

Israel in Bureaus of Jewish Education

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Introduction: The Central Agencies and their Israel Agenda

In most Jewish communities in North America, the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE)* or Central Agency (CA)* is the planning arm and central service delivery agent for Jewish education, defined broadly. While they receive their mandate from the Federations and are clearly defined as Jewish communal organizations, they function in a curricular mode as distinguished from a social planning mode, more typical of Federations, behaving more like a centralized education system than like Federations. BJE's pursue both their planning and their service agenda according to a notion of curriculum, or plan of educational action. A strategic plan that a BJE may be asked to develop shares many of the contours of a curriculum or lesson plan.

The teaching of Israel, supporting or implementing the Israel Experience, producing Israel-related materials, and providing other centralized services are all ways that BJE's or CAs throughout North America incorporate Israel in their array of programs. Three strategic premises underlie these activities:

- The first strategic principle is that, to the BJE's, Israel education is a central part of an organic set of services, not a separate and distinct topic. Because BJE's do not divide the curriculum of Jewish life into independent components, they see Israel as an interdependent piece of the whole, a part of the entire spectrum of educational activities offered. Just as a school may choose a central theme which it promotes through all of its courses and departments, BJE's promote Israel through many of their varied materials and programs.
- Second, for the BJE's, Israel is reflected in educational programming for every age from early childhood through adults.
- Third, Israel should occupy a place in the educational plans and programs of every type of educational setting, formal and informal.

Part 2

The breadth and depth of involvement in Israel education varies among CAs, differing in the areas of active interest, level of funding, structure, staff allocation and educational rigor.* Motivated by concern for Jewish continuity and identity, by the search for a meaningful, "nineties-appropriate" relationship with Israel and by the new interest and support of Israel education in general and the Israel Experience in particular, most CAs have joined new endeavors in Israel education and are investing more of their traditional curricular, professional development, and resource functions in this realm.

Many central agencies are involved in developing Israel-oriented curricula, including lesson plans, teaching units, and/or learning packages. These are typically free standing instructional units which may fit into the Jewish school's curriculum with ease or with minor adjustment by the teacher and/or principal. Some CAs have undertaken more complex projects, developing graded or spiraled curricula which may be independent, as is the case with the Boston-published *The Israel Connection* and the New

York BJE's Israel: The Jewish Homeland Then and Now or part of an entire curriculum, as is the case with the Montreal Tal Sela Hebrew language arts curriculum and TaL AM curriculum. Of the twenty-one agencies surveyed, four indicated no involvement in curriculum, four some level of involvement, and thirteen a more intense involvement.

Implementing programs at the bureau level is a complex issue. The BJE plays a very important, yet frequently invisible, role in the implementation process, namely, translating a vision into a practical plan. What will actually happen? Whose "buy-in" is required; how is it attained? Between the rhetoric and vision of wanting to teach Israel and the delivery of a program or service is the interstitial step of actually developing a program and getting it to happen effectively, namely, implementation. To BJE's, a plan is a product, and so is consultation (more particularly, the consultation that is directed at initiating and supporting transformative activities in institutions and their target populations). Both are also process steps. (This is a good example of why there is no "means-ends" problem in Judaism. After all, mitzvah gorreret mitzvah, i.e., performing a mitzvah, even when it is an end in itself, is also a means to performing even more mitzvot.)

Bureaus provide the kind of institutional, professional, and personal support to bridge the vision and the program through consultations with the stakeholders of institutions, articulation of goals and directions, and strategic planning. Further, the central agencies facilitate the professional and lay training that is critical to program implementation, and they address the need for replication, sharing, and dissemination of information.

Most BJE's also conduct programs, and some actually run schools. Most of the bureaus across the continent, either independently or together with the Federation, synagogues, or the JCC, do conduct some form of Israel Experience program or advise it, consult on it, coordinate it, or deliver it. If March of the Living (which may or may not be seen as an Israel program), Partnership 2000, and similar programs are taken into consideration, the array of programmatic initiatives that CAs are involved in is even wider.

In-service teacher training has for many years been a hallmark of CA activity. Specially designed professional days, institutes, or (sometimes) school-based, tailor-made professional development opportunities are the CAs' specialty. Traditionally the focus has been on the formal educator of all age levels. Recently, however, CAs have also begun to offer professional development activities for informal educators, especially for camp personnel. For example, Montreal, in cooperation with Melitz and later the Youth and Hechalutz Department, has developed the Machanayim training program for Montreal-area camps' senior staff, with a three-week component in Israel. The program is primarily dedicated to enabling participants to design and implement Israel activities upon their return to camp. Similarly, a CA initiative established a youth leadership program for the CITs of Camp B'nai Brith, a Montreal community camp with a three week component in Israel (out of the eight week summer program).

CAs also organize teacher/principal seminars in Israel, using Israel as a laboratory to focus on the teaching of Israel and other issues. Atlanta, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, for example, have been offering such successful programs for several years.

CAs have, for some time, been operating resource centers which, among other things, house collections of print and non-print materials that train and support teachers, principals, and informal educators in the preparation of lesson plans or programs. These collections usually include an Israel section.. In some communities, especially those with an Israel Experience Center, bureaus provide information about trips and programs, from summer trips to full-year programs at universities or Zionist yeshivot for men and women. Another example is the Boston BJE's co-development (along with a local JCC) of a traveling, interactive "Walk Through Jerusalem" exhibit, which after two years and stops in more than a dozen cities has attracted over 80,000 visitors. The survey found that almost every community has some type of Israel Experience resource, either as part of the general resource center or as part of a new Israel "Desk" ("Center" or "Office").

Historically in most communities, trips to Israel for students, families, or lay leaders, were sponsored by schools, youth organizations, religious movements, synagogues, and Federations, but not by BJE's. In recent years, however, especially with the success of the March of the Living, CAs have started running their own trips, including preparation and follow-up activities. CAs' involvement in Israel trips resulted, to some extent, from the changing relationship of Federations to Israel, particularly the Federations' desire to see more youth and families visit Israel without undertaking the responsibility for non-fundraising missions. BJE's have also become involved in pre- and post-trip programs for missions organized by Federations and other organizations.

The following summarizes the involvement of bureaus in Israel Experience trips:

CENTRAL AGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN ISRAEL EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS:

(Please see the PDF version of the book to review the included chart.)

Of the twenty-one communities surveyed, thirteen operate an Israel Incentive Savings Program. (CAs are usually well positioned, especially if they are assigned the community's Israel Experience portfolio, to serve as home base for Israel Incentive Savings Programs.) In eleven of these communities, CAs are responsible for administering these programs, whose success requires appropriate levels of funding for the incentive (which should be at least \$1,000 per participant) as well as funding for infrastructure (i.e., staff and advertising).

Increased interest in Israel Experience programs precipitated the establishment of Israel Experience Centers to increase participation in these programs. Under the many names mentioned above, thirteen of the twenty-one communities surveyed operate Israel Experience Centers, in most cases administered by the Federation with varying degrees of cooperation and input from the JCC and the local Committee on Jewish Continuity. In other cases, the CA serves as a consultant to the Center either on a formal or informal basis.

The role of the CA in the Montreal Israel Experience Centre (MIEC) is exceptional and worthy of elaboration. The CA administers the Israel Experience Centre which was established through a coalition among the Federation, the Education Department of the Jewish Agency, The CRB Foundation, the Jewish Cultural Association (which directs the proceeds of its March to Jerusalem walk-a-thon almost

exclusively to Israel Experience programs and the Jewish Education Council [the CA]). The Centre is involved in all aspects of Israel Experience activities. The MIEC's mandate and activities include: local representation of the Canadian Israel Experience Centre (located in Toronto); complete responsibility for several Israel Experience programs including the March of the Living; administration of the FEDERATION CJA Israel Experience Grants (based on need; for 1997 MIEC requested an allocation of \$250,000); Gift of Israel; initiation of new programs; the administration of the local Jewish Camp Council; the Kibbutz Aliya Desk; recruitment for Canadian National and North American programs; preparation and follow-up sessions, and more. The Centre is well funded and staffed by the equivalent of 3.75 professional positions (this includes the Centre's Director) and a part time secretarial position. This unique setup reflects close cooperation between the Israel Affairs Department of FEDERATION CJA and the Jewish Education Council. Obviously, only the full commitment of Montreal's Jewish community to Israel Experience programs makes such an enterprise possible.

Most CAs assign only part-time staff to Israel Education. Only three agencies have the equivalent of a full-time position or more. It should not be forgotten, however, that in many cases the CA consultants, curriculum development staff and, indeed, the Executive Director, dedicate much of their time to Israel education.

Part 3

What philosophical principles or content goals govern the design, development, and implementation of these major strategies? Over the last several years the CAs have supported the development of a curriculum package that embodies a set of clearly articulated principles and goals. The curriculum*, originally produced in the 1980s by the Hebrew University's Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, and now being published by the Boston BJE, is based on seven main ideas. Reflecting a Zionist, tradition-based, yet pluralistic perspective about Jewish education - an ideological amalgam that has typified most North American communal education for most of this century - the curriculum represents the broadest communal approach, to which most institutions can subscribe. It is likely that most BJE's still hold to these as guiding principles for the development of their Israel activities, though today they would probably want to make significant corrections to some of the points reflecting the emerging religious ideologies of the synagogue movements, especially as they sharpen their positions concerning the State of Israel. Although some new language will likely have to be worked out over time, the seven points are:

1. The idea that the Jews have a special land, Eretz Yisrael, is a value that has been central to the Jewish people in all the corners of the world in which they have lived and throughout their long history.
2. Eretz Yisrael has meant many different things to Jews throughout the ages.

At different stages in Jewish history, Eretz Yisrael has represented one or more of the following: the birthplace of the nation and the Temple; a symbol of exile and future redemption; a refuge from

antisemitism; the locus of the dramatic rebirth of our nation; a modern, sovereign, Jewish state; a source of Jewish pride and identity.

3. Contemporary Israel is a great laboratory of the diversity and heterogeneity of the Jewish people.

Modern Israeli society reflects the many varieties of today's Judaisms: Sephardic, Ashkenazic, orthodox, secular, traditional, socialist, capitalist, urban, rural.

4. Demographically, contemporary Israel is one of the largest centers of Jewish population in the world; culturally and educationally, it is a source of much Jewish creativity and learning.

Israel is a leading center for Jewish creativity in all of the arts, scholarship, and Torah study.

5. The meaning of Israel for Jews transcends its boundaries and citizens. The State of Israel is regarded by almost all Jews as an important part of their legacy and life.

The joys, pains, accomplishments, struggles, failures, and wars of Israel have an impact upon, and are influenced by, Jews and Jewish life throughout the world.

6. The existence of the State of Israel heightens the issue of aliyah.

Israel's existence brings into focus questions about aliyah from countries where Jews live as free productive citizens. Those who choose to express their Zionist commitment through aliyah raise discussion about the relationship to Israel of those who, by choice, remain in the Diaspora. Examination of these issues is an important part of our understanding of the meaning of aliyah.

7. The creation of the state and its existence since 1948 has been continually characterized by conditions of war and the struggle for physical survival.

(For a fuller discussion of these points, please see Appendix A.)

Again, we ought to emend several of the points by adding religious language that would further the understanding of Israel within the core religious values of ahavat tzion and shivat tzion (love of and return to Zion) and reshit tzmihat geulateynu (the dawn of our redemption) as reflected in our texts and liturgy.

Though adding the religious perspective would be important, it is also important to understand the philosophy of communal education that the bureaus represent. This approach respects the pluralistic nature of the community as well as the tradition. Whether creating curriculum, designing an interactive museum exhibit, or promoting trips or seminars to Israel for youth, professionals, or adults, CAs seek out and integrate those intellectual and textual sources to which virtually every educator and institution can relate. In many ways, CAs build education-based communities around common, core issues, marshaling diffuse resources and bringing diverse elements together in collaboration.

Because BJE's cross traditional boundaries - functional, ideological, or strategic - the issue of Israel cannot be isolated to the early childhood setting or JCC, for example. Israel plays a role in the Orthodox day school, the Conservative congregational school, the Reform youth group, and communal settings. BJE's serve all the many places where people learn Judaic content and have Jewish experiences, each of which includes Israel in its own way. They also help synthesize the various educational experiences in the community and facilitate collaboration among institutions. BJE's have to look at a large and complicated picture and, given the limitations of available resources, have to address this multiplicity of settings and approaches as efficiently as possible.

Part 4

We have identified five major areas of possible future endeavor for Central Agencies in enhancing Israel education. Taken as a whole, they form a curricular approach to the challenge of teaching Israel, a framework which is comfortable and appropriate to BJE's. These are: 1) Vision and Goals; 2) Professional and Lay Development Around a Common Judaic Core; 3) Curriculum and Program Development Around a Common Judaic Core; 4) Research and Evaluation; and 5) Community-Wide Coordination and Planning.

The first major challenge is to assist institutions and educators to choose and articulate an ideological position: What role should Israel play in the life of an (educated) North American Jew? What is it about Israel that we want to teach and why? The answers will vary from setting to setting and from auspice to auspice, but basically the task remains the same: the articulation of a vision and the clarification of goals.

Engaging planners, educators, and other leaders - lay and professional - in a self-reflective deliberation about what they stand for regarding Israel is absolutely critical. Otherwise, CAs will continue to support multiple, diffuse initiatives with no common pedagogical elements. Without such discussion there can be no criteria for evaluating the success of initiatives and no basis for training professionals or writing materials for them. An important initial step is guiding the participants through a clarification of their own personal philosophies. The next step is to engage them in articulating goals and visions for their institution or educational program.

The variety of institutions that CAs serve obviously requires different types of programming, but every consultative encounter must begin with a process of envisioning, finding the right approach based on an articulated set of philosophical principles and governing goals. We maintain that any approach must also be rooted in Judaic texts or sources. For example, when talking about what we want our clients to experience of Israel, it should relate to the history and historical texts of our people.

A second functional area for BJE's is professional and lay leadership development. Bureaus foster personal and professional growth, particularly by encouraging leaders to engage in more enriched Judaic and Israel study, tailored to their particular setting and interest. Our preference is for methodologies that stimulate critical textual analysis, personal inquiry, exploration of multiple ideas through discussion, and coming to (tentative) conclusions about personal stances vis a vis Israel.

Since their founding, the bureaus have espoused the philosophy that a body of Judaic knowledge exists to which every Jew, old or young, could potentially subscribe. Despite some range of interpretation, a common core exists which we need to identify, focus on, and link to Israel in multiple ways. The outcomes of these efforts will differ somewhat depending on the affiliation and ideology of the institution that the BJE is serving, however BJEs are places where teachers, educators, lay leaders, rabbis, family educators, youth workers, and camp workers of all kinds can come together to deliberate on the "core," because it is common to all of them.

The third major area of future work is integrating curricula and/or program development in a way that maximizes what in Boston is called "the more, the more" phenomenon. In other words, there is a connection between those who continue to study past bar/bat mitzvah, who have multiple educational experiences as a result of family choice or involvement, and those who maintain their Jewish involvement into adulthood. We know that the more young people are involved for more years in more varied experiences, the more likely it is that they will come to Israel . . . and come back to Israel . . . and remain active Jews! The data all point to this. Even without going so far as to ascribe a cause and effect relationship, there is at least associative power to this profile.

Rarely, however, are all these elements intentionally integrated by a participant's synagogue, school, or community. It is left up to the individual; somehow these folks succeed in pulling many disparate experiences together, either by virtue of their families' values and contexts, or by virtue of who they are, or perhaps because some person or institution helps them make sense of it all. Integration is almost never planned or purposeful; neither has this type of integration been seen as the mission of any single group or institution.

The key issue here is the need for "planful" integration of the various factors in the Israel education picture, e.g., missions, Israel education in congregations, Israel in day and supplementary school curricula, Israel in community-wide and family celebrations. For educators, Israel represents a potential integrative force and the locus and occasion for integrating Jewish and/or educational experiences: school, youth group, camp, family experience, trips, tefilla (prayer), Shabbat, ethnicity, etc. Our need to consciously integrate these experiences and the integrative power that Israel represents must be treated as an ideal and a value, one of many core values that can provide integrative meaning for the people with whom we work. This is, again, a curricular issue for our institutions and organizations and a process that the bureaus could take upon themselves to catalyze in each community.

If the CAs assume that Israel does play a role in the lives of Jews of all ages, and if Israel is seen as central to the dynamics of Jewish life throughout the world, then the study of Israel (and Israel-Diaspora relations) is "integral to exploring the fundamental value(s) of Jewish life" (Towvim, 1993). This raises interesting questions about the ways we have chosen to teach about Israel: How do ends and means vary for different client groups? When is it appropriate to teach Israel?

Expanding on the notion that integrating multiple experiences (with Israel playing a central role) can lead to an enhanced meaning of Israel for American Jews, we must address the question of whether there could be, in fact, a "stage theory" applied to the teaching and experiencing of Israel. Are there

specific key stages in a Jew's life that present opportunities for teaching Israel? How should Israel be "taught" to families that are most intensely involved with their youngest children when they start their Jewish education, when they are less intensely involved for a while, when they reach the time of bar/bat mitzvah, and when they become more deeply involved in certain other contexts? BJE's routinely address these kinds of topics as curricular concerns. They should now approach Israel in the same way.

All the possible stages cannot be covered in this guide, but here is an example of some curricular stage thinking: Let us assume that the peak moment of families' and youth participation in their synagogues and movements is around bar/bat mitzvah time. Today, more families are going to Israel earlier, rather than waiting for their child's high school program. Therefore, there might in fact be great utility in constructing an Israel Experience for the family at the bar/bat mitzvah stage (both in the school curriculum, writ large, and in a specially designed trip), which would emphasize denominational ideology and be conducted in coordination with the synagogue movements and congregations.

And what of a later developmental stage? Let us look at youth that have high school Israel experiences and then go to college. What is the nature of their initial contact with the Jewish community when they arrive on campus? Where does Israel fit in? These young adults are told by everything around them on campus to enjoy the freedom to explore every subject intellectually.

What are they being told Jewishly? This is an interesting question. By and large, they are told to join organizations which mirror the rest of the adult Jewish world - Hillels that basically say, "you came out of USY, there is a Conservative minyan for you; you came out of an Orthodox day school, there is an Orthodox minyan for you." We do not encourage them to do that which they would ordinarily do on a college campus, namely to explore and test everything. We expect college students to be somewhat radical - everywhere but in their Jewish activities.

To prepare older teens for their Jewish experiences on campus, where they will confront the entire world of intellectual exploration, a diverse Jewish community and views of Israel they have not experienced before, one hypothesis might be to design an Israel Experience in later high school, under communal auspices with a pluralistic dimension

There is value in trying to decide when Israel, as a formative or transformative experience for kids, should in fact be a denominational, congregational experience and when it should be a communal, pluralistic experience. The former would strengthen denominational ties for younger families, while the latter could allow Jewish teens to begin to develop new ways of communicating with each other across denominational lines about major issues, readying them for their college years. Israel experiences can be a forum where youth can express concern about their own Jewish identity and religious commitment, exploring them in developmentally appropriate ways. This idea is worthy of further consideration and development. It relates to the curricular notions of vision, goals, implementation, and integration, and it requires further research.

A further question: is there a "stage theory" for repeat visitors to Israel? Is there a point when you choose to revisit Masada for some purpose, but not every time you come to Israel? If your first experience generated a sense of pride, then what would be the purpose of a return visit? It makes sense

to do it again only from a totally different perspective, for example, one that generates a profound understanding of history, politics, and religious issues. Then, on subsequent visits to Israel you might progress to establishing close personal or professional relationships with Israelis, and forgo Masada altogether. Thus, by approaching Israel as a curriculum design problem, in a "stage theory" model, BJE's would design several distinct, focused experiences - each one self-contained, but building to future experiences with different organizing principles. First would come a family-synagogue experience; then a communal, pluralistic, peer-group building experience; then, perhaps, a volunteer service experience for young adults; and a professional-interest, personal relationship building trip or study seminar for adults.

CAs are uniquely placed to conduct research and evaluation, in particular to fulfill the need for formative assessment and feedback loops so programs can change and grow properly. Central Agencies frequently engage in ongoing formative, as well as summative, qualitative evaluations of programs and performance. The importance of such evaluation is a basic principal of education that the CA applies both to itself and to its client schools. Evaluation is also a powerful community building, consultative, and training tool for the bureaus, as well as a unique "territorial" claim for the importance of central agencies to a community.

One example of a future endeavor in this area could be conducting follow-up analyses on the participants in Israel Experiences to supplement the initial impact studies of The Israel Experience. This information, largely unavailable, is crucial for assessing which types and components of Israel travel programs have the most desired impact on participants in the long term. Further, there is a need for better assessment of what students actually know and understand of most subjects in the typical school curriculum, with Israel being one important topic.

Most of the bureaus across the continent are places where global ideas like "Jerusalem 3000" take hold on the local level. Such large issues, which require much advance planning and thinking, do not occupy a place of immediate practical importance in a school. Schools deal with today and perhaps tomorrow. Undertakings like Jerusalem 3000 (until they become an imminent calendar or deadline item) are for the day after tomorrow - an issue that only a BJE deals with, especially in the earliest stages. Such efforts requiring much advance planning cannot start in the schools because the delivery system required for widespread success is too diffuse for individual schools to be the point of initiation or coordination. Bureaus can and should serve as the brokers of the Israel connection to their local communities and institutions - an interstitial, catalytic, political, and curricular role that they perform extremely well. Furthermore, it is the job of the bureaus to think ahead about major events that are two years away and to start developing the programs, training the teachers, and getting everything in place NOW. The dissemination of major Israel themes and education initiatives throughout the community can and should be coordinated by bureaus.

In addition to mounting theme-based campaigns in the community, bureaus are also frequently the agencies best suited for bringing together the various sponsoring and program-delivering institutions and groups. Israel can readily become a shared topic among many education auspices in the community,

but for that to occur a catalyst is typically required. The CA can create opportunities for collaborative programming and cooperative community-building around the topic of Israel.

Clearly, conflicts may arise among the various stakeholders in the Israel agenda - between the congregation and its national or regional movement and the community; between the congregation and the bureau; between the bureau and the Federation. The central agency in each community must address questions of turf as sensitively and realistically as possible. No central agency can dictate, impose, or demand compliance with its standards or adoption of its programs by any of its client schools or organizations. Its influence comes from the power of expertise, the quality of products, the fact that they supply what the schools, the synagogues, and the community need - at least what they acknowledge they need - and not from an outside authority. The more a bureau can be relied upon to do its job consistently, capably, sensitively, and professionally, the greater the trust it earns from other organizations. This increased trust not only leads to CAs being called upon more often to coordinate Israel Experience programs, but to a greater dissemination of quality Israel education in the various schools, camps, and youth groups.

However, let us frame this coordination task as something other than a turf issue. Perhaps handling such conflicts can become an interesting challenge related to stage theory, curriculum theory, and community building. Not coincidentally, this is one of the things that those in the bureau world try to do, on their own, in their communities, and with their clientele. BJE's explore questions and new ideas, build a community of discourse in a civil manner around tables where everybody can participate equally. There is not an abundance of opportunities for this kind of serious exploration of Jewish educational issues, either in North America or in Israel. Israel is but one topic, albeit a critical and central one, around which CAs try to unite the community of Jewish educators and service deliverers, to develop and promote universal learning experiences for individuals and families of all ages, and to instill a basic knowledge in the minds and hearts of Jews - young and older - today.

A Final Word

Given the already established track record of bureaus in Israel education, they should be involved, if not at the hub, of future intensification and improvement of Israel education activities. With the economies of scale BJE's provide in community-wide (and continent-wide) planning and programming, the Israel projects BJE's initiate will become increasingly viable. In partnership with other community organizations, BJE's will be successful in intensifying, disseminating, and improving Israel education throughout North America.

APPENDIX A

THE ISRAEL CONNECTION

MAIN IDEAS

The entire course of study is designed to help students understand and appreciate the following main ideas:

1. The idea that the Jews have a special land, Eretz Yisrael, is a value that has been central to the Jewish people in all the corners of the world in which they have lived and throughout their long history.

The land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael) has been an important value and motif in Jewish life throughout the ages and across continents. Jews in diverse places and in many different eras of history have, with very few exceptions, regarded Eretz Yisrael as an important part of, if not central to, Judaism and Jewish life.

2. Eretz Yisrael has meant many different things to Jews throughout the ages.

In the early years of our history, Eretz Yisrael represented the place of birth of the Jewish nation and of God's Temple. After the destruction of the Temple, Eretz Yisrael became a symbol of exile and redemption for those exiled. In the Middle Ages, Eretz Yisrael was a symbol of hope, holiness, and salvation. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Israel served as a refuge from antisemitism as well as an expression of an open society and of Jewish rebirth. In current times, the State of Israel represents a modern, sovereign, democratic homeland for millions of Jews, a dramatic response to the consequences of the Holocaust, and a source of Jewish pride, identity, and creativity for Jews everywhere.

3. Contemporary Israel is a great laboratory of the diversity and heterogeneity of the Jewish people.

The modern State of Israel reflects the rich and very diverse medley of Jewish life-styles: ultra-orthodox, secular, traditional, liberal, socialist, capitalist, Sephardic, Ashkenazic, urban, agricultural, etc. Contemporary Israel is a mirror of the many kinds of Jews and "Judaisms" which characterize modern Jewish life.

4. Demographically, contemporary Israel is one of the largest centers of Jewish population in the world; culturally and educationally, it is a source of much Jewish creativity and learning.

The demographic map of the Jewish world has changed dramatically in the past 100 years, and today Israel is one of the two largest Jewish communities in the world. Moreover, it is a center for Jewish creation in all of the arts, scholarship, and Torah study.

5. The meaning of Israel for Jews transcends its boundaries and citizens. The State of Israel is regarded by almost all Jews as an important part of their legacy and life.

The State of Israel is important not only to the Jews who live in it; it has increasingly become an important part of the lives of Jews all over the world. The joys, pains, accomplishments, struggles,

failures, wars, and problems of Israel have an impact upon, and are influenced by, Jews and Jewish life throughout the world.

6. The existence of the State of Israel heightens the issue of aliyah.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 meant that Jews could now immigrate to a sovereign Jewish state where they would comprise the majority of the population and control their own destiny. The state offered a haven to the survivors of the Holocaust and to many Jews living in endangered communities.

The State's existence also brought into focus questions about aliyah from countries where Jews live as free, productive citizens. Jews from these countries make aliyah as a positive expression of Zionist commitment, rather than a solution to persecution. In doing so they raise discussion about the relationship to Israel of those who, by choice, remain in the Diaspora. Examination of these issues is an important part of our understanding of the meaning of aliyah.

7. The creation of the state and its existence since 1948 has been continually characterized by conditions of war and the struggle for physical survival.

The life of the state has been influenced by the ever difficult challenge of survival. In the face of hostile neighbors, world conflicts, and economic scarcity, Israel has continually had to mobilize its energies and resources to defend its very existence.

From *The Israel Connection: Are We One? Issues in Israel-Diaspora Relations (Teacher's Guide)*, New York: JESNA Inc., 1993.

The Israel Connection is a grade 2-12 sequential curriculum on contemporary Israel, available through the Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston, 333 Nahanton Street, Newton, Massachusetts 02159; (617) 965-7350; fax: (617) 965-9776.

APPENDIX B

AGENCIES REPRESENTED IN THE SURVEY

OF MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF CENTRAL AGENCIES November, 1996, Seattle, Washington.

Akron Jewish Community Federation Educational Resource Center

Atlanta Jewish Educational Services

Boston Bureau of Jewish Education

Cleveland Jewish Education Center

Columbus Commission on Jewish Education

Dallas Jewish Federation Jewish Education Department

Detroit Agency for Jewish Education

East Bay Center for Jewish Living and Learning

Houston Bureau of Jewish Education

Los Angeles Bureau of Jewish Education

MetroWest Jewish Education Association

Miami Central Agency for Jewish Education

Montreal Jewish Education Council

Orange County Bureau of Jewish Education

Philadelphia Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education

Pittsburgh Jewish Education Institute

Rhode Island Bureau of Jewish Education

San Diego Association of Jewish Education

San Francisco Bureau of Jewish Education

Seattle Jewish Federation Jewish Education Council

Southern Arizona Jewish Federation