World Jewish Population, 1990

Updated Estimates

THIS ARTICLE PRESENTS UPDATES, for the end of 1990, of the Jewish population estimates for the various countries of the world.[1] The estimates reflect some of the results of a prolonged and ongoing effort to study scientifically the demography of contemporary world Jewry.[2] Data collection and comparative research have benefited from the collaboration of scholars and institutions in many countries, including replies to direct inquiries regarding current estimates. It should be emphasized, however, that the elaboration of a worldwide set of estimates for the Jewish populations of the various countries is beset with difficulties and uncertainties.

Over 96 percent of world Jewry is concentrated in ten countries. The aggregate of these ten major Jewish population centers virtually determines the assessment of the size of total world Jewry, estimated at 12.8 million persons in 1990. The country figures for 1990 were updated from those for 1989 in accordance with the known or estimated changes in the interval—migrations, vital events (births and deaths), and identificational changes (accessions and secessions). In addition, corrections were introduced in the light of newly accrued information on Jewish populations. Corresponding corrections were also applied retrospectively to the 1989 figures, which appear below in revised summary (see table 1), so as to allow adequate comparison with the 1990 estimates.

During the year 1990 under review here, operations of data collection and analysis relevant to Jewish population estimates were in planning or already under way in

[1]The previous estimates, as of 1989, were published in AJYB 1991, vol. 91, pp. 441–65.

[2]Many of these activities have been carried out by, or in coordination with, the Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The authors acknowledge with thanks the collaboration of the many institutions and individuals in the different countries who have supplied information for this update. The paper was revised during DellaPergola's stay at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

several countries. Some of this ongoing research is part of a coordinated effort to update the sociodemographic profile of world Jewry at the outset of the 1990s.[3] Two important sources recently yielded results on major Jewish populations: the official population census of the Soviet Union held in 1989, and the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) in the United States completed in 1990.[4] The respective results basically confirmed the estimates we had reported in previous AJYB volumes and, perhaps more importantly, our interpretation of the trends now prevailing in the demography of world Jewry. At the same time, these new data highlighted the increasing complexity of the sociodemographic and identificational processes underlying the definition of Jewish populations—hence the estimates of their sizes. While we address below some of these conceptual problems, users of population estimates should be aware of these difficulties and of the consequent limitations of the estimates.

Concepts and Definitions

In many respects Jewish populations share in the general difficulties met when trying to define, identify, and enumerate minority groups. Difficulties are augmented by the uniquely blended character of Jewry, with its religious, ethnic, cultural, historical, and other components, as well as by the wide geographical scatter and distinctive socioeconomic structure of Jewish groups.

In contemporary societies experiencing intense processes of secularization, acculturation, and social interaction, the ideational (and statistical) boundaries between different religious, ethnic, or cultural groups are no longer clearly and rigidly defined, as they may have been in the past. Multiple bases of identification between individual and community can coexist. Since group identity is not regulated by legal provisions, individuals may change their preferences during their lifetimes. Individuals of Jewish origin may feel varying degrees of personal attachment to Judaism or the Jewish community, and may choose to cut the respective links, whether or not formally adopting another group identity. These identificational changes are reversible: persons who disclaim being Jews at some stage of life may change their minds later. Even at the same time, some may admit or deny their Jewishness under different circumstances. Another element of this general picture

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[3]Following an international conference in 1987 on Jewish population problems, sponsored by the major Jewish organizations worldwide, an International Scientific Advisory Committee (ISAC) was established. Cochaired by Dr. Roberto Bachi of the Hebrew University and Dr. Sidney Goldstein of Brown University, ISAC's function is to coordinate and monitor Jewish population data collection internationally.

[4]The 1989–1990 National Jewish Population Survey was conducted under the auspices of the Council of Jewish Federations with the supervision of a National Technical Advisory Committee chaired by Dr. Sidney Goldstein of Brown University. Dr. Barry Kosmin of the North American Jewish Data Bank and City University of New York Graduate Center directed the study.

is the growing frequency of mixed marriage. Some of the couples in interfaith marriages prefer to unify the home, one of the partners adopting the group identity of the other; other couples do not. Children of these marriages are likely to be exposed to the different religious and cultural backgrounds of their parents, out of which their own eventual identities will be shaped.

These fluid and voluntaristic patterns of group identification imply that the concept of Jewish population is no longer simple and uniform but offers ground for alternative interpretations and even some confusion and misunderstanding—especially when large and heterogeneous amounts of data are handled and compared. In an attempt to clarify these matters, we briefly outline here one conceptual framework—applied throughout this article—that appears useful in the sociodemographic study of contemporary Jewries.

Core Jewish population. In contemporary social-scientific research on Jews, including demography, it is usual to consider as Jews all those who, when asked, identify themselves as such; or, if the respondent is a different person in the same household, are identified by him/her as Jews. We define this aggregate as the "core" Jewish population. It includes all those who converted to Judaism or joined the Jewish group informally. It excludes those of Jewish descent who formally adopted another religion, as well as other individuals who did not convert out but currently disclaim being Jewish. This categorization is intentionally comprehensive, reflecting subjective feelings rather than halakhic (Rabbinic) or other legal definitions.[5] Our definition of a person as a Jew does not depend on any measure of that person's Jewish commitment or behavior—in terms of religiosity, beliefs, knowledge, communal affiliation, or otherwise. The core Jewish population is the conceptual target of our population estimates. In estimating the size of a Jewish population, we include, in principle, all marginal individuals who have not ceased to consider themselves Jewish.

Extended Jewish population. We adopt the term "extended" for the sum of the core Jewish population and all other persons of Jewish parentage who are not Jews currently (or at the time of investigation). These non-Jews with Jewish background, as far as they can be ascertained, include: (a) persons who have themselves adopted another religion, even though they may claim to be still Jews ethnically; (b) other persons of Jewish parentage who disclaim to be Jews currently. In survey-taking it is usual, for both conceptual and practical reasons, to consider in this context parentage only and not any more distant ancestry.

Enlarged Jewish population. We designate by the term "enlarged" the sum of the

[5]The definition of "Who is a Jew?" according to Halakhah constituted the cardinal criterion of Jewish identification across history. Normatively, it continues to bind all Orthodox and many other Jewish communities in contemporary times. The constraints typical of empirical research do not allow for ascertaining on a case-by-case basis the halakhic identity of each individual included in surveys. Therefore, it is usual in most social-scientific research to rely on the subjective criteria defined here.

core Jewish population and all other persons of Jewish parentage included in the extended Jewish population, as well as their non-Jewish household members (spouses, children, etc.). For both conceptual and practical reasons, this definition does not include any non-Jewish relatives living elsewhere.

These various definitions point to the importance of the household as the primary—and in social terms truly significant—reference unit for the study of Jewish demography. For demographic research purposes, "eligible Jewish households" are all those including at least one individual who is either currently Jewish or of Jewish parentage.[6] Ideally, information should be collected on all the members of Jewish households, Jews and others, to enable researchers to apply the above—and perhaps additional—definitions and to estimate the respective sizes of the various groups and subgroups involved.

In the past, core, extended, and enlarged Jewish populations tended to overlap; today, however, the respective sizes and characteristics may be quite different. One relevant example is provided by the findings of the U.S. NJPS reported below in the section on American Jewry. The time perspective employed in these definitions mainly relates to the two generations of the surveyed individuals and their parents. Other, more extended generational or time perspectives might be considered in the attempt to estimate the size of populations of Jewish origin, based on prolonged genealogical reconstructions. Such approaches, albeit of some interest for historical research, will not be considered here.

Another definitional framework stems from the special position of Israel as a country of destination for Jewish international migration, recently chiefly from the (former) Soviet Union. Israel's most distinctive legal framework for the acceptance and absorption of new immigrants is provided by the Law of Return (*Hok Hashvut*), first passed in 1950 and amended in 1954 and 1970. That basic law awards Jewish new immigrants immediate citizenship and other civil rights in Israel. According to the current, amended version of the Law of Return, a Jew is any person born to a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism (regardless of denomination—Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform). Conversion from Judaism, as in the case of some "ethnic" Jews who currently identify with another religion, entails loss of eligibility for Law of Return purposes. Significantly, the law extends its provisions to all current Jews, and to their Jewish or non-Jewish spouses, children and grandchildren, as well as to the spouses of such children and grandchildren. It can readily be seen, therefore, that due to its three-generational time perspective and lateral extension, the Law of Return applies to a wide population. This population may be of wider scope not only than the core but even than the enlarged Jewish population, as defined above.

Finally, it should be noted that the actual contents and patterns of Jewish identity and behavior may widely vary within the core Jewish population itself, from strongly committed to very marginal. The respective differentials are associated with

[6]This approach was followed in the two U.S. National Jewish Population Studies of 1970–1971 and 1989–1990.

sociodemographic trends that may ultimately affect Jewish population size. These issues are, however, beyond the scope of the present article, which is mostly concerned with the bare attempt to estimate the size of core Jewish populations in the countries of the world.

Jewish Population Trends

The world's Jews are highly dispersed. In most countries their number is now rather small and they constitute no more than a minute fraction of the entire population. Consequently, though Diaspora Jews tend to cluster in large cities, they are greatly exposed to assimilation. While the major thrust of the assimilatory process tends to be associated with secessions from the Jewish population (whether formal or informal), there also are gains through accessions of non-Jewish-born persons. It is the net balance of these identificational changes that matters demographically. Outmarriages may involve demographic losses to the Jewish population if less than half of the children are themselves Jews. Moreover, in the longer run, the overall cohesion of a Jewish community may be affected, with consequences for its size as well. What counts in the demographic balance of Diaspora Jewries is "effectively Jewish" fertility and birthrate, including only those newborns who are Jews.[7]

The Jews in most countries of the Diaspora are characterized by very low fertility, which is the major cause for great population aging. An increased proportion of elderly in the population actually implies not only many deceased and a higher death rate, but also a reduced proportion of persons of reproductive age and therefore a relatively lower birthrate. While there are differences in the levels of these demographic factors between the Jews in various regions and countries, in all major Diaspora populations the joint balance of the natural and identificational changes is now close to nil or outrightly negative, with Jewish deaths frequently outnumbering Jewish births. These negative tendencies have been taken into account in updating the estimates of the Jews in many countries.

A notable paradox of Diaspora Jewish demography is that growth of an enlarged Jewish population—following intense outmarriage and an increasing number of persons in households with both Jewish and non-Jewish members—may go hand in hand with stagnation or even diminution of the respective core Jewish population. A case in point is provided by the recent demographic transformations of the Jewish population in the United States (see below).

With regard to the balance of external migrations, there is no regularity among the various Diaspora populations or even in the same population over time. In 1990, the overall volume of international migrations of Jews was much greater than in

[7]A fuller discussion of the subject can be found in U.O. Schmelz, "Jewish Survival: The Demographic Factors," AJYB 1981, vol. 81, pp. 61–117; and, by the same author, *Aging of World Jewry* (Jerusalem, 1984).

earlier years, after many of the previous restrictions on the outflow of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union were lifted. Where the migratory balance is positive—e.g., in North America—it counteracts or even outweighs any numerically negative influence of internal demographic developments. Where the migratory balance is negative, as in Eastern Europe, it may cause or aggravate the decrease of a Jewish population. Any attempt to understand the current and potential flow of Jewish international migration should make reference not only to the internal transformations of Jewish populations and societies but also to the major political and socioeconomic trends shaping world society in general.[8]

In contrast, in Israel the impact of outmarriage and secessions from Judaism is statistically negligible. The fact that Israeli society has a Jewish majority encourages accessions (formal or informal) of non-Jewish members in mixed immigrant households. A positive net balance of accessions and secessions results. Moreover, until the early 1980s and again since 1990 Israel had a positive migration balance.

Jewish fertility levels in Israel are comparatively high, and the Jewish age structure is significantly younger than among Diaspora Jews and the general populations of the other developed countries. The previously substantial fertility differentials between Jews ingathered in Israel from Asia-Africa and Europe-America are no longer in evidence. Remarkably, European Jews in Israel have not participated in the drastic fertility decline that has characterized the developed nations and particularly the Diaspora Jews during the last few decades, but have actually raised their fertility somewhat. In recent years, both major origin groups among Israel's Jews have displayed a fertility level surpassing not only the vast majority of Diaspora Jewry but also the general populations in other developed countries.

In the overall demographic balance of World Jewry, the natural increase of Israel has, so far, made up for the losses in the Diaspora. But such compensation will not be possible for much longer. As a consequence of the intensifying demographic deficit in the Diaspora, a trend toward some reduction in the total size of world Jewry is probably setting in. The relative share of Israel among that total is on the increase, regardless of *aliyah* and *yeridah* (immigration to, and emigration from, Israel), which obviously constitute only internal transfers within the global Jewish framework.

Sources of Data and Estimation Problems

Available demographic information on Jews is deficient in both quantity and quality. Besides the conceptual problems discussed above, difficulties involved in

[8]Sergio DellaPergola, "*Aliyah* and Other Jewish Migrations: Toward an Integrated Perspective," in U.O. Schmelz and G. Nathan, eds., *Studies in the Population of Israel in Honor of Roberto Bachi, Scripta Hierosolymitana*, vol. 30 (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 172–209; and, by the same author, "Mass *Aliyah*: A Thing of the Past?" *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 51, 1989, pp. 96–114.

estimating the size of Jewish populations reflect the substantive complexity of Diaspora demography. Relevant aspects are the great geographical scattering of Jews—a factor that makes multiple data collection mandatory but also hinders its feasibility; and the Jews' unusually strong demographic dynamics in many respects—migrations, social mobility, family formation patterns (including outmarriage), etc. More specific difficulties in estimating the up-to-date size of Jewish populations are due to measurement problems.

Particular difficulties exist with regard to the countries of Eastern Europe, whose Jewish populations were drastically reduced during and after World War II. Prolonged antireligious policies in these countries have had a negative effect on the identity of genealogically Jewish persons, many of whom may have severed, insofar as it depends on themselves, all links with Jewishness. The resulting uncertainties have led to wishful thinking in terms of exaggerated estimates, and account for the widely differing numbers of Jews that have been circulated for these countries.

Figures on Jews from population censuses are unavailable for most Diaspora communities, though they do exist for some important ones. In general, the practice of self-determination is followed in relevant censuses and surveys which inquire into religion or ethnicity, thus providing results close to our definitions of a "core" or an "extended" Jewish population—the latter, if religion and ethnicity can be cross-classified, as in Canada. Even where census statistics on Jews are forthcoming, they are usually scant, because the Jews are a small minority of the total population. There have been instances where detailed tabulations on Jews were undertaken, through Jewish initiative, from official census material; examples are Canada, Argentina, and South Africa. In some countries where Jewishness is associated with actual or feared discrimination, individuals may prefer not to describe themselves as Jews. Elsewhere, as has happened in some Latin American countries, non-Jews may be erroneously included as Jews. These problems require statistical evaluation whose feasibility and conclusiveness depend on the relevant information available. Reliable figures are currently forthcoming for the Jews of Israel from official statistics.

Surveys are the major way of obtaining comprehensive information on Jewish populations in the absence of official censuses. In the Diaspora, Jewish-sponsored surveys have the additional advantage of being able to inquire into matters of specifically Jewish interest, e.g., Jewish education, religious practices, and attitudes. However, since they address themselves to a small and scattered minority with identification problems, surveys are not easy to conduct competently and may encounter difficulties with regard to both coverage and response, especially from marginal Jews. Again, these aspects require evaluation. Over the last decades, countrywide Jewish population surveys were undertaken in the United States, South Africa, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. Local surveys were carried out in many cities of the United States, the United Kingdom, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, and some smaller communities. However, these several initiatives have so far been uncoordinated with regard to content and method.

In certain countries or localities, Jewish community registers include the largest part of the Jewish population. Often the same communities keep records of Jewish vital events—especially marriages performed with a Jewish ceremony and Jewish burials. However, communal registers tend to cover mixed households insufficiently. In addition, although the amount and quality of updating varies from place to place, communal registers generally lag behind the actual situation of the respective Jewish populations.

Finally, many estimates of Jewish Diaspora populations for which no solid data from censuses or surveys exist are regrettably of unspecified or dubious source and methodology. This situation contrasts with the amount and quality of demographic information available for Jews in Israel. Israel took its latest census in 1983, but has constantly updated statistics of its Jewish population size and characteristics.

Besides the conceptual and measurement difficulties affecting baseline figures on Jewish population size, similar problems recur with regard to the updating information which should account for all the various types of changes in the time elapsed since that base date. Age-sex-specific models can be of use for vital events and identificational changes. They may be applied after studying the evolution of the respective or similar Jewish populations. With regard to the migratory balance in any updating interval, concrete information must be gathered, because of the above-mentioned irregularity, over time, in the intensity of many migratory streams.

Not a few Jews have some residential status in more than one country. This may be due to business requirements, professional assignments in foreign countries, climatic differences between countries, periods of prolonged transit for migrants, etc. The danger of double-counting or omissions is inherent in such situations. This is particularly critical regarding some countries in Central and tropical South America, Africa, and South or East Asia, where the relatively few Jews living permanently may be outnumbered by a floating population of temporary Jewish residents or tourists. As far as possible we have tried to account for such persons only once, giving precedence to the usual country of residence.

The problem is even more acute with regard to residential status in more than one locality of the same country. This may adversely affect—through omissions or, more likely, double-counting—the accuracy of national Jewish population estimates obtained by summing up reports for individual localities.

Presentation of Data

The detailed estimates of Jewish population distribution in each continent and country (tables 2–7 below) aim at the concept of "core" Jewish population as defined earlier in this article. The reader will recall that "extended" or "enlarged" Jewish populations, including Jews, non-Jews of Jewish parentage, and respective non-Jewish household members, may result in significantly higher estimates. Separate figures are provided for each country with at least 100 resident Jews. Residual estimates of "other" Jews living in smaller communities supplement some of the

continental totals. For each of the reported countries, the four columns in the following tables provide the United Nations estimate of mid-year 1990 total population,[9] the estimated end-1990 Jewish population, the proportion of Jews per 1,000 of total population, and a rating of the accuracy of the Jewish population estimate.

There is wide variation in the quality of the Jewish population estimates for different countries. For many Diaspora countries it would be best to indicate a range (minimum-maximum) rather than a definite figure for the number of Jews. It would be confusing, however, for the reader to be confronted with a long list of ranges; this would also complicate the regional and world totals. Yet, the figures actually indicated for most of the Diaspora communities should be understood as being the central value of the plausible range of the respective core Jewish populations. The relative magnitude of this range varies inversely to the accuracy of the estimate.

ACCURACY RATING

The three main elements which affect the accuracy of each estimate are the nature and quality of the base data, the recency of the base data, and the method of updating. A simple code combining these elements is used to provide a general evaluation of the reliability of the Jewish population figures reported in the detailed tables below. The code indicates different quality levels of the reported estimates: (A) base figure derived from countrywide census or relatively reliable Jewish population survey; updated on the basis of full or partial information on Jewish population movements in the respective country during the intervening period; (B) base figure derived from less accurate but recent countrywide Jewish population investigation; partial information on population movements in the intervening period; (C) base figure derived from less recent sources, and/or unsatisfactory or partial coverage of Jewish population in the particular country; updating according to demographic information illustrative of regional demographic trends; (D) base figure essentially conjectural; no reliable updating procedure. In categories (A), (B), and (C), the years in which the base figures or important partial updates were obtained are also stated. For countries whose Jewish population estimate of 1990 was not only updated but also revised in the light of improved information, the sign "X" is appended to the accuracy rating.

Distribution of World Jewish Population by Major Regions

Table 1 gives an overall picture of Jewish population for the end of 1990 as compared to 1989. For 1989 the originally published estimates are presented along with somewhat revised figures that take into account, retrospectively, the correc-

[9]See United Nations, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Statistical Office, *World Population Prospects 1990*, Population Studies no. 120 (New York, 1991). The figures reflect the 1990 UN revision of world population estimates.

TABLE 1. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION, BY CONTINENTS AND MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS, 1989 AND 1990

Region	1989			1990		% Change 1989–1990
	Original	Revised				
	Abs. N.	Abs. N.	Percent	Abs. N.	Percent	
World	12,810,300	12,813,800	100.0	12,806,400	100.0	−0.1
Diaspora	9,093,200	9,096,700	71.0	8,859,700	69.2	−2.6
Israel	3,717,100	3,717,100	29.0	3,946,700	30.8	+6.2
America,						
Total	6,261,700	6,261,700	48.9	6,278,400	49.0	+0.3
North[a]	5,825,000	5,825,000	45.5	5,845,000	45.6	+0.3
Central	46,700	46,700	0.4	46,700	0.4	—
South	390,000	390,000	3.0	386,700	3.0	−0.8
Europe,						
Total[b]	2,558,400	2,558,400	20.0	2,307,300	18.0	−9.8
EC	1,019,200[b]	1,019,200[b]	8.0	999,600	7.8	−1.9
West, other	52,300[b]	52,300[b]	0.4	44,000	0.3	−15.9
East and Balkans[c]	1,486,900	1,486,900	11.6	1,263,700	9.9	−15.0
Asia, Total	3,750,700	3,750,900	29.3	3,979,400	31.1	+6.1
Israel	3,717,100	3,717,100	29.0	3,946,700	30.8	+6.2
Rest[c]	33,600	33,800	0.3	32,700	0.3	−3.3
Africa,						
Total	149,900	153,200	1.2	148,700	1.2	−2.9
North	12,700	11,000	0.1	10,600	0.1	−3.6
Central	22,100	27,100	0.2	23,100	0.2	−14.8
South[d]	115,100	115,100	0.9	115,000	0.9	−0.1
Oceania	89,600	89,600	0.7	92,600	0.7	+3.3

[a]U.S.A. and Canada.
[b]Including Jewish migrants in transit.
[c]The Asian regions of USSR and Turkey are included in "East Europe and Balkans."
[d]South Africa and Zimbabwe.

tions made in 1990 in certain country estimates, in the light of improved information. These corrections resulted in a net increase of the 1989 world Jewry's estimated size by 3,500, primarily due to a better estimate for Ethiopia. Some explanations are given below for the countries whose estimates were revised.

The size of world Jewry at the end of 1990 is assessed at 12,806,400. According to the revised figures, between 1989 and 1990 there was an estimated loss of 7,400 people, or about −0.1 percent. Despite all the imperfections in the estimates, it is clear that world Jewry has reached "zero population growth" or is slightly shrinking, with the natural increase in Israel barely or insufficiently compensating for the demographic decline in the Diaspora.

The number of Jews in Israel rose from a figure of 3,717,100 in 1989 to 3,946,700 at the end of 1990—an increase of 229,600 people, or 6.2 percent. In contrast, the estimated Jewish population in the Diaspora declined from 9,096,700 (according to the revised figures) to 8,859,700—a decrease of 237,000 people, or 2.6 percent. These changes primarily reflect the upsurge of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. In 1990, the Israel-Diaspora estimated net migratory balance amounted to a gain of about 181,400 Jews for Israel. Internal demographic evolution produced further growth among the Jewish population in Israel and further declines in the Diaspora.

About half of the world's Jews reside in the Americas, with over 45 percent in North America. Thirty-one percent live in Asia, excluding the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey—nearly all of them in Israel. Europe, including the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey, accounts for less than one-fifth of the total. Less than 2 percent of the world's Jews live in Africa and Oceania. Among the major geographical regions listed in table 1, the number of Jews in Israel—and, consequently, in total Asia—increased in 1990. Moderate Jewish population gains were also estimated for North America and Oceania. Latin America, Europe, Africa, and the Asian countries other than Israel sustained decreases in Jewish population size. World Jewry constitutes about 2.4 per 1,000 of the world's total population. One in about 414 people in the world is a Jew.

Individual Countries

THE AMERICAS

In 1990 the total number of Jews in the American continents was somewhat more than six and a quarter million. The overwhelming majority (93 percent) resided in the United States and Canada, less than 1 percent lived in Central America (including Mexico), and about 6 percent lived in South America—with Argentina and Brazil the largest Jewish communities (see table 2).

United States. The 1989–1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations and the North American Jewish Data Bank (NAJDB), provided the much awaited benchmark information about size and

TABLE 2. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN THE AMERICAS, 1990

Country	Total Population	Jewish Population	Jews per 1,000 Population	Accuracy Rating
Canada	26,521,000	310,000	11.7	B 1981–86
United States	249,224,000	5,535,000	22.2	A 1990
Total North America	275,865,000[a]	5,845,000	21.2	
Bahamas	253,000	300	1.2	C 1973
Costa Rica	3,015,000	2,000	0.7	C 1986
Cuba	10,608,000	700	0.1	C 1990
Dominican Republic	7,170,000	100	0.0	D
Guatemala	9,197,000	800	0.1	C 1983
Jamaica	2,456,000	300	0.1	B 1988
Mexico	88,598,000	35,000	0.4	C 1990
Netherlands Antilles	188,000	400	2.1	D
Panama	2,418,000	5,000	2.1	C 1990
Puerto Rico	3,480,000	1,500	0.4	C 1990
Virgin Islands	116,000	300	2.6	C 1986
Other	23,862,000	300	0.0	D
Total Central America	151,361,000	46,700	0.3	
Argentina	32,322,000	215,000	6.7	C 1990
Bolivia	7,314,000	700	0.1	B 1990
Brazil	150,368,000	100,000	0.7	C 1980
Chile	13,173,000	15,000	1.1	C 1988
Colombia	32,978,000	6,500	0.2	C 1986
Ecuador	10,587,000	900	0.1	C 1985
Paraguay	4,277,000	900	0.2	B 1990
Peru	21,550,000	3,300	0.2	B 1985
Suriname	422,000	200	0.5	B 1986
Uruguay	3,094,000	24,200	7.8	C 1990
Venezuela	19,735,000	20,000	1.0	C 1989
Total South America	296,716,000[a]	386,700	1.3	
Total	723,942,000	6,278,400	8.7	

[a]Including countries not listed separately.

characteristics of U.S. Jewry and the basis for subsequent updates. According to the official report of the results of this important national sample study,[10] the "core" Jewish population in the United States comprised 5,515,000 persons in the summer of 1990. Of these, 185,000 were converts to Judaism. An estimated 210,000 persons, not included in the previous figures, were born or raised as Jews but converted to another religion. A further 1,115,000 people, thereof 415,000 adults and 700,000 children below age 18, were of Jewish parentage but were not Jews themselves and followed a religion other than Judaism at the time of survey. All together, these various groups formed an "extended" Jewish population of 6,840,000. NJPS also covered 1,350,000 non-Jewish-born members of eligible (Jewish or mixed) households. The study's "enlarged" Jewish population thus consisted of about 8,200,000 persons.

Comparison with the results of the previous National Jewish Population Study, conducted in 1970–1971, is complicated by the fact that various versions were published of the 1970–71 results; moreover, there are margins of error when two sample studies are compared, especially if they were taken under differing circumstances 20 years apart. The 1990 Jewish population estimates are within the range of a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percent.[11] This means a range between 5.3 and 5.7 million for the core Jewish population. The 1970–71 estimates of the core Jewish population varied between 5.4 and 6.0 million persons.[12] Even if the lower 1970–71 estimate is preferred, it is sufficiently clear—and very relevant to the assessment of trends—that the core Jewish population hardly grew over the last 20 years, whereas the extended and especially the enlarged Jewish population in the United States increased significantly. This attests numerically to the strengthening of assimilatory trends and to intensifying sociodemographic integration of American Jews with the general population. The new data also reflect the use of more systematic random surveying methods, and the somewhat wider definition of eligible households in the 1989–1990 NJPS, in comparison to the 1970–1971 study. Referring again to our conceptual and definitional framework, it is worth noting that in

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[10]Barry A. Kosmin, Sidney Goldstein, Joseph Waksberg, Nava Lerer, Ariella Keysar, and Jeffrey Scheckner, *Highlights of the CJF 1990 National Jewish Population Survey* (New York, Council of Jewish Federations, 1991).

[11]See Kosmin et al., p. 39.

[12]The 1970–1971 NJPS results were reported by the study director, Fred Massarik, in "National Jewish Population Study," AJYB 1974–75, vol. 75, pp. 296–97; and, by the same author, "The Boundary of Jewishness: Some Measures of Jewish Identity in the United States," in U.O. Schmelz, P. Glikson, and S. DellaPergola, eds., *Papers in Jewish Demography 1973* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 117–39. According to Massarik, the "core" Jewish population amounted to about 5.4 million, out of an "enlarged" Jewish population of about 5.9 million. A different set of estimates was prepared by the 1970–1971 NJPS chief statistician, Bernard Lazerwitz, in "An Estimate of a Rare Population Group: The U.S. Jewish Population," *Demography*, vol. 15, 1978, pp. 389–94. According to Lazerwitz, the U.S. Jewish population amounted to 5.8 million, plus or minus a sampling error of about 200,000. The matter was summarized in U.O. Schmelz, *World Jewish Population: Regional Estimates and Projections* (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 32–36. Schmelz suggested a base figure of 5.6 million Jews for 1970.

1990 the core Jewish population comprised about two-thirds of the enlarged Jewish population in the U.S.; conversely, the latter exceeded the former by roughly one-half.

Over the whole 1970–1990 period, several hundred thousand Jews migrated to the United States, especially from the USSR, Israel, Iran, and Latin America. During fiscal years 1989 and 1990 alone, respectively 39,553 and 37,770 refugees from the Soviet Union were admitted to the United States.[13] The international migration balance of U.S. Jewry should have generated an actual increase of Jewish population size. The fact that the expected influence of international migration did not show up in the size of U.S. core Jewish population according to NJPS indicates that the balance of other factors of core population change over that whole 20-year period must have been somewhat negative. First detailed analyses of the new NJPS data actually provide evidence of low levels of Jewish fertility and the "effectively Jewish" birthrates, increasing outmarriage rates, declining rates of conversion to Judaism (or "choosing" Judaism), increasing rates of conversion from Judaism, rather low proportions of children of mixed marriages being identified as Jewish, and increasing aging among the Jewish population.[14] A recent temporary increase in the Jewish birthrate appears to have occurred, because the large cohorts born during the "baby boom" of the 1950s and early 1960s have been in the main procreative ages; however, this echo effect is about to fade away, as the much smaller cohorts born since the late 1960s reach the stage of parenthood.

Taking into account this evidence, our estimate of U.S. Jewish population size at the end of 1990 starts from the NJPS benchmark core Jewish population of 5,515,000; assumes that the current balance of demographic and identificational changes in the core Jewish population is overall close to nil; and attempts to account for Jewish immigration which arrived in the latter part of 1990, after completion of NJPS. Assuming a total net migration gain of about 50–60,000 from the USSR, Israel, and other origins for the whole of 1990, we apportioned 20,000 to the final months of 1990. We thus suggest a tentative estimate of 5,535,000 Jews in the United States at the end of 1990. This estimate is of course conditional on further detailed scrutiny and interpretation of the NJPS findings.

The research team of the NAJDB, which is responsible for the primary handling of NJPS data files, has also continued its yearly compilation of local Jewish population estimates. These are reported elsewhere in this volume.[15] NAJDB estimated the

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[13]Figures from U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1990, presented in unpublished table reported in Barry R. Chiswick, "Soviet Jews in the United States: A Preliminary Analysis of Their Linguistic and Economic Adjustment," paper prepared for the Sapir Forum, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Chicago, 1991); HIAS, news release, New York, Oct. 11, 1991.

[14]See the article by Sidney Goldstein in the present volume. See also U.O. Schmelz and Sergio DellaPergola, *Basic Trends in U.S. Jewish Demography*, Jewish Sociology Papers (New York, American Jewish Committee, 1988).

[15]The first in a new series of yearly compilations of local U.S. Jewish population estimates appeared in Barry A. Kosmin, Paul Ritterband, and Jeffrey Scheckner, "Jewish Population

U.S. Jewish population in 1986 at 5,814,000, including "under 2 percent" non-Jewish household members. This was very close to our own pre-NJPS estimate of 5,700,000. The NAJDB estimate was updated as follows: 1987—5,943,700; 1988—5,935,000; 1989—5,944,000; 1990—5,981,000. These changes do not reflect actual sudden growths or declines, but rather corrections and adaptations made in the figures for several local communities. It should be realized that compilations of local estimates, even if as painstaking as in the case of the NAJDB, are subject to a great many local biases and tend to fall behind the actual pace of national trends. This is especially true in a context of vigorous internal migration, as in the United States. The new NJPS figure, in spite of sample-survey biases, provides a more reliable national Jewish population baseline.

Canada. In Canada the 1981 census enumerated 296,425 Jews according to religion. By adding 9,950 persons who reported "Jewish" as their single reply to the census question on ethnic origin, while not reporting any non-Jewish religion (such as Catholic, Anglican, etc.), the figure rises to 306,375. There were additional persons who did not report a non-Jewish religion but mentioned "Jewish" as part of a multiple response to the question on ethnic origin. It is likely that some of them were merely thinking in terms of ancestry and did not actually consider themselves as Jews at the time of the census. Yet, after including a reasonable portion of the latter group, a total core Jewish population of 310,000 was suggested for 1981. A further 5,140 Canadians who reported being Jewish by ethnic origin but identified with another religion were not included in our estimate.

The population census held in Canada in 1986 provided data on ethnic origins but not on religious groups. A total of 245,855 persons reported being Jewish as a single reply to the question on ethnic origin, as against 264,020 in the same category in 1981. A further 97,655 mentioned a Jewish origin as part of a multiple response to the 1986 question on ethnic origin, as compared to apparently 30,000–40,000 in 1981. Thus, a substantial increase in the number of Canadians reporting partially Jewish ancestry seemed to offset the decline in the number of those with a solely Jewish identification according to the ethnic criterion. Besides actual demographic and identificational trends, changes in the wording of the relevant questions in the two censuses may have influenced these variations in the size of the "ethnically" (or, in our terminology, "extended") Jewish population of Canada.[16]

The 1986 census data indicated that about 9,000 Jews migrated to Canada between 1981 and 1986; more immigration arrived in the following years. In the light of this admittedly partial evidence, and considering the increasingly aged Jewish population structure, it is suggested that a migratory surplus may have roughly

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in the United States, 1986," AJYB 1987, vol. 87, pp. 164–91. The 1991 update appears elsewhere in the present volume.

[16]Statistics Canada, *1981 Census of Canada: Population: Ethnic Origin; Religion* (Ottawa, 1983, 1984); Statistics Canada, *Population by Ethnic Origin, 1986 Census: Canada, Provinces and Territories and Census Metropolitan Areas* (Ottawa, 1988).

offset the probably negative balance of internal evolution since the 1981 census. Consequently, the 1981 figure of 310,000 was kept unchanged throughout 1990. The 1991 census again included questions on both religion and ethnic origin, and its results will provide a new baseline for the estimate of Canada's Jewish population.

Central America. The estimate for Mexico was kept unchanged at 35,000. The official Mexican censuses have given widely varying figures—17,574 in 1950; 100,750 in 1960; 49,277 in 1970; 61,790 in 1980. It is generally admitted that the last three censuses mistakenly included among the Jews many thousands of non-Jews living outside the known regions of Jewish residence in that country. In 1990 a new census was undertaken, but the figure of Jews was not reported. A Jewish-sponsored population survey of Mexican Jewry was completed in 1991, and its analysis will contribute to refining the current estimate. Panama's Jewish population—the second largest in Central America—is estimated at about 5,000.

South America.[17] The Jewish population of Argentina, the largest in that geographical region, is marked by a negative balance of internal evolution. Since the 1960s, the balance of external migrations was strongly negative; after the restoration of a democratic regime in the early 1980s, emigration diminished and there was some return migration. In 1989, emigration increased again; in 1990, over 2,000 Jews migrated to Israel alone, while others possibly went to North America and Western Europe. Accordingly, the estimate for Argentinian Jewry was reduced from 218,000 in 1989 to 215,000 in 1990.

The official population census of Brazil in 1980 showed a figure of 91,795 Jews. Since it is possible that some otherwise identifying Jews failed to declare themselves as such in the census, a corrected estimate of 100,000 was adopted for 1980 and has been kept unchanged through 1990, assuming that the overall balance of vital events and external migrations was close to zero. The national figure of approximately 100,000 fits the admittedly rough estimates that are available for the size of local Jewish communities in Brazil.

On the strength of fragmentary information that is accumulating, the estimates for Uruguay and Peru were slightly reduced, while those for Venezuela, Chile, and Colombia were not changed.

EUROPE

Of the estimated over 2,300,000 Jews in Europe in 1990, 45 percent lived in Western Europe and 55 percent in Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries—including the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey (see table 3). In 1990 Europe

[17]For a more detailed discussion of the region's Jewish population trends, see U.O. Schmelz and Sergio DellaPergola, "The Demography of Latin American Jewry," AJYB 1985, vol. 85, pp. 51–102; Sergio DellaPergola, "Demographic Trends of Latin American Jewry," in J. Laikin Elkin and G.W. Merks, eds., *The Jewish Presence in Latin America* (Boston, 1987), pp. 85–133.

TABLE 3. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN EUROPE, 1990

Country	Total Population	Jewish Population	Jews per 1,000 Population	Accuracy Rating
Belgium	9,845,000	31,800	3.2	C 1987
Denmark	5,143,000	6,400	1.2	C 1990
France	56,138,000	530,000	9.4	C 1990
Germany	77,573,000	40,000	0.5	C 1990
Great Britain	57,237,000	315,000	5.5	C 1990
Greece	10,047,000	4,800	0.5	B 1990
Ireland	3,720,000	1,800	0.5	B 1990
Italy	57,061,000	31,200	0.5	B 1990
Luxembourg	373,000	600	1.6	B 1990
Netherlands	14,951,000	25,700	1.7	C 1990
Portugal	10,285,000	300	0.0	B 1986
Spain	39,187,000	12,000	0.3	D
Total European Community	341,560,000	999,600	2.9	
Austria	7,583,000	7,000	0.9	C 1990
Finland	4,975,000	1,300	0.3	A 1990
Gibraltar	30,000	600	20.0	C 1981
Norway	4,212,000	1,000	0.2	B 1987
Sweden	8,444,000	15,000	1.8	C 1990
Switzerland	6,609,000	19,000	2.9	C 1980
Other	982,000	100	0.1	D
Total other West Europe	32,835,000	44,000	1.3	
Albania	3,345,000	300	0.1	B 1990
Bulgaria	9,010,000	3,100	0.3	C 1990
Czechoslovakia	15,667,000	7,800	0.5	D
Hungary	10,552,000	57,000	5.4	D
Poland	38,423,000	3,800	0.1	C 1990
Romania	23,272,000	17,500	0.8	B 1988
Turkey[a]	55,868,000	19,700	0.4	C 1990
USSR[a,b]	288,595,000	1,150,000	4.0	B 1990
Yugoslavia	23,807,000	4,500	0.2	C 1986
Total East Europe and Balkans	468,539,000	1,263,700	2.7	
Total	842,934,000	2,307,300	2.7	

[a]Including Asian regions.
[b]See also table 4.

lost about 10 percent of its estimated Jewish population, mainly through the emigration of over 200,000 Jews from the Soviet Union, and the final resettlement of another 28,000 who were staying in temporary accommodations in Italy and Austria at the end of 1989.

European Community. The twelve countries that form the European Community (EC) together had an estimated permanent Jewish population of about one million. Decline against the 1989 estimate of 1,019,200 reflects the final resettlement of about 19,000 Jewish migrants from the Soviet Union who were temporarily staying at Ladispoli and other localities near Rome. The process of economic and political integration of the EC countries is slowly moving ahead. The free movement of goods and manpower expected to become effective after January 1, 1993, and accompanying changes in occupational needs and opportunities within the EC, could affect geographical mobility, possibly altering the distribution of Jews among the respective countries. EC policies toward immigration from other, non-EC, countries may be affected as well.

France has the largest Jewish population in Western Europe, estimated at 530,000. Monitoring the plausible trends of both the internal evolution and external migrations of Jews in France suggests that there has been little net change in Jewish population size since the major survey that was taken in the 1970s.[18] A study conducted in 1988 at the initiative of the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU) confirmed the basic demographic stability of French Jewry.[19]

Periodic reestimations of the size of British Jewry are carried out by the Community Research Unit (CRU) of the Board of Deputies. Based on an analysis of Jewish deaths during 1975–1979, the population baseline for 1977 was set at 336,000, with a margin of error of plus or minus 34,000.[20] An excess of deaths over births is clearly shown by the vital statistical records annually compiled by the Jewish community. Allowing for emigration and some assimilatory losses, the update for 1984, as elaborated by the CRU, came to 330,000. Continuation of the same trends suggested an estimate of 320,000 for 1989. A new study of Jewish synagogue membership indicates a decline of over 7 percent between 1983 and 1990.[21] While this should not be taken as an automatic proxy for Jewish population decline, our reduced estimate to 315,000 in 1990 aims at characterizing the ongoing trend.

In 1990, the momentous process of German political reunion was formally completed. In the former (West) German Federal Republic, the 1987 population census

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[18]Doris Bensimon and Sergio DellaPergola, *La population juive de France: socio-démographie et identité* (Jerusalem and Paris, 1984).

[19]Erik H. Cohen, *L'Etude et l'éducation juive en France ou l'avenir d'une communauté* (Paris, 1991).

[20]Steven Haberman, Barry A. Kosmin, and Caren Levy, "Mortality Patterns of British Jews 1975–79: Insights and Applications for the Size and Structure of British Jewry," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, ser. A, 146, pt. 3, 1983, pp. 294–310.

[21]Marlena Schmool and Frances Cohen, *British Synagogue Membership in 1990* (London, 1991).

reported 32,319 Jews. Jewish community records reported about 28,500 affiliated Jews at the end of 1990—an increase over previous years. Immigration continuously compensated for the surplus of deaths over births in this aging Jewish population. From the scarce information that existed about the number of Jews in the former (East) German Democratic Republic, we gave an estimate of 500 for 1988. Our 1989 estimate for unified Germany was 35,000, the increase over the sum of Jewish populations in the previous West and East Germanys reflecting assumed recent immigration. In 1990, an estimated 5,000 Jewish migrants from the Soviet Union were admitted to settle in Germany, thus bringing the total Jewish population estimate to 40,000.

Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands each have Jewish populations ranging around 30,000. There is a tendency toward internal shrinkage of all these Jewries, but in some instances this is offset by immigration. In Belgium, the size of Jewish population is probably quite stable, owing to the comparatively strong Orthodox element in that community. In Italy, until 1984, Jews were legally bound to affiliate with the local Jewish communities, but then membership in these communities became voluntary. Although most Jews reaffiliated, the new looser legal framework may facilitate the ongoing attrition of the Jewish population.

Other EC member countries have smaller and, overall, slowly declining Jewish populations. An exception may be Spain, whose Jewish population is very tentatively estimated at 12,000.

Other Western Europe. Countries which are not EC members together account for a Jewish population of 44,000. Decline from the 1989 estimate of 52,300 reflects the departure of most of the Jewish migrants that were accommodated in transit in Austria. The estimate of Austria's permanent Jewish populaton was increased to 7,000. Switzerland's Jews are estimated at below 20,000. While there is evidence of a negative balance of births and deaths, connected with great aging and frequent outmarriage, immigration may have offset the internal losses. The Jewish populations in Scandinavian countries are, on the whole, numerically rather stable.

USSR. The demographic situation of East European Jewry is rapidly changing as a consequence of the extensive geopolitical changes in the region. The major event was the economic and political crisis that culminated in the disintegration of the Soviet Union as a state in 1991. Closely related to the same fateful complex of factors was the upsurge in Jewish emigration in 1990, which continued, slightly attenuated, in 1991. While mass emigration is an obvious factor in population decrease, the demography of East European Jewry has been characterized for years by very low levels of "effectively Jewish" fertility, frequent outmarriage, and heavy aging. Therefore the shrinking of the Jewish populations there must be comparatively rapid.

At the end of 1990, the timing of our present update, by far the largest Jewish population in Eastern Europe was still concentrated in the USSR, including its Asian republics. Data on "nationalities" (ethnic groups) from the Soviet Union's official population census, carried out in January 1989, revealed a total of 1,451,000

Jews.[22] The new figure confirmed the declining trend already apparent since the previous three population censuses: 2,267,800 in 1959; 2,150,700 in 1970; and 1,810,900 in 1979. Our own estimate of the number of Jews in the USSR at the end of 1988, projected from the 1979 population census, was 1,435,000; it thus deviated by only 1 percent from the new official baseline figure.

Our reservation about USSR Jewish population figures in previous AJYB volumes bears repeating: some underreporting is not impossible, but it cannot be quantified and should not be exaggerated. One should keep in mind the possible effects on census declarations of the prolonged existence of a totalitarian regime and also of societal preferences for other than Jewish nationalities in the various parts of the Soviet Union. As they are, the figures of successive censuses appear to be remarkably consistent with one another—taking into account also the known volume of emigration, on the one hand, and the probable internal demographic evolution of the Jewish population in recent decades, on the other. The latter was characterized by very low fertility and birthrates; high frequencies of outmarriage, especially in the Slavic republics, which have a large share of the total Jewish population; a preference for non-Jewish nationalities among the children of outmarriage; aging; and a clear surplus of Jewish deaths over Jewish births.[23] Viewed conceptually, the census figures represent the core Jewish population in the USSR. They provide a good example of a large and empirically measured core Jewish population in the Diaspora, consisting of the aggregate of self-identifying Jews.

The respective figures for the enlarged Jewish population—including all current Jews, as well as any other persons of Jewish parentage and their non-Jewish household members—must be substantially higher in a societal context like that of the USSR, which has been characterized by high intermarriage rates for a considerable time. It is not possible to provide an actual estimate of this enlarged Jewish population for lack of appropriate data. Nor can any information be derived about the ratio between Jews and non-Jews in an enlarged Jewish population in the USSR from the

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[22]First data from the 1989 census results, by "nationalities," appeared in *Goskomstat SSSR, Natsional'nii sostav naseleniia* (Moscow, 1989); "Po dannym goskomstata SSSR," *Gazeta Soyuz*, Mar. 11, 1990; Mark Kupovetzky, "Yidish-dos mame-loschen fun 150 toysent Sovetische yiden," *Sovetisch Heimland*, no. 3, 1990, p. 131.

[23]U.O. Schmelz, "New Evidence on Basic Issues in the Demography of Soviet Jews," *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 16, no. 2, 1974, pp. 209–23; Mordechai Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry Since the Second World War: Population and Social Structure* (Westport, 1987); Leonid E. Darski, "Fertility in the USSR: Basic Trends," paper presented at European Population Conference, Paris, 1991; Mark Tolts, "Jewish Marriages in the USSR: A Demographic Analysis," Moscow, 1991. Indeed, consistency between the censuses, i.e., the respective declarations of self-identification by Jews, was such that our estimate for 1975 turned out to fit well as a demographic interpolation between the results of the 1970 census and the subsequent one held in 1979. See Schmelz, *World Jewish Population: Regional Estimates and Projections*.

statistics of immigrants to Israel. Due to the highly self-selective character of *aliyah*, non-Jews have constituted a relatively small minority of all new immigrants from the USSR.[24] It is obvious, though, that the wide provisions of Israel's Law of Return (see above) apply to virtually the maximum emigration pool of self-declared Jews and close non-Jewish relatives. Any of the large figures attributed in recent years to the size of Soviet Jewry, insofar as they are based on demographic reasoning, do not relate to the core but to various estimates of an enlarged Jewish population. The evidence also suggests that in the USSR, core Jews constitute a smaller share of the total enlarged Jewish population than in some Western countries, including the United States.

Just as the number of declared Jews remained consistent between censuses, the number of persons of Jewish descent who preferred not to be identified as Jews was rather consistent, too, at least until 1989. However, the recent political developments, and especially the emigration urge impressively illustrated by the exodus of 1990–1991, have probably led to greater readiness to declare Jewish self-identification by persons who did not describe themselves as such in the 1989 census. In terms of demographic accounting, these "returnees" imply an actual net increment to the core Jewish population of the USSR, as well as to world Jewry.

With regard to updating the January 1989 census figure to the end of 1990, Jewish emigration has played the major role among the intervening changes. An estimated 71,000, thereof about 60,000 declared Jews, left in 1989, as against 19,300 in 1988, 8,100 in 1987, and only 7,000 during the whole 1982–1986 period. In 1990, according to Soviet, Israeli, American, and other sources, an estimated 201,000 Jews left the Soviet Union.[25] For the first time since 1976, a substantial majority of the Jewish emigrants who left the Soviet Union in 1990 went to Israel rather than to another Western country, as in the preceding years. Concurrently, a further 28,000 emigrants from the previous year who were in temporary accommodations—19,000 in Italy and 9,000 in Austria—were permanently resettled, and the transit camps closed. In total, an estimated 229,000 Jews originating in the USSR were involved in these international migrations in 1990. Of these, 180,000 emigrated to Israel.

At the same time, the heavy deficit of internal population dynamics continued and even intensified due to the great aging which is known to have prevailed for many decades. Aging cannot but have been exacerbated by the significantly younger age

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[24]Israel's Ministry of Interior records the religion-nationality of each new immigrant for identification purposes. Such attribution is made on the basis of documentary evidence which is supplied by the immigrants themselves and is checked by competent authorities in Israel. According to data available from the Interior Ministry's Central Population Register, 94.2 percent of all new immigrants from the Soviet Union during the period Oct. 1989–Feb. 1991 were registered as Jewish. See Sergio DellaPergola, "The Demographic Context of the Soviet Aliya," *Jews and Jewish Topics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* 3 (16), Winter 1991, pp. 41–56.

[25]See Sidney Heitman, "Soviet Emigration in 1990," *Berichte des Bundesinstitut fur Ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*, vol. 33, 1991.

composition of the emigrants.[26] On the strength of these considerations, our estimate of the core Jewish population in the USSR was reduced from the census figure of 1,450,000 at the end of 1988/beginning of 1989 to 1,370,000 at the end of 1989, and to 1,150,000 at the end of 1990.

At the end of 1990, the Soviet Union still constituted one country, and it is referred to as such in our statistical presentation. However, in view of its subsequent political disintegration, it is relevant to review the distribution of Jewish population in the 15 former Soviet republics that were to become its independent successor states (see table 4).[27] Of the total estimate of 1,150,000 Jews, 30,500 lived in the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which were the first to reach independence and international recognition in 1991; 920,000 in the three Slavic republics of Byelorussia (Belarus), Russia, and Ukraine; 50,000 in Moldavia (Moldova); 44,500 in the three trans-Caucasian republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia; and 105,000 in the five central-Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Other East Europe and Balkans. The Jewish populations in Hungary and Romania and the small remnants in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia are all reputed to be very overaged and to experience frequent outmarriage. In each of these countries, the ongoing processes of political liberalization have permitted greater autonomy of the organized Jewish communities and their registered membership. More Jews or persons of Jewish origin are known or believed to exist than previously thought, some having come out in the open after years of hiding their identity. Yet, the inevitable numerical decline of Jewish populations in Eastern Europe is reflected in reduced estimates for 1990. (In 1991, the entire Jewish community of Albania, amounting to some 300, emigrated to Israel.) The size of Hungarian Jewry—the largest in Eastern Europe outside the USSR—is quite insufficiently known. Our estimate of 57,000 only attempts to reflect the declining trend that prevails there, too, according to the available indicators. Comparatively large emigration of Jews continued to take place from Romania and was reflected in the

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[26]Age structures of the Jewish population in the Russian Federal Republic in 1970 and 1979 were reported in *Goskomstat SSSR, Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1970 goda*, vol. 4, table 33 (Moscow, 1973); *Goskomstat SSSR, Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1979 goda*, vol. 4, part 2, table 2 (Moscow, 1989). Data from the 1989 census are in the course of publication. Age structures of recent Jewish migrants from the USSR to the United States and to Israel are available, respectively, from: HIAS, Statistical Abstract, vol. 30, no. 4 (New York, 1990); Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, Immigration to Israel 1990, Special Series, no. 900 (Jerusalem, 1991).

[27]These estimates are based on the detailed geographical origins of new immigrants to Israel. They repeat, with minor adaptations, those of Yoel Florsheim, "Immigration to Israel from the Soviet Union in 1990," *Jews and Jewish Topics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* 2 (15), 1991, pp. 5–14. Our estimates of the total population of USSR republics in 1990 were adapted from Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Institute of Sociology, Center for Social Demography, *Selected Statistical Data on Demographic Processes in the USSR* (Moscow, 1991).

detailed community records available there. Romania's Jewish population was estimated at 17,500 in 1990.

TABLE 4. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN THE USSR, 1990

Republic	Total Population	Jewish Population	Jews per 1,000 Population	Accuracy Rating
Estonia	1,600,000	3,500	2.2	B 1990
Latvia	2,700,000	18,000	6.7	B 1990
Lithuania	3,700,000	9,000	2.4	B 1990
Byelorussia	10,295,000	75,000	7.3	B 1990
Russia	147,945,000	470,000	3.2	B 1990
Ukraine	51,780,000	375,000	7.2	B 1990
Moldavia	4,400,000	50,000	11.4	B 1990
Armenia	3,300,000	500	0.2	B 1990
Azerbaijan	7,095,000	21,000	3.0	B 1990
Georgia	5,495,000	23,000	4.2	B 1990
Kazakhstan	16,695,000	17,000	1.0	B 1990
Kirghizstan	4,400,000	5,000	1.1	B 1990
Tajikistan	5,300,000	11,500	2.2	B 1990
Turkmenistan	3,600,000	1,500	0.4	B 1990
Uzbekistan	20,290,000	70,000	3.4	B 1990
Total	288,595,000	1,150,000	4.0	

The Jewish population of Turkey, where a surplus of deaths over births had been reported for several years, was estimated at about 20,000.

ASIA

Israel accounts for 99 percent of all the nearly four million Jews in Asia, excluding the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey (see table 5). By the end of 1990, Israeli Jews constituted 31 percent of total world Jewry. Israel's Jewish population grew in 1990 by about 230,000, or 6.2 percent. This was the highest rate of growth since the end of the initial wave of mass *aliyah* in 1951. About 79 percent of this

growth was due to the net migration balance; 21 percent to natural increase.[28] The total number of immigrants from all countries was 201,500, of whom 195,600 were Jewish. (This last is the second highest in Israel's history, and the highest since 1949, when 239,950 Jewish immigrants arrived.) Included in the figures are 185,000 immigrants from the USSR, of whom 180,000 were Jewish.

It is difficult to estimate the Jewish population of Iran for any given date, but it continues to dwindle. The estimate for 1990 was reduced to 19,000. In other Asian countries with small veteran communities—such as India—the Jewish population tends to decline slowly. On the basis of research conducted by recent visitors to Yemen, firm statistical evidence was obtained for the first time for the small remnant of the Jewish population in that country. Very small communities, partially of a transient character, exist in several countries of Southeast Asia.

AFRICA

Less than 150,000 Jews are estimated to remain now in Africa. The Republic of South Africa accounts for 77 percent of total Jews in that continent (see table 6). In 1980, according to the official census, there were about 118,000 Jews among South Africa's white population.[29] Substantial Jewish emigration after that was compensated in good part by Jewish immigration. Considering a moderately negative migration balance, and an incipient negative balance of internal changes, the Jewish population estimate for 1988 was reduced to 114,000. In 1989 and 1990, the numbers of emigrants, on the one hand, and immigrants and returning residents, on the other, possibly balanced—suggesting no considerable change in Jewish population size. A Jewish-sponsored survey of South African Jewry was completed in 1991, and results will be forthcoming along with the results of a new official population census.

In recent years, the Jewish community of Ethiopia has been at the center of an international effort of rescue. In 1990, over 4,000 Jews migrated to Israel. (In the course of 1991, the overwhelming majority of Ethiopian Jews—about 20,000 people—were brought to Israel, most of them in a one-day dramatic air-lift operation.) A few of these migrants were non-Jewish members of mixed households. In connection with these events, the size of Ethiopian Jewry could eventually be estimated on a more accurate basis than had been the case previously. Taking into account the numbers of those who subsequently left or yet remained in the country, it can be

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[28]Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 1991* (Jerusalem, 1991). For a comprehensive review of sociodemographic changes in Israel, see U.O. Schmelz, Sergio DellaPergola, and Uri Avner, "Ethnic Differences Among Israeli Jews: A New Look," AJYB 1990, vol. 90, pp. 3–204.

[29]Sergio DellaPergola and Allie A. Dubb, "South African Jewry: A Sociodemographic Profile," AJYB 1988, vol. 88, pp. 59–140.

TABLE 5. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN ASIA, 1990[a]

Country	Total Population	Jewish Population	Jews per 1,000 Population	Accuracy Rating
Hong Kong	5,841,000	1,000	0.2	D
India	853,094,000	4,800	0.0	C 1981
Iran	54,607,000	19,000	0.3	D
Iraq	18,920,000	200	0.0	D
Israel	4,822,000[b]	3,946,700	818.5	A 1990
Japan	123,460,000	1,000	0.0	C 1988
Korea, South	42,793,000	100	0.0	D
Philippines	62,413,000	100	0.0	C 1988
Singapore	2,723,000	300	0.1	B 1990
Syria	12,530,000	4,000	0.3	D
Thailand	55,702,000	200	0.0	C 1988 X
Yemen	9,196,000	1,700	0.2	B 1990 X
Other	1,810,938,000	300	0.0	D
Total	3,057,039,000	3,979,400	1.3	

[a]Not including Asian regions of USSR and Turkey.
[b]End 1990.

TABLE 6. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN AFRICA, 1990

Country	Total Population	Jewish Population	Jews per 1,000 Population	Accuracy Rating
Egypt	52,426,000	200	0.0	C 1988
Ethiopia	49,240,000	21,000	0.4	B 1990 X
Kenya	24,031,000	400	0.0	B 1990
Morocco	25,061,000	8,000	0.3	D X
South Africa	35,282,000	114,000	3.2	C 1980
Tunisia	8,180,000	2,400	0.3	D
Zaire	35,568,000	400	0.0	D
Zambia	8,452,000	300	0.0	D
Zimbabwe	9,709,000	1,000	0.1	B 1990
Other	394,162,000	1,000	0.0	D
Total	642,111,000	148,700	0.2	

estimated that the Jewish population was about 25,000 at the end of 1989, and 21,000 at the end of 1990. This implies an upward revision of 5,000 in comparison with our original estimate for 1989.

The remnants of Moroccan and Tunisian Jewry tend to shrink slowly through emigration. In the light of available information, our 1989 estimate was reduced retrospectively, and a further moderate decline was introduced in the estimates for 1990. It should be pointed out, though, that not a few Jews have a foothold both in Morocco or Tunisia and in France and other Western countries, and their geographical attribution is uncertain.

OCEANIA

The major country of Jewish residence in Oceania (Australasia) is Australia, where 95 percent of the estimated total of nearly 93,000 Jews live (see table 7). The 1986 census of Australia, where the question on religion is optional, enumerated 69,065 declared Jews but also indicated that about 25 percent of the country's whole population either did not specify their religion or stated explicitly that they had none.[30] This large group must be assumed to contain persons who identify in other ways as Jews. In addition, Australian Jewry has received migratory reinforcements during the last decade, especially from South Africa and the Soviet Union. At the same time, there are demographic patterns with negative effects on Jewish population size, such as strong aging, low or negative natural increase, and some assimilation. We raised our estimate for 1990 to a provisional figure of 88,000. The new census of 1991, as well as a Jewish survey now being planned, will hopefully provide firmer data on Jewish population size and trends in Australia. The Jewish community in New Zealand—now estimated at 4,500—attracted some immigrants, but incurred a negative migration balance with Australia.

TABLE 7. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN OCEANIA, 1990

Country	Total Population	Jewish Population	Jews per 1,000 Population	Accuracy Rating
Australia	16,873,000	88,000	5.2	C 1986
New Zealand	3,392,000	4,500	1.3	C 1988
Other	6,216,000	100	0.0	D
Total	26,481,000	92,600	3.5	

[30]Walter M. Lippmann, *Australian Jewry 1986* (South Yarra, Victoria, 1987).

TABLE 8. DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORLD'S JEWS, BY NUMBER AND PROPORTION (PER 1,000 POPULATION) IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES, 1990

Number of Jews in Country	Jews per 1,000 Population					
	Total	Below 1	1–4.9	5–9.9	10–24.9	25+
			Number of Countries			
Total	74[a]	49	15	6	3	1
100–900	24	19	4	—	1	—
1,000–4,900	18	17	1	—	—	—
5,000–9,900	6	4	2	—	—	—
10,000–49,900	15	8	6	1	—	—
50,000–99,900	2	—	—	2	—	—
100,000–999,900	6	1	1	3	1	—
1,000,000 and over	3	—	1	—	1	1
			Jewish Population Distribution (Absolute Numbers)			
Total	12,806,400[b]	375,100	1,408,000	1,229,200	5,845,600	3,946,700
100–900	9,600	7,400	1,600	—	600	—
1,000–4,900	47,500	43,000	4,500	—	—	—
5,000–9,900	40,700	29,300	11,400	—	—	—
10,000–49,900	346,100	195,400	126,500	24,200	—	—
50,000–99,900	145,000	—	—	145,000	—	—
100,000–999,900	1,584,000	100,000	114,000	1,060,000	310,000	—
1,000,000 and over	10,631,700	—	1,150,000	—	5,535,000	3,946,700
			Jewish Population Distribution (Percent of World's Jews)			
Total	100.0[b]	2.9	11.0	9.6	45.6	30.8
100–900	0.1	0.1	0.0	—	0.0	—
1,000–4,900	0.3	0.3	0.0	—	—	—
5,000–9,900	0.3	0.2	0.1	—	—	—
10,000–49,900	2.7	1.5	1.0	0.2	—	—
50,000–99,900	1.1	—	—	1.1	—	—
100,000–999,900	12.4	0.8	0.9	8.3	2.4	—
1,000,000 and over	83.0	—	9.0	—	43.2	30.8

[a]Excluding countries with fewer than 100 Jews.
[b]Including countries with fewer than 100 Jews.

Dispersion and Concentration

Table 8 demonstrates the magnitude of Jewish dispersion. The individual countries listed above as each having at least 100 Jews are scattered over all the continents. In 1990, more than half (42 out of 74 countries) had fewer than 5,000 Jews each. In relative terms, too, the Jews were thinly scattered nearly everywhere in the Diaspora. There is not a single Diaspora country where they amounted even to 3 percent of the total population. In most countries they constituted a far smaller fraction. Only three Diaspora countries had more than 1 percent Jews in their total population, and only nine countries had more than 5 Jews per 1,000 of population. The respective nine countries were, in descending order of the proportion, but regardless of the absolute number of their Jews: United States (22.2 per 1,000), Gibraltar (20.0), Canada (11.7), France (9.4), Uruguay (7.8), Argentina (6.7), Great Britain (5.5), Hungary (5.4), and Australia (5.2). The other major Diaspora Jewries, having lower proportions of Jews per 1,000 of total population, were the USSR (4.0), South Africa (3.2), and Brazil (0.7 per 1,000). Although by the end of 1990 the constituent republics of the Soviet Union were not independent states, and therefore were not reported as such in table 8, it may be noted that four had more than 5 Jews per 1,000 of population: Moldova (11.4), Belarus (7.3), Ukraine (7.2), and Latvia (6.7).

In the state of Israel, by contrast, the Jewish majority amounted to 818.5 per thousand in 1990, compared to 815.2 per thousand in 1989—not including the Arab population of the administered areas.

While Jews are widely dispersed, they are also concentrated to some extent (see table 9). In 1990 over 96 percent of world Jewry lived in the ten countries with the

TABLE 9. TEN COUNTRIES WITH LARGEST JEWISH POPULATIONS, 1990

Rank	Country	Jewish Population	% of Total Jewish Population			
			In the World		In the Diaspora	
			%	Cumulative %	%	Cumulative %
1	United States	5,535,000	43.2	43.2	62.5	62.5
2	Israel	3,946,700	30.8	74.0	—	—
3	Soviet Union	1,150,000	9.0	83.0	13.0	75.5
4	France	530,000	4.1	87.1	6.0	81.5
5	Great Britain	315,000	2.5	89.6	3.5	85.0
6	Canada	310,000	2.4	92.0	3.5	88.5
7	Argentina	215,000	1.7	93.7	2.4	90.9
8	South Africa	114,000	0.9	94.6	1.3	92.2
9	Brazil	100,000	0.8	95.4	1.1	93.3
10	Australia	88,000	0.7	96.1	1.0	94.3

largest Jewish populations; and 83 percent lived in the three countries that had at least a million Jews each (United States, Israel, Soviet Union). Similarly, nine leading Diaspora countries together comprised over 94 percent of the Diaspora Jewish population; two countries (United States and Soviet Union) accounted for 75 percent, and the United States alone for over 62 percent of total Diaspora Jewry.

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