

# World Jewish Population, 1988

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## *Updated Estimates*

THIS ARTICLE PRESENTS UPDATES, for the end of 1988, of the Jewish population estimates for the various countries of the world.<sup>1</sup> The estimates reflect some of the results of a prolonged and ongoing effort to study scientifically the demography of contemporary world Jewry.<sup>2</sup> 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. Information on the quality of the estimate for each country is provided below, through a simple accuracy rating scale.

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. The figures for 1988 have been updated from those for 1986 in accordance with the known or estimated changes in the interval—vital events (i.e., births and deaths), identificational changes (accessions and secessions), and migrations. In addition, some corrections have been introduced in the light of newly accrued information on Jewish population. Corresponding corrections have also been applied retrospectively to the 1986 figures, which appear below in revised summary (see table 1), so as to allow for comparison with the 1988 estimates.

The 1988 estimates were compiled in 1989, toward the end of the decade of the 1980s. By now, a new round of decennial population censuses is under way throughout the countries of the world. Those countries which include information on religion and/or ethnic group (or ancestry) in their census, specifying the Jews as a separate category, are expected to furnish updated counts of their self-declared Jews. The most important instance is the Soviet Union, which took its new census some-

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<sup>1</sup>The previous estimates, as of 1986, were first published in AJYB, vol. 88, 1988, pp. 412–27, and reprinted in a condensed version in AJYB, vol. 89, 1989, pp. 433–41.

<sup>2</sup>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.

what earlier, in January 1989, though no results by ethnic group (religion is not inquired into) had been released by the time of this writing. Other countries from which new census figures on national Jewish populations are expected include Canada, Brazil, Switzerland, South Africa, and Australia.

In addition, the world's largest Jewish population—that of the United States—will be investigated in 1990 by means of a scientifically designed national sample survey, under the auspices of the Council of Jewish Federations. The feasibility of Jewish-sponsored national sample surveys is being considered in other countries as well. Thus, while many of the estimates presented here for 1988 are updates ultimately traceable to data collections conducted around 1980 or even earlier, this new round of basic information intake is expected to provide the needed empirical data for several prominent Diaspora populations. This documentation will be duly taken into account in compiling our future sets of Jewish population estimates.

Israel took its latest census in 1983, but has constantly updated statistics of its Jewish population size.

### *Jewish Population Trends*

Diaspora 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 Jews tend to cluster in large cities, they are greatly exposed to assimilation. While the assimilatory process leads to demographic losses for the Jewish population, there may also be gains through accession of persons who were born as non-Jews. It is the net balance of the identificational changes that matters demographically; in the longer run, though, the cohesion of a Diaspora population may be affected as well.<sup>3</sup>

The Jews in most countries of the Diaspora are demographically characterized by very low fertility, considerable outmarriage (which may involve losses of children to the Jewish population),<sup>4</sup> some other net assimilatory losses, and great aging. Since an increased proportion of elderly in the population usually implies not only many deceased but also a reduced proportion of persons of reproductive age—and therefore relatively fewer births—the aging of a population has the effect of reducing the birthrate and raising the death rate. There are differences in the levels of these demographic factors among 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 the Jewish deceased frequently outnumbering newborn Jews. These negative tendencies have been taken into account in updating the estimates of Jews in many countries.

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<sup>3</sup>A fuller discussion of the subject can be found in U.O. Schmelz, "Jewish Survival: The Demographic Factors," *AJYB*, vol. 81, 1981, pp. 61–117. See also *Aging of World Jewry* (Jerusalem, 1984), by the same author.

<sup>4</sup>If less than half of the children of the outmarried are themselves Jews.

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. 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, it may cause, or aggravate, the decrease of a Jewish population. In 1987–1988, the overall volume of international migrations of Jews was rather modest, primarily because of the restricted outflow of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union.

In contrast, Jews in Israel incur virtually no outmarriages and direct assimilatory losses. Moreover, until the early 1980s they tended to have a positive migration balance. They have a younger age structure than Diaspora Jews and the general populations of the developed countries and exhibit a fairly high level of fertility. The previously substantial fertility differentials between Jews in-gathered 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 the developed countries.

In the overall demographic balance of World Jewry, the natural increase of Israel has, so far, made up for 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 for some reduction in the total number of the world's Jews may soon be setting in.<sup>5</sup> The relative share of Israel among world Jewry is on the increase.

### *Difficulties in Estimating Jewish Population Size in the Diaspora*

Some of the difficulties involved in estimating the size of Jewish Diaspora populations are common to all aspects of the study of Diaspora demography.<sup>6</sup> They are mainly due to the great geographical scattering of Jews—a factor that makes multiple data collection mandatory but also hinders its feasibility; to their unusually strong demographic dynamics in many respects—migrations, social mobility, family formation patterns (including outmarriage), etc.; and to lacunae of available demographic information, which is deficient in both quantity and quality.

More specific difficulties in estimating the up-to-date size of Jewish populations are due to conceptual and measurement problems.

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<sup>5</sup>*Aliyah* and *yeridah*—immigration to, and emigration from, Israel—obviously constitute only internal transfers within the global Jewish framework.

<sup>6</sup>Reliable figures are currently forthcoming for the Jews of Israel from official statistics which need not be discussed here.

When mixed couples and households are not infrequent, it is necessary to distinguish between the "actually Jewish population" and the "enlarged Jewish population." The latter comprises also the non-Jewish household members (spouses, children, etc.) of the Jews. However socially significant the non-Jewish household members (and more distant non-Jewish relatives) of the Jews may be, they should not be included in a count of Jews. The paradoxical situation that exists is that growth of an enlarged Jewish population may be associated with contraction of the respective actually Jewish population.

Another vexing problem is identificational changes among Jews. Under present conditions, there are Jews who have not formally embraced another religion, yet are either very estranged ("marginal") or have even become resolutely alienated from Judaism and the Jewish community and, if questioned, disclaim being Jews any longer. When a census or survey is taken which inquires into religion or ethnicity, these individuals have an opportunity to define their current status subjectively.<sup>7</sup> In general, the practice of self-determination is followed in all relevant censuses and surveys.<sup>8</sup> This applies to marginal individuals, converts to Judaism (although some of the conversions may be contested between the various ideological trends—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform), and to all other persons who claim to be Jews. In estimating the size of a Jewish population, it is usual to include, in principle, all marginal individuals who have not ceased to be Jews.

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 and account for the widely differing estimates of Jews that have been circulated for these countries.

Not a few Jews (like other persons) have some residential status in more than one country.<sup>9</sup> This may be due to business requirements, professional assignments in foreign countries, climatic differences between countries, migrants staying temporarily in prolonged transit, etc. The danger of double-counting or omissions is inherent in such situations. The situation is particularly critical regarding some countries in Central and tropical South America, Africa, and East Asia, where the relatively few Jews living permanently may be outnumbered by a floating Jewish population of people who are not tourists but who are in residence for temporary periods. As far as possible, we have tried to account for such persons only once, giving precedence to the usual country of residence.

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<sup>7</sup>Misreporting of Jews in official censuses is a different issue; see below.

<sup>8</sup>Persons who disclaim being Jews at some stage of life may change their minds later.

<sup>9</sup>The problem is even more acute with regard to residential status in more than one locality of the same country. This may adversely affect the accuracy of Jewish population reporting for individual countries through omissions or, more likely, double-counting.

Figures on Jews from population censuses are unavailable for most Diaspora communities, though they do exist for some important ones. Even where census statistics on Jews are forthcoming, they are usually scant, because the Jews are a small minority. There have been instances where detailed tabulations on Jews have been undertaken, through Jewish initiative, from official census material; examples are Canada, South Africa, and Argentina. In some countries serious problems exist, or are feared to exist, in the reporting of Jews as such: individuals may prefer not to describe themselves as Jews, or non-Jews may be erroneously included as Jews (as has happened in some Latin American countries). These problems require statistical evaluation whose feasibility and conclusiveness depend on the relevant information available.

Surveys are the only way of obtaining comprehensive information on Jewish population in the absence of official censuses. Jewish-sponsored surveys have the additional advantage of being able to inquire into matters of specifically Jewish interest, e.g., Jewish education, observances, 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 with regard to marginal Jews. Again, these aspects require evaluation. Countrywide surveys have been undertaken in the United States, South Africa, France, Italy, Netherlands, etc. Local surveys have been carried out in many U.S. cities, in the United Kingdom, Latin America, Australia, etc. However, these local initiatives have so far been uncoordinated with regard to content and method.

In certain countries or localities, Jewish community registers include all, or 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 vary from place to place, community registers generally lag behind the actual situation of the respective Jewish populations.

Many estimates of Jewish populations for which no solid data from censuses or surveys exist are regrettably of unspecified or dubious source and methodology.

Besides the conceptual and measurement difficulties affecting the figures for a Jewish population at any base date, 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. For vital events and identificational changes, age-sex-specific models can be of use; these 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.

## *Presentation of Data*

The detailed estimates of Jewish population distribution in each continent (tables 2–6 below) refer to residents in countries with at least 100 Jews. A residual estimate of “other” Jews living in smaller communities, or staying temporarily in transit accommodations, supplements some of the continental totals. For each of the reported countries, the four columns in the table provide the United Nations estimate of midyear 1988 total population,<sup>10</sup> the estimated end-1988 Jewish population, the proportion of Jews per 1,000 of total population, and a rating of the accuracy of the Jewish population estimates.

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 countries should be understood as being the central value of the plausible range. The relative magnitude of this range varies inversely to the accuracy of the estimate.

### ACCURACY RATING

The three main elements that affect the accuracy of each estimate are the nature 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 surveys; updated on the basis of full or partial information on Jewish population movements in 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 country; updating according to demographic information illustrative of regional demographic trends; and (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 1988 was not only updated but also revised in the light of improved information, the sign “X” is appended to the accuracy rating.

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<sup>10</sup>See United Nations, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Statistical Office, *Population and Vital Statistics Report: Data Available as of July 1, 1989*. Statistical Papers, ser. A, vol. 41, no. 3 (New York, 1989).

*Distribution of World Jewish Population by Major Regions*

Table 1 gives an overall picture for 1988 as compared to 1986. For 1986 the originally published estimates are presented along with somewhat revised figures that take into account, retrospectively, the corrections made in 1988 in certain country estimates, in the light of improved information. These corrections resulted in a net increase of world Jewry's estimated size by 4,500. Some explanations are given below for the relevant countries.

The size of world Jewry at the end of 1988 is assessed at 12,979,000, or slightly below 13 million. According to the revised figures, the estimated growth between 1986 and 1988 was negligible—only 6,600 people, or about three per 10,000 annually. Despite all the imperfections in the estimates, it is clear that world Jewry is in the state of “zero population growth,” with the natural increase in Israel compensating for demographic decline in the Diaspora.

The number of Jews in Israel rose from a figure of 3,562,500 in 1986 to 3,659,000 at the end of 1988, a change of +1.3 percent annually. In contrast, the estimated Jewish population in the Diaspora declined from 9,409,900 (according to the revised figures) to 9,320,000, a change of -0.5 percent annually. These changes were almost entirely due to internal demographic evolution, since the net migratory balance between the Diaspora and Israel amounted to no more than 3,300 during these two years (Israel gained migrants on balance). By the end of 1988, Israel's Jews constituted about 28.2 percent of total world Jewry.

About half of the world's Jews reside in the Americas, with 46 percent in North America. Twenty-eight 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 20 percent of the total. The proportions of the world's Jews who live in Africa and Oceania are very small.

Among the major geographical regions listed in table 1, the number of Jews in Israel—and, in consequence, in total Asia—increased by more than 2 percent in the two-year span 1987–1988. The total number of Jews estimated for North America virtually did not change. The total estimate for Oceania increased by nearly 3 percent. Most other regions sustained decreases in Jewish population size.

World Jewry constitutes about 2.5 per 1,000 of total world population. One in about 395 people in the world is a Jew.

*Individual Countries*

## THE AMERICAS

In 1988 the total number of Jews in the American continents was somewhat less than six and a half million. The overwhelming majority (93 percent) reside in the United States and Canada, less than 1 percent live in Central America—including

TABLE 1. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION, BY CONTINENTS AND MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS, 1986 AND 1988

| Region                           | 1986       |            | 1988    |                        | % Change<br>1986-1988 |         |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|---------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
|                                  | Original   | Revised    |         | Abs. N.                |                       | Percent |
|                                  |            | Abs. N.    | Percent |                        |                       |         |
| Diaspora                         | 9,405,400  | 9,409,900  | 72.5    | 9,320,000              | 71.8                  | -1.0    |
| Israel                           | 3,562,500  | 3,562,500  | 27.5    | 3,659,000              | 28.2                  | +2.6    |
| World                            | 12,967,900 | 12,972,400 | 100.0   | 12,979,000             | 100.0                 | +0.1    |
| America,                         |            |            |         |                        |                       |         |
| Total                            | 6,454,700  | 6,453,200  | 49.8    | 6,447,600              | 49.7                  | -0.1    |
| North <sup>a</sup>               | 6,010,000  | 6,010,000  | 46.3    | 6,010,000              | 46.3                  | 0.0     |
| Central                          | 45,500     | 45,500     | 0.4     | 45,500                 | 0.4                   | 0.0     |
| South                            | 399,200    | 397,700    | 3.1     | 392,100                | 3.0                   | -1.4    |
| Europe, Total                    | 2,685,900  | 2,688,900  | 20.7    | 2,607,500 <sup>b</sup> | 20.1                  | -3.0    |
| EC                               | 1,005,100  | 1,005,100  | 7.7     | 1,000,400              | 7.7                   | -0.5    |
| West, other                      | 43,200     | 43,200     | 0.3     | 43,200                 | 0.4                   | 0.0     |
| East and<br>Balkans <sup>c</sup> | 1,637,600  | 1,640,600  | 12.6    | 1,553,900              | 12.0                  | -5.3    |
| Asia, Total                      | 3,598,000  | 3,598,000  | 27.7    | 3,692,400              | 28.4                  | +2.6    |
| Israel                           | 3,562,500  | 3,562,500  | 27.5    | 3,659,000              | 28.2                  | +2.6    |
| Rest <sup>c</sup>                | 35,500     | 35,500     | 0.3     | 33,400                 | 0.2                   | -5.9    |
| Africa, Total                    | 145,200    | 145,200    | 1.1     | 141,900                | 1.1                   | -2.3    |
| North                            | 15,200     | 15,200     | 0.1     | 12,700                 | 0.1                   | -16.4   |
| Central                          | 13,800     | 13,800     | 0.1     | 14,100                 | 0.1                   | +2.1    |
| South                            | 116,200    | 116,200    | 0.9     | 115,100                | 0.9                   | -0.9    |
| Oceania                          | 84,100     | 87,100     | 0.7     | 89,600                 | 0.7                   | +2.8    |

<sup>a</sup>U.S.A. and Canada.

<sup>b</sup>Including 10,000 Jews in transit.

<sup>c</sup>The Asian territories of USSR and Turkey are included in "East Europe and Balkans."



Mexico, and about 6 percent live in South America, where Argentina and Brazil have the largest Jewish communities (see table 2).

During the period reviewed here, 1986 to 1988, the balance of Jewish population changes in the United States as a whole probably was close to nil. Several local surveys taken in recent years provided evidence of very low "effectively Jewish" birthrates and of increasing aging among the Jewish population. Thus, it is possible that the influence of internal evolution on the size of U.S. Jewry may be negative, though there is no consensus with regard to this assessment. Any negative internal balance in U.S. Jewish population was generally offset by an undoubtedly positive balance of external migrations. In earlier years, the international migration balance of U.S. Jewry often resulted in actual increases of Jewish population size. However, the volume of Jewish international migration during most of the mid-1980s was very small, and only toward the end of 1988 did a significant increase begin to appear. The major determinant of these trends in recent years was the changing volume of Soviet Jewish immigration.

Our 1988 estimate of 5,700,000 Jews in the United States cautiously repeats the figures reported for the previous years, and differs slightly from the new estimates prepared by the research team of the North American Jewish Data Bank (NAJDB) which are reported elsewhere in this volume.<sup>11</sup> NAJDB estimated the 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 estimate of 5,700,000. For 1987, the NAJDB estimate was revised to 5,943,700, which was to be understood not as actual sudden growth but as a result of changes made in the figures for several local communities. For 1988, the NAJDB estimate was revised to 5,935,000, which again reflects corrections of data rather than actual decline. A nationwide sample survey of U.S. Jewry, scheduled for 1990—conducted by the NAJDB with the sponsorship of the Council of Jewish Federations—is expected to provide benchmark information and the basis for updates in subsequent years.

In Canada an official population census held in 1981 enumerated 296,425 Jews according to religion. If the persons are added who responded "Jewish" as a *single* reply to the census question on ethnic origin, while not indicating any religion (i.e., they were not Christians, etc.), the figure rises to 306,375. There were additional persons who did not indicate religion but mentioned "Jewish" as part of a *multiple*

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<sup>11</sup>The new U.S. Jewish population estimates first appeared in Barry A. Kosmin, Paul Ritterband, and Jeffrey Scheckner, "Jewish Population in the United States, 1986," AJYB, vol. 87, 1987, pp. 164–91. The 1988 update, by the same authors, appeared in AJYB, vol. 89, 1989, pp. 233–52. See also U.O. Schmelz, *World Jewish Population: Regional Estimates and Projections* (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 32–36; U.O. Schmelz and Sergio DellaPergola, "The Demographic Consequences of U.S. Jewish Population Trends," AJYB, vol. 83, 1983, pp. 141–87; by the same authors, *Basic Trends in U.S. Jewish Demography*, Jewish Sociology Papers, American Jewish Committee (New York, 1988); and Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewish Demography: Inconsistencies That Challenge," in U.O. Schmelz and S. DellaPergola, eds., *Papers in Jewish Demography 1985* (Jerusalem, 1989), pp. 23–42.

response to the question on ethnic origin. It is likely that some of them were merely thinking in terms of ancestry but did not actually consider themselves as Jews at the time of the census. By including a reasonable proportion of those who were identified in the census as Jews by multiple ethnicity only, a round total estimate of 310,000 was arrived at for 1981.

The population census held in Canada in 1986 provided new 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 possibly 30,000 to 40,000 in 1981. Thus, a substantial increase in the number of Canadians reporting partially Jewish ancestry appeared to offset the decline in the number of those with a solely Jewish identification according to ethnic criteria. Changes in the wording of the relevant questions in the two censuses, no less than actual demographic and identificational trends, are responsible for these variations in the size of the Canadian "ethnically" Jewish population. It should be noted, too, that an unknown number of "ethnic" Jews identify with a non-Jewish religion. This occurs comparatively more frequently among those reporting multiple ethnic origins than among those identifying only with the Jewish ethnic group. (These "ethnic" Jews who identify with another religion are not included in our estimate.) Finally, census data suggest that about 9,000 Jews migrated to Canada between 1981 and 1986.

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 offset the probably negative balance of internal evolution since the 1981 census. Consequently, the figure of 310,000 was adopted for 1988 as well. The next census, as of 1991, is again expected to include a question on religion, thus providing a better baseline for a revised estimate of Canada's Jewish population.

The estimate for Mexico has been kept unchanged at 35,000. While 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 erroneously included among the Jews many thousands of non-Jews living outside the known regions of Jewish residence in that country.

The Jewish population of Argentina is marked by a negative balance of internal evolution. In the past, the balance of external migrations was strongly negative; but since the restoration of a democratic regime, emigration has diminished and there has been some return migration. Assuming a moderately negative migratory balance, the estimate has been reduced from 224,000 in 1986 to 220,000 in 1988.

The official population census of Brazil in 1980 showed a figure of 91,795 Jews. Since it is possible that some 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 for 1988, assuming that the overall balance of vital events and external migrations was close to zero. The 100,000 figure 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 admittedly quite tentative estimates for Uruguay and Chile—as well as the figure for Peru—were reduced, while that for Venezuela was not changed.<sup>12</sup>

## EUROPE

Of Europe's estimated 2,607,500 Jews, 40 percent live in Western Europe and 60 percent in Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries, including the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey (see table 3).

The twelve countries that form the European Community (EC) contain a total Jewish population of one million. Economic integration between these countries will be greatly enhanced after the end of 1992, following the implementation of existing treaties. This will most likely stimulate occupationally motivated geographical mobility, with possible effects on the distribution of Jews among the EC's different countries.

France has the largest Jewish population in Western Europe, estimated at 530,000. Monitoring of the plausible trends in the internal evolution and the external migrations of Jews in France—including a new study conducted in 1988 at the initiative of the Fonds Social Juif Unifié—suggests that there has been little net change in Jewish population size since the major survey that was taken in the 1970s.<sup>13</sup>

A reestimation of the size of British Jewry was carried out by the research unit of the Board of Deputies, based on an analysis of Jewish deaths during 1975–1979. The revised population figure for 1977 was 336,000 with a margin of error of +/– 34,000.<sup>14</sup> Allowing for an excess of deaths over births, some assimilatory losses, and emigration, the update for 1984, as elaborated by the board's research unit, came to 330,000. The update for 1986 was 326,000; continuation of the same trends suggests an estimate of 322,000 for 1988.

West Germany, 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 partly offset by immigration. The West German Jewish community records—which are among the most complete and up-to-date available—point to a modest Jewish population increase between 1986

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<sup>12</sup>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*, vol. 85, 1985, pp. 51–102. See also 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.

<sup>13</sup>Doris Bensimon and Sergio DellaPergola, *La population juive de France: socio-démographie et identité* (Jerusalem and Paris, 1984).

<sup>14</sup>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.

TABLE 2. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN THE AMERICAS, 1988

| Country                       | Total Population | Jewish Population | Jews per 1,000 Population | Accuracy Rating |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Canada                        | 25,950,000       | 310,000           | 11.9                      | B 1981-86       |
| United States                 | 246,329,000      | 5,700,000         | 23.1                      | C 1986          |
| <b>Total Northern America</b> |                  | <b>6,010,000</b>  |                           |                 |
| Bahamas                       | 244,000          | 300               | 1.2                       | C 1973          |
| Costa Rica                    | 2,851,000        | 2,000             | 0.7                       | C 1986          |
| Cuba                          | 10,402,000       | 700               | 0.1                       | D               |
| Dominican Republic            | 6,867,000        | 100               | 0.0                       | D               |
| Guatemala                     | 8,681,000        | 800               | 0.1                       | A 1983          |
| Jamaica                       | 2,446,000        | 300               | 0.1                       | B 1988          |
| Mexico                        | 82,734,000       | 35,000            | 0.4                       | C 1980          |
| Netherlands Antilles          | 188,000          | 400               | 2.1                       | D               |
| Panama                        | 2,322,000        | 3,800             | 1.6                       | C 1986          |
| Puerto Rico                   | 3,606,000        | 1,500             | 0.4                       | C 1986          |
| Virgin Islands                | 110,000          | 300               | 2.7                       | C 1986          |
| Other                         |                  | 300               |                           | D               |
| <b>Total Central America</b>  |                  | <b>45,500</b>     |                           |                 |
| Argentina                     | 31,963,000       | 220,000           | 6.9                       | C 1960-88       |
| Bolivia                       | 6,993,000        | 600               | 0.1                       | C 1986          |
| Brazil                        | 144,428,000      | 100,000           | 0.7                       | C 1980          |
| Chile                         | 12,748,000       | 15,000            | 1.2                       | C 1988 X        |
| Colombia                      | 30,241,000       | 6,500             | 0.2                       | C 1986          |
| Ecuador                       | 10,204,000       | 900               | 0.1                       | C 1985          |
| Paraguay                      | 4,039,000        | 900               | 0.2                       | C 1984          |
| Peru                          | 21,256,000       | 3,500             | 0.2                       | B 1985          |
| Suriname                      | 392,000          | 200               | 0.5                       | B 1986          |
| Uruguay                       | 3,060,000        | 24,500            | 8.0                       | D               |
| Venezuela                     | 18,751,000       | 20,000            | 1.1                       | D               |
| <b>Total Southern America</b> |                  | <b>392,100</b>    |                           |                 |
| <b>Total</b>                  |                  | <b>6,447,600</b>  |                           |                 |

and 1988. In Italy, until 1984, Jews were legally obliged to register with the local Jewish communities. Since then membership in the community has become voluntary. Although most Jews reconfirmed their membership, the looseness of the new legal framework may reduce both the completeness of the communal registers and, in the long run, the cohesion of the community.

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 European countries which are not EC members account for a cumulative Jewish population of 43,200. Among these, 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, overall, numerically stable.

Eastern European Jewry is characterized by particularly low levels of effectively Jewish fertility, connected with a frequent and prolonged practice of outmarriage, and by heavy aging. The shrinking of the Jewish population in those countries must be comparatively rapid, therefore.

By far the largest Jewish population in Eastern Europe is concentrated in the Soviet Union, including its Asian territory. In 1987–1988, Jewish emigration from the USSR resumed and gained momentum: 8,100 Jews left in 1987 and 19,300 in 1988, as against only about 2,000 during 1985–1986. In the interim, the heavy deficit of internal population dynamics must have continued and even intensified, due to the great aging which is known to prevail. This can only have been exacerbated by the comparatively younger age composition of the emigrants.<sup>15</sup> On the strength of these considerations, the estimate has been reduced from 1,515,000 in 1986 to 1,435,000 in 1988.

Our estimates for Soviet Jewry are updates of the figures from three population censuses (1959, 1970, and 1979). These were rather consistent among themselves, considering the probable evolution in the intervals. Our reservation about Soviet Jewish population figures in previous AJYB volumes bears repeating: While some underreporting is not impossible, it cannot be quantified and should not be exaggerated. Data on nationalities from the Soviet Union's official population census, carried out in January 1989, will eventually provide a better basis for revised estimates of Jewish population size.

During the period reviewed here, the choice of country of destination by Jews leaving the Soviet Union followed the same pattern it had for the preceding few years. A minority went to Israel (12 percent of the total emigrants in 1987–1988), while a majority chose to settle in Western countries. However, because of the strong

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<sup>15</sup>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. See also Mordechai Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry Since the Second World War: Population and Social Structure* (Westport, 1987).

TABLE 3. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN EUROPE, 1988

| Country                          | Total Population | Jewish Population | Jews per 1,000 Population | Accuracy Rating |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Belgium                          | 9,925,000        | 31,800            | 3.2                       | D               |
| Denmark                          | 5,130,000        | 6,500             | 1.3                       | C 1988          |
| France                           | 55,874,000       | 530,000           | 9.5                       | C 1972-88       |
| Germany, West                    | 61,199,000       | 33,000            | 0.5                       | B 1988          |
| Great Britain                    | 57,077,000       | 322,000           | 5.6                       | B 1988          |
| Greece                           | 10,013,000       | 4,900             | 0.5                       | B 1986          |
| Ireland                          | 3,538,000        | 1,900             | 0.5                       | B 1988          |
| Italy                            | 57,441,000       | 31,500            | 0.5                       | B 1986          |
| Luxembourg                       | 375,000          | 700               | 1.9                       | C 1970          |
| Netherlands                      | 14,758,000       | 25,800            | 1.7                       | C 1988          |
| Portugal                         | 10,408,000       | 300               | 0.0                       | B 1986          |
| Spain                            | 39,053,000       | 12,000            | 0.3                       | D               |
| Total European Community         |                  | 1,000,400         |                           |                 |
| Austria                          | 7,595,000        | 6,300             | 0.8                       | A 1986          |
| Finland                          | 4,951,000        | 1,300             | 0.3                       | A 1987          |
| Gibraltar                        | 30,000           | 600               | 20.0                      | B 1981          |
| Norway                           | 4,196,000        | 1,000             | 0.2                       | A 1987          |
| Sweden                           | 8,436,000        | 15,000            | 1.8                       | C 1986          |
| Switzerland                      | 6,509,000        | 19,000            | 2.9                       | B 1980          |
| Total other Western Europe       |                  | 43,200            |                           |                 |
| Bulgaria                         | 8,995,000        | 3,100             | 0.3                       | D               |
| Czechoslovakia                   | 15,620,000       | 8,000             | 0.5                       | D               |
| Germany, East                    | 16,666,000       | 500               | 0.0                       | D               |
| Hungary                          | 10,596,000       | 58,500            | 5.5                       | D               |
| Poland                           | 37,862,000       | 4,200             | 0.1                       | D               |
| Romania                          | 23,048,000       | 20,000            | 0.9                       | B 1988 X        |
| Turkey <sup>a</sup>              | 52,422,000       | 20,000            | 0.4                       | C 1988          |
| USSR <sup>a</sup>                | 283,682,000      | 1,435,000         | 5.1                       | C 1979          |
| Yugoslavia                       | 23,559,000       | 4,600             | 0.2                       | C 1986          |
| Total Eastern Europe and Balkans |                  | 1,553,900         |                           |                 |
| In transit                       |                  | 10,000            |                           | A 1988          |
| Total                            |                  | 2,607,500         |                           |                 |

<sup>a</sup>Including Asian regions.

**TABLE 4. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN ASIA, 1988**

| Country      | Total Population       | Jewish Population | Jews per 1,000 Population | Accuracy Rating |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Hong Kong    | 5,681,000              | 1,000             | 0.2                       | D               |
| India        | 796,596,000            | 5,000             | 0.0                       | B 1981          |
| Iran         | 52,522,000             | 20,000            | 0.4                       | D               |
| Iraq         | 17,656,000             | 200               | 0.0                       | D               |
| Israel       | 4,476,800 <sup>a</sup> | 3,659,000         | 817.3                     | A 1988          |
| Japan        | 122,613,000            | 1,000             | 0.0                       | C 1988          |
| Korea, South | 41,975,000             | 100               | 0.0                       | D               |
| Lebanon      | 2,827,000              | 100               | 0.0                       | D               |
| Philippines  | 58,721,000             | 100               | 0.0                       | D               |
| Singapore    | 2,647,000              | 300               | 0.1                       | C 1984          |
| Syria        | 11,338,000             | 4,000             | 0.4                       | D               |
| Thailand     | 54,536,000             | 300               | 0.0                       | D               |
| Yemen        | 7,534,000              | 1,000             | 0.1                       | D               |
| Other        |                        | 300               |                           | D               |
| <b>Total</b> |                        | <b>3,692,400</b>  |                           |                 |

<sup>a</sup>End 1988.

**TABLE 5. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN AFRICA, 1988**

| Country      | Total Population | Jewish Population | Jews per 1,000 Population | Accuracy Rating |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Egypt        | 51,897,000       | 200               | 0.0                       | C 1988          |
| Ethiopia     | 47,882,000       | 12,000            | 0.2                       | D               |
| Kenya        | 23,882,000       | 400               | 0.0                       | B 1988          |
| Morocco      | 23,910,000       | 10,000            | 0.4                       | D               |
| South Africa | 33,747,000       | 114,000           | 3.4                       | C 1980          |
| Tunisia      | 7,809,000        | 2,500             | 0.3                       | D               |
| Zaire        | 33,458,000       | 400               | 0.0                       | D               |
| Zambia       | 7,531,000        | 300               | 0.0                       | D               |
| Zimbabwe     | 8,878,000        | 1,100             | 0.1                       | B 1988          |
| Other        |                  | 1,000             |                           | D               |
| <b>Total</b> |                  | <b>141,900</b>    |                           |                 |

preference for settling in the United States and that country's selective immigration policies, there were more emigrants than available immigration permits. Consequently, by the end of 1988, about 10,000 Soviet Jews were in transit in temporary accommodations, mostly in Italy and Austria. The relevant figure is shown separately in table 3.

The Jewish populations in Hungary and Romania and the small remnants in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia are all reputed to be very overaged. Their inevitable numerical decline is reflected in reduced estimates.

The size of Hungarian Jewry—the largest in Eastern Europe outside the USSR—is quite insufficiently known. Our estimate only attempts to reflect the declining trend that prevails there too, according to the available indications. Comparatively large emigration of Jews continued to take place from Romania, whose Jewish population declined to 20,000 in 1988, according to the community records available there.

The Jewish population of Turkey, where a surplus of deaths over births is reported, has been estimated at about 20,000.

#### ASIA

Israel accounts for 99 percent of all the Jews in Asia, excluding the Asian territories of the USSR and Turkey (see table 4). Israel's Jewish population grew over 1987–1988 by about 97,000. Nearly all this growth was due to natural increase, since the migration balance was very small (+3,300) in 1987–1988.

It is difficult to estimate the Jewish population of Iran for any given date, but it continues to dwindle. The updated estimate for 1988 has been put at 20,000.

In other Asian countries with smaller, long-standing communities—such as India and Syria—the Jewish population tends to decline slowly. Very small communities, partially of a transient character, exist in several countries of Southeast Asia.

#### AFRICA

About 142,000 Jews are estimated to remain now in Africa. The Republic of South Africa accounts for 80 percent of total Jews in that continent (see table 5).

In 1980, according to the official census, there were about 118,000 Jews among South Africa's white population.<sup>16</sup> Substantial Jewish emigration since then has been 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.

According to recent reports, the Jews remaining in Ethiopia may be very roughly

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<sup>16</sup>Sergio DellaPergola and Allie A. Dubb, "South African Jewry: A Sociodemographic Profile," *AJYB*, vol. 88, 1988, pp. 59–140.



estimated at 12,000. The remnant of Moroccan and Tunisian Jewry continued to shrink through emigration. It should be pointed out, though, that not a few Jews have a foothold both in Morocco (or Tunisia) and in France, 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 90,000 Jews live (see table 6).

The estimate for Australian Jewry has been raised. The 1986 census of Australia, with an optional question on religion, enumerated 69,065 declared Jews. It also indicated that about 25 percent of the country's whole population either did not specify religion or stated explicitly that they had none. This large group must be assumed to contain some persons who identify in other ways as Jews. In addition, Australian Jewry has received migratory reinforcements during the last decade, especially from South Africa. At the same time, there are demographic problems linked to strong aging, low or negative natural increase, and assimilation. Therefore, we offer a provisional estimate of 85,000 for 1988—pending clarification of population trends since previous censuses.

The Jewish community in New Zealand—now estimated at 4,500—attracted some immigrants, too, but incurred a negative migration balance with Australia.

TABLE 6. ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN OCEANIA, 1988

| Country     | Total Population | Jewish Population | Jews per 1,000 Population | Accuracy Rating |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Australia   | 16,532,000       | 85,000            | 5.1                       | C 1986 X        |
| New Zealand | 3,292,000        | 4,500             | 1.4                       | C 1988          |
| Other       |                  | 100               |                           | D               |
| Total       |                  | 89,600            |                           |                 |

#### *Dispersion and Concentration*

Table 7 demonstrates the magnitude of Jewish dispersion. The individual countries listed above as each having at least 100 Jews are scattered over all the continents. More than half (43 out of 75 countries) have fewer than 5,000 Jews apiece.

In relative terms, too, the Jews are now thinly scattered nearly everywhere in the Diaspora. There is not a single Diaspora country where they amount even to 3

TABLE 7. DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORLD'S JEWS, BY NUMBER AND PROPORTION (PER 1,000 POPULATION) IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES, 1988

| Number of<br>Jews in Country | Jews per 1,000 Population |         |   |           |           |           |  |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|
|                              | Total                     | Below 1 | 1-5   | 5-10      | 10-25     | 25+       |  |
|                              |                           |         | <u>Number of Countries<sup>a</sup></u>                          |           |           |           |  |
| Total                        | 75                        | 50      | 14  | 7         | 3         | 1         |  |
| Below 1,000                  | 25                        | 20      | 4   | —         | 1         | —         |  |
| 1,000-5,000                  | 18                        | 16      | 2   | —         | —         | —         |  |
| 5,000-10,000                 | 5                         | 4       | 1   | —         | —         | —         |  |
| 10,000-50,000                | 16                        | 9       | 6   | 1         | —         | —         |  |
| 50,000-100,000               | 2                         | —       | —   | 2         | —         | —         |  |
| 100,000-1,000,000            | 6                         | 1       | 1   | 3         | 1         | —         |  |
| 1,000,000 and over           | 3                         | —       | —   | 1         | 1         | 1         |  |
|                              |                           |         | <u>Jewish Population Distribution (Absolute Numbers)</u>        |           |           |           |  |
| Total                        | 12,979,000 <sup>b</sup>   | 367,300 | 257,100   | 2,675,000 | 6,010,600 | 3,659,000 |  |
| Below 1,000                  | 11,700                    | 9,400   | 1,700   | —         | 600       | —         |  |
| 1,000-5,000                  | 46,900                    | 38,600  | 8,300   | —         | —         | —         |  |
| 5,000-10,000                 | 32,300                    | 25,800  | 6,500   | —         | —         | —         |  |
| 10,000-50,000                | 344,600                   | 193,500 | 126,600   | 24,500    | —         | —         |  |
| 50,000-100,000               | 143,500                   | —       | —   | 143,500   | —         | —         |  |
| 100,000-1,000,000            | 1,596,000                 | 100,000 | 114,000   | 1,072,000 | 310,000   | —         |  |
| 1,000,000 and over           | 10,794,000                | —       | —   | 1,435,000 | 5,700,000 | 3,659,000 |  |
|                              |                           |         | <u>Jewish Population Distribution (Percent of World's Jews)</u> |           |           |           |  |
| Total                        | 100.0                     | 2.9     | 2.0   | 20.7      | 46.3      | 28.2      |  |
| Below 1,000                  | 0.1                       | 0.1     | 0.0   | —         | 0.0       | —         |  |
| 1,000-5,000                  | 0.4                       | 0.3     | 0.1   | —         | —         | —         |  |
| 5,000-10,000                 | 0.2                       | 0.2     | 0.0   | —         | —         | —         |  |
| 10,000-50,000                | 2.7                       | 1.5     | 1.0   | 0.2       | —         | —         |  |
| 50,000-100,000               | 1.1                       | —       | —   | 1.1       | —         | —         |  |
| 100,000-1,000,000            | 12.3                      | 0.8     | 0.9   | 8.3       | 2.4       | —         |  |
| 1,000,000 and over           | 83.2                      | —       | —   | 11.1      | 43.9      | 28.2      |  |

<sup>a</sup>Excluding countries with fewer than 100 Jews.

<sup>b</sup>Total includes 10,000 Jews in transit in Europe.

TABLE 8. TEN COUNTRIES WITH LARGEST JEWISH POPULATIONS, 1988

| Rank | Country       | Jewish<br>Population | % of Total Jewish Population |              |              |              |
|------|---------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|      |               |                      | In the Diaspora              |              | In the World |              |
|      |               |                      | %                            | Cumulative % | %            | Cumulative % |
| 1    | United States | 5,700,000            | 61.2                         | 61.2         | 43.9         | 43.9         |
| 2    | Israel        | 3,659,000            | —                            | —            | 28.2         | 72.1         |
| 3    | USSR          | 1,435,000            | 15.4                         | 76.6         | 11.1         | 83.2         |
| 4    | France        | 530,000              | 5.7                          | 82.3         | 4.1          | 87.3         |
| 5    | Great Britain | 322,000              | 3.4                          | 85.7         | 2.5          | 89.8         |
| 6    | Canada        | 310,000              | 3.3                          | 89.0         | 2.4          | 92.2         |
| 7    | Argentina     | 220,000              | 2.4                          | 91.4         | 1.7          | 93.9         |
| 8    | South Africa  | 114,000              | 1.2                          | 92.6         | 0.9          | 94.8         |
| 9    | Brazil        | 100,000              | 1.1                          | 93.7         | 0.8          | 95.6         |
| 10   | Australia     | 85,000               | 0.9                          | 94.6         | 0.6          | 96.2         |

percent of the total population. In most countries they constitute a far smaller fraction. Only three Diaspora countries have 10–25 Jews per 1,000 of total population; and only ten countries have more than 5 Jews per 1,000 of population. The respective ten countries are, in descending order of the proportion of their Jews (but regardless of the absolute number): United States (23.1), Gibraltar (20.0), Canada (11.9), France (9.5), Uruguay (8.0), Argentina (6.9), Great Britain (5.6), Hungary (5.5), USSR (5.1), and Australia (5.1). This list includes all the Diaspora countries with Jewries of 100,000 or more, except for South Africa and Brazil (in the latter's large population the Jews form only 0.7 per 1,000).

In the State of Israel, by contrast, the Jewish majority amounted to 81.7 percent in 1988, against 82.2 percent in 1986 (not including the Arab population of the administered areas).

While Jews are widely dispersed, they are also concentrated to some extent (see table 8). In 1988 over 96 percent of world Jewry lived in the ten countries with the largest Jewish populations; 83 percent lived in the three countries that have at least a million Jews each (United States, Israel, Soviet Union). Similarly, the United States alone accounted for over 61 percent of total Diaspora Jewry; two countries (United States and Soviet Union) for 77 percent; and the nine leading countries together comprised about 95 percent of the Diaspora Jewish population.

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