life appeared more overtly Jewish, causing many to reflect on how the community had changed from the days when its agenda was primarily to help immigrant Jews become Americans. Inter-marriage, to be sure, had become a real and disturbing phenomenon, but Jewish leaders understood conversion as a positive vehicle to transform crisis into opportunity. In turn, the guarded optimism about the Jewish future prevalent in the 1970s became far more heady and unrestrained in the 1980s.

### **The 1980s: Coexisting Optimism and Pessimism**

By the mid-1980s widespread, albeit by no means unchallenged, optimism prevailed concerning the Jewish future in America. Again, a single book seemingly captured the communal ethos and mood even as it gave rise to considerable debate. In a *tour d'horizon* of Jewish life inviting comparison to Alexis de Tocqueville's survey of America in the 1830s, Charles Silberman, a noted journalist and sociologist, discovered no crisis in American Jewry but rather much to celebrate. In Silberman's view, anti-Semitism continued to decline as Jews were welcome in all corners of American society including the upper corporate suite. Beyond isolated pockets of Jewish poverty, Jews were generally quite comfortable and economically successful. Nor did Silberman see much danger in low birthrates and high rates of mixed marriage. He argued that Jewish women still intended to have two children, just later in life. As for mixed marriage, he calculated the overall rate at 28 percent—somewhat high but still manageable. Most significantly, he argued that conversion to Judaism would result in a 40 percent gain for the Jewish community in population numbers.<sup>35</sup>

Although some disputed Silberman's reading of the demographic data, most acknowledged that a perspective that celebrated Jewish renewal rather than bemoaned erosion possessed considerable merit. Politically, AIPAC had become one of the most widely admired lobbies on the Washington scene, suggesting that Jews had learned to avail themselves of the unprecedented leeway America provided for exercising collective minority politics. Similarly, the Soviet Jewry movement could be counted as one of the great success stories of Jewish foreign policy in the twentieth century. Economically, the emergence of Jewish foundations suggested that leading Jewish philanthropists were prepared to devote the resources necessary to sustain Jewish life. Culturally, academic Jewish scholarship had become one of the treasures of American universities thereby legitimizing the study of Judaic civilization as part of American elite culture. In

1960, academic Jewish studies had been present on only a handful of American campuses. By the 1980s there was hardly a university of note that did not house an impressive department of academic Jewish studies.

Jewish feminism also constituted a critical aspect of this era of Jewish empowerment. By the 1980s the Conservative movement had accepted the ordination of women as religiously and morally correct much as the Reform movement had done in the 1970s. Even within the precincts of Orthodoxy one encountered women's prayer groups and advanced study circles notwithstanding considerable opposition to at least the former by leading Talmudic authorities. To the observer of Jewish life, the fact that women were demanding increased rather than decreased responsibilities within religious life argued for Jewish renewal and renaissance rather than decline.<sup>36</sup>

Last, and strangely ignored by Silberman, was the rise of Jewish day schools providing intensive Judaic and general education within every community across the country. Once perceived as an option for Orthodox Jews alone, by the 1980s day schools were operating within each of the religious movements and held out the promise of a committed and Judaically literate leadership for the future. Within a generation the number of day school students nationwide had increased from fifty thousand in 1960 to over one hundred thousand in 1985—a growth that took place long after the baby boom had faded.<sup>37</sup> Significantly, by the 1980s the major complaint concerning day school education had become less about the quality of education provided than about the capacity of middle-class parents to afford it.

In effect the portrait of American Jewry in the 1980s painted by Silberman suggested a community in which Jews were becoming far more Jewishly identified than their parents or grandparents ever might have imagined. This story of Jewish renewal did present tangible evidence on its behalf and found in Silberman its narrator.

Missing from the narrative, however, was the story of assimilation and erosion. Two groupings in particular challenged Silberman's overoptimistic portrait: Orthodox Jews and Zionists. Both argued that assimilation was a far more powerful factor affecting the Jewish future than Silberman had suggested. Inter-marriage was more pervasive than he reported, and the fact that Jewish women said they wanted two children did not mean they actually would have them given delayed marriage and the heavy pressures of career.

Thus, Arthur Hertzberg, for one, noted that Silberman had omitted completely the mixed marriage rate in Los Angeles, the second largest Jewish community in the country, and one that had reported a mixed marriage rate of 39 percent.<sup>38</sup> Hertzberg agreed that the 1980s had brought about an era in which Jews increasingly were taking responsibility for their destiny. But he argued that only a religious revival, which he doubted would occur, ultimately could secure and sustain the Jewish future in America.<sup>39</sup>

## **The Impact of the 1990 NJPS**

Many of these forebodings were sharply confirmed by the early 1990s. In 1991, the Council of Jewish Federations released the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), the single most comprehensive survey of American Jewry ever conducted. The study reported a dual message: Jews were doing extremely well as Americans, much less so as Jews. This dual narrative of external success accompanied by internal weakness failed to penetrate public Jewish consciousness. Instead what everyone remembered about the 1990 NJPS was a single set of statistics: 52 percent of Jews who had married within the previous five years had married non-Jews, and only 5 percent of gentile spouses had converted to Judaism. Only 28 percent of children of mixed marriages were being raised exclusively within the Jewish faith.<sup>40</sup>

It was these data that shocked the Jewish community and inaugurated the crisis of Jewish continuity. The findings implied that Jews were as likely to marry a gentile as a Jew and that the faith in conversion as answer to mixed marriage was hardly well grounded. If children were being raised outside the Jewish faith, hopes for realizing Jewish grandchildren were indeed in peril.

To be sure, some challenged these findings. The actual intermarriage rate apparently lay below 50 percent, a fact that provided some psychological comfort that more Jews were marrying Jews than gentiles. Others noted that the study should not be interpreted globally but needed to be contextualized within different segments of the Jewish community. When viewed segmentally, some Jews were most unlikely to choose gentile spouses; others overwhelmingly so. Much depended on geographic locale, size of the local Jewish community, and relative degrees of intensity and richness of Jewish life. New York City, for example, reported mixed marriage rates at or below 25 percent.<sup>41</sup>

These nuances, however, could not mitigate the report's devastating impact. The heady optimism about the Jewish future so prevalent in the 1980s was now called seriously into question. Jewish leaders convened conferences and task forces to determine actions and policies, or, as some cynics noted, to search for a magic bullet that would secure Jewish continuity.

Quick fixes, however, were not to be found because the problem of assimilation ran much deeper than supposed. For one thing, Jewish birthrates had fallen below replacement level. The total Jewish population stood at 5.5 million where in 1950 it had been five million. By contrast, the general American population numbering 150 million in 1950 had nearly doubled in the ensuing forty years. Or, as one wag quipped in response to the comment of a Christian minister that God does not hear the prayer of a Jew, the real story may be that there were simply not many Jews praying to begin with.

Intermarriage, however, ignited the sharpest debate over communal policy within the community. Some argued that intermarriage was now inevitable in American society, efforts at its prevention were futile at best and harmful at

worst, and that resources now needed to be directed at outreach to mixed married couples to enable them to draw closer to Jewish life. Others questioned the effects of abandoning efforts to encourage endogamy and conversion so as to avoid giving offense to mixed married couples. Still others questioned the effectiveness of outreach to those whose Jewish connections were so tenuous in any case.<sup>42</sup>

A third area of contention concerned the relationship with Israel. At most, only a third of American Jewry—notwithstanding American Jewish affluence—had ever visited Israel at all, roughly half the rate of Jews in other English-speaking Diasporas such as Britain or Canada.<sup>43</sup> Declining interest in and attachment to Israel seemingly was a reflection of growing distance from and declining interest in matters Jewish generally. Thus assimilation was undermining some of the most critical assumptions of postwar Jewish life.

The relationship with Israel underwent further strains on the political level. The longstanding consensus of the Conference of Presidents that Jewish organizations speaking in Washington political circles ought to support the legally elected government of Israel began to fray in the 1990s. Americans for Peace Now supported the first Bush administration's policy of suspending loan guarantees to Israel to resettle Soviet Jewish immigrants unless Israel halted settlement activity on the West Bank.<sup>44</sup> In turn, their dissent from the communal consensus supporting Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir on loan guarantees set a precedent for right-wing groups, notably the Zionist Organization of America and the National Council of Young Israel, to lobby against American support for the Oslo process in direct contrast to the policies of Israel's legally elected government. For the first time in Israel's history, domestic American Jewish groupings were asking the U.S. government to oppose Israeli governmental policy.

As American Jewry wrestled with demographic findings that challenged long-held communal assumptions about the Jewish future, two issues prevailed in Jewish communal discourse: securing Jewish continuity and recalibrating Israel-Diaspora relations in light of the Oslo process. Both issues were inherently divisive and aroused considerable passion on both sides. Securing a communal consensus appeared feasible in the face of external threats but quite elusive on the controversial internal questions of Jewish education, intermarriage, fertility, and attachment to Israel. Some argued for increased funds for Jewish day schools, which had become the jewel in the crown of the Jewish education system. Others looked to Jewish summer camps as the key to Jewish continuity. Still others maintained that the growth in intermarriage could be transformed into an opportunity for Jewish population growth.

The one program that succeeded in garnering communal support—albeit not without considerable difficulty—related to Israel-Diaspora relations while holding out the potential of securing future Jewish continuity. Stimulated by a partnership of leading philanthropists, Jewish federations, and the government of Israel, the Birthright Israel project sought to increase the number of Jews visiting Israel by providing free ten-day trips for Jews aged eighteen to twenty-six.

Numerically, the program succeeded far beyond expectations. Over the course of its first decade, Birthright had brought two hundred thousand young Jews to Israel. Early evaluations were quite positive, though long-term effects in terms of Jewish identity and attachment to Jewish peoplehood could be measured only longitudinally.<sup>45</sup> Philosophically, however, Birthright had sent positive signals. By making a visit to Israel a matter of right rather than privilege, Birthright was underscoring how 1948 had changed the map and meaning of Jewish peoplehood in irrevocable ways. Second, the philanthropists supporting Birthright were making a profound statement of philanthropic norms—namely, the priority of Jewish continuity projects in communal allocations. Last, the partnership between Israel, Jewish federations, and megaphilanthropists connoted a statement that Jews themselves had the resources and capacity to reshape the Jewish future.

Notwithstanding the optimism of Birthright's organizers, by the end of the twentieth century the dominant paradigm of American Jewish life remained the threat of assimilation and what to do about it. The nomination of Senator Joseph Lieberman for vice-president by the Democratic Party symbolized the arrival and acceptance of Jews within American society. The eight years of the Clinton administration had marked the collapse of whatever remaining barriers existed to Jewish participation in American society. The administration ceased counting how many Jews it employed and really did not care. No society in Diaspora Jewish history had afforded Jews as many opportunities as had the United States. What Jews would do with those opportunities remained the open question for the twenty-first century.

### **The 2000–2001 NJPS: Issues of Interpretation**

The data reported for the twenty-first century reflected overall continuity with patterns reported earlier accompanied by some change. The 2000 National Jewish Population Survey reported intermarriage rates at 47 percent, suggesting a possible leveling off in intermarriage rather than an inexorable increase. Conversion to Judaism occurred approximately in 15 percent of cases, possibly suggesting that the conversion rate of 5 percent reported in 1990 had been artificially low. A third of mixed marrieds reported that they were raising their children as Jews, though exactly what they meant by that statement was by no means certain.<sup>46</sup>

A subsequent study in Boston reported that in the Boston area 60 percent of mixed marrieds were raising their children as Jews, prompting widespread calls for increased allocations to programs that serviced mixed marrieds à la those of the Jewish Federation in Boston. Others noted that the Boston survey questions had not included the response option of raising children partly as Jews and partly outside the Jewish faith. Still others cautioned that the claim to raising children as Jews hardly guaranteed adult Jewish identification given the tenuous ties to faith and peoplehood among mixed marrieds themselves, let alone their progeny.<sup>47</sup>

What NJPS 2000–2001 did suggest was that American Jewry required understanding in segmented rather than differentiated terms. Some Jews were in fact greatly intensifying their Jewishness. Others reported increasingly tenuous ties of Jewish identification. Was American Jewry becoming weaker or stronger? It depended on whom you asked and where you looked.

For example, if one adopted mixed marriage statistics as a barometer of Jewish identification, all depended on where one was looking. Orthodox Jews reported mixed marriage rates as low as 6 percent, Reform synagogue members reported a mixed marriage rate of 36 percent, and Conservative synagogue members reported a rate of 19 percent, significantly higher than the Orthodox, but significantly lower than Reform. The largest differentiation occurred between intermarriage rates for synagogue members and for nonmembers: unaffiliated Jews reported intermarriage rates in excess of 65 percent.

This model of a bipolar Jewish community with both ends of the spectrum becoming stronger at the expense of the middle can be demonstrated most sharply with respect to Orthodoxy. Although comprising only 8 percent of the Jewish population, Orthodox Jews represented 17 percent of the under-thirty-five population. Among children the distinction was even more pronounced: Reform synagogues reported a total of 197,000 children of synagogue members. Conservative synagogues reported 155,000. Orthodoxy, however, given higher birthrates, reported 225,000. In other words, the smallest of the movements contained 38 percent of the children within affiliated homes.<sup>48</sup> The pattern pointed clearly to a future Orthodox ascendancy within American Jewry. For example, 74 percent of Orthodox Jews reported multiple visits to Israel contrasted with only 31 percent for Reform Jews, suggesting intensive and long-term Orthodox attachment to Israel.<sup>49</sup>

Yet all is hardly well within the Orthodox camp culturally even if it demonstrated considerable demographic strength and resilience. Orthodoxy itself had to confront the demographic increase of *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) families whose birthrate far exceeded those of the Modern Orthodox. Moreover, Orthodox institutions, particularly day schools, often experienced great difficulty in finding Modern Orthodox faculty and often were forced to rely on *haredi* instructional personnel.

Haredi Orthodoxy proudly pointed to its capacity to fill Madison Square Garden for a celebration commemorating completion of the study of the Talmud on a daily basis over a seven-year period, while secular and non-Orthodox organizations could hardly dream of such numbers in attendance at their events. Others pointed to Orthodox difficulties in cooperating with the non-Orthodox movements and to an overall spirit of Orthodox triumphalism, which frequently trivialized or dismissed the serious efforts to promote Jewish continuity within the non-Orthodox movements.

Perhaps most important, American Orthodoxy, beginning in the 1970s, had introduced a new norm of post-high school, precollege study in an

Israeli yeshiva for an extended period. Commonly referred to as the “gap year in Israel,” the study period often extended to two or even more years. The transformative impact on American Orthodoxy was dramatic: students returned to the United States strongly committed to Israel, the Jewish people, and religious practice. Over time, the norm became widely accepted for day school graduates. Yeshivot sent recruiters, day schools employed guidance counselors for Israel study programs, and many schools proudly took out ads in the media touting the fact that well over 50 percent of their graduating classes were spending at least the next year at an Israeli yeshiva. By 2002, 65 percent of New York City day school graduates were spending their gap year at an Israeli yeshiva.<sup>50</sup>

These benefits could not be denied. Yet the impact of the experience in other and more dubious ways transformed the culture of modern American Orthodoxy. For those who attended Yeshiva University or Touro College, a step strongly encouraged by faculty at the Israeli yeshivot, the Israel experience meant limiting college to three years or less, diminishing by at least 25 percent the impact of undergraduate coursework in secular studies. More broadly, the Israel experience intellectually signaled the ascendancy of *roshei yeshiva* (heads of yeshivot) as primary influences. The hallmarks of secular education—encouraging questioning and doubt—gave way to a quest for certitude.<sup>51</sup>

In this context, the norm concerning spending the gap year in Israel merits serious communal debate. All acknowledge that Orthodoxy had been strengthened by the experience and that attachments to Israel had been deepened. Yet many who had championed or participated in the program question the phenomenon of enhancing the authority of Orthodox faculty uninterested in secular education, isolation from more modern and secular Jewish intellectual currents, and “flipping out,” the widely observed transformation of American Jewish Orthodox teenagers into black-hatted adolescents, who now perceived college as at best a necessary evil rather than an exciting intellectual opportunity.<sup>52</sup>

In truth, each of the religious movements was experiencing both strengths and weaknesses as each confronted the new millennium. Conservative Judaism had forfeited its demographic primacy to Reform as aging congregations reported significant membership losses. Reform had become the largest movement but often found itself required to speak on behalf of large numbers of Jews whose identification with Reform was at best minimal and therefore opposed to a language of serious Jewish commitments and demands. Most important, each of the movements was experiencing tensions between inclusivity and distinctiveness—two worthy goals that coexisted only with great difficulty.

The more distinctively Jewish an institution became, the greater the difficulty it experienced in being inclusive of all Jews wishing to enter. Conversely, the more inclusive the institution was, the more difficulty it encountered in attempts to articulate distinctive Judaic teachings and messages. In the case of Reform, these tensions had been especially evident given the large numbers of mixed

marrieds and their families within Reform synagogues. Thus synagogues were debating questions of inclusivity such as whether a non-Jew should receive an *aliyah* (in this sense, the privilege to read publicly from the Torah) or be eligible for holding synagogue office.<sup>53</sup>

Nor did consensus exist as to even how many Jews lived in the United States. NJPS 2000–2001 reported 5.2 million American Jews. Others pointed to the estimates of local Jewish communities, which in the aggregate totaled closer to six million.<sup>54</sup> Still others argued that non-Jewish members of Jewish households should be included in the number, which would raise it to 6.8 million. Given the blurring of boundaries between Jew and gentile in twenty-first-century America, in theological terms it had become increasingly difficult to determine who exactly had stood at Sinai.

Against this overall image of historical evolution within American Jewry, our original operating assumptions can now be revisited and their relevance in contemporary America tested:

## 1. The Eclipse of Orthodoxy

Demographically, as noted above, an Orthodox ascendancy is likely on the way—certainly among the active and engaged community. Given the convergence between high Orthodox birthrates and the disparity in degree of Jewish activism between in-married and out-married Jews, sociologist Steven M. Cohen goes so far as to predict: “If Orthodox Jews continue their demographic growth, perhaps approaching a quarter of the U.S. Jewish population in some 40 years, and if they continue to exhibit relative Jewish ‘hyper-activity,’ it’s certainly possible that they’ll make up as much as half of the Jewish communal activists in another generation or two.”<sup>55</sup>

The communal implications in terms of intra-Jewish relations remain to be considered. First, the rest of the Jewish community, increasingly agonizing over whether it will in fact enjoy Jewish grandchildren, will do well to emulate the dedication of the Orthodox to ensuring Jewish continuity by insisting on the primacy of Jewish education, and strengthening ties to Israel as central to the meaning of Jewish peoplehood and identity. Conversely, a resurgent Orthodoxy, frequently accompanied by a rightward political and ideological shift, often suggests the triumph of extreme rather than moderate positions as religious norms. The current effort to restrict even further conversion to Judaism serves as a case in point.

Moreover, a resurgent Orthodoxy differs with the larger Jewish community on a range of American domestic policy and church-state questions. Tuition tax credits for Jewish children attending Jewish day schools are one example. To be sure, Jewish communal divides on these issues date back at least half a century. However, Orthodoxy today, rightfully impressed with its tangible successes

within America, appears far more willing to intensify political initiatives on the domestic political agenda.

Finally, the Orthodox resurgence risks widening the divide between Israel and American Jewry. The longstanding monopoly of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel over questions of personal status suggests continued friction between Israel and the Diaspora over the definition of who is a Jew, who is a convert to Judaism, and the rights of non-Orthodox rabbis to officiate at lifecycle events. These questions—critical to Jewish identity—present a face of Orthodox Judaism at odds with, and even alien to, non-Orthodox brethren in the United States.<sup>56</sup>

## 2. The Decline of Anti-Semitism

Jewish security in America largely remains unthreatened. The long-term patterns of the gradual receding of anti-Semitism to the margins of American society continue into the twenty-first century. To be sure, anti-Semitism does exist and pockets of concern do need to be addressed, particularly the delegitimization of Israel on American campuses, the intellectual assault on pro-Israel activism, and interethnic and interreligious tensions. Nevertheless, the broad consensus remains intact. No society in Diaspora Jewish history has been as receptive to Jewish participation as has the United States. Every door remains open to Jews regardless of which party is in power. Test laboratories for anti-Semitism—the Pollard and Boesky affairs of the 1980s, the Marc Rich affair in the 1990s, the 9/11 terrorism, and the Walt-Mearsheimer controversy in the twenty-first century, all noticeably failed to inspire an anti-Semitic backlash.<sup>57</sup> The fact of acceptance of mixed marriage demonstrates alone that not only has the Jew become a desirable in-law but that anti-Semitism has been relegated to the margins of American society.

Some danger signs do exist. Black-Jewish tensions erupted in the 1991 Crown Heights riots. The militant rhetoric of some black leaders, such as Louis Farrakhan, stoked the flames considerably. Perhaps too whimsically Jews often hark back to a mythical golden age of black-Jewish relations, implying that by comparison today we have fallen upon hard times. Yet correctives for the mistakes of Crown Heights, such as lack of communication between Jewish and black leaders, have since been installed, and tensions between the two communities have subsided considerably, both nationally and locally.<sup>58</sup> That nearly 80 percent of American Jews voted for Barack Obama for the presidency of the United States testifies to positive relations between Jews and African Americans.

In recent years great concern has been focused on the university campus. A number of high-profile incidents of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism have occurred, including at elite universities. Particularly frightening were pressures on Jewish students demonstrating on behalf of Israel, pressures that included potential threats of violence.

Understandably the Jewish community has been greatly agitated by these

incidents. So much faith had been placed in American universities as vehicles of Jewish integration into American society that the specter of anti-Semitism on campus augurs for many a major setback to Jewish aspirations. Moreover, Jews traditionally have assumed, in many cases wrongly, that higher education serves as an antidote to anti-Semitism. To encounter anti-Semitism within some of the most highly educated sectors of American society therefore is especially disturbing.

Yet it remains important to understand the overall context of Jews in American universities. Most universities have no problem with either Jews or Israel. Less than 2 percent of the population generally, Jews constitute 5 percent of the student population, 10 percent of university faculties, and 20 percent of the faculties on elite campuses. Today, Ivy League universities routinely report over 25 percent Jewish enrollments and have been led on occasion by Jewish presidents. The most remarkable aspect of these statistics is that the Jewish presence, once sharply restricted on leading campuses, is now taken for granted as a desirable norm. Vanderbilt University went so far in recent years as to announce a special recruiting program designed to increase the number of its Jewish students. In recent years universities have introduced new courses in Israel studies—a phenomenon virtually unheard of a mere decade ago. Jewish life on campus may not be a “golden age,” as some have intimated, but it is far from the “disaster area” forecast in the 1960s.

### **3. Intensification of Israeli-American Ties**

The longstanding closeness between American Jews and Israel—greatly intensified since 1967—now requires reexamination. Many have feared that for younger Jews, who have no memory of May 1967, the attachment to Israel has become tenuous. One 2008 study reported that only 49 percent of non-Orthodox Jews under thirty-five would perceive the destruction of Israel as a personal tragedy—in pronounced contrast to the overwhelmingly high percentage of Jewish communal leaders who would feel such a loss in highly personal terms.<sup>59</sup> Still other social scientists claim that the relationship between Israel and American Jews remains stable and that younger Jews remain as close to Israel as did their forebears.<sup>60</sup> Put another way, social scientists are divided as to whether Israeli-American ties and the longstanding pro-Israel consensus of American Jews remained salient or were experiencing some degree of attenuation.

Relations between American Jewry and Israeli society may be described as a pyramidal structure. At the apex of both communities—Israeli governmental officials and American Jewish leaders—relations generally remain quite close. The further one penetrates down to the grassroots of those societies, differences of culture, politics, identity, and sheer lack of knowledge and understanding about one another threaten to pull apart the world’s two largest Jewish populations.

Two primary issues were of dominant concern to American Jews when they considered Israel: the future of the peace process and Israel's future as a democracy. With respect to the former, a profound shift of thinking has taken place since the collapse of the Oslo process. American Jews have become more skeptical of Palestinian intentions and desires for sincere peace with Israel. However, the discussion has evolved from concerns of history/theology to concerns with Israeli security. Even among the Orthodox one detects a shift away from religious conviction and "Holy Land" to concerns as to whether a peace will be secure and lasting.

More important, American Jews clearly divide over Israeli settlement policy. Orthodox Jews tend to be quite supportive of settlements—citing friends and family members who often populate them. By contrast, Conservative and Reform Jews favor dismantling at least some of the settlements as part of an overall peace process. This issue will likely divide American Jewry much as it divides Israeli society and augurs a possible widening of differences between American and Israeli governmental policies.<sup>61</sup>

Yet perhaps even more important to Israeli-American Jewish relations than the role of the peace process is the perception of Israel's future as a democracy. Great resentment exists over the Orthodox monopoly within Israel over laws of personal status. Orthodox Jews defend this monopoly as necessary to ensure the Jewish character of the state and preserve the unity of the Jewish people by positing a halachic standard of who is a Jew. Non-Orthodox Jews, by contrast, fear a looming Jewish theocracy and desire greater separation of synagogue and state. These issues of religious pluralism and their place within Israeli society may well constitute flashpoints of concern between the two communities likely to weaken American Jewish attachments to Israel.

These legitimate concerns, however, need to be placed against the backdrop of both Jewish assimilation and renewal in American society. Frequently, those who are most outspokenly critical of one or another aspect of Israeli policy are those most committed and attached to Israel as a Jewish state. For example, a recent study of independent minyanim—hardly a venue where criticism of Israel is *verboten*—found that 96 percent of minyan participants had been to Israel at least once compared to only 35 percent of American Jews generally.<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, as Jack Wertheimer has written, the real divide in Jewish life is between "young Jews who have spent considerable time in Israel and those who have not."<sup>63</sup> Put another way, those who are seeking to strengthen their relationship with Judaism and the Jewish people naturally perceive Israel as an appropriate vehicle for doing so. Conversely, those who are uninterested in leading a creative Jewish life are distancing themselves from Israel as well. Indifference, in other words, constitutes a greater danger to American Jewish-Israeli relations than criticism of particular Israeli policies and practices. For example, issues of religious pluralism evoke far greater resonance among committed Conservative and Reform Jews, for many of whom Israel plays a large role in their Jewish

identities, than they do among those whose attachments to Judaism and Jewish peoplehood are more tenuous.

#### 4. The Continuing Salience of Holocaust Memory

Historians of Jewish memory describe the 1950s as an era of communal silence concerning the Holocaust. Nathan Glazer, who authored in 1957 the then-standard work on American Judaism, noted at the time that the Holocaust had made remarkably few inroads into Jewish communal consciousness.<sup>64</sup> Where some detected conscious suppression of memory, others maintained that the event had been simply too shocking to absorb and respond to within such a short span of time. Thus the novels of Elie Wiesel went unread. Returning American GIs in fact were prepared to tell what they had seen, but few found many listeners. The 1954–1955 judicial inquiry into the wartime behavior of Reszo Kastzner, a Hungarian Jewish leader accused of collaboration with Eichmann in Budapest and subsequently assassinated by Israeli extremists, sent shockwaves through Israeli society but caused barely a ripple within the American Jewish community.<sup>65</sup> When the Holocaust was invoked, for example, the 1959 film on Anne Frank, it was its universal dimensions rather than its particularistic Jewish themes that were emphasized.<sup>66</sup>

Most recently Hasia Diner of New York University has challenged this portrait of the suppression of memory. She marshals a myriad of evidence to indicate that American Jewry on grassroots levels did remember the Holocaust in multiple ways—memorials, synagogue programs, Jewish camping, even folksongs.<sup>67</sup> Although Diner mounts an impressive array of evidence, the overall portrait of relative communal silence remains compelling. The Holocaust simply failed to penetrate Jewish public consciousness in the 1950s to the degree it did in the 1960s and 1970s. Of course people knew of the human losses—it could hardly be otherwise given that virtually every family had suffered a personal loss. However, the rhythms of Jewish communal life remained relatively unaffected and referenced the Holocaust at most only occasionally. Certainly the Holocaust was hardly a banner or rallying cry of Jewish public activity. World War II textbooks relegated the Holocaust to virtual footnote status. Jewish education, perhaps appropriately, underscored the need to connect with Judaic heritage rather than with the destruction of the Jews.

By contrast, the 1960s marked a breakthrough in Holocaust consciousness. The Eichmann trial brought awareness of the Holocaust to the American public. The month of May 1967, as noted earlier, evoked all the echoes of the 1940s—daily threats to eliminate the Jews, the silence of the churches, and the relative indifference of the liberal world. Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy* and Arthur Morse's *While Six Million Died* served as chilling reminders of how isolated and vulnerable Jews had been during the Holocaust years. Elie Wiesel became

the primary narrator of the Holocaust experience through literature and the spokesman for Holocaust survivors.<sup>68</sup>

After 1967, in particular, as noted, the Holocaust, together with the state of Israel entered the civil religion of American Jews. For some Jewish leaders, the Holocaust became a banner for political activity, particularly the Soviet Jewry movement. Courses on the Holocaust on university campuses multiplied exponentially. Some Jewish academics questioned whether it was indeed more critical to study about Auschwitz than it was about Maimonides, but few doubted the popularity of Holocaust courses. By 2000 the UCLA Hillel director was reporting that, with the important exception of Hebrew-language courses, enrollment in Holocaust courses at UCLA outnumbered enrollment in all other Judaic studies courses combined. In 1979, the television miniseries *Holocaust* brought into people's homes an admittedly sanitized narrative of the Holocaust and initiated a process whereby the Holocaust penetrated not only Jewish historical consciousness but American historical consciousness about Jews as well.

The 1985 Bitburg affair seemingly posed a challenge. Excluded from the 1984 D-Day commemorations, and eager to promote a "safe nationalism" in contrast to the radical German Left, the German government invited President Ronald Reagan to lay a wreath at the Bitburg cemetery for World War II veterans. Apparently unaware that the cemetery contained the graves of SS officers, Reagan agreed to the visit notwithstanding the subsequent protests of Jewish leaders, particularly Wiesel. American Jewry, appalled by the failure to internalize the lessons of the Holocaust, redoubled its efforts to ensure that the Holocaust narrative be told and remembered.<sup>69</sup>

Some, however, began to question this direction. Robert Alter, a prominent professor of Jewish literature at Berkeley, critiqued the emphasis on the Holocaust in Jewish communal and institutional life.<sup>70</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, an Emory University historian and in later years a justly-hailed defendant in a celebrated lawsuit initiated by David Irving, who objected to being characterized by her as a Holocaust denier, questioned the image of the Jew as perpetual victim. Lipstadt claimed that the emphasis on the Holocaust distorted Jewish historical vision and encouraged what the late Salo Baron had decried as the "lachrymose conception of Jewish history."<sup>71</sup>

Notwithstanding these reservations the project of enshrining Holocaust memory continued to advance, partly owing to the perseverance of survivors and partly to the determination of Jewish leadership that the story should remain ever-present within historical consciousness. The opening of the United States Holocaust Museum in 1993 signaled a major breakthrough. The museum attracted over two million visitors per year, 84 percent of them non-Jews. Among visitation sites in the DC area, the museum attracted more visits per year than any other site after the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum and the Museum of American History.

Moreover, Steven Spielberg's Holocaust film, *Schindler's List*, told the

Holocaust story in a way that Americans could internalize. The narrative of rescue and the righteous gentile gave voice to the lessons of the Holocaust in ways that resonated with Americans. The film suggested that good continued to exist even in history's darkest moments. By the same token, secondary school curriculum units, such as the widely adopted *Facing History and Ourselves* compared the Holocaust experience to the persecution of other minorities.<sup>72</sup>

Within Jewish education, programs such as the March of the Living enabled Jewish teenagers to visit Auschwitz and bring back the message that the Jewish condition is very different today. The visit culminated in a trip from Poland to Israel suggesting that Israel as a Jewish state provides every Jew with a potential refuge, and therefore "never again" should Jews be so defenseless.

By the turn of the century, the communal consensus prevailed, albeit with misgivings, that the Holocaust, as a dominant event of our times, must be taught both to Jews and to gentiles. The story of the Holocaust demonstrated effectively the dangers of Jewish vulnerability and the importance of Israel as symbol of Jewish power and self-defense. As Yitz Greenberg, a former chairman of the United States Holocaust Commission and a historian and theologian who had promoted study of the Holocaust within university curricula, commented, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, but absolutely powerlessness corrupts the most."<sup>73</sup>

Yet by the twenty-first century more voices were challenging the emphasis on Holocaust education. Ruth Wisse of Harvard University argued that study of anti-Semitism in some measure was demeaning to Jews because it implied that the most important thing about Jews was not their achievements but the "negative passions they inspire."<sup>74</sup> In this context Wisse's university rejected funds for a chair in Holocaust studies arguing that a chair in modern Jewish history was a more pressing priority.

Moreover, one of the critical assumptions about Holocaust education was that it would reduce anti-Semitism. Yet by the twenty-first century it had become evident that even countries that had excelled in Holocaust education contained some of the chief purveyors of anti-Zionism. For example, the Scandinavian countries had introduced extensive Holocaust education, but now large sectors of left-wing elites within both Norway and Sweden equated the chief perpetrators of evil with Israelis.

Perhaps the most problematic area of Holocaust education, however, was its message for Jews and Jewish identity. For one thing, it distorted Jewish historical memory. Polish Jewish history serves as one example. Rather than recall seven centuries of Polish-Jewish interaction, the primary lens contemporary Jews have on Polish-Jewish history are the years of the Holocaust. The treasures of rabbinic scholarship, the extensive Jewish communal self-government, and Jewish enlightenment and *Haskalah* in Poland have all receded in historical memory in favor of the destruction of Polish Jewry. Moreover, the emphasis on the Holocaust distorts the meaning of contemporary Jewish identity, perhaps lending

credibility to Jean-Paul Sartre's claims that Jewish identity is primarily a reaction to anti-Semitism. In this view Jews and Judaism do not possess sufficient power in themselves to sustain the Jewish enterprise. The choice by individuals to lead a Jewish life is far less significant for the Jewish future than a gentile society that will not permit the Jew to forget who he is.<sup>75</sup>

Not only is this a distorted reading of the Jewish experience, it fails to address the reality of American Jewry today. American Jews feel welcome in all sectors of American society. The problem of Jewish identity for them is why be Jewish in a society that gives Jews every possible choice. By underscoring Holocaust memory Jewish leadership in effect has said, "Be a Jew because terrible things happen to Jews." Conversely, however, if terrible things do not happen to Jews, Jewish leaders often find themselves incapable of articulating a compelling rationale for why leading a Jewish life is worthwhile in itself.

A less myopic view of Jewish history would stress that it concerns far more than Jewish suffering. It contains a story of Jewish creativity, community, peoplehood, and, yes, positive relations between Jews and others. Many of the greatest expressions of rabbinic Jewish scholarship flourished not because of gentile oppression but because of a friendly and supportive gentile environment. Yet, as Lipstadt noted, the dominant memory of the Holocaust leads one to believe that the lachrymose conception of Jewish history indeed is accurate. In turn, the emphasis on the Holocaust diverts the community from the more critical questions of securing future Jewish continuity and nurturing stronger ties of peoplehood, ties that need to be based on common Jewish aspirations and hopes rather than fears.

There are other distortions resulting from the current emphasis on the Holocaust in communal programming. Virtually every Jewish high school features the Holocaust as central to historical memory. By contrast, however, the other seminal event in modern Jewish experience—the birth of Israel—rarely receives adequate attention. Moreover, given the current emphasis on the Holocaust in communal programming, we have, unfortunately, become embroiled in an unseemly competition for "victim status," a status in which traditional Judaism saw no merit and took no pride. We have become quite shrill in our denunciations of President Roosevelt's failure to rescue while ignoring his real achievement, which was to lead America out of its isolationist mindset and, like Winston Churchill, to recognize that Western democracy could never coexist with Nazi Germany. Lastly, we have held our heads in shame over the Jewish community's own failure to rescue, ignoring how little actual influence and leverage American Jewry in the 1930s and 1940s in fact exerted over American public policy.

Moreover, the emphasis on the Holocaust in American public culture distorts the presentation of Jews and Judaism to the American mindset. For American society, it is as if the Jews had been given a magic wand to make mandatory one but only one chapter of Jewish history. Yet rather than choose, as the foundational narrative of the Jewish people, from among the Exodus from slavery in Egypt, the

return of the Jews to sovereignty and statehood in modern Israel, or the emergence of prophetic Judaism as a protest culture challenging the status quo, we have chosen the single most negative chapter in the experience of Jews as a people for Americans to grasp of Jewish history. Thus Holocaust museums have become the dominant expression of Judaic culture in American public space.

An ironic illustration of this trend occurred in the context of President Obama's 4 June 2009 speech in Cairo. Jewish leaders rightly objected to his speech in terms of the narrative of Israel. The speech implied that the primary rationale for Israel's existence had been the memory of Auschwitz and Treblinka. Jewish leaders correctly took offense that Obama had failed to invoke Jewish historical aspirations and ties to the homeland.<sup>76</sup> Yet, in fairness, the president had only articulated what Jewish leaders themselves had been emphasizing. In other words, one may hardly object to use of the Holocaust trope as rationale for the need for a Jewish state when Jewish leaders themselves have been striking those chords for the American public over several decades.

To be sure, important reasons remain for the focus on Holocaust education. In itself it represents the most horrendous chapter of Jewish history if not of all human history. Moreover, there remain those who deny the facts of the Holocaust. A larger number, particularly among historians, attempt to relativize the proportions of the Holocaust, in effect reducing it to one tragedy among others in twentieth-century history. For these reasons Holocaust history is significant. But it needs to be contained within a larger narrative of the modern Jewish experience. Building a strong Jewish identity requires surefootedness in the riches of the Jewish experience. Similarly, the message of what it means to be a Jew should never be equated with the image of perpetual suffering.

## **5. The Values of Endogamy and Conversion**

Perhaps no issue has been as divisive among Jews as have been contrasting communal perceptions on mixed marriage. Some perceive mixed marriage as representing a collapse of communal values of family and endogamy and define mixed marriage as the single greatest threat to Jewish continuity. Ideally, for them, intermarriage should be prevented. When it does occur the single best outcome is the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse. Others take a more benign view of mixed marriage, which, in any case, will doubtless remain a fact of American Jewish life. For this group, all efforts should be geared toward outreach to mixed married couples, encouraging their involvement in Jewish communal life and increasing the percentage of mixed marrieds willing to raise children as Jews.<sup>77</sup> This latter group regards the rhetoric of endogamy and conversion as potentially offensive to mixed marrieds and their families.

Two critical values of Judaic heritage seem to have fallen off the radar screen in recent decades: the importance of marriage within the faith and that conversion

of the non-Jewish spouse provides the best outcome to a mixed marriage. The prevailing reality of mixed marriage as a phenomenon absent conversion to Judaism makes it difficult to sustain these twin messages. Yet failure to articulate them cedes ground to a dominant American culture that perceives mixed marriage as normative and as American as apple pie. In fact, over 1.6 million non-Jews currently reside in homes alongside Jewish loved ones.<sup>78</sup>

Once-sacred taboos clearly have fallen. Nearly 50 percent of newly-affiliated couples in Reform congregations contain at least one partner who was not raised as a Jew. These, however, in turn—that is, those mixed marrieds prepared to become synagogue members—represent but a fraction of the overall numbers of mixed marrieds, most of whom do not join temples. Contentious issues arise over whether non-Jewish partners can become officers of synagogues, and some have even suggested that the ban on rabbis or rabbinical students having non-Jewish spouses needs to be lifted.<sup>79</sup>

Yet the differences between in-marrieds and mixed marrieds remain considerable and have ominous implications for the Jewish communal future. For example, the Christmas tree, once prevalent inside American Jewish homes, today exists in only 3 percent of in-married Jewish homes; yet 82 percent of mixed marrieds maintain a Christmas tree in their home. Two-thirds of mixed marrieds who claim to raise Jewish children remain totally unaffiliated with any Jewish communal institution, four times the rate for in-marrieds with children. Last, children of in-marrieds are twenty times more likely to travel to Israel than children of mixed marrieds.<sup>80</sup>

One small incident helps to clarify this debate. Some years back, around the time of the High Holidays, I received a greeting card urging me to add a new *Al chet* (confession of sin) to the Yom Kippur confessional liturgy. In itself this was by no means unusual. Generally, I set these recommendations aside on the grounds that my bill of accounts to the Almighty is already sufficiently weighty and requires no additions. This one, however, caught my eye.

Specifically, the greeting card requested that I confess, “for the sin we have committed against Thee in the exclusion of the mixed marrieds.” The message of the card clearly signaled a sharp transformation of Jewish values. Historically, mixed marriage constituted a sin and outreach a vehicle of mitigating its effects. Rabbi Schindler’s 1978 address insisted that dealing with mixed marriage through outreach did not mean accepting it.<sup>81</sup> Now, however, we were informed that intermarriage itself is perfectly acceptable, and the only sin is the failure to engage in sufficient outreach.

Conversely, the rise in the phenomenon of mixed marriage does signal the increased acceptability of Jews in American society and should allay Jewish fears of a looming danger of anti-Semitism in the United States. As the numbers of Americans with Jewish loved ones increases, the number of people offended by anti-Jewish comments or stereotypes is also likely to increase. The real question, however, is whether, as outreach advocates eloquently put it, we should now

view mixed marriage as an opportunity to be embraced rather than a danger to be contained.

Several qualifications, however, are in order. First, the Jewish community can indeed operate upon a principle of inclusivity in which it is open to all interested in joining and partaking of its services. No specific need exists to apply the “who is a Jew” test for communal services and programs that are not religiously based, such as political activism, adult Jewish learning, child care, and so on. By the same token, outreach in the form of Jewish education easily may include mixed marrieds within programs targeted to larger Jewish populations. Much as a college professor would never distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish students in courses of academic studies, Jewish communal programs designed to teach Judaism to families and individuals may absorb mixed marrieds who are open to and interested in leading a Jewish life. This type of outreach can maximize Jewish content without validating mixed marriage as a phenomenon.

The second set of questions relates to the goals of outreach. Many outreach advocates fail to articulate the goal of conversion to Judaism. Still others fail to proclaim the virtues of an exclusively Jewish home. Reportedly one rabbi goes so far as to maintain a Christmas tree in the lobby of his synagogue as a sign of welcome!<sup>82</sup> One may easily understand the good intentions underlying such an approach. Outreach advocates maintain correctly that mixed marrieds are suspicious of the agenda of the Jewish community and hope to allay the fears of mixed marrieds by a language that validates where they are rather than articulates where they ought to be. Those are, to be sure, legitimate concerns. However, they do raise the specter of a Jewish community that abstains from a language of sustained Jewish expectations and commitments so as to avoid giving offense to key constituencies. The Conservative movement, for example, long perceived as underscoring conversion as the single-best response to mixed marriage, may be retreating from this stance.<sup>83</sup> More generally, a Brandeis University study of congregations found that many failed to encourage conversion to Judaism as an appropriate and meaningful response to the fact of mixed marriage.<sup>84</sup>

Last, outreach advocates frequently request communal neutrality on intermarriage so as to be effective in their approach to mixed marrieds. For example, Irwin Kula, the widely esteemed copresident of CLAL, among many others, urges the Jewish community to stop inveighing against intermarriage, which “poses no intrinsic threat to Jewish life.” Kula urges that “it is not about lowering boundaries but actually imagining that there are no boundaries.”<sup>85</sup>

More important, neutrality toward mixed marriage connotes surrender to it as normative. American culture itself proclaims mixed marriage as quintessentially American, manifesting American traditions of tolerance and diversity. Only the Jews can articulate a countermesssage, and failure to do so may easily result in a mixed marriage rate that exceeds 90 percent given the tiny percentage of Jews in

American society. Nevertheless, outreach advocates generally prefer sacrificing the language of endogamy so as to enhance the message of outreach. Both messages are significant, and both need to be articulated.

Jewish leadership, thus far, has failed to see mixed marriage as a challenge of balancing conflicting imperatives of welcome, inclusivity, and enlarging our demographic base coupled with preserving a distinctive Judaic ethos that underscores the importance of endogamy and conversion to Judaism. Instead, Jewish leaders look for comforting news that will somehow guarantee the Jewishness of grandchildren even absent the commitment to raise children exclusively as Jews. For example, the Boston study, which did not probe specifically whether children are being raised exclusively as Jews, is taken as proof that outreach to mixed marrieds will ensure Jewish continuity. If only we replicate Boston's commitment to outreach, the intermarriage crisis will become a success story! Whether Boston is an exception and whether the offspring of Boston's mixed marrieds will in fact identify as Jews as adults and will be Jewishly active are questions that may be measured only over the long term. In the short term, Jewish leaders need to keep in play the twin challenges of encouraging in-marriage and welcoming the participation of interested mixed marrieds in Jewish life rather than sacrifice one of these goals for the sake of the other.

## **6. Jewish Education as Key to the Jewish Future**

Perhaps the most pressing long-term concern relates to the future of Jewish education. Day schools currently attract over two hundred thousand students across the country. Yet, as noted, as early as the 1980s, the primary complaint about day schools pertained less to the quality of education provided and more to the capacity of middle-class parents to afford it.

For the Orthodox, twelve years of day school education have clearly become normative. Among the non-Orthodox, by contrast, the dropout rate after bar or bat mitzvah suggests that children are lost precisely at the moment when day school education is likely to exert the most profound influence in shaping and forming their Jewish lives.

Research studies have established the power of Jewish education on the high school level. There are, at least, four aspects of these success stories:

1. Jewish civilization is a bookish culture celebrating the beauty and power of Jewish ideas. Only during adolescence do students become sufficiently mature to understand the complexities of Jewish ideas, let alone their interaction with Western mores and values.
2. The friendship networks established during high school are particularly important and often serve as predictors of degree and intensity of long-term Jewish involvement.

3. Adolescence is precisely the time when questions of dating, marriage, and family expectations begin to assume salience for young people.
4. Day school education at its best provides an excellent opportunity to explore the fundamental assumptions of modern Jewish identity: that Judaic heritage and modern culture may feed on one another in exciting ways, and that the conflicts and tensions between these two value systems need to be weighed carefully rather than ignored. The Covenant Foundation recently recognized this potential by offering one of its esteemed awards to a biology teacher who explored with her students the conflicts of science and religion and the salience of Judaic heritage for ethical dilemmas raised by contemporary scientific research.

Sadly, most American Jews remain unconvinced of the potential of Jewish high schools. Notwithstanding growth in the Reform and Conservative day school movements, few of these have been high schools. Collectively, non-Orthodox high schools report barely 5,600 students nationally.<sup>86</sup> Some are concerned that intensive Jewish education may mean diminished involvement in the broader American culture and possibly negatively affect community relations. This is an untested but unlikely assumption given the unprecedented degree of Jewish integration into American society, and day schools, with the notable exception of the haredi sector, remain dedicated to educating students to the proposition that American Jews do live in two civilizations.

Policy implications, therefore, are clear but warrant redefining priorities and norms within the Jewish community. First, the Conservative and Reform movements need to be challenged to build and maintain more high schools. School closings need to be prevented and success narratives widely disseminated. Both movements are committed to Judaic literacy, and Jewish high schools provide ideal vehicles for realizing that aim.

Second, high schools must be made affordable for all Jews. The Jewish community, to date, has resisted tuition subsidies for day school students generally on the grounds that their numbers, currently over two hundred thousand, have so increased that meaningful subsidies for all would prove too heavy a communal burden. Yet if day schools make the greatest difference on the high school level, the policy implication is to target subsidies to those attending the ninth grade and beyond—a more limited and affordable yet most worthy goal.

Most important, however, the Jewish community needs to undergo a profound cultural change in how it perceives day schools. Adolescence remains a critical age for formation of Jewish identity and warrants communal intervention to secure it. The Jewish community's embrace of day schools, albeit significant, to date simply has not extended to the high school levels with the critical exception of American Orthodoxy. Jewish educators are currently frustrated at the fact that the teenagers are lost precisely at the moment when Jewish education might make the most difference to them Jewishly. Judaic literacy, to be sure, is no guarantee

of Jewish commitment. Yet a literate Jew remains the most likely to remain a committed Jew.

## 7. The Ongoing Salience of Religious Denominations

American Jewish religious life over the past two centuries has been denomination-centered. Sephardic Orthodoxy enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the early days of the Republic. Reform Judaism enjoyed an ascendancy in America under German Jewish leadership. The post-Civil War onrush of immigration created an Orthodox ascendancy, notwithstanding the fact that most immigrants coming to the United States were doing so against the wishes of East European rabbinical leadership and therefore were unlikely to attend synagogues in any case. However, the Orthodox synagogue became the synagogue that immigrant Jews chose not to attend. Conservative Judaism, established originally in an unsuccessful effort to attract East European immigrants, found its most natural base in suburban America. Thus it enjoyed its greatest growth spurt in the post-World War II era and by the 1990s clearly had become dominant among the religious movements.

By the twenty-first century, however, as noted above, Conservative Judaism was going through a crisis of self-confidence given significant demographic and institutional losses. Reconstructionism, always the smallest of the movements, was experiencing some growth but its intellectual and institutional significance far outweighed its demographic numbers given the prominence of Reconstructionist rabbis in Jewish education and in Jewish cultural institutions.

Yet the critical question by the twenty-first century was whether denominations still mattered at all. A postdenomination ethos had been current since at least the 1970s with the publication of the *Jewish Catalog* series. These volumes formed a do-it-yourself guide to Jewish living as practiced and expressed by the 1970s Jewish counterculture and *havurah* (small religious fellowship) movements. For the editors of the *Jewish Catalog*, the religious movements had ceased being relevant to the needs of their generation. Denominational differences in their view were, at best, quite trivial. Their motto became a “do it yourself” Jewish identity and practice guided by Judaic heritage but governed by no particular denomination.<sup>87</sup>

By the twenty-first century this view had evolved into an exhortation to the community to “do Jewish,” that is, advance the programs to secure the Jewish-continuity agenda but avoid getting bogged down in what were perceived as irrelevant denominational disputes. In 2005, Limmud, a Jewish learning initiative, pronounced that “denominations are yesterday’s news.” Similarly, prominent philanthropist Michael Steinhardt and the above-mentioned Jewish intellectual and spiritual leader Yitz Greenberg in 2003 announced a movement known as “common Judaism,” beyond the parameters of the respective religious denominations.<sup>88</sup> By 2005 Steinhardt was arguing, “The period when Reform,

Conservative and Reconstructionist Judaism were vibrant, growing, intellectually exciting movements has all but ended,” in effect homogenizing the non-Orthodox movements.<sup>89</sup> Fluidity and denomination-switching suggested that theological and ideological distinctions critical to leadership meant little to the rank and file for whom style and behavior counted far more than theology.<sup>90</sup>

But the denominations themselves continue to possess considerable salience for the Jewish body politic. Seventy-three percent of American Jews continue to self-identify as either Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist. These are far more Jewishly active than those who do not so identify. The latter score far higher on intermarriage rates and far lower on affiliation rates.<sup>91</sup> Second, the disputes between the denominations are by no means trivial. Questions of personal status, definitions of who is a Jew, approaches to intermarriage and conversion, and, last but hardly least, how to read Scripture and its record of revelation remain powerful ideological issues that the Jewish community needs to debate and confront.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, the denominations provide much of the institutional structure—schools, camps, youth movements—essential to transmittal of Jewish identity.<sup>93</sup>

Most important, however, is the power of ideology and commitment. The more Jews battle over what it means to be Jewish, the greater the communal discord but also the greater the passion over the meaning and conviction of what it means to be a Jew. The greater the passion underlying the message, the greater its sustaining power. Conversely, Jewish leaders who espouse postdenominationalism are effectively stating that there are enough enemies from without, and Jews should not deflate their numbers further by squabbling over who precisely is a Jew. Younger Jews in particular often resonate to this reasoning, and, as noted, they bring greater experimentation and more denominational switching.

Moreover, often overlooked is the critical role denominations play in encouraging Jewish passion and ideological commitment. Jews willing to enter intellectual battle over these questions are more likely to be committed to their respective ideas. As the Talmud put it, “a dispute for the sake of heaven is likely to be sustained.” In this view, a key to Jewish continuity lies in creating passionate and committed members within each of the religious movements who will translate that passion into active and vibrant Jewish religious institutions. To be sure, such a vision presupposes a contentious Jewish people, for the chasm between these denominations in fact runs quite deep. A contentious people, however, is not necessarily a divided people. Instead the model of a contentious people suggests a critical mass of serious Jews committed to their respective religious movements so as to dedicate themselves to ensuring its future success and continuity.<sup>94</sup>

By contrast, homogenization of the non-Orthodox movements will not create more committed Jews. On the contrary, given such homogenization the most committed elements are likely to find non-Orthodox Jewish life too bland to be sustaining.

## Conclusion

How, then, may one characterize the place of Jews in twenty-first-century America? The fundamental paradigm remains that the narrative of Jews as Americans underscores America as the Diaspora that has worked extraordinarily well for Jews. The Jewish story in America has been an unprecedented success story. The outer lives of Jews as Americans elicit the envy of virtually every other ethnic and religious grouping. Jewish security rests on firm bases, and Jewish social and economic upward mobility remain high. By the criteria of educational and income achievements, Jews have done extremely well. For example, Jews are at least three times as likely as other Americans to possess graduate degrees.

The paradox, however, relates to the inner lives of Jews as Jews. Jewish insecurity and anxiety relate to concerns over future Jewish continuity expressed by high intermarriage rates, low fertility rates, and the huge gap between secular educational attainments and minimalist Jewish educational attainments. To be sure, Orthodox Jewry provides an important exception. Moreover, pockets of Jewish renewal exist within each of the religious movements. Yet that story of Jewish renewal coexists alongside a larger narrative of assimilation and erosion.

In short, it remains the best of times and the worst of times. Jews have become so well integrated into American society that the boundary between Jew and non-Jew has become so fluid as to be frequently nonexistent. Intermarriage itself, a barometer of Jewish weakness, also signals the unprecedentedly high degree of acceptance of Jews within American society.

Moreover, the Jews form an extraordinarily well-organized community. No community in Diaspora Jewish history has constructed so impressive an array of Jewish institutions. At the conclusion of the recent film, *The Reader*, a German barrister questions a renowned Jewish author of Holocaust literature whether a Jewish organization exists to promote literacy. She replies, "There must be; there is a Jewish organization for everything." Whether that impressive and costly network of Jewish organizations can survive economic downturn and the assimilation of many of its supporters is likely to prove a major challenge for the Jewish future.<sup>95</sup> When economic resources were abundant, few choices needed to be made between conflicting communal priorities. The pressure of balancing budgets and meeting payrolls at a time of economic downturn, however, may well create the necessity for making such difficult choices and in turn cause considerable shakeout among frequently overlapping and competing Jewish institutions.

Second, continuing Jewish political influence can by no means be taken for granted. Demographics alone suggest an aging Jewish population with fewer young people. In political terms that translates into fewer Jewish votes. In large measure Jewish political power depends on the rules of the Electoral College, which awards large numbers of electoral votes in presidential elections to precisely those states of densest Jewish concentration. Jews may constitute less

than 2 percent of the overall population but 4 percent of the voting population given the relatively low turnout at the polls. Yet fewer Jews in turn mean fewer Jewish votes.

Fortunately, Jewish political influence has never depended on demographics alone. Elections require finances, and the willingness of Jews to involve themselves financially within political campaigns means that candidates will continue to court Jews so as to capture their largesse. Most important, so much of the political discussion in American culture has been conducted by Jews within both liberal and conservative camps. The presence of Jewish intellectuals and thinkers within universities, policy think tanks, and organs of public opinion means that politicians of both parties will continue to ask what is on the minds of American Jews.

Will these patterns continue in the future? In 2004, Daniel Pipes pronounced an incipient end to American Jewry's golden age.<sup>96</sup> In his view, a growing Muslim population augured poorly for continued Jewish political influence. Perhaps of even greater concern is the predictability of Jewish voting patterns. Since 1928 a virtual iron law has prevailed among Jewish voters: Jews will vote for the more liberal candidate—Jewish or not—who is not perceived as hostile to Israel. Conversely, Jews will not vote for the more conservative candidate notwithstanding his or her strong support for Israel. To be sure, Jews have punished candidates at the polls who were perceived as hostile to Israel, notably President Jimmy Carter in 1980. By 2010, the predictability of Jewish voting patterns possibly constitutes the Achilles' heel of Jewish political strength. If the more liberal candidate can take Jewish votes for granted and the more conservative candidate can harbor no illusions about capturing Jewish votes, little need exists on either side to court Jewish voters.

There remain two exceptions to the patterns of predictability. In 2000, a majority of Orthodox Jews voted for Vice-President Al Gore. By 2004 nearly 70 percent of Orthodox Jews voted for President George W. Bush in pronounced contrast to 86 percent of Reform Jews who favored Senator John Kerry. Russian Jews were also far less predictable and more likely to vote for the more conservative candidate. Together Orthodox and Russian Jewry constitute 18 percent of the Jewish population, suggesting that Democratic candidates may reasonably continue to expect large Jewish majorities but that the potential of a Jewish shift to the Republican camp remains a possibility, especially given fertility and age rates among Orthodox Jews.

To take the most recent election, in 2008 some voiced concerns about the putative presidency of Barack Obama with respect to Israel, yet over three-quarters of American Jews voted for him. Nevertheless, the perception of Jewish influence remains. High-profile politicians, especially Senators Kerry and Clinton, loudly proclaimed their interest in discovering Jewish members of their respective family trees. In 2008, all presidential candidates continued to seek out Jewish votes and express themselves positively on Jewish concerns. The defection of

some sectors of elite opinion from the pro-Israel consensus, for example, the charge by Profs. Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer that the “Israel lobby” has hijacked American foreign policy, in fact failed to evoke much resonance within the political campaign or among voters.<sup>97</sup>

The underlying problem, however, clearly remains assimilation. Jewish political influence presupposes a critical mass of Jews interested in leading a creative Jewish life. Fewer Jews concerned with Judaism means a weakened Jewish people. What Jews should do with themselves as Jews and why they should lead a Jewish life clearly have become the most vexing questions that need to be answered in order to shape the Jewish future. American Jews had survived well the storms of the twentieth century. How they would cope with an America that loved Jews and welcomed them into all sectors of American society remains very much an open question.

## Notes

1. Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955), esp. chs. 10–11.
2. On the baby boom, see Chaim Waxman, *Jewish Baby Boomers* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), introduction. For some evidence indicating that Jews did *not* share fully in the postwar baby boom, see Samuel C. Heilman, *Portrait of American Jews* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 41–42.
3. Arthur Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 187. See also Heilman, *Portrait*, 29–30; Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 323–25. These attendance rates seem to have held until at least 1970, according to Gallup surveys. See Jack Wertheimer, *A People Divided* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 202, n. 57.
4. Dana Evan Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 11.
5. Deborah Dash Moore, “Jewish GI’s and the Creation of the Judeo-Christian Tradition,” *Religion and American Culture*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 53, n. 42; idem, *GI Jews* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 257–59.
6. Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*. See also Harry Ausmus, *Will Herberg* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 141–51.
7. Will Herberg, *Judaism and Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Young, 1951), *passim*.
8. Charles Stember et al., *Jews in the Mind of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), part 1. See, more generally, Edward Shapiro, *A Time for Healing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), ch. 2; Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), ch. 8.
9. Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, *The Rosenberg File* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983), 349–55.
10. Edward S. Shapiro, *We Are Many* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 95.
11. See the memoir of ADL’s general counsel and associate national director, Arnold Forster, *Square One* (New York: Primer, 1988), 125.

12. David Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 205, 428.
13. On Ben-Gurion-Blaustein, see Zvi Ganin, *An Uneasy Relationship* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), ch. 4. On the American Council for Judaism, see Thomas Kolsky, *Jews against Zionism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), Epilogue and Conclusion.
14. Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism*, 21, 23, 117.
15. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1963), 164.
16. Marshall Sklare, "Intermarriage and the Jewish Future," *Commentary*, April 1964, reprinted in Marshall Sklare, *Observing American Jews* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1993), 234–47.
17. Heilman, *Portrait*, 58–60; Waxman, *Jewish Baby Boomers*, 12.
18. J. J. Goldberg, *Jewish Power* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996), 133–38.
19. Arthur Hertzberg, "Israel and American Jewry," *Commentary*, August 1967, 69–73.
20. Dan Carter, *The Politics of Rage* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 296–97.
21. Charles Liebman, *The Ambivalent American Jew* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973), 164–68.
22. Murray Friedman, *What Went Wrong?* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 257–63.
23. Henry Feingold, *Silent No More* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 62–69.
24. Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon, *The Death of an American Jewish Community* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 40, 56–57. See also Seth Farber, *An American Orthodox Dreamer* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 96, 153.
25. Rosenman expressed his critique at a retreat for Hadassah leadership in May 1980. He expanded on these views in many private discussions with me during my tenure under him at AJC.
26. Jonathan Woocher, *Sacred Survival* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), esp. chs. 3–4.
27. Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976), 639–46.
28. Steven Bayme, "Yitz Greenberg: A Biographical Introduction," in Steven Bayme and Steven Katz, eds., *Continuity and Change: Festschrift in Honor of Irving (Yitz) Greenberg's 75th Birthday* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, forthcoming).
29. Egon Mayer, "Intermarriage Research at the American Jewish Committee: Its Evolution and Impact," in Steven Bayme, ed., *Facing the Future* (New York: Ktav and AJC, 1989), 168–69.
30. Peter Berger, "Converting the Gentiles?," *Commentary*, May 1979, 25–29.
31. Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism*, 81.
32. Soloveitchik's remarks occurred in a Hebrew-language interview printed in *Ha-doar*, 22 August 1986, and subsequently cited in Marc Angel, *Choosing to Be Jewish: The Orthodox Road to Conversion* (New York: Ktav, 2005), 15–16.
33. Egon Mayer and Amy Avgar, *Conversion among the Intermarried* (New York: AJC, 1987), 1–2.
34. Milton Himmelfarb, *The Jews of Modernity* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973), 123.
35. Charles Silberman, *A Certain People* (New York: Summit Books, 1985), chs. 5–7.
36. Sylvia Barack Fishman, *A Breath of Life* (New York: Free Press, 1993), passim.
37. Jonathan Woocher, "Mountain High, Valley Low: Status of Jewish Education Today," in Bayme, *Facing the Future*, 117.
38. Arthur Hertzberg, *Jewish Polemics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992),

- 140–41. See also Steven Bayme, “Crisis in American Jewry,” *Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 8 (1986), reprinted in Steven Bayme, *Jewish Arguments and Counterarguments* (New York: Ktav and AJC, 2002), 415–18.
39. Hertzberg, *Jews in America*, 387–88.
  40. Barry Kosmin et al., *Highlights of the CJF National Jewish Population Survey* (New York: Council of Jewish Federations, 1991), passim. For reactions to the NJPS, see Marianne Sanua, *Let Us Prove Strong* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2007), 369–74.
  41. Jacob Ukeles and Ron Miller, *Jewish Community Study of New York* (New York: UJA Federation, 2004), 163.
  42. For a diverse range of responses, see *A Statement on the Jewish Future: Text and Responses* (New York: AJC), 1997.
  43. David Mittelberg, *The Israel Connection and American Jews* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 61.
  44. Dan Flesher, *Transforming America’s Israel Lobby* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2009), 106.
  45. Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel* (Hanover, NH, and London: Brandeis University Press, 2008), passim. Significantly, in 2009, one Birthright trip provider resigned after being told that he could not encourage endogamy among participants. See Sharon Udasin, “A Divorce in the Birthright Family,” *New York Jewish Week*, 8 July 2009.
  46. United Jewish Communities, *Strength, Challenge and Diversity in the American Jewish Population* (New York: UJC, 2003), 16–19.
  47. Steven M. Cohen, Jack Ukeles, and Ron Miller, “Read Boston’s Study on Inter-marriage with Caution,” *Forward*, 8 December 2006. See also Leonard Saxe et al., *Boston’s Good News on Inter-marriage* (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2006).
  48. Jonathan Ament, *American Jewish Religious Movements* (New York: UJC, 2005), see tables on pp. 5, 21, 24. See also Ukeles Associates, *Young Jewish Adults in the U.S. Today* (New York: AJC, 2006), 79–83 for data on younger American Jews.
  49. Steven Bayme, “An Orthodox Ascendancy,” *Jewish Week*, 27 March 2009, 22. See also Jonathan Ament, *Israel Connections and American Jews* (New York: UJC, 2005), 26, table 5.
  50. Samuel C. Heilman, *Sliding to the Right* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 112–22.
  51. Perhaps nowhere was this more evident than in discussions concerning Middle Eastern politics. Religious Zionism—one of the chief features of Modern as opposed to haredi Orthodoxy—now often became identified with the religious messianism of Gush Emunim, the West Bank settlers’ movement. To take one personal example, when my daughter wrote an essay at the conclusion of her year in Israel in which she called for open debate and discussion concerning the Oslo process, the instructor, rather than engaging the issue, much less acknowledge the criticisms of Gush Emunim of the revered dean of Modern Orthodoxy, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, marginalized her by saying such a student obviously did not belong in the program.
  52. Unfortunately, research on the one-year programs is extremely limited. The volume by Shalom Z. Berger et al., *Flipping Out?* (New York: Yashar Books, 2007), by the authors’ own admission is based on research from a decade ago and tracks subjects for only one year rather than longitudinally. Unfortunately, no study exists of the programs themselves and the many shades and distinctions among them.
  53. See articles by Deborah Rubin, “Eden Temple to Reassess Non-Jews as Officers,” and

- “Temple Reasserts Stance on Non-Jews as Officers,” both in *New Jersey Jewish News*, 26 May 2009 and 9 June 2009, respectively.
54. The *American Jewish Year Book* for 2006 reports two different estimates. Ira Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky estimate the American Jewish population as 6.4 million; Sergio DellaPergola argues for an estimate of 5.275 million. *American Jewish Year Book*, vol. 106 (2006): 134, 561, respectively.
  55. Steven M. Cohen, email communication, 10 August 2009.
  56. David Landau, *Who Is a Jew?* (New York: AJC, 1996), passim; Jack Wertheimer, *All Quiet on the Religious Front?* (New York: AJC, 2005), 20–22.
  57. Jonathan Pollard, a Defense Department specialist with access to classified material, was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1985 for transmitting classified materials to Israel. Ivan Boesky, a prominent Jew in Wall Street and philanthropic circles, was found guilty of financial misdeeds and served time in prison. Marc Rich benefited from the intercession of prominent Jewish leaders with President Clinton in the waning moments of the Clinton administration to secure a pardon enabling him to return to the United States despite charges of financial wrongdoing. Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer published an extensive article, subsequently a book, in 2006 charging that American foreign policy interests had been hijacked by the domestic pro-Israel lobby. Jewish leaders feared that each of these affairs would provoke domestic anti-Semitism. All indications are that no collective anti-Jewish backlash ensued.
  58. Edward S. Shapiro, *Crown Heights* (Hanover, NH, and London: Brandeis University Press, 2006), ch. 7. Notwithstanding these efforts, Shapiro suggests that real tensions do continue to simmer albeit somewhat below the surface. For a somewhat more whimsical portrait, see Cheryl Greenberg, “Negotiating Coalition,” in Jack Salzman and Cornel West, eds., *Struggles in the Promised Land* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 168. See also Shapiro, *We Are Many*, 239–47, on efforts by Jews to romanticize their relationship with blacks and reconstitute the black-Jewish alliance.
  59. Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman, *Beyond Distancing: Young Adult American Jews and Their Alienation from Israel* (New York: Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies), 9, table.
  60. Theodore Sasson, Charles Kadushin, and Leonard Saxe, *American Jewish Attachment to Israel* (Waltham, MA: Steinhardt Social Research Institute, Brandeis University, 2008), passim.
  61. Sam Freedman, “In the Diaspora: American Jewry’s Green Line,” *Jerusalem Post*, 11 June 2009. See also Steven Bayme, “American Jews and the Settlements,” *New York Jewish Week*, 23 July 2009. In the *2009 AJC Annual Survey of American Jews* (available on website), 51 percent of all U.S. Jews disagreed with the Obama administration’s call for a freeze on all new Israeli settlement construction. Forty-one percent supported the Obama initiative.
  62. Jack Wertheimer, “The Truth about American Jews and Israel,” *Commentary*, June 2009, 42–44.
  63. *Ibid.*, 44.
  64. See Judith Miller, *One by One* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 221.
  65. The Kastzner case has been treated most recently in Anne Porter, *Kastzner’s Train* (New York: Walker, 2007), chs. 31–34, and Ladislaus Lob, *Dealing with Satan* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2008), ch. 13. For the reverberations of the case within Israeli society, see Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993), chs. 13–16. By comparison, American reaction was quite muted.
  66. See the treatment of the Frank Diary upon its publication in 1952, its becoming a Broadway production in 1956, and a movie in 1959 in Alan Mintz, *Popular Culture and*

- the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 16–19.
67. Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), passim.
  68. See Wiesel's memoir, *Night* (New York: Hill & Wang), 1960. Originally published in Yiddish in 1956 and subsequently in French in 1958, this work was translated into English only in 1960 and only later became standard reading within courses on the Holocaust. In 2006, Oprah Winfrey broadened its impact and reach to the American public remarkably by including it in her book club. Among Wiesel's many novels and fictional portrayals of the Holocaust, perhaps the most compelling is *The Gates of the Forest* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966). Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy* (New York: Grove Press, 1964) caused a sensation by portraying through drama the silence of Pope Pius XII concerning news of the Holocaust. Arthur Morse's *While Six Million Died* (New York: Random House, 1968) was particularly influential in indicting the Roosevelt administration for its failure to rescue.
  69. The fullest treatment of the Bitburg affair may be found in Geoffrey Hartman, ed., *Bitburg in Moral and Historical Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), passim.
  70. Robert Alter, "Deformations of the Holocaust," *Commentary*, February 1981, 48–54.
  71. Miller, *One by One*, 232.
  72. Alvin Rosenfeld argued that the American narration of the Holocaust told its story in ways that suited the optimistic temperament of Americans and American society. See Alvin Rosenfeld, "The Americanization of the Holocaust," in Alvin Rosenfeld, ed., *Thinking about the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), ch. 6. For a critique of "Facing History and Ourselves," see Deborah Lipstadt, "Not Facing History," *The New Republic*, 6 March 1995.
  73. Greenberg's remarks were delivered in a lecture to the Hadassah National Board for Yom Ha-shoah in April 1981.
  74. Ruth Wisse, *If I Am Not for Myself* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 44.
  75. *Ibid.*, 144.
  76. See, e.g., Eric Fingerhut, "Rounding Up Opinions on Obama in Cairo," *JTA*, 4 June 2009.
  77. For a summary of this debate, see Steven Bayme, "Jewish Organizational Responses to Inter-marriage: A Policy Perspective," in Roberta Farber and Chaim Waxman, eds., *Jews in America* (Hanover, NH, and London: Brandeis University Press, 1998), 151–62.
  78. Jonathan Sarna, "Preface," *Non-Jews in the Jewish Community* (New York: AJC, 2009), v.
  79. Rubin, "Eden Temple." See also Julie Wiener, "The Last Taboo: Inter-married Rabbis," *New York Jewish Week*, 5 June 2009, 22.
  80. Steven M. Cohen, "Seeking a Third Way to Respond to the Challenge of Inter-marriage," address to the CCAR, Convention, 31 March 2008, kindly lent to me by the author.
  81. Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism*, 178–79. The Jewish Agency experienced firsthand how normative Jewish values concerning mixed marriage had become too culturally offensive in Diaspora circles when it had to withdraw an advertisement warning of potential losses to the Jewish people through mixed marriage. Associated Press, 10 September 2009.
  82. Paper by Dru Greenwood, director of outreach, Union for Reform Judaism, conference, Brandeis University, 26 April 2004. I thank the author for kindly sharing a copy of the paper with me.

83. Stewart Ain, "Conservatives End Push to Convert Intermarrieds," *New York Jewish Week*, 8 July 2009.
84. Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Double or Nothing?* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 148–49.
85. See the remarks of Irwin Kula, copresident, CLAL, cited in "Maverick Rabbi: Don't Resist Intermarriage," *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent*, 18 June 2009. Contrast the position of Union for Reform Judaism president Eric Yoffie on the need to maintain certain boundaries, Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism*, 173.
86. Marvin Schick, *A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States, 2008–2009* (New York: Avi-Chai, 2009), see tables on pages 6–7. Significantly this marks an increase of nearly 50 percent from the data for non-Orthodox high schools reported in 2005. For the earlier data, see Schick, *A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States, 2003–2004* (New York: Avi-Chai, 2005), see tables on pp. 6–7.
87. For a description of the *Jewish Catalog* series, see Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 320–21. See also Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism*, 156.
88. See the interview with Greenberg and Steinhardt in *Contact*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 3–8.
89. Michael Steinhardt, "My Challenge: Toward a Post-Denominational Common Judaism," *Contact*, vol. 7, no. 4 (Summer 2005): 14.
90. David Ellenson, "Thoughts on American Jewish Denominationalism Today," in Zachary I. Heller, ed., *Synagogues in a Time of Change* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2009), 74.
91. Steven M. Cohen, "Non-Denominational and Post-Denominational," *Contact*, vol. 7, no. 4 (Summer 2005): 7–8.
92. Surprisingly, these debates are often dismissed as petty or trivial. See, e.g., Sanford Cardin, "A Personal Reflection on Contemporary Trends in American Judaism," in Heller, *Synagogues*, 186.
93. Jonathan Woocher, "Jewish Education: Postdenominationalism and the Continuing Influence of Denominations," in *ibid.*, 143.
94. Steven Bayme, "Foreword," in Wertheimer, *All Quiet?* v–vii.
95. Jonathan Tobin, "The Madoff Scandal and the Future of American Jewry," *Commentary*, February 2009, 11–14. See also Jonathan Sarna, "The American Jewish Community in Crisis and Transformation," *Contact*, vol. 11, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 5–6.
96. Manfred Gerstenfeld, Interview with Daniel Pipes, "The End of American Jewry's Golden Era," *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*, 20, 2 May 2004.
97. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007), *passim*.