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THE RENEWED JEWISH COMMUNITY OF SPAIN

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The Rebirth of Jewish Life

Today, after five centuries of Jewish invisibility and virtual absence, Spain is witness to a rebirth of Jewish life. The Spanish Jewish community is unique in its thoroughly contemporary nature and development set against its tremendous historical legacy. Spanish Jewry feels pride and connection to the historical accomplishments and contributions made by Jews to Spanish civilization, prior to the 1492 Edict of Expulsion. Despite the force of Jewish history in Spain, it is not the past but the present, modern-day infusion of Jews drawn from around the world which fuels Spanish Jews to propel themselves forward.

Modern Spanish Jewry was born in recent decades from a handful of immigrants trickling into the country, mostly from harsher political climates. The new Spanish Jews faced the task of building a community with no foundation other than that

which they imported from their own backgrounds. The result is a community composed of very diverse Jewish cultural experiences and identities, with a significant influence by individual leaders and personalities shaping the new Jewish presence in Spain. Contemporary Spanish Jewry combines elements of nearly all strands of Jewish tradition. This creates a climate of cross-cultural cooperation, as well as conflict and confusion.

Although the organized Jewish community is predominantly influenced by Sephardi tradition, the Jewish population as a whole is a mixture of Ashkenazi and Sephardi people from Europe, North and South America, North Africa, and the Middle East. Despite its relatively small size (Spain's Jewish population is estimated at 12,000), this microcosm of the Jewish world generates a dynamic vitality, full of the promise and tension inherent in its multi-faceted nature, all set in a con-

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temporary Spanish context.

Jews coming to Spain this century found a society largely ignorant of contemporary Jewish culture and people, due to their relative isolation from Jews since the Expulsion. This lack of exposure for the Spaniards bred both misperceptions and curiosity about the Jewish people. As a religious minority in a Catholic state, the Jews have been instrumental in the development of religious freedom in Spain. Nevertheless, they are conscious of their minority status and cautious of how vocal or visible they should be.

Foundation and Settlement

Jews began to resettle in Spain during the second half of the nineteenth century, however the contemporary Jewish community in Spain was formed primarily by immigrants arriving in the twentieth century. Jewish immigration came in three major groupings. The first wave began with World War I, but really surged during the political changes surrounding World War II. By 1924, Spanish Jewry was estimated at 2,000 with the majority split between Barcelona and Madrid. Barcelona had a synagogue since before World War I, and Madrid has had one since 1917. The two communities were emerging as the centers of Jewish activity in Spain. In the 1930s, new laws simplified naturalization for Sephardim (especially those made stateless where they were living) and extended Spanish protection to the Sephardim of Greece, Turkey, Egypt and Morocco. An estimated 2-3,000 refugees (mostly from Germany) were absorbed into Madrid and Barcelona. During this time, the two major communities began to organize and develop. Community life revolved around the synagogue and congregational membership. Most of the community originated from Central and Eastern Europe, but there were also Jews from Western Europe and Mediterranean countries living in Barcelona.

Under Franco's rule, Spain's policies towards Jewish refugees during World War II helped to save tens of thousands of Jews from Nazi Europe. Relief work included providing escape routes through Spanish ports; liberating Jews from Nazi camps and occupied territory; and facilitating the transport and absorption of Jews directly into Spain.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Jews of Madrid and Barcelona reopened the synagogues which had been closed during the war. Community development resumed and continued to be centered around the synagogue. In 1951, the Jewish population of Spain was estimated at 8,000. Between 1955 and 1960, the second significant wave of immigrants came to settle

in Spain following the independence of Morocco in 1956. The North African Sephardim rapidly became absorbed and involved in community life, rising to positions of leadership during the 1960s and to a large extent dominating the organized community in the 1970-80s. Following this wave, the 1970s brought the third major group of Jews to Spain, from Latin America. The predominantly Ashkenazi Jews of Latin America came mostly from Argentina and Equador, and also from Chile and Paraguay. The Latin American immigrants became more integrated in secular activities, and developed Jewish cultural and intellectual circles outside of the organized, religious community.

Especially since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Spain and Israel in 1986, a number of Israelis have moved to Spain. The Israelis often come for diplomatic, commercial and academic work. Some are Latin American immigrants to Israel who decided to move to Spain after several years in Israel. The Israelis tend to form social groups with each other; few become involved in organized community life, although some teach Hebrew or send children to the Jewish school.

The current population of the "official" Jewish community (that is, registered or affiliated members of the synagogues or other organizations) in Spain is estimated at 12,000. Barcelona and Madrid are thought to have up to 3,000 affiliated members, and a "considerable amount" of unaffiliated Jews as well. In addition, about 4,000 Jews are thought to be scattered among Seville, Malaga, Cadiz, Valencia, Granada, and other cities.

Most Spanish Jews have visited Israel, often several times. Emigration to Israel is high among young adults (individuals and couples in their 20s), leaving a young leadership gap between the youth (students) and the established leaders. The aliyah of Spanish Jews, however, is often temporary, with Jews returning to Spain after living in Israel for up to ten years. Among the Sephardim especially, there is an apparent tendency for the younger generation to spend several years studying at French, British, and American universities. This also contributes to a young leadership gap, as professional opportunities or marriage abroad lead to an out-migration of young adults.

Countrywide Jewish Organizations

The structure of Spain's Jewish community is predominately based around local congregations, especially in Madrid and Barcelona. These and other congregational communities in Spain coordinate and communi-

cate with one another directly and through countrywide organizations. The largest, most established countrywide organizations are: the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain (FCI), Federacion WIZO-Espana, and B'nai B'rith. The FCI is a government-like institution which serves as a coordinating and representative body for all the Jewish communities of Spain. Federacion WIZO-Espana and B'nai B'rith are general purpose, mass-based organizations which address political, social and cultural issues. The two organizations are gender specific, offering women and men separate social and leadership opportunities. All of these countrywide structures are based in Madrid. This is not only the function of initiatives by individual Jewish leaders in Madrid, but also because of the capital city itself. All the relevant government ministries are based in Madrid, as are embassies (including the Israeli Embassy). It is a practical center for countrywide activity.

The FCI represents the communities in the countrywide arena (to the Spanish government), and in the world arena (to world Jewish organizations and to Israel). It is the countrywide network of Jewish communities (and in effect, congregations) in Spain, responsible for overall communal welfare, community relations, and external relations. One of the biggest internal problems of the FCI, according to its Secretary-General, is how to reach the small Jewish communities in Spain. As indicated above, most Jewish activity centers around Madrid and Barcelona. However, small communities of only 10-20 Jewish families, scattered around the country, are often isolated from Jewish resources and activity. The FCI, in an attempt to extend the resources of the two large communities, has proposed to send emissaries out to meet the needs of these isolated clusters of families. As such, leaders and junior rabbis from Madrid and Barcelona would visit the small communities, bringing religious, cultural and Zionist education to those families in need of Jewish support.

Local Organization: Congregations and Cultural Centers

In the local arena, organized Jewish communal life revolves around the synagogue, which serves as a house of worship as well as a community center. Local congregational community centers are multi-functional as synagogues and as facilities for most of the organized Jewish activity spanning all spheres. Congregations provide religious ritual services, Jewish education and training, social and welfare services, and political-civic

management of the Jewish community. The term "Jewish community" refers to the organized group of Jews who belong to the synagogue as paid members or as regular participants in community activities, be it through religious services or organized congregational activity.

There are many Jews living in Spain today who do not fit into this definition of "the Jewish community." According to the congregational community leadership, these are "lost Jews," assimilated and unidentified as Jews. However, many of these so-called "lost" Jews have found alternative ways to identify and express themselves as Jews, or are seeking to do so. In particular, the Jews who are not involved with religious or congregational activity but seek to maintain their Jewishness often do so through intellectual and cultural activity organized outside the congregation. As a result, there are at least two streams of Jewish life in the local arena. The first and more developed stream is the congregational community structure, centered around the synagogue and dominated by those Jews who built (or whose families built) the community structure and institutions, basically since the middle of the twentieth century. The second and less established stream attempts to provide an alternative to the congregational structure. Highly decentralized, it is characterized by intellectual and cultural individuals and groups who have emerged in Spain during the last two decades.

The Madrid and Barcelona communities began their early organizational development in the 1930s, but the onset of World War II led to the suspension of much Jewish activity in Spain. Consequently, the real progress in creating an organizational infrastructure occurred after the war. Today, both Madrid and Barcelona offer Sephardi and Ashkenazi religious services in the synagogues, known as the "Comunidad Israelita de Madrid" (CIM) and the "Comunidad Israelita de Barcelona" (CIB). Each congregation has a rabbi and *hazzan*. The communities have kosher butchers, and both congregations offer a range of educational, social, Zionist and cultural programs.

There are Jewish day schools in Madrid, Barcelona, and Malaga, attended by children from various communal and traditional backgrounds. There are also two Jewish summer camps and two cemeteries, outside Madrid and Barcelona. Adult Jewish educational opportunities exist through the CIM and CIB, as well as through academic channels and institutions. Courses in Hebrew and Jewish studies are taught at the Universidad Complutense (Madrid) and the Universitat Autònoma (Barcelona). In addition, Madrid's Instituto de

Benito Arias Montano carries out higher research in Hebrew, Arabic and Sephardi culture.

Madrid also has a Center of Jewish-Christian Studies which offers courses, seminars, and a library designed to fight ignorance and antisemitism through education. The Center is the outgrowth of an Association of Jewish-Christian Friendship, which launched an important campaign of Spanish textbook revision in order to edit out the antisemitic and derogatory references to Jews.

In the 1980s, the Latin Americans began to develop loose organizational structures outside of the synagogue-centered community. Seeking an intellectual and cultural expression of Jewish identity, they formed "Circulos de Reflexion," small and diverse groups that meet semi-regularly to consider topics and themes relating to contemporary Jewish identity.

A Spanish Jewish cultural magazine, *Raíces* (Roots), was launched from Madrid by an Argentinian Jew in the mid-1980s. The magazine has a circulation of several thousand, many of whom are non-Jews, and is distributed in Spain and abroad. *Raíces* provides an important forum for diverse Jewish voices and points of view. The magazine includes articles, essays, reviews and interviews, on topics of intellectual and cultural Jewish interest, similarly to the *Circulos de Reflexion*.

Barcelona's recently established Baruch Spinoza Center is another example of a cultural initiative designed to provide an organizational alternative to the traditional, congregation-based community structure. The Center functions independently from the CIB, in a separate building, where it provides resources and facilitates Jewish cultural events for the Jewish and general public.

Intercommunity Dynamics: Madrid and Barcelona

There is an undercurrent of competition in each community's claim to their synagogue being the older one. Actually, while Barcelona's synagogue predates Madrid's, the CIM in Madrid was the first officially sanctioned synagogue built in Spain since 1350. To a large extent, the Madrid Jewish community considers itself the center of Spanish Jewry. This self-perception is augmented by its pivotal role in countrywide Jewish organizations and by its involvement with the Spanish government and the Israeli Embassy, all located in the city.

From Barcelona's perspective, the potentially dominant position of Madrid in countrywide affairs is a subject of sensitivity, if not slight resentment. The

Jews of Barcelona are eager to identify themselves as equal co-founders of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain. Furthermore, the distinctive features of Jewish life in Catalan Spain reinforce Barcelona's pride and self-image as an influential Jewish community, in no way subordinate to Madrid. The Catalan cultural identity is strongly asserted throughout Barcelona and the region. Because of their vibrant spirit against oppression and discrimination, the Catalan people sometimes call themselves "the Jews of Spain." The regional pride of Catalonia contributes to the drive for recognition by the Barcelona community, and partially accounts for the Barcelona Jews' sensitivity regarding the centrality of Madrid in Spain's Jewish community structure.

Other Spanish Jewish Communities

In addition to the relatively large and developed communities of Madrid and Barcelona, there are also Jews living in several other cities spread across Spain, including: Malaga, Marbella, the Canary Islands (Tenerife, Las Palmas), Valencia, Alicante, Sevilla, Cadiz and Granada. These Jewish communities, or rather clusters of 10-20 Jewish families, are small and diverse. The communities are relatively isolated from Jewish contact and resources, with little communal infrastructure to meet the needs of the few families they might serve. Each community has its own characteristics, generally reflective of the overall circumstances of the town or region. For example, Granada is largely a university town. Its Jewish residents are a handful of young adults and families, graduates of the university, who came to Granada for academic study or the professions.

Malaga's Jewish community is largely comprised of wealthy English (and Continental European) Jews who come seasonally for the warm weather. They maintain homes in Spain, but a significant part of the community is transient. Still, Malaga (together with nearby Marbella) is the third largest Jewish community in Spain, with a synagogue, a Jewish school, and some organizational development.

While Cordoba and Toledo are not significant centers of contemporary Jewish life, their historic and symbolic importance are noteworthy in the context of contemporary Spanish Jewry. Twentieth century Spanish interest in Maimonides has directed attention towards Cordoba, the home of Maimonides, as an important city for Spanish Jews. Cordoba has a statue of Maimonides, erected in 1964. Nationwide commemorations celebrating the achievements and contributions of Maimonides to Spanish civilization were held in

1935, 1985, and 1988. An ancient synagogue building also exists in Cordoba.

Toledo is often referred to as the "Jerusalem of Spain" because of its historic and symbolic importance to the three religions of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Today, Toledo is the home of "el Museo Sefardi," a very small museum devoted to Sephardi history and culture, which is attached to the beautiful and recently renovated Transito Synagogue and *mikve*. The museum also contains a Sephardi study center and library, with a collection of literature and rare texts. No Jews live in Toledo today, although a kosher restaurant run by a man from Madrid exists in the "juderia" (the old Jewish neighborhood), largely as a tourist attraction.

Organizational Relations with Israel

Until the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1986, much of Spanish-Israeli relations were conducted through the Jewish communities, and through private organizations promoting Spanish-Israeli friendship and cultural exchange. As an organizational legacy, these associations still exist and continue to promote Israeli-Spanish cultural relations. The associations are under the coordinating umbrella of the Instituto Cultural Israel Ibero-America based in Jerusalem, under the direction of Netanel Lorch, President, and Gabi Levy, Director General, both former Israeli ambassadors to Latin America. The most active associations in Spain are the Asociacion de Relaciones Culturales Cataluna-Israel (ARCCI) based in Barcelona since 1973, and the Amistad Espana-Israel based in Madrid since 1982. In addition, there are similar but smaller associations for cultural relations between Israel and Valencia, las Canarias, Baleares, and Navarra.

Since 1986 when the Israeli Embassy opened in Madrid, Spanish-Israeli relations have developed through normal diplomatic channels. Several agreements have been made between the two countries covering cultural exchange, scientific and technological cooperation, and free trade. In Spain, Israel is perceived as a technologically advanced country with considerable scientific resources from which Spain could benefit. In recent years, Israel has attempted to improve its media image in Spain, which has been traditionally unfavorable. Due to the relative ignorance of Spanish society about Jews, the Israeli Embassy finds itself engaged in public relations and general education about Jewish culture and Israeli society.

Leadership Dynamics

The early leaders of Spain's Jewish community were European refugees whose leadership style reflected personal drive, determination, and a keen survival instinct. In the aftermath of World War II, Jewish organizational and communal infrastructure in Spain was established with a deep-rooted desire to preserve the remnants and the future of European Jewry. The efforts made by the European leaders to improve and develop religious freedom and the legal status of Jews in Spain grew from a primary concern with Jewish security and establishment in their new country. Their priorities were to consolidate their security and position, establish Jewish communal structures, and reconstruct their personal and professional lives.

The Europeans were both Sephardi and Ashkenazi, without too much conflict between traditions. Subgroups existed and tended to stick together (according to country and linguistic origin), but there was no major division between Ashkenazim and Sephardim. After this first wave of European immigrants, Spain absorbed a second wave of Jewish immigrants from Spanish Morocco. The influx of the Spanish Moroccan Jews, bringing with them affluence and significant influence, marked a "Sephardi shift" in the direction of Spanish Jewish community development.

The Spanish Moroccans had maintained strong ties to Spain for literally centuries. For many, there was a sense of "returning home," about which they felt a mixture of familiarity, righteousness, and uncertainty. They integrated quickly into what there was of the European established Jewish communal structures, and soon challenged the authority of the early leaders.

Here marks the beginning of what is sometimes referred to as a division between Ashkenazim and Sephardim in Spain. Actually, the political struggles for communal power were more reflective of historical circumstance, individual ambition, and family pride, than of the ability to speak Yiddish or Ladino.

Among the Moroccan Sephardim were several prominent families whose ancestry boasts direct lineage to the Golden Age of Spain, followed by a long list of Jewish leaders ever since. The heritage they brought with them on their "return" to Spain also included a good deal of rivalry, competition, and passion for Sephardi life.

By the time the Jewish community was more or less dominated by Spanish Moroccan immigrants, political

clashes were rampant, not only between the early European leaders and the new Sephardim, but also between different families and feuding sub-groups from Morocco. Although the self-proclaimed motto of one Jewish leader is "unity above everything," the political reality is far from it.

While the European and Moroccan Jewish leaders came to Spain with different, often conflicting, orientations, the arena for political struggle remained within the congregational community structure surrounding the synagogue. When the Latin Americans arrived, a new political dynamic was thrust into the scene, reflecting more cultural and circumstantial differences.

Unlike the Jews fleeing religious persecution in Europe, or the Sephardim "returning" to Spain from potentially dangerous conditions in Morocco, the Latin American Jews came to Spain for political reasons hardly related to their Jewish identity. For the most part, they came to Spain because of the language and the promise of economic opportunity. The Latin American Jews came from secular, integrated, upper-middle-class families; mostly educated and professionally successful in academia, science, psychology, architecture and the arts; with little hesitancy about intermarriage or active Jewish involvement in a non-Jewish world. When they arrived in Spain, they found a Jewish community centered around religious tradition, dominated by Sephardi Moroccan families, and beset with internal political struggles for power. The Latin Americans did not see where or how they could fit into the Jewish community as it was structured, nor did they particularly desire to do so.

The political orientation of the Latin Americans had been to oppose the rigid (and in their experience, oppressive) structures of authority. As a result, they were inclined to avoid the established, formal Jewish organizational life, and to pursue more individual, cultural and intellectual forms of Jewish identity. To the Latin Americans, the newly-established Jewish community appeared close-minded and unwelcoming to alternative ways of being Jewish. To them, the religious community seemed firmly set in its ways, hesitant and unreceptive to outsiders, and ultimately insecure about their status in Spain and cautious in their relations with non-Jews. Likewise, the established Jewish community saw the Latin American Jews as disinterested, distant, and assimilated.

The perception of Latin American Jews as "outsiders" to the Jewish community is not only reinforced by their relative absence at religious services, but also by assumptions about their political orientation. Comments

from community leadership about the Latin Americans include: "They are very left wing and so they have lost their Jewish identity," and "The Argentinians are not Zionists; they are communist!" Toward the end of 1989, however, a breakthrough meeting of sorts occurred at the CIM, bringing together for the first time leaders, organizers, and participants of both the CIM and the Circulo de Reflexion in Madrid for a cultural evening to discuss Jewish intellectuals of the twentieth century.

Jewish Identity, Assimilation and Integration

The congregational community leadership defines a Jew in accordance with *halakhah*, as "any person born of a Jewish mother." In practice, the definition is more narrow, excluding Jews outside of the more traditional patterns of participation in the religious and congregational spheres. The "Jews of Spain" usually refers only to those Jews who are registered as paid members of the synagogue and organized community. These Jews express their identity through religious observance, practice, education, and family life.

The Sephardim, in particular, express their Jewish identity through traditional religious observance and strong commitment to Jewish history. This drive to conserve and preserve traditional forms of Jewish identity reflects the Sephardi experience and religious orientation. Among the Sephardim there is little incidence of intermarriage with non-Jews. They are integrated with Spanish society through professional involvement (primarily in trade, commerce, and business), however social integration is limited. This is due largely to Jewish social opportunities resulting from family involvement in the synagogue and with other Jewish families.

Outside of the Moroccan Sephardim, the patterns of Jewish participation are very different. High rates of intermarriage occur, reflecting wider social and professional integration in Spanish society. In most cases, Jewish intermarriage and integration into Spanish society does not necessarily indicate assimilation or repudiation, as many intermarried Jews maintain Jewish identity through community involvement, organizational affiliation, and Jewish education and culture.

Many of the Latin American Jews intermarry, but send their children to Jewish day school. Very few are members of the synagogue or the organized Jewish community. The initiatives of *Raices*, the *Circulos de Reflexion*, and the Baruch Spinoza Center are manifestations of their struggle for alternative but meaningful Jewish identity.

Spanish Perceptions of Jewish Identity

Outside the Jewish community, Spaniards know very little about contemporary Jewry. The impression of the contemporary Jewish community in Spain is that of a closed, secretive, ritualistic community of very wealthy, politically influential Jews. Since the Spanish word for Jew, *judío/a*, is often used interchangeably with *israelita* (meaning literally "Israelite"), there is confusion about the distinction between Jew and Israeli.

Almost all Spaniards claim to have some "Jewish blood" in their ancestry. Often, a Spanish person will reveal that one of their ancestral names is a "Jewish" name, and that they are therefore "Jewish!" It is sometimes considered chic for Spaniards to emphasize this ancestral identity, even though they may know virtually nothing about Judaism. Ironically, claiming Jewish ancestry has not only become fashionable, but also a means to show how ancient and deep one's Spanish roots are. According to this logic, if a Spaniard descends from a Jew, his or her Spanish ancestry must precede the Inquisition. Asserting "Jewish" identity becomes a way to authenticating true Spanish identity!

Antisemitism and Philosemitism

The foundation for Spanish antisemitism is deeply rooted in Spanish history, predating the Inquisition. Indeed, one could argue that antisemitism is even embedded into the Spanish language. Historically, the word for converted Jew, *marrano*, means "filthy, dirty, pig, swine." Another word still used today, *judiada*, means "deceitful trick, foul or unfair play."

Early this century, Jews became the subject of literary interest in Spain. Several antisemitic books were published ironically coinciding with a wave of philosemitic writings. Like antisemitism, philosemitism also singles out Jews as different on the basis of generalized assumptions and stereotypes. Although intended as a complementary way to distinguish Jews, philosemitism may also be harmful. For example, a news article on the vastness of Jewish wealth and power in Spain, intended as a statement of admiration, may easily be interpreted as antisemitic propaganda.

One Jewish leader described the situation today regarding antisemitism as follows: "We have good news and bad news. The good news is that we have no social antisemitism in Spain. The bad news is, it has been replaced with political antisemitism!" Social antisemitism, such as restrictive membership in clubs, professions, or universities, is practically non-existent in Spain. However, contemporary antisemitism is complicated by the contemporary phenomena of political anti-

semitism, or anti-Zionism. Anti-Zionism flared at the outset of the intifada (the Arab uprising that began in the late 1980s), but subsided as diplomatic relations between Spain and Israel developed. The confusion in Spanish between *israelita* and *judío/a* reinforces the antisemitic implications of anti-Zionism.

Much of the antisemitism in Spain is the function of clear ignorance and misinformation. For example, an ignorant Spaniard might make insensitive comments such as "The Jews all left Spain because of crimes they had committed," or "Who knows the truth about whether or not Jews died in the Holocaust? After all, Jews own all the media." Yet the same Spaniard, when confronted with the offensive meaning of such comments, might be sincerely surprised that they were "misunderstood" as antisemitic. After all, he might add, "But I like Jews. I cannot be antisemitic because I am Jewish," revealing his distant Jewish ancestry!

A more disturbing expression of antisemitism was a public poster campaign promoting a new edition of *Mein Kampf* on sale at a Spanish book festival in Madrid in June 1990. Large portraits of Adolf Hitler were plastered on walls throughout Madrid, with the words: "Read Hitler's Bestseller: *Mein Kampf*!" A similar poster campaign celebrated Hitler's birthday. While these campaigns by no means represent mainstream public opinion (they were organized by extreme right-wing factions), what was perhaps most disconcerting was the response of silence and the absence of opposition to such virulent antisemitism. Not only was there no apparent response from the society at large, but there was none from the Jewish community as well. As the Jewish community becomes more confident to assert its identity and concerns publicly, perhaps the extent of ignorance, both antisemitic and philosemitic, will dissipate.

Current Trends and Directions

Without exception, when asked about the future of Spanish Jewry, Jewish leaders expressed concern about the young generation. One Jewish leader summed up the sentiments of many when he said, "We had the challenge of building a community. To our children we leave the more difficult task of maintaining it."

The young generation of Jews, those born in Spain, have different motivations and opportunities than those of previous generations, which influences their approach to the Spanish Jewish community. Young Spanish Jews are raised with greater opportunities for integration, assimilation, and non-traditional forms of Jewish identity. They have more possibilities of academic and

professional training, Jewish education and aliyah, religious freedom, social acceptance and advancement, interdating and intermarriage. Furthermore, advanced telecommunications and transportation put before them the entire spectrum of diaspora and Zionist choices. Unlike their parents and grandparents, they are not directly motivated by survival, nor by the drive to salvage and preserve European Jewry in the ashes of the Holocaust. They do not look towards the "return" to Spain after a brutally imposed exile, nor to the (re)building of Jewish life in Spain; after all, they were born into it.

The motivating factors of young people for active involvement in the organized Jewish community stem primarily from: religious commitment, family heritage, and Zionism. Religious commitment and weight of family heritage seem to be strongest among first-generation Sephardi Spaniards, descendants of the Moroccan immigrants. Family heritage also becomes important for young parents who may not be very religious but want to pass on Jewish tradition to their children. Among those motivated by Zionism, many leave for Israel on aliyah or for extended periods of study. Of those who return from Israel, unless they are very religious, most do not reenter the organized Jewish community.

As it is currently structured and oriented, the Spanish Jewish community is, at best, not growing. High emigration and diminished motivation of the youth are the main reasons behind a decline in numbers. But the community structure and orientation may be a cause of stagnation as well. The congregational community structures must be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the Jews they seek to serve. The alternative threatens to be a stagnant institution which alienates Jews whose contemporary identity is no longer represented by community leadership. The cultural initiatives of the Spinoza Center, *Raices*, and the *Circulos de Reflexion* may contribute to the alternative options

available for Jews who want to affiliate and identify as Jews, but who do not fit into the conventional community mold.

Another initiative providing a wide range of opportunity for Spanish Jews emerged in the commotion surrounding Sefarad '92, the 500th Anniversary of the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain. To commemorate the history of Jews in Spain, the tragedy of the Expulsion, and the glory of Sephardi culture, many events were organized to celebrate Sefarad '92. The opportunity for public educational, social, and cultural programs was tremendous. Unfortunately, several factors may have hampered the overall effectiveness of Sefarad '92, including an economic recession, competing international events in Spain, and internal political quarrels among Spanish and international Jewish leaders. Still, many worthy projects undertaken have made the year a memorable and historic one for Spanish Jewry.

Hopefully, Sefarad '92 will lead to greater public awareness of Jewish history in Spain, Sephardi culture, and contemporary Jewish life in Spain. The consequences of an educated, sensitized Spanish public might include a decrease in antisemitism and an increase in Spanish identification with Jews. These potential trends would not only benefit the Jewish community of Spain, but Spanish-Israeli relations, and Spanish-world Jewry relations as well.

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Diana Ayton-Shenker is a student of the renewed Jewish community of Spain. This *Jerusalem Letter* is based on a more complete study undertaken by the author as part of Round Two of the Jerusalem Center's multi-decade Study of Jewish Community Organization. The full version of her study is due to appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Jewish Political Studies Review*.