

SURVEY SHOWS LOVE OF ISRAEL BY AMERICAN JEWS

NEW YORK -- American Jews are wholeheartedly in support of Israel and are concerned for her security even though most of them reserve the right to criticize her policies publicly.

These are among the conclusions of a survey of American Jewish views on a wide spectrum of topics ranging from the Middle East to the domestic agenda of the United States. On the domestic side, the survey reveals that although Jews, like other Americans, have become more conservative in their political and social views in recent years, they are still more liberal on many issues than most of the rest of the country.

The survey was conducted by Dr. Steven M. Cohen, who discussed his findings at a news conference of the American Jewish Committee. The AJC was co-sponsor of the study, together with the City University Center for Jewish Studies.

Mr. Cohen stated that the characteristics of his respondents, selected through an experimental, low-cost sampling technique, matched those appearing in other recent Jewish community surveys. With a median adult age of 49, American Jews are older than the general population. They are better educated, with 59 per cent college graduates, and 33 per cent having attended graduate school. While their median income of \$27,500 is higher than the general American average, there is a greater span in the incomes of Jews than is usually assumed. The comparatively large numbers of affluent households are offset by large numbers of lower middle-income households.

The survey revealed that American Jews ranked two issues above all others in terms of their importance to the American Jewish community -- the security of Israel, and anti-Semitism in the United States.

A nearly unanimous 94 per cent of the respondents characterized themselves as either "pro-Israel"

(50%) or "very pro-Israel" (44%); 93 per cent believe that "support for Israel is in America's interest"; 83 per cent would see the destruction of Israel as "one of the greatest personal tragedies of my life."

At the same time, 71 per cent do not believe that "Israel's future is secure," and 76 per cent believe that "Jews should not vote for candidates who are unfriendly to Israel."

Despite their support, however, most American Jews have never accepted the Zionist ideal that all Jews should strive to return to Israel. Dr. Cohen declared, He reported that a vast majority of his respondents, 81 per cent, disagreed with the statement that "each American Jew should give serious thought to settling in Israel," and "by a margin of better than three to one (61 per cent to 17 per cent)," they asserted that "there is a bright future for Jewish life in America." However, only 34 per cent agree with the statement that "virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews."

Assessing Israel's policies in regard to the Arabs, 74 per cent of the respondents considered them "about right," while 23 per cent said they were "too hawkish," and 4 per cent said they were "too dovish."

5743 - Remembrance and Anticipation

BY RABBI WILLIAM BERKOWITZ

Unlike the annual celebration of others, the Jewish New Year stresses remembrance and anticipation, in place of revelry and carousing. This is a period to look behind -- and look ahead, both on the individual and collective levels.

As we bid farewell to 5742 and welcome 5743, what does the slate look like for the Jewish people?

The past year was a mixture of light and shadows. Early on, Anwar Sadat and Moshe Dayan were taken from our midst, reminding us of the Middle East and its curious blend of politics and personality. While Sadat's assassins hoped to crush his peace effort, the Egyptian leader's successor adopted his Camp David legacy. As the year progressed, we witnessed how Israel made a great sacrifice for peace, and as part of the peace process returned the Sinai to Egypt. Observers noted the depth of the sacrifice of the oil-producing land, and a withdrawal in the face of intense Israeli domestic opposition.

Yet 5742 will also be remembered for Israel's Northern border and the events of Lebanon. No one can forget how Israel offered its most precious possession -- its sons -- in order to end PLO terrorism on its border in the North and restore sovereignty to Lebanon, thereby increasing peace to that region. No one can forget the many stories of Israeli soldiers who fought with humanity and restraint, incurring losses and injury rather than needlessly harming civilians. Now can we forget how the PLO terrorists hid behind the skirts of civilians, using small children as shields, setting military installations in hospitals, schools, mosques and apartment houses, and finally taking an entire city hostage. We asked in wonder how the world could be indifferent to the 7-year agony of the Lebanese people who endured torture, rape, pillage and total life disruption by the PLO. Moreover, we were stunned by the gross exaggerations and outright lies which provided cover and sympathy for PLO intransigence and terrorism.

Indeed, Lebanon served to focus on two issues of 5742 which disturbed us greatly. The first was the attempt to use moral concerns or the memory of the Holocaust as a weapon to further de-legitimize the Jewish state. By attacking Israel's moral standing, the hope of some was to make her an outcast state.

The second issue which Lebanon highlighted was the gross media distortions and editorial-

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izing. Across the year, the mass media have abounded with articles and programs which strongly portrayed Israeli policy or events in the Middle East. The War in Lebanon climaxed a year of such disinformation and misinformation, sensitizing us further to its dangers.

Last June, the rabbinic cabinet met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the coming campaign. At the time, the theme of the campaign was to be the 15th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem. Since then, events have caused that theme to be combined with the emergency campaign launched in the wake of the war in Lebanon.

The High Holy Day campaign has its origins in the very beginnings of the Bond Organization over three decades ago.


The Bond Organization initially held a High Holy Day appeal in two cities; Paterson, N.J., and Washington, D.C. The results encouraged a rapid expansion of the effort.

Today, six regional rabbinical cabinets help run the appeals. Another 30 sub-divisions are planned, generating greater participation in the campaign. In each unit, a triumvirate of rabbis in the leadership represents each of the three congregational denominations.

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