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## REINVENTING WORLD JEWRY — PART ONE: FUNDAMENTALS, TASKS AND FUNCTIONS

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[Editor's Note: This two-part *Jerusalem Letter* outlines the institutional and functional basis of the world Jewish polity today and proposes an institutional basis for restructuring the world Jewish arena based on the tasks and functions it must be prepared to undertake. It is based on a larger study, *Reinventing World Jewry*, prepared by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, which was originally commissioned by the Jewish Agency for Israel during the terms of Board of Governors Chairman Mendel Kaplan and Chairman of the Executive Simcha Dinitz. A revised and expanded version of the full study is available from the Jerusalem Center.]

### Introduction

World Jewry is at a turning point. This is an unmistakable aspect of the mid-1990s regardless of

whether one appreciates the opportunities of the future or regrets the loss of past arrangements. In some respects, Jews are pulled in both directions, but the fact itself is unmistakable.

Look at the record of this decade so far. The last great Jewish community in distress has opened up, both for the freedom of Jews to live Jewishly in their countries of origin and the freedom to emigrate elsewhere. Israel has entered into a peace process with the Palestinians, Jordan and Syria which, in turn, has opened the doors to the state's full acceptance by the rest of the world. Israel's economy entered a period of very rapid growth.

On the other hand, assimilation and intermarriage in the diaspora reached new highs. The struggle between those who want Israel to abandon its Jewish character and become a "normal" state and those who want it to remain a Jewish state

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connected to the Jewish people worldwide, took on new intensity. In the last analysis, the Jewish world is dividing into two camps: those who seek normalization "like all the nations" and those who seek the way to perpetuate and cultivate Jewish civilization.

All of this has had pronounced effects on organized Jewish life whether in Israel, in the organized Jewish communities of the diaspora, or in the world Jewish organizations which link the two. The response of the leadership in all three spheres has been to foster constitutional change, restructuring, and reorganization:

- In 1992, Israel's Knesset changed its Basic Law to provide for the direct election of the prime minister and added Basic Laws establishing clear human rights protections under the constitution and expanding the judicial review of other branches of government.

- Two years later the victory of a new slate in the Histadrut elections led to a major reorganization of that venerable institution and Israel's health care system was reorganized.

- The Jewish Agency for Israel was restructured internally to expand its Board of Governors, to change the organization and governance of the departments, and even to transfer traditional tasks to the Israeli government.

- In the United States, American Jewry entered into a process of restructuring that points toward a consolidation of the Council of Jewish Federations, the United Jewish Appeal, and the United Israel Appeal into a new broad-based organization that could speak in the name of American Jewry in new ways.

- In the former Soviet Union, organized Jewish communities sprang up throughout the country as soon as it became permissible for Jews to organize freely.

- European Jewry as a whole has begun to explore new continent-wide intercommunity contacts.

In the wake of all of these and similar developments in other countries, world Jewry as a whole has begun to face the prospect of reinventing itself as old tasks and functions have become obsolete and new ones now demand attention.

In the larger study, we address the great practical questions of governance, which are:

1. What should be done?
2. Who should do it?
3. How should it be done?
4. In many cases, where should it be done?
5. For or to whom?
6. Who should pay for it?
7. How should those involved in the foregoing work together to achieve common tasks?

Increasingly, the last is one of the most important questions. There is evidence that at least since the beginning of the modern epoch, with the growing interdependence of peoples and their institutions and societies, it has become even more complex.

### Some Fundamentals

There is a world Jewish polity that is identifiable as such. It serves a Jewish population that has organized itself into a series of concentric circles, willy-nilly, consisting of all those in the world who subjectively define themselves as Jews or who are recognized as Jews by their respective communities. It is activated by those who are in some way affiliated with organized Jewry through some organization or institution and is led by those who are active in Jewish life in some way.

Those who are so connected, active in, or follow the activities of the organizations or institutions of the world Jewish polity do so on three planes. The first is through Jewishness or identification with the Jewish people. The second is local organizational affiliation with organizations that themselves are parts of the world Jewish network at one or more steps removed. The third consists of those who participate or follow the world Jewish arena.

Because of today's crisis of Jewish identity and survival, whereby the old religious and communal models are no longer compelling for so many people born Jews, a more or at least different associational model may be able to contribute something to the resolution of this problem. At least in part this model can be found through the fostering of a sense of Jewish citizenship, locally, countrywide, and worldwide.

There are several organized means of connecting with the world Jewish polity. The most common are the world associations of local and countrywide organizations. At the heart of the polity, however, are five entities: the government of the State of Israel, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the World Zionist Organization, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the World Jewish Congress.

Many of the connections that hold the world Jewish polity together are non-organizational, including networks that involve international travel and telephoning by Jews to friends and family around the world, reading or watching Jewish printed or visual materials about different communities, ham radio connections and more recently satellites, fax, global Jewish computer communications and the like. All of these are important. Most are independent and few are subject to any kind of hierarchial structuring but remain networks whose

use and entry is dependent upon voluntary choice by individuals.

The past century has seen a growing compression of the world into an ever smaller compass. Not only have travel and communications become easier and more widespread, but interdependence has grown by quantum leaps. This has implications for the Jewish people by increasing the ease of communication among Jews worldwide. The need for that communication is also greater since Jews are located in more places and farther apart geographically than ever before. At the same time, they are able to communicate with each other more easily than ever before and to be in touch with every part of the Jewish world almost instantaneously. More and more have connections throughout the Jewish world, or at least across long distances within it. Increasingly, individual Jews, Jewish families, and Jewish communities are dependent upon resources in other communities, whether it is religious direction from Israel or whether it is just for inspiration from the American Jewish experience, or whether it is an "Israel experience" as a means of strengthening Jewish identity.

Despite the plethora of organizations and organizational activities, a majority of world Jewry seem to be unaware of them. For most Jews, knowledge of their local involvements is all they know about organized Jewish life, if that. In some cases, they also know about the countrywide confederations of organizations to which their local bodies, or the equivalent, belong. Relatively few even know of the existence of most of the institutions and organizations that guide the world Jewish polity and have even less knowledge of what they do, who their leaders are, and how they spend the funds available to them. It is a constant effort to acquaint them with even the bare minimum of knowledge required for anything that might be described as citizenship. A deliberate and assertive effort must be made to develop that sense of citizenship and provide the knowledge upon which it must rest. It may be that even the emotional base will have to be strengthened because of the problems of assimilation abroad in the Jewish world today.

Nevertheless, an institutional structure has developed and has generated a network of linkages more or less involving most of the existing organizations and institutions. World Jewry functions even if its functioning is not widely understood by the Jews of the world. While a continuing effort must be made to acquaint more Jews with it, it will continue to function. Those involved in it must help it to function with the maxi-

mum possible democracy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Not only is this necessary for the health of the Jewish people and its body politic, but it has become increasingly reasonable in a world that has become far more interconnected than ever before, where dispersed groups survive primarily by formal association and identification and all the informal elements that are part of both. Moreover, the world is more accepting of such phenomena as ethnicity that crosses state borders, national sentiment that is not limited to particular territories, and the existence and maintenance of state-diaspora relationships, all critical components of Jewish peoplehood or nationhood. The Jewish people now has a better opportunity to maintain worldwide unity than it has had since the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE. It is up to the leaders and activists in the Jewish world, those who are connected or can be brought to consciousness of this new reality to make the most of it.

#### **Tasks and Functions of the Polity**

We can identify the following as the tasks and functions that are performed by the institutions which collectively provide the governance of the world Jewish polity.

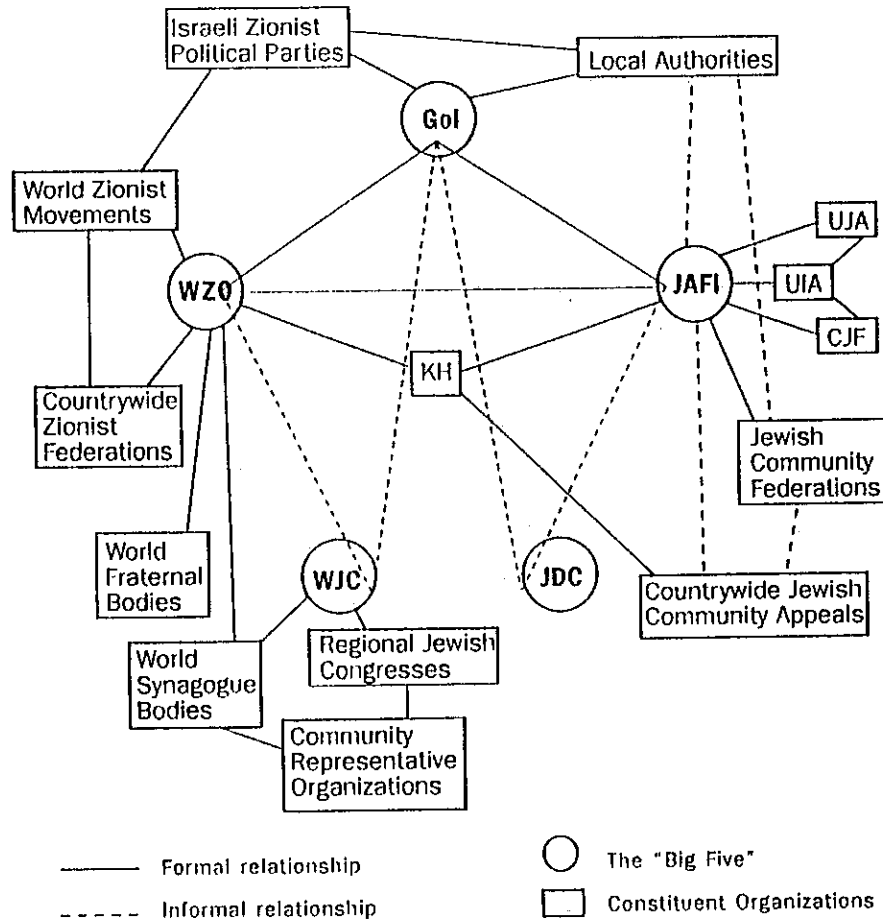
They are:

1. nation-building
2. the development of Israel
3. relief and rescue of Jewish communities in need
4. fighting anti-Semitism
5. representing collective Jewish interests in world affairs
6. mobilization of leadership and activists to undertake these and other functions
7. governance functions in the world Jewish polity
8. assuring that there are appropriate bodies for the carrying on of the functions
9. raising funds to cover the costs of these functions
10. oversight of the organizations and institutions handling the functions
11. developing appropriate inter-organizational relations both among the authorities that comprise the world Jewish polity and the local, countrywide, regional, and worldwide arenas.

#### **Five Major Bodies**

These functions are divided among organizations and institutions operating in four different arenas: local, countrywide, regional, and worldwide, either general purpose governance institutions or institutions and organizations specialized according to interests, territo-

## The "Big Five" and the Other Players



rial communities, subdivisions of the Jewish people, or functions.

The five major bodies of the world Jewish polity are:

1. The government of the State of Israel (Gol)
2. The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI)
3. The World Zionist Organization (WZO)
4. The World Jewish Congress (WJC)
5. The Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)

They are constituted by or dependent on a number of other bodies, including other worldwide organizations, organizations with a certain worldwide character, some regional bodies, and individual country organizations.

To take one example, WJC is dependent upon the representative boards or their equivalents in the countries outside of the United States. There and in some other countries, out of necessity it operates on its own. Thus, for the most part, it is dependent upon the voluntary affiliation of these representative boards and voluntary membership in the other bodies for its

constituency and on them and connected wealthy individuals for its funding.

Or to take another example, Keren Hayesod is nominally a division of the WZO that raises the funds in most of the world upon which the WZO and JAFI are quite dependent. One countrywide Jewish community, that of the United States, has reorganized outside of Keren Hayesod. The functions performed by the KH are performed in the United States by the United Jewish Appeal and the United Israel Appeal, which serve the same backup purposes for JAFI, only with less focus on supporting the WZO and with full responsibility for funding the JDC. The UJA is a creature of two founding partners, the UIA and JDC, and works to collect funds through 200 plus local Jewish community federations. In fact, UJA has only limited responsibility for raising the funds. Most of the money is raised by the local federations coordinated overall by the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF). After funds are raised through the UJA and the local federations, they are transmitted to the two founding partners.

When the funds are transferred to JAFI, oversight functions are placed in the hands of the United Israel Appeal. UIA is responsible for transmitting them to Israel and overseeing the way they are spent. In the other countries, the Jewish community fundraising for JAFI is conducted within the Keren Hayesod framework. Canada is the only major countrywide Jewish community to combine the Keren Hayesod and American systems. In Canada, the local federations raise the funds and transmit them to Canadian United Israel Appeal, which is formally a part of Keren Hayesod but actually quite independent in a manner similar to American UJA. In most countries, Keren Hayesod relies on a combination of external (Israeli) and internal fundraisers who conduct an annual campaign for Israeli (read WZO and JAFI) needs alone.

Each of these inter-organizational arrangements is generally good. Their level of specialization generally is high enough to avoid extensive conflicts. However, cooperation between them often is antagonistic cooperation, at times reflecting a deeper underlying hostility that manifests itself on specific issues.

In addition, while the very top leadership of the Big Five overlaps considerably, as we move down into the lower ranks and out into their supporting organizations, specialization requires individual allocation of time and resources that place limits on other involvements, but in addition, talent, interest, and orientation play their role. Thus there are those leaders and activists who are particularly interested in specific fields of activity.

First of all, leaders of the State of Israel must live in Israel and have chosen to go into Israeli public life, which is party-political.

JAFI has leaders from the two channels of the partnership that govern it. One channel includes fundraisers, philanthropists, and community builders, and the other, political activists. Those who seek to publicly represent the Jewish people and those who represent their organizations are significantly different types of leaders. There is a perennial tension between them that constantly must be overcome in an ad hoc way.

JDC voluntary leadership is essentially American (although the professional staff constitutes a world Jewish civil service), often involving people who either do not have the high interest in Israel or the resources to reach equivalent positions in JAFI, as well as those who are especially interested in relief and rescue operations.

WZO leadership is more overtly political and is divided into four groups: those from Israel who are chosen by their political parties, those from the Zionist

parties outside the United States who often hold leadership positions in their communities as well, those from the old line Zionist parties inside the United States who generally do not because they lack serious constituencies, and those representing organizations relatively newly affiliated with the WZO who do not see themselves as political in the classic party sense. Arza, Arzenu, Merkaz, WIZO, the World Sephardic Federation and the World Maccabi Union, all of which spread beyond the United States, are of the latter type. The fact that the WZO leadership is not monolithic should help encourage cooperation with the other partners.

WJC leadership is much less involved with JAFI, as such. They are primarily interested in Jewish foreign relations (anti-Semitism, Jewish-Christian relations, etc.). Their influence was much greater when the Communist bloc existed and so much of the Third World was closed to Israel. Now that the Communist bloc has collapsed, and opposition to Israel in the Third World has so much diminished, the representatives of the State of Israel undertake many of those tasks, and the WJC has had to search for new ones.

This group of organizations has developed on an ad hoc basis which, in every case, answered to certain objective and subjective needs developed over a period of at least 100 years or in some cases more. As such, it is not going to be easily changed and must serve as a starting point for any realistic changes that are proposed. On paper, the match between organizations and functions is quite good and there should be no problem in making it better. In reality, however, the problem is more difficult, given the demands of leaders for power, prestige, and position which, particularly in this network, often focus on the search for good publicity. This is generally true of the world of politics and voluntary organizations and particularly of Jewish organizations, where the competition for recognition is intense. It makes any rationalization or sorting out of functions especially difficult. Thus any recommendations designed to improve the present arrangements must be framed to consider not only objective issues of structure and function but also the political and psychological issues involved.

### Nation-Building

Among the Big Five, there is a broad general consensus that this is the primary task of the instrumentalities of the world Jewish polity today. For the State of Israel this task is clearly identified with the development of the state, although it has always included the idea of the strengthening of the diaspora as well,

if only for instrumental purposes. Before the establishment of the state and until 1967 those ideas were essentially focused on strengthening Jewish life in the diaspora so as to make diaspora Jews more interested in settling in Israel. Since 1967 it has included a strong component of maintaining Jewish life in the diaspora for its own sake or, in our terms, for the sake of the building and survival of the Jewish nation, read Jewish people.

JAFI was originally founded to serve as the arm of the World Zionist Organization and such diaspora leaders as identified with its purposes in this respect to build the Jewish national home in Eretz Israel. It has since the establishment of the state and most particularly since the reconstitution devoted more time to discussing and even in a sense trying to define nation-building as a joint Israel-diaspora task. While all of its leadership acknowledges that JAFI's primary task is nation-building, in some cases it is hardly more than formal acknowledgment since deep down (and sometimes not so deep) the diaspora leadership still may perceive much of its work as philanthropy, saving Jews in distress, rather than nation-building. We discuss this in more detail in "The UIA-KH-WZO Partnership in JAFI: Options for the Future," the first report in this series.

The WZO and Keren Hayesod, its creature, obviously share the strongest and most Israel-centered definition of nation-building although in fact with the weakened survival capacity of the WZO in the diaspora and the development of Keren Hayesod into a Jewish rather than a Zionist fundraising body, the diaspora leadership of both have in some cases come closer to a diasporist or philanthropic definition of what nation-building is all about.

JDC, among the Big Five, is the least committed to nation-building, whether in Israel or the diaspora, in theory, though in practice it fully shares the nation-building goals of the majority. Originally established as an American philanthropic organization to provide relief and rehabilitation for Jews within their countries of residence, to make them good and productive citizens of those countries, in the early days it not only was in competition with Zionism for funds but also ideologically. Much of its early leadership even opposed the goals of Zionism, even when it undertook relief and rehabilitation operations in Eretz Israel. It took the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust to change that.

Since World War II, JDC has more or less abandoned its emancipationist ideology, although more than any other organization it holds, both formally and

informally, to the idea that Jewish life in the diaspora should be strengthened for those Jews who choose to remain outside of Israel. This remains a source of tension with the State of Israel and JAFI, although operationally their differences are very small. JDC has embraced the idea of the Jewish people, even if it interprets that idea geographically more broadly than the Zionist movement, so the tensions in the partnership are frequently over strategy and tactics rather than goals.

In that respect, the WJC, although its founding was initiated by the WZO, is perhaps the most diasporist of the Big Five organizations, having the least prominent role in Israel and relying heavily on the idea that its main mission is to serve the Jewish people in the diaspora. Still, in the last years it has expanded its mission in Israel as well, through such devices as the initiation of sponsorship of the Israel Council on Foreign Relations. Nevertheless, WJC's diasporism is fully oriented toward Jewish peoplehood as a variant of the nation-building theme which was implanted in the organization at its founding and brought to a high state of development in the days of Nahum Goldmann.

Goldmann and those who surrounded him were old-time diaspora Jewish nationalists. They may have been uncomfortable with many aspects of life in the State of Israel but they saw themselves as, first and foremost, citizens of the Jewish people. Their life-work was conducted very much within that framework, even at a time when the framework itself was breaking down both in Israel and in the New World diasporas, where Jews were accepted as fully equal citizens of the countries in which they found themselves and remained Jews formally by religion and informally as a result of their ethnicity without any national component prominent in their eyes or in the eyes of their fellow countrymen.

Thus nation-building, with its variant of peoplehood, is a strongly shared goal of all five organizations and a primary task for all of them — this means in all of its facets — and all of the Big Five are committed to it as a central proposition of Jewish existence.

### **The Development of Israel**

Whether for nation-building or for philanthropic reasons, every one of the Big Five sees itself as committed to this task which stands as the first and foremost one in its public and undoubtedly in its private self-perceptions. Needless to say, each sees its task in its own way.

Only the State of Israel can conduct those tasks of

governance and self-defense which lie at the bedrock of the development of the State of Israel.

JAFI has its set of tasks revolving around aliya, klita, and rural and urban development. Those are the original tasks of JAFI and while they now share the stage with other nation-building tasks, they remain the primary tasks of JAFI and of those who contribute to the support of JAFI.

The WZO was called into being to build the state and make it possible, and while its tasks today are more diaspora-oriented, they are diaspora-oriented in the name of the development of the State of Israel.

JDC was called into being for purposes of relief and rehabilitation, but among its very first tasks during World War I was to provide relief and rehabilitation for the Jewish population in Eretz Israel at the time, a task which has undergone a number of permutations but which it has never relinquished and which acquired new expression after 1948.

The WJC perhaps has the least in the way of a concrete role with regard to the development of the State of Israel, but it, too, over the years acquired more of one, serving as Israel's entry into regions and countries of the world that were unwilling to develop direct ties with the Jewish state, particularly in the Communist bloc and the Third World during the time when Israel was excluded from direct formal contacts with both.

### **Relief and Rescue of Jewish Communities in Need**

This was the precise reason why the JDC was called into existence and it has always undertaken to do this on diasporist premises; that is to say, Jews may choose to live in the diaspora or not, but if they do so choose, the Jewish people have an obligation to help them live securely and well. As indicated above, before the Holocaust the JDC pursued these aims on an emancipationist basis and since the establishment of the state on a more Israel-oriented diasporist basis. Within the JDC the two trends clashed at the point of transition in the 1940s when the emancipationists wanted to keep the JDC activities in Israel to a minimum and their opponents argued that in view of the JDC's self-assumed mandate to help Jews wherever they were, the Joint had an obligation to help those in Israel as much as those in other countries.

The WZO also entered into this activity as part of its Zionist mission with the purpose of its relief and rehabilitation efforts tied in to the aliya of diaspora Jewry to Israel on the argument that only in Israel could

there be true relief and rehabilitation of Jews. In fact, the WZO was able to do relatively little in this regard because it was basically a political organization without the appropriate welfare and social services structure. Also, it was very identified with a political ideology that was very often rejected by the rulers of the lands where Jews needed the most relief and rehabilitation. Indeed, a great part of JDC's success was achieved by its assuming a profile of being very much non-political and strictly philanthropic. This was easy for JDC's founders, a few of whom in any case wanted the Jews to have much visibility as a political entity on the world scene. As it proved to be functional in terms of JDC's mission, it became a cardinal principle of all of JDC's leadership, voluntary and professional, regardless of where they stood individually on matters of Jewish politics. WZO was avowedly political from the first, hence could not abjure its political role for other purposes.

The State of Israel assumed the mantle of the WZO with respect to relief and rehabilitation after 1948. It, too, was limited because it was not only political but a politically sovereign state in the family of nations. At the same time that standing also gave it certain advantages. It had more money at its disposal because it could tax. It had an army with equipment. It had a secret service good at infiltrating into difficult places. At first, its mission also was rather well-confined to bringing Jews in distress to Israel, but after the end of the first mass aliya in the 1950s it slowly began to expand its activities to defend and assist Jews wherever they happened to be, albeit still with the ultimate intention of stimulating aliya.

Early on, JAFI began to serve as an arm, first of the WZO and then of the State of Israel with respect to the relief and rehabilitation of Jews both in the diaspora, in stimulating and overseeing their aliya to Israel, and then in Israel to make their klita possible. These have always been principal JAFI functions and remain so to this day.

The role of the WJC in all of this is not only to endorse these efforts but to fight for them on the political front, to secure the political rights, security and protection for Jews in the diaspora, especially in their communities, and the right of Jews in the diaspora to organize in communities. More than any of the others of the Big Five, the WJC's mission is political. They have neither the budget nor the responsibility for functioning on other than in the political arena.

### Fighting Anti-Semitism

Here the WJC is in its element. This is its primary task and it does so on the principle of maximum possible visibility, working behind the scenes only where it feels it to be absolutely necessary and trying to bring in the bright light of publicity in most cases.

JDC functions in this area primarily in relief, rehabilitation and rescue, even working with anti-Semites where necessary to bring about the successful completion of its mission.

The State of Israel shows great concern about anti-Semitism but always as an instrument of Israeli policy, either as an argument for aliya or to strengthen Israel's hand in its particular definition of its mission to defend Jews wherever they are.

JAFI has no primary role in the fight against anti-Semitism, but quite naturally its work with regard to aliya and klita brings it into contact with this issue.

### Representing Collective Jewish Interests in World Affairs

The definition of what are collective Jewish interests is often a matter of dispute as are questions of how best to represent them. Still, all of the Big Five agree that it is a fundamental task of the world Jewish polity to represent those interests.

Probably the organization most clearly designated to represent collective Jewish interests in world affairs is the World Jewish Congress which was established in 1936 for that purpose at the initiative of the WZO when the latter felt that it was limited in doing so because of its Zionist identification. WJC survives first and foremost on the claim that it is doing just that, which it does by claiming to represent all of world Jewry, even, in a somewhat less than fully direct way, the State of Israel, which is represented in the WJC through the WZO.

The State of Israel also has a certain claim to be the representative of collective Jewish interests in world affairs, although Ben-Gurion formally abjured it in his exchange of letters with Jacob Blaustein in 1952. Still, the state has not often hesitated in its efforts to do so, although its interpretation of what are collective Jewish interests is obviously very Israel-centered and at times Israel has needed pushing to assert those interests in a different way by groups in the diaspora. For example, on the Soviet Jewry issue the Israeli government was very reluctant to get involved for fear of further antagonizing the USSR, but was pushed to do so by Soviet Jewry activists in various diaspora communities

around the world. So, too, with Ethiopian Jews in the 1950s, the Israeli government did not want to bring them to Israel on the grounds that their absorption would present major problems. As pressure on their behalf built up among Jewish activists in the diaspora the Israeli government was forced to reconsider its position and finally used the resources of the state to mount a very visible and successful massive airlift a few years ago.

The question of how best to represent the collective Jewish interests of Jews in the ex-Soviet republic remains an issue very much on the table with the state's arm, the Lishkat HaKeshet, asserting the Israeli government position, whatever that may be at the time, not only in tension with that of JDC but also with that of JAFI, presumably a sister Israeli institution. Still, the state has means of representing what it feels to be collective Jewish interests on the world scene that no other Jewish body has. Perhaps a classic example was the kidnapping of Adolph Eichmann from Argentina over thirty years ago. The state was able to activate the Mossad, its embassy in Argentina, and the Israeli airforce, inter alia, to carry out that mission.

The WZO has also claimed from the first to represent collective Jewish interests in world affairs but of course in a Zionist manner and directed toward Zionist goals. It has, in fact, limited its ability to do so, having neither the power of a state nor the comprehensiveness of other organizations. That is the major reason why it took the lead in founding the WJC. Still, by participating in the other organizations it asserts its position regularly and occasionally even undertakes actions on its own.

The JDC has as much of a mandate as any body to represent the collective Jewish interests in world affairs, but only in the very narrow area of relief and rehabilitation.

Of the Big Five, JAFI probably has the least formal role in representing collective Jewish interests in world affairs. Before the establishment of the state, it played the role that the government of Israel plays today best it could, but it transferred that role to the government as soon as the state was declared, except in a few countries where the government of Israel could not operate in any way, but over the years it has transferred those missions to others as well. Except for the role that like the WZO, JAFI may be represented in the other bodies, it has very little direct role of its own. In this respect, WJC and JAFI are polar opposites. JDC is on another point on the triangle.



### Mobilization of Leadership and Activists

All five organizations undertake to mobilize leadership, each in its own way, for their own survival and for the Jewish world as a whole. Obviously, the greatest differences in the mobilization process are between the State of Israel, where the normal democratic politics of a state, its government, and the electoral process come into play, and the diaspora bodies, all of which are voluntary organizations and depend more on self-selection. Money figures in the mobilization of leadership in both the state and the other organizations, but in different ways, with far more reliance on the part of the non-state organizations on private wealth as a necessity for leadership than in the state. While all bodies do this separately, they all have a mutual interest in seeing that it is done well. In some cases there may be competition between them in theory, but in fact there is relatively little since people tend to gravitate to where their interests are best expressed, their needs best met, and their achievement level most satisfactory.

Thus the State of Israel recruits very broadly from all income levels, but essentially from those who have an aptitude for politics and the kind of public leadership that can mobilize other politicians and the public.

JAFI recruits from two very different groups: the Zionist leadership, consisting primarily of diaspora politicians, that is to say, those in the diaspora who have a particular affect for the political dimensions of public affairs but who, unlike those in Israel, do not have constituencies to mobilize except in the narrowest sense. They are, rather, those who are adept in the internal politics of their organizations and in the representation of those organizations to other players. On the other hand, the representatives from the Magbiot are primarily the bigger givers who are also interested in taking an active role in Jewish affairs, either people interested in fundraising or in community planning in the *edah* arena after having had experience in their local and countrywide arenas.

The WZO recruits political figures both from Israel and abroad. The Israelis are more likely to be those particularly interested in Israel-diaspora relations.

WJC also recruits people with political interests, especially those who are better at political concerns than fundraising or community planning and with more interest in the diaspora as their arena of activity than in Israel.

The JDC recruits people interested in community planning, normally with some capacity to contribute or raise funds as well.

### Governance Functions in the World Jewish Polity

Here, too, all five bodies share in those tasks that can be defined as governance functions. We have already discussed the principal missions of each body from which flow their functions. Briefly put, they can be summarized as follows:

The State of Israel is comprehensively responsible for the governance of the Jews living within its territory and assumes partial responsibility for the security, relief, if necessary rescue, rehabilitation, and resettlement of diaspora Jewry. It also assumes some responsibility for the Jewish education of Jews in the diaspora, for supplying their religious needs, especially for Orthodox and traditional Jews. By simply being, it fills certain cultural, academic and spiritual needs for all Jews. Whatever decline it may have suffered in the hearts and minds of world Jewry in the past decade, Israel still remains the great magnet of the Jewish people and usually plays a Jewish governance role accordingly.

JAFI plays a governance role primarily in connection with aliya and klita, certain social and increasingly economic services at least nominally connected with klita, urban and regional development and redevelopment in Israel, Jewish education, principally in the diaspora, and providing an opportunity for diaspora Jews to participate in governance activities involving nation-building in Israel and linked to the organs of the state.

The WZO plays a secondary role to the Jewish Agency in most of the same spheres, although it has much less to do with aliya or klita on the Israeli side of the old "green line." What it does, it does mostly in partnership, formal and informal, with the Jewish Agency and the government of Israel. In some communities, its institutions, organizations and leadership play a direct role in communal governance.

JDC handles relief and rehabilitation or rescue operations in the diaspora principally within those communities in greatest need but increasingly in communities where their Jewish survival requires outside help. It also provides selected and increasingly limited social services in Israel and has expanded its role as a promoter of experiments in that field. It also promotes experiments in matters of local and regional governance and development within Israel.

The WJC serves as a kind of diaspora-oriented foreign ministry for the Jewish people, intervening in various parts of the world, usually on the basis of its own decision, often with minimal influence from any

of the other bodies, to protect or advance Jewish rights, including in the religious sphere.

### **Raising Funds to Cover the Costs of these Functions**

The bodies have different ways of doing this. The State of Israel levies and collects taxes, borrows money from other governments or from private individuals and institutions, or secures grants to cover its needs.

JAFI relies upon fundraising through Keren Hayesod or, in the United States, the United Jewish Appeal for perhaps four-fifths of its budget. It secures government grants mostly from the American government for most of the rest, benefits from some transfers of payment from the Israeli government, and periodically borrows funds from private institutions.

The JDC secures the bulk of its funding through the UJA in the United States and the remainder through U.S. government and occasional Israeli government grants.

The WZO secures its funding from the Jewish Agency and hence indirectly from Keren Hayesod, and also through some Israeli governmental transfers as part of various formulas between it, JAFI, and the government of Israel.

WJC secures its funding from private contributors, the Magbiot, JAFI, WZO, and, for some purposes, the government of Israel. Its lifeline in recent years has depended upon some major private gifts.

### **Oversight of the Organizations and Institutions Handling the Functions**

Here, too, there are pronounced differences among the five bodies. The State of Israel has the full complement of oversight mechanisms designed to keep government democratic, honest and efficient: elections, laws, and administrative agencies. They work in the accepted manner of states and governments.

Nominally, JAFI has similar institutions and devices, but because it is a voluntary organization, elections are contested only at certain points. There is a certain amount of self-selection among office-seekers based on factors other than those of a democratic state and there are certain limits imposed by political reality. The same is the case with regard to the WZO.

JDC, because it is guided by philanthropic rather than political principles, relies essentially on administrative rather than board control for oversight functions. The same can be said for the WJC, but in fact the WJC executive leadership has quite a free hand in conducting WJC operations.

### **Developing Appropriate Interorganizational Relations**

This is an ongoing process in which there are most demands for improvement. As a whole, this work is done through various joint authorities or joint committees in which two or more bodies are represented, perhaps along with others of more limited significance.

The State of Israel also relies on its network of embassies and consulates to maintain its relationships with diaspora Jewish communities as well as various emissaries that it sends out for one purpose or another on an ad hoc basis.

JAFI relies upon its system of governance which includes leaders and activists who hold significant positions in the other bodies as well. It has much expanded its use of joint authorities, especially with the Israeli government and the WZO, and it has organic connections through the governance system with bodies in the other arenas. In addition it has various joint committees with both sets of bodies of varying degrees of effectiveness. It probably has the most elaborate network of any of the Big Five, which is one of the reasons why it stands at the nexus of the world Jewish polity.

The WZO maintains frameworks similar to those of JAFI within its particular organizational and institutional network as well as in conjunction with JAFI and the Israeli government, but since it is constituted differently it is more able to act from the center than JAFI which must respond to its various constituents, most of whom are powerful in their own right. JAFI and the WZO both have regular emissaries to the various diaspora Jewish communities including senior resident representatives in both the United States and Europe who have responsibilities in the field of day-to-day operations and liaison.

JDC is far more self-contained than either of the first three, though it maintains close liaison with the government of Israel and a modicum of liaison with the Jewish Agency, although its relations with the latter body are often tense and even conflictual. It also maintains liaison with its American partners, the UIA, the UJA, and the Council of Jewish Federations on an institutionalized or semi-institutionalized basis.

The WJC is perhaps the least connected of the Big Five. It maintains continuing ad hoc contacts with the government of Israel through its Israel office plus ad hoc contacts at its highest levels and there are various of its committees on which the others are represented or committees of others on which it is represented. This in part is a reflection of the fact that it has

Table 1

## FUNCTIONS AND PRIORITIES OF THE "BIG FIVE"

	State of Israel	JAFI	WZO	JDC	WJC
Nation-building	1	1	1	2	1
Development of Israel	1	1	1	2	2
Relief and rescue	2	2	2	1	2
Fighting anti-Semitism	3	3	2	3	1
Represent Jewish interests in the world	2	2	2	2	1
Mobilization of activists	2	2	2	2	2
Governance	2	2	2	2	2
Assuring existence of authorities	2	1	2	2	3
Fundraising	2	2	2	2	2
Oversight	3	2	2	2	3
Interorganizational relations	3	2	3	3	3

Key: 1 = premier priority; 2 = shared priority; 3 = periodic concern

been less necessary for it to do so because of its substantially different role, although there are fields in which greater liaison and coordination could clearly be helpful.

The relationship between the priorities of the Big Five entities and these eleven functions is portrayed in Table 1. An effort has been made to rank each function relative to each organization. The rankings in the table will be useful also in assigning functional responsibilities in any subsequent developments.

\* \* \*

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**Community and Polity:  
The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry**  
Revised and Updated Edition

*By Daniel J. Elazar*

The organized life of American Jewry is of interest in its own right. It is the largest Jewish collectivity in the world today, perhaps of all time. For students of politics, the American Jewish community is an example of a voluntary political order that functions authoritatively for those who acknowledge their connection with it, but does not seek a monopoly on the loyalty of its members.

The first edition of *Community and Polity* offered a description and analysis of the developments in the American Jewish community through the first postwar generation — roughly, 1946 through 1976. Since the appearance of the original edition of *Community and Polity* in 1976, the aggressive advancing Jewish community of the late 1960s and early 1970s has given way to a far more quiescent and even troubled one.

This edition of *Community and Polity* explores in depth these and other issues. Like the first edition, it is designed to serve two purposes: to provide a basic survey of the structure and functions of the American Jewish community and to suggest how that community should be understood as a body politic, a polity that is not a state but is no less real from a political perspective.

This revised and updated edition of *Community and Polity* examines the transformations taking place in local community federations and in the countrywide federation movement, the decline of the mass-based organizations, the shift in the forms and organization of Jewish education, the changes taking place in the synagogue movements, and the problems of Jewish unity generated by inter-movement competition.

The book also looks at the new ambiguity in the sphere of community relations, the impact of demographic shifts on Jewish community organization, the institutionalization of new relationships between the American Jewish community and Israel, and the emergence of new model organizations to mobilize and serve the Jewish community.

This book is a product of four decades of study of the American Jewish community. It took its present form as a result of a growing need for an understanding of the importance of the structural and institutional aspects of American Jewish life. While the commitment of individual Jews and Jewish families to Jewish life is obviously a prerequisite to the life of a Jewish community, the character of Jewish life is ultimately shaped by the institutions that Jews create collectively.

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