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IS THE DIASPORA GOOD FOR THE JEWS?

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GALSTON: Thank you all for coming. Let me begin by introducing myself. I'm Bill Galston, a Senior Fellow in the Governance Studies Division here at Brookings, and let me explain the genesis of this event.

I'm involved in a number of different activities here at Brookings. One of them is a book series called *Governing Ideas*, which is an occasional discussion series of books that seem to present large ideas about how human beings organize and govern themselves. This event is, in part, the latest installment of that series.

I'm also one of the co-directors of a Brookings project on religion, politics, and public life, and this book also fits very neatly into that category. The confluence of these two programs has produced this event. Plus, full confession, I know Mr. Wolfe reasonably well and have gotten to know Yehuda Kurtzer through the Hartman Institute.

At any rate, I'm delighted to welcome you to what I suspect will be a searching discussion of Alan Wolfe's book, *At Home in Exile*, and let me introduce both of the participants and explain the order of events very quickly.

You have full biographies in your written packets, and so I'm not going to waste time by repeating what you could read for yourselves. Suffice it to say that Alan Wolfe is a Professor of Political Science and Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College. He's the author and editor of more than 20 books, including the one that we're here to discuss today. He's done all sorts of things. Many of you may have gotten to know him in his capacity as an extraordinary book reviewer for *The New Republic*, a relationship that lasted for a very long time.

Yehuda Kurtzer is President of the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America. He has a doctorate in Jewish Studies from Harvard, an MA in religion from

Brown, and he's the author of a very interesting book called *Shuva: The Future of the Jewish Past*, a work of constructive theology that offers new thinking on how contemporary Jews can and should relate to our past while living profoundly in the present.

For those of you who are not acquainted with the Hartman Institute, either it's branch in North America or the mother ship in Jerusalem, I would urge you to acquaint yourselves with it because it is one of the most vital and interesting centers for the exploration of the Jewish tradition in relationship to the profoundest problems of Jews in eternity.

The order of events will be roughly as follows: Alan Wolfe will present the main themes of his book in no more than 25 minutes. Yehuda Kurtzer will have 20 minutes to offer commentary. There will then be a brief, moderator colloquy between the two of them, and the remaining half hour or so will be given over to your questions and responses from our panel. Without further do, Alan Wolfe.

MR. WOLFE: thanks so much, Bill, for the introduction and acknowledgment of our long-standing friendship.

One thing an author just absolutely hates to do is possibly lose an audience, though I see more people than chairs. Is it possible to get a few? Okay.

Bill Galston kindly referred to the fact that I've written a lot of books in my life, and I sometimes think that maybe it's too many. There are other things you can do with your time than write some 20 books. But then I think about a man named Jacob Meisner, a great writer on Jewish subjects, was probably written about 80 or 85. I think he comes in second at all time to God and the number of books written by a scholar of Jewish studies.

I'm going to begin with a reference to Jacob Meisner who's written to the

effect that in the last 60 or 70 years, the years that have taken place since those two cataclysmic events happened so closely together: The Holocaust in Germany and then the creation of Israel in the 1948. He writes that it was inevitable that these two events which shaped how post-World War II Jews would think. He insists that in this period, 60 or 70 year period, a period, as it happens, that corresponds almost exactly with my life.

I was born in 1942, six years before Israel, and as the Holocaust was picking up steam the conjunction of these two events really created essentially a new religion for Jews primarily in the Diaspora, but also to some extent in the holy land. He calls it the Judaism of Holocaust and redemption. He says it's very, very different from the Judaism of the Torah.

In some ways, it resembles Christianity historically more than Judaism because it gives us such a sharp and contrasting contrast between the hell of Hitler and the heaven of Israel. With Hitler the Jews met a form of evil unprecedented in the history of the world; far worse than anything John Milton may have depicted as the Christian hell in *Paradise Lost*. A living, breathing Satan whose danger that he posed to the Jewish people and to the world was probably unprecedented in human history.

You have this absolute horror of horrors, and then lo and behold, it's followed shortly thereafter by the prospect of salvation through statehood. That statehood was the heaven for which the Holocaust was the hell. That statehood for the Jewish people assumed an atmosphere of salvation, an atmosphere of redemption. The designers who created Israel may have been secular, but the meaning of statehood is transformed into religious terms as offering a possible, better ending to a story that had such an awful evening.

Since these events corresponded so exactly with the years of my own life, I've been shaped by them like just about everybody has been. I'm one of those

people that absolutely cannot stop reading every book I can find her every move yet that I can attend about the Holocaust, obsessed with the Holocaust, and trying to figure out its meaning; writing other books about political evil in subjects like that.

But it does occur to me that for all the power of this imagery of destruction and redemption that this religion, the religion of color cost redemption, unlike most religions is time bound. It's temperable. It's not universal. It doesn't appeal to an endless ending. There is an ending. There will be an ending, and that is when the impact of these two astonishing events begins to lose their grasp on our mental imagination.

The linking of the two will have to pass, and something else will have to replace it. I think that's essentially what's happening now, that things like the extensive pew survey of American Jews shows that among younger Jews consciousness of the Holocaust is diminishing, that the almost sacred attitude towards Israel is also diminishing. I think we're finding ourselves in a world in which we need a new way of understanding the role that Jews play for themselves and for the rest of the world. One can lament this, and some writers have.

I think primarily of a very, very interesting professor of Jewish Studies at Indiana University in Bloomington named Alan Rosenfeld has written about how the passing of the Holocaust memory would be a tragedy, that the Holocaust was not a generalized lesson of evil; it was a specific horror against the Jews, that it doesn't correspond to other genocides, and that when we lose that, we lose something precious.

It's an attitude I can well understand, but it also seems to me to assign to the Jews a perpetual and inevitable victimization, essentially a negative, defensive, protective outlook on the world. I would much rather prefer that the transition from this world in which the Holocaust and the birth of Israel created the beginning and the ending

of the story that chooses instead to turn back to a tradition that is some part of their history really since (inaudible) was particularly emphasized in 19th century Enlightenment thought in Berlin and then taken to the United States; the tradition of the more universal and universalistic understanding of the Jewish mission.

Now, universals and particularism are frequently used as ways of describing contrasting Jewish attitudes towards themselves and toward others. There are numerous scholars who have proven that these terms are hopeless to use, that you can't really define them, that one blends into the other, and so on. I think all of that is true, and yet I find myself unable to not use them. As I try to understand these things, there really are two basic, different attitudes that have persevered throughout Jewish history since the book of Deuteronomy was written.

One sees the dispersal of Jews around the world as a punishment that God has imposed upon their sins. Their sins are primarily forgetting God or ignoring God or putting other gods before Him. Diaspora as punishment. One Diaspora as dispersion as a positive thing that has happened to the Jews because they relatively enlighten religion associated with Judaism can be spread to the world as a whole and not just confined to the Jewish people.

These have fought back and forth with each other for a very, very long time. It was inevitable that the Holocaust and the creation of Israel would turn the tide in a particularist direction. Hitler himself was particularist. He did choose other peoples than the Jews to massacre and eliminate, but the Jews were in particular his enemy and in particular the people that he singled out.

Israel also singled out Jews: Singled out Jews to provide them a home and to provide them a safe place. That conjunction of events, I don't think there was any choice but for Jews to think more particularistically as long as those events shaped their

consciousness.

In a post-Holocaust, post-birth of Israel world however, I think the time is right for a return of the more universalistic traditions within Judaism. The kind that came, for example, from Rabbi David Einhorn.

Born in Bavaria, he ultimately understood Judaism as an obligation to spread the seeds of enlightenment around the world. He moved to Baltimore, Maryland, just as the Civil War was breaking out. He had to flee his pulpit in Baltimore because of his antislavery teachings. He had two daughters, both of whom married the number one and number two prominent, reformed Jews in the United States. He spreads this mission of an enlightenment kind of Judaism around the country, influencing rabbis from generation to generation. That kind of message is due for a revival.

The main argument in my book is to look at various developments that are happening in Judaism and in the Jewish community that could return us to this really important, but somewhat underappreciated, tradition over the last 60 or 70 years. In that context, I try to address a number of the things that worry Diaspora Jews like the intermarriage rate, which is indeed very high among Jews, and I try to argue against a doom-and-gloom mentality associated with it. That if Hitler didn't kill all the Jews, the Christians they marry will. That there's no fundamental difference between trying to kill Jews and trying to love them. In a sense, they're both bent on the extermination of Judaism.

One of the heroes of the book was a man who grew up in Lithuania and died in Waltham, Massachusetts, named Simon Rawidowicz; a man who I think understood so much of the dilemma that Jews face around the world today; who wrote extensively in his time about the problem that Jews who made (inaudible) to Israel would face with the Arab; who wrote as a, kind of, old-fashioned Jewish prophet and called

Jews not just to live, but to live up to an ideal.

I try to bring to life in the book other voices. I particularly focus on a writer like Simon Dubnow (inaudible), a great historian of the Jewish people; after Heinrich Graetz who, again, was born in -- he never did come to the United States, but his wife, Sophie, did. She lived until she was 102 years old. She became a very famous Jewish poet in New York. I actually had no idea at the time, but in the 1960s I attended a seminar at Columbia University and one of the members was an economist of the Soviet Union named Alexander Erlich, and he turned out to be Dubnow's grandson, and I wish I had known at the time when I knew him so well.

This is what the book's about. It uses a lot of different methods. There's some counting there. There's some intellectual history there. There's a chapter designed to show that was not just one Zionist movement, but there are many kinds of Zionism: Political Zionism, cultural Zionism, and so on.

For me, as a person who is not a professor of Jewish studies, who is not religious in any real sense of the term, a thoroughly secularized, Americanized Jewish boy from Philadelphia, to come to terms relatively late in life with (inaudible) that I never paid any attention to and to try to make sense of it as best as I could for me and for you, that's what the book is about. Thank you very much for your attention. (Applause)

MR. GALSTON: Alan, thank you so much. Your mention of Jacob Meisner reminded me that he is the subject of one of the better academic jokes I've ever heard. Apparently a friend of his called his office, and his secretary answered. The friend asked to speak to Professor Meisner, and the secretary said, oh, I'm sorry, you can't. He's writing a book. To which the friend responded, that's okay, I'll hold. (Laughter) Yehuda, the floor is yours.

MR. KURTZER: First of all, it's a great honor to be here today. Thank

you, Bill, for inviting me. Bill and I know each other through the Shalom Hartman Institute Philosophy Conference which Bill runs at the Institute for many years. Of course, it's an honor to be responding to Professor Wolfe's important and provocative book.

I do want to also acknowledge that in the context of a conversation about collective Jewish identity, it's a funny and sad day to be having that conversation in light of the terrorist attack that took place last night in Israel and this morning this time. Apropos of what I hope that we talk about today a little bit, I feel a little bit personally -- I channel a little bit of the Yehuda Halevi who you speak about in your book as the architect of Jewish particularism in the Middle Ages in his famous line of 'My heart is in the East, and I am in the uttermost West.'

I want to start with a quote from the German-Jewish philosopher, Franz Rosenzweig, writing in the 1920s who says as follows: Zionism, diagnostician of genius but most mediocre healer, has recognized the disease but prescribed the wrong treatment. What is recognized was the absence of a specific, contemporary Jewish life having some common characteristics other than the just common possession of a dead scholarship called the Science of Judaism which no one is familiar with and the common defense against anti-Semitism.

Rosenzweig goes on to say later in the chapter: As soon as the great question is posed to us about what should be done now and how new vessels of Jewish communal life are to be plated in this devastated but indestructible soil in place of the shrunken ones so that grafting themselves onto these new vessels, individuals can again feel the sap of the old, eternally inexhaustible stream course through their arteries. As soon as this question is asked, Zionism fails us.

Rosenzweig was responding to in the 1920s was, in many ways, the core two questions that (inaudible) raised for the Jewish people which animate a lot of

Professor Wolfe's book, which are emancipation and enlightenment. Once Jews become actually freed of the political structures that tie them to live in the context of ghettos in their own communities and they're enabled to be free citizens of the societies in which they live. Simultaneously, once enlightenment takes over for the Jewish people and allows for the breakdown of the traditionalism that had kept Jews not just physically isolated but in some ways intellectually isolated. The Jewish people have been asking this question for the last 250 years: What is the point of remaining or continuing to be Jewish? In what ways are the various new mass movements, intellectual or otherwise, going to help create a narrative by which Judaism is supposed to continue onwards?

Rosenzweig's comments, provocative at the time and incredibly provocative almost 100 years later, suggests that Zionism comes along as one political solution to the "Jewish problem," a term that Jews used for themselves before the Nazis used for Jews. The question of: Who are we supposed to be in the world, and how are we supposed to act now that we can live freely in the societies that will have us as members and we can participate in the same intellectual culture as others without the prisons of intellectualism that we've created for ourselves?

Rosenzweig responds to this political reality by saying, sure, Zionism acknowledges this problem by providing a solution for Jews to escape political anti-Semitism and to constitute our own culture in a particular place. But as he indicates, once it's actually poses a question of meaning, whose Jews are supposed to be, what are we supposed to do, Zionism fails us. Rosenzweig, to his credit, is, of course, right. The fact that Jews wind up with the state of Israel means that they've achieved a political success, but the fact that that state of Israel is still trying to work out what Jewishness is supposed to mean in the context of the state of Israel means that Zionism doesn't solve the Jewish problem except politically and not fully intellectually.

Rosenzweig is aware that Zionism is a political ideology can't address the more significant question of what Jewishness is supposed to do for us in the world. They can solve a political problem, but not an exit essential one.

But what's interesting that Rosenzweig's take here, and it'll echo with Professor Wolfe's book, is that the outcome that he provides is not a prescription towards universalism and abandonment of the particular Jewish tradition, but that same critique of Zionism actually generates for Rosenzweig a turn inwards. It's part of a book that's called *On Jewish Learning*, and it's part of a document that means to animate the creation of the Lare House, a new institution of Jewish learning created in Germany in the 1920s that, but for the demise of German Jewry on the one hand and the demise of Rosenzweig to ALS himself would have had, one could imagine, a long and illustrious history.

In other words, for Rosenzweig the critique of Zionism comes not with the response: If this political ideology doesn't solve the Jewish problem for us, how do we turn outwards? But actually he used the same question to demand a turn inwards. The turning phrase that he uses later in the book which is so suggestive and that I want to come back to is that the present moment requires an investment in the creation of what he calls Jewish human beings. How do we make people into Jewish human beings? It's an incredibly powerful term because it captures precisely the tension that's played out so intensively in the book on Jewish has a particular designation and human being as a universal designation.

For Rosenzweig, the answer to this problem was not by choosing particularism or choosing universalism, but by trying to integrate the 2 inch hem of the two into a more comprehensive identity, that particularism would become a vessel for universalism and not a substitute for it.

There is a lot I admire and embrace in this remarkable book, including five key ideas that I think the book represents and articulates very powerfully that have significant political ramifications, and I hope they get for their press. One: The willingness to stand up as you do in the book to not just the classical, but the continued subtle negation of the Diaspora that continues to animate American Jewish life, including the really problematic ways that our Jewish community often times uses Israel as a proxy or shortcut for meaningful Jewish identity.

Since the 1967 War, American Jewish self-definition changes, and American Jews stand up proudly and think of themselves very differently. But sometimes the more nefarious representation of this is when more educational resources in the Jewish community go sending Jewish kids to Israel than they go into Jewish educational institutions of the Diaspora. We sometimes use Israel is a proxy for or substitute for actually amounting a credible claim about our own identity.

Second, another admirable idea in the book, a significant critique of the cult or culture of anti-Semitism has a self-serving instrument to Jewish pride and Jewish identity in spite of what we can only call dramatically-changed circumstances for the Jewish experience in America. I think you rightly acknowledge in the book there continues to persist to be anti-Semitism. It appears differently in different parts of the world, but the American Jewish experience, especially over the last half-century, has resulted in a totally different experience for Jews today of what it means to be an American.

The continued insistence in some quarters of Jewish communal leadership that we should stay Jewish because of anti-Semitism, the continued persistence of a narrative of anti-Semitism as defining what it means to be Jewish today is, I agree with you, in some ways an unethical shortcut to identity. That it doesn't require

us to seriously think about what it means to be Jewish, which just allows us to rely on the fact that as long as they still hate us, we still have something meaningful to say in the context of our own community.

A third big idea you play out in the book, which I identify with very much, is the possibility of a new, nonhierarchical, Israel-Diaspora relationship. You mentioned Rawidowicz, and Rawidowicz famously imagines that instead of thinking that there's this hierarchy, Israel is the center and Diaspora is the periphery, that rather two communities or multiple communities can function in an elliptical relationship, drawing strength from the relationship to one another but not resulting in a hierarchy.

In my own research I like to go back to a different golden age in Jewish history and one that doesn't get enough press, which is the Golden age of the Jewish community of Alexandria in Egypt. Again, at a time prior to the destruction of the second Temple, when Jews were living in a voluntary Diaspora, they had a choice to go to the land of Israel and live where the Temple was and elected not to and produced phenomenal literature, architecture, interpretation of the Bible that reflected their desire to, on one hand, be in a relationship to the Jews of the land of Israel and on the other hand to not allow their identity to be defined entirely by it.

A fourth grade term you used in the book is the secularization of particularism. It's a good one. It's a keeper.

MR. WOLFE: You're the first person who noticed.

MR. KURTZER: I like that a lot. It's also tweetable.

The secularization of particularism suggests that whereas particularism once may have been a religious ideology of believing that we are together as a people because of religious terms or ethical behaviors, secularizing it, and to borrow a phrase from my colleague, Professor Shaul Magid, replaces a significant Jewish secularism,

which was a very strong ideology for very long time, with pro-Israel is some. It makes particularism a political ideology rather than a substance of ideology. I think this is an incredibly profound and important idea that needs to be pushed out there.

But perhaps what I appreciate most about the book, and then I'm going to offer a challenge, is the fundamental optimism of the book. You make the case very strongly that we as a community must move beyond the narrative of crisis, of enemies at the gates, the deterioration or collapse of either our own communities or those on the outside, and embrace of intermarriage as a reflection of the fact that, for the first time in our history, people are not just trying to kill us, but they actually want to be part of us, as you alluded to.

A willingness to embrace present realities rather than tilting against them, suggesting that instead of looking at the great problems that we face, and I think it's fair to say that the problems that the American Jewish community faces today are the best problems that the Jewish people have ever had, that instead of fighting against those problems, we accept an understanding of the Jewish people for who they are rather than in some ways wishing that we were otherwise. I find that a lot of public policy in the Jewish community tries to tell people to stop being who they are instead of understanding who they are and providing resources to build a rich and meaningful Jewish life.

In all these ways, I think you've convincingly argued the subtitle of your book that Diaspora is, in fact, good for the Jews. But there's an itch of sorts in the narrative that you portray on universalism and particularism that I want to try to scratch today, that I struggled with as I was reading through the book and I want to address. Namely, I think your insistence throughout the book that these two pools are opposite to one another, that we have a choice between particularism and universalism. The irony,

as a result, is that many of the people who you critique in the book for being adamant in their particularism you wind up actually aligning with because you've conceded the point that particularism and universalism are opposite to one another, and you just take one side rather than the other.

The reason this jumped out at me is that it signaled that you told the story as entirely a modern Jewish story through the prism of a modern experience that has created political realities that may seem obvious that these are opposite to one another. As a result, Zionism in your narrative becomes associated with particularism and Diaspora becomes associated with universalism. Moreover, Zionism, particularism, and lack of moral imagination are on the one side; Diaspora, universalism, and moral possibility are on the other.

My instinct, perhaps because of my own training, is to take a little bit of an older view throughout Jewish intellectual history and to try to explore further into the Jewish past and the Jewish canon how these terms come into being. I tend to read the Bible through the metaphor of an hourglass. The opening narrative of the Bible is the creation of a human being in the image of God. Not the creation of the Jew, but rather the belief that what God wanted to do was create a human being who would replace God on earth and live out a moral, universal vision without any distinction or differentiation between human beings. For the first 11 chapters of Genesis, God attempts to do that and realizes that even if God is a universal God; you can't actually convey morality through that universal sensibility. The hourglass begins to narrow through the selection, or if you prefer election, of a particular human being, a particular family, that of Abraham, who is charged not to be particular in the closed sense of the word, but to actually carry out the universal mission on behalf of the rest of the world. That's why Abraham is told, I know that your responsibility is to be the ambassador for trust and for justice and

righteousness, and why Abraham and his selection is also told that as a result, if you do what you're supposed to do in the world, the rest of the world will be blessed by you. Much of the rest of the Bible is the narrowing of this hourglass as the Jewish people become concerned with their particular family story and surround that story with a set of ethical obligations about what they're supposed to do. By the time you get to the end of the Bible however, the hourglass reopens in the critique of the profits ultimately is that the people have become so obsessed with their particularism that they've forgotten that that particularism was meant to be an instrument for universalism.

Imagine that the story of the Bible starts as a universal challenge of what Jews are supposed to seek in the world. It becomes particular, and by the end of the Bible we get a critique that is insufficiently universal. The moral quest of universalism might share with you; I think that's what Jewishness is supposed to make us do in the world. I think it's supposed to be a particular identity that supposed to enable us to be the investigators are the architects of the model of justice and righteousness that is possible beyond the limitations of her own community. But whatever challenges that I think that this moral challenge runs through particularism and not around it.

But a lot of institutions they ultimately talk about in the last chapter of the book, the new forms of prayer communities, of study communities, Hadara Limmud, even my own institution, the Shalom Hartman Institute, are really actually attempts to do this two-fold thing, in many ways what Rosenzweig was trying to do with his Lare House, that the creation of the Jewish human being was an effort to fortify particularism not as an end in of itself, not so that Jews would turn particularism into chauvinism. Here I think you're completely right.

It's not particularism intended to be an end in and of itself, but how else does someone achieve a lofty vision of what they're attempting to do in the world except

through a community, through friends, and through colleagues and through kin?

Particularism is an instrument to universalism, and the metric or the barometer always should be in are we living up to the best of water moral tradition is telling us to do.

There is a trap door when one invests too much in particularism which is chauvinism. But just because there's a trap door doesn't mean it may not be the end of the day a more effective instrument to achieve the same moral values are you trying to achieve. I resist the belief that universalism is moral and particularism is self-interested. I think that's the case, you're probably doing both of them wrong. Particularism always has to be a self-interested attempt to achieve a moral outcome, and if all you have done a separate these two I don't think either of them has done as effectively as it should.

I started with Rosenzweig because I think the knowledge, the authenticity, and community that he was talking about that needed to be bred as an alternative response to Zionism is the means by which the Jewish people can achieve something in the world.

Here is the last piece that I'll say. When we take these pieces together, when we take an investment in Jewish ideas and authenticity, when we take the creation of Jewish community, whether in Israel or whether it's in Diaspora, and we use community and particularism as the instrument to try to achieve something morally universal, we create the possibility not of one morally significant community which is in Diaspora and one morally inferior community that is the particular community in Israel, but we take on the possibility of two centers of Jewish life where achieving this moral universalism in unprecedented ways.

In other words, why must the result of this narrative be a kind of diminishment of Israel in order to promote Diaspora, and instead why don't we acknowledge at the present moment, the excess, the affluence, the cultural penetration of

Jews in America and simultaneously a thriving, sovereign state of Jewish political power in the state of Israel, simultaneously provide the opportunity for more universalism is a Jewish message that the Jewish people have ever had before.

Couldn't a Diaspora Jew to look at the present moment in the state of Israel and realized that the state of Israel today, I'm not saying it always lives up to this, provides the single, biggest engine for the possibility of tikkun olam. The single biggest possible engine for repair of the world for this universal mission that you're talking about than Jews have ever made possible before.

I guess my hope at the end of the day reading your book is that we take this book, the challenge that you play forth but Diaspora, to more seriously acknowledge the strengths and possibilities there are at our disposal as Diaspora Jews. But at the same time, I hope we don't take this book to the fullest extent to imagine that that seeking of moral vision is only possible through the abandonment of our particular tradition, but rather is fortified, is made stronger, through an investment in particularism. But the moral universal vision that we want to go see for the world as possible through a particular community and Diaspora as well as through a particular community in the state of Israel. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. GALSTON: Yehuda, thank you for what I think many people would regard as a model of how to do a commentary on a book. Thank you.

Alan, the floor is available for whatever response you want to make, then I have a question or two to put the two of you, and then it'll be your turn.

MR. WOLFE: You never know when you write a book with the reaction is going to be. I wrote a book about American Christianity ones, and it turned out that the most right-wing Christians in the country loved it. You just never know what's going to happen, and I was want with this book that the ultra-Orthodox were going to love my bed

because the ultra-Orthodox who historically are against the creation of the state of Israel, and this would resonate with at least certain trends. I was extremely anxious before he came here about what the Shalom Hartman Institute would think about it, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate that you found such positive things in the book. As a book launch, I couldn't have asked for anything more.

I also found remarks critical but extremely eloquent and very, very thoughtful. My only problem was I didn't think that I was as much given to that dichotomizing as you suggest. Just a few examples: I have the chapter on the three great defenders of Diaspora: Rawidowicz, Dubnow, and Ahad.

In all three cases, I say that it was their deep immersion in the particular traditions that enable them to have a more universalistic vision. What everyone thinks of my fellow graduate of Central High School in Philadelphia, Noam Chomsky, whatever you think of him, he's deeply rooted in a very fitness Jewish family, a very famous tradition of Jewish scholarship, and even his rather peculiar criticisms of Israel, which are not a one-state solution kind of criticism, blend that particularism and universalism as well.

I ultimately think you're absolutely right; it will be some kind of combination. I think the difference really is my combination is different than your combination. But I see absolutely no reason why I couldn't share in your conclusion about Israel and the Diaspora and the relationship. When I prepared for questions that I might get about this book, no one has ever asked the following question, but I've had an answer for it for so long that I'm going to give you the answer.

Professor Wolfe, in an ideal world you could create, what would be the proper distribution of Jews around the world between the homeland and the Diaspora? I would've said roughly half in Israel and roughly half the rest of the world, and that's

exactly what we have. I think that is actually an ideal solution for a very, very complicated dilemma which symbolizes what you're doing. I say at one point in the book that just as the Diaspora support of Israel in the early years were primarily financial, I don't think it's financial support that now would be the best contribution the Diaspora can make to a healthy and vibrant Israel but an ethical support.

I'm somewhat pessimistic of how that would go over. I'm sensitive to the fact that it's advice coming from abroad, that most of us choose here in the Diaspora have not served in the Army. We have not lost people to terrorist acts and so on, and so it's somewhat gratuitous of us to give ethical advice. In the conclusion of the book I've tried a very, very powerful commentary from probably the most extinguished Israeli in my particular line of work, Shlomo Avineri, who basically argued that it's up to us in Israel, the Diaspora, can give everybody -- it's our decision. We have to make it.

I also read a very interesting response to his essay by a young Israeli who had originally come from England, was educated at Balliol College at Oxford where I once taught. He said, no, no. We really do need the Diaspora, and that's the view that I'm inclined to do.

I tried to walk a lot of lines in the book, but I don't want the book to be read as supportive of boycott investment sanctions or Mondowiess (inaudible), the anti-Zionist thing. My own personal identity is with a liberal Zionism. I know that there was the op-ed in the New York Times that my dear friend Tony Lehrman, the British (inaudible), wrote the end of liberal times. There won't be any, and I very much object to that.

But you're right to sense a difference. I see it more of a difference of degree than of kind.

MR. KURTZER: Yeah, I appreciate that. Perhaps what we're talking

about is nuance quality and detail and not necessarily what I heard in the book as a serious dichotomy between these two may not have been as strong as you're articulating.

The one edit I would say to what you just said is I'm not sure how comfortable I am again with what Diaspora Jews owe to Israel is ethical as opposed to philanthropic because again, to me that conveys some sensibility that there's an ethical privileging of Diaspora Jews because of the absence of living under sovereignty than there is for Jews under sovereignty.

What I would be more interested in is actually a discursive relationship between Israeli shoes and a Asperger's about the ways in which the two experiments under which we're living: One is power connected to sovereignty and one is power of the longing that's not explicitly sovereign, and finding ways to structure what could ultimately both be an ethical, structural, and functional conversation. A more discursive relationship to what sounds to me almost like a reaffirmation of a hierarchical relationship by imagining that one community has something to say ethically that other community isn't capable of doing.

MR. WOLFE: I think that's right, and that I would confess to. I think that Israeli actions, primarily with respect to the settlers and other kinds of issues that I don't think we need to go into, have given me a sense that they've taken ethically-backward steps that are very disastrous and needs some -- if you want to call it hierarchy, yes.

The whole point of Diaspora to me is that you learn something about being in a minority when you're in a Diaspora. The danger of being in the majority as Jews are in Israel is that they lose that. I would confess to a two-step or a hierarchy as you call it.

MR. GALSTON: Although being strangers amidst (inaudible) didn't do much for our ethical sensibility as I recall, but let me, if I may, to spend a couple of

minutes prepping to questions that I think are of particular interest in the book. Two quasi-theoretical questions that the particularity of the narrative of the book raises.

The first of these questions was triggered by Yehuda's very interesting term of phrase when he advocated and wished for and I quote, "A nonhierarchical relation between Israel and the Diaspora." One of the many things that's interesting about this book is refusal. So many of the players in the book to agree to that idea of a nonhierarchical relationship because ultimately it comes down to a question of what is the best way to live a Jewish life? This is not, it seems to me, a question that can be so easily abated.

Let me just give you two or three examples in the book. The twice-mentioned Professor Meisner you quoted in your book as saying America is a better place to be a Jew than Jerusalem. Lapidary words, but a pretty strong assertion. Then towards the end of the book you quote someone who is now a Dutch Jew by the name of Tamara Benima who says that Diaspora is good for everyone. It makes you more of a mensch if you're not defined by bulletin, that is to say, soil. Once again, the ethical superiority of living in exile. A better, fuller, human, more human life in exile.

Then we come to perhaps the most famous Zionist of all, David Ben-Gurion, and here's what Ben-Gurion has to say: Classically, only in the state of Israel is a full Jewish life possible. He goes on to explain exactly what he means in classic, theoretical terms. He says a whole Jew and a whole man without any split or division between the citizen and the society. Rousseau couldn't have said it better than that.

My question is, and it's a question to the two of you, do the two of you refuse that debate or do you situate yourself along that continuum or within that conversation but without necessarily coming to the one or the other as your settled point of view?

MR. KURTZER: Part of the reason I think I found myself in the right place is that those polemics are useful educationally, but are very hard to relate to as being effective means of actually crafting out the conversation of what does a good Jewish life mean. They help to situate a debate as the poles of the superiority of the Diaspora or the poles of the superiority of living in the land of Israel, but they actually misrepresent the complexity that comes with a full and rich Jewish identity.

Part of what I was trying to push back with respect to the book is the belief that any hierarchy must exist between these places. That means not just correcting for the classical hierarchy of the superiority of the land of Israel over the Diaspora, but making sure that we don't slip so far in the other direction as believing that living in America affords us some, sort of, ethical superiority or religious advantage over living in the land of Israel.

One of the things that's been so interesting to watch with Israelis over the past 25 to 30 years is that when there is actually a discursive relationship between Israeli Jews and Diaspora Jews, Judaism changes in both places. A classic site or locus of this has been the question of is Jewishness a private phenomenon or a public phenomenon? Where for a long time the model was for Diaspora Jews that Jewishness was a phenomenon of the household, the community center, or the synagogue. This is the Zionist Paul Udalay Gordon that the longing in the late 19th century was to be a Jew at home and a human being on the street. That's the Diaspora vision.

The state of Israel provided an opportunity for what you might call public space Jewishness, in which Jewishness is how you create a national calendar, it's how you have national holidays, and so on. It's the days of the week, but you don't need the private institutions.

Now, when the debate stays there, you lend yourself to a hierarchy

because one side will claim synagogues are better than a calendar, and the other side, the Avi Hashuas, the David Ben-Gurion's, and others will say the national fabric of the society is fuller and richer than just being Jewish in the privacy of your home and in your synagogue.

What's been so interesting to watch over the last 30 years is that these phenomena are bleeding into one another. American Jews are acting like Israelis in the American public square. There was a scandal in the seventies when Jews started lighting Hanukkah Menorahs in public parks, and now it's just normal. That we've actually begun to become public Jews in ways that Israelis are.

Israeli Jews are, in very clear and explicit ways, reclaiming the privatized model of Jewishness because it's insufficient to say I just want to be Jewish through the calendar. Do I actually have content, richness, books, and texture to make my Jewishness possible?

When you actually get away from the hierarchical poles and actually create a discursive conversation between Israeli Jews and American Jews, you find the possibility of the rearticulation of these values in much more complex, hybrid ways. That's what I personally just find not only a more ethical conversation, but a more interesting conversation.

MR. GALSTON: Alan?

MR. WOLFE: I have a couple of possible responses. One is that I tried as best as I could to find out the same question was asked by other groups. I have a colleague at Boston College named Kevin Kenny who's a distinguished historian of the Irish Diaspora, and I asked him this, and he said he couldn't think of anything comparable in our litigation of the Diaspora concept or this hierarchical relationship. I asked scholars of India who told me that Indian identity in the 20th century has been so shaped by

novelists living in Toronto and London. (Laughter)

I can't really find a comparable example where this question is debated. Can you lead a more thoroughly Greek life? I met somebody at lunch from Greece. Can you lead a more thoroughly Greek life here than you can in Greece? Maybe the answer to that is obvious. I just don't know enough about the subject. I know at one level that this is a question that would face any Diaspora -- a Greek word, by the way. I meant the Jewish Diaspora is not the only Diaspora in the world.

The other thing I would say is I don't think there's a theoretical answer to your question. If you had asked me this question in the early 1950s, even when Ben-Gurion made that statement that I would so disagree with, to me Israel would have been a Socialist or at least a Social-democratic experiment dominated by Labor Zionists who themselves had grown out of a universalistic vision. Herzl himself was a Universalist and so on. It would have been a very, very different Israel.

Probably back in those days I would have said something like, my god, look at this experiment. It's absolutely amazing. This is the first time Jews have ever (inaudible). Let's listen to them. They have things to teach us.

I look at the Israel of today, which is increasingly becoming a Middle Eastern country in the Middle East rather than a European outpost in the Middle East and think of it however you want, but it's a different kind of Israel.

You quoted is it better to be a Jew in New York than in Jerusalem? For a reformed Jew married to another reformed Jew who wants to raise reformed Jewish children, absolutely it would be better to be in New York than in Jerusalem. From a more orthodox Jew the answer might be different; I don't know. But again, I just can't come up with one general answer that would apply to all cases.

For someone like me, if you even want to consider me Jewish, I know

where I could lead the kind of life that I -- but it's your life. It's a life that recognizes my Judaism but not in any real religious sense and only vaguely even in an ethnic sense but still can't let go of it. I'm an (inaudible) music fanatic, and I'll go to hear a performance of Handel Oratorios based on texts from the Old Testament, and I'll get goose bumps. That's my tradition.

MR. GALSTON: I would simply observe that at least as the question is imposed in your book by these quotations, it really goes to the heart of the worth of liberalism because what Ben-Gurion refuses is the defining principle of a liberal order, mainly a separation between the public and the private, between state and society. I do think it is a question that can't be easily evaded: Whether a full Jewish life is best situated within a liberal order or within an order in which, to be blunt, there is a state religion, and it happens to be Judaism.

Here's my second question, then it's your turn. There is a wonderful moment in this book when you quote the late Christopher Hitchens who discovered that he was (inaudible) Jewish very late in life, disturbingly late in life, though there are parallels among Secretaries of State. (Laughter) I think it's just wonderful that John Kerry is the great-great-grandson of the Maharal in Prague, but go figure. Adam Sandler, we need you.

At any rate, Christopher Hitchens you quote as saying as referring to the important but delayed realization will have to come: Israeli Jews are part of the Diaspora, not a group that has escaped from it. Now, if that's correct, then the basic polarity of the book will have to be rethought completely, but just to tee this up a little bit let me read a quotation to the same effect: The establishment of the state of Israel is the most profound modification of the Galut which has occurred, but it is not the end of the Galut. In the religious sense and perhaps not only in the religious sense, the state of Israel is part of

the Galut.

Now, those of you with rhetorically sensitive ears will have recognized that as a statement from the late Leo Strauss, but it appears to me to be very much along the same lines as Christopher Hitchens. What do you understand Hitchens, and by extension Strauss, to be saying when he makes that argument which you appear to have some sympathy with?

MR. WOLFE: I don't know what was in the mind of either gentleman when they wrote that. It resonated with me for two reasons: One is that we now have a situation that I think most of the early Zionists could never have imagined, and that is people in Zion fleeing for the Diaspora. Israeli Jews in New York, Israeli Jews in Berlin; inconceivable, I think. But once you pause with the idea that Israel is the only place for Jews to live as Zionists like Ben-Gurion did, that Jews would voluntarily have that privilege and then give it up seems inconceivable.

I think the more general meaning is the security that statehood seemed to offer. We now know that Jews are a majority in Israel but a severely threatened minority in the Middle East. Because Israel is in the Middle East, you never escaped the Diaspora after all. It depends upon how wide your geographic scope is, but I just say this challenges some of the ideas in the book. If you look just at Israel, Jews have their own state, and it should be a secure one because that's what states offer. But if you look at the Middle East, the security disappears. Therefore, the Israeli Jews are facing exile. They're facing exile in the Middle East more generally.

MR. KURTZER: I'll just say two quick responses. One is to go back to my Rosenzweig quote, which Hitchens affirms, which is that Zionism does not solve the problem for the Jewish people. It provides a political alternative for now living under sovereignty, and here I'm reminded that you quote Isaiah Levkovich, the great Israeli

chemist/philosopher and great curmudgeon of the late 20th century in Israel who says that Zionism for him is not an ideological movement, but it is the ability not to be ruled over by Goyim. Zionism only solves that problem. It doesn't solve the big, larger challenge of what Judaism is supposed to mean in the world. In some ways, Levkovich aligns with that reading that says no dramatic condition, no Messianic condition has come to save us from the challenges that we face even if we now get to actually be in charge.

I would just put a note of caution on that, and I think this is an unexpected outcome that Hitchens wouldn't anticipate, which is the persistence of the ideology that would say that Israel is still diasporic or exilic even as it's sovereign is that it breeds an attitude towards foreign policy that is diasporic and exilic. That doesn't take full responsibility for what it means to actually be a sovereign state, but is obsessed with the enemies at the gates and our vulnerability and our weakness. It is on the record, but I do think that a good bit of Israeli policy is too often crippled by that sensibility of insisting on being diasporic even in the context of being sovereign and forgetting what it means to actually rule as the sovereign.

MR. WOLFE: Just one more word before we open up. I'm glad you brought up Levkovich. He's the orthodox Jewish pacifist. Probably the greatest critic of Israel' military policies but from an orthodox Jewish perspective.

One of the things you learn about the Diaspora is all the connections. Everybody seems to be connected to everybody else. Levkovich grew up in Riga in Latvia, and he had the same Hebrew schoolteacher as the British philosopher Isaiah Berlin, and they were always being compared to each other as Berlin was the inferior pupil.

MR. GALSTON: I think we've probably teed up a lot of questions, and the last half hour, as promised, belongs to you. I will start with Norman Birnbaum and

then move back.

MR. BIRNBAUM: I'm Norman Birnbaum from Georgetown University and The Nation magazine. Thanks to all three of you for an immensely stimulating discussion with enough lines of thoughts in it to generate any number of good university seminars.

My question is a simple existential one. The assumption is that the state of Israel, in one form or another, will continue to exist and pose a problem for the Diaspora. Suppose however that in the troubled Middle East, as we saw today, that the existence of Israel as a Jewish state is simply impossible. What then for the Diaspora?

MR. KURTZER: Are you pointing at me? (Laughter)

MR. GALSTON: I don't know. It's a hard question, so I'm pointing at you.

MR. KURTZER: Since I shared Professor Wolfe's optimism, I don't think the state of Israel is going away anytime soon, and I don't think it's Jewish character as the Jewish state is going away anytime soon. If anything, what I'm more concerned about is the legislative efforts to affirm the Jewishness of the Jewish state in Israel, which I think are actually much more damaging to precisely the moral, liberal, universal qualities that that state is supposed to exhibit.

I'm going to dodge the question a little bit by saying I'm not particularly concerned that that's going to happen. That at the risk of being portrayed as completely naïve, what I would say is at one point in Jewish history when there existed a temple and a sovereign Jewish people in one place and there existed a voluntary Diaspora in another place, the nature of the gravitational relationship between those two places was such that when that center was destroyed it had dramatic gravitational effects on the communities on the outside.

I do believe that Jews in America are safer and prouder and more successful and more powerful and more affluent because of the state of Israel for reasons that are very difficult to unpack, and I believe the reciprocal is true.

Part of the reason for a continued, sustained relationship between Diaspora Jews and Israeli Jews is not merely because that's an ethical way of thinking about where half the Jews are and where the other half are and because we have relationships to one another, but because in very deep ways our fates are actually tied up to each other. A serious cataclysmic act or event or transformation that took place either for Diaspora Jews or for Jews in the state of Israel would almost, by the laws of physics, have profound ramifications for the other.

MR. GALSTON: I saw a couple of hands back here. Yes, sir. On the aisle, and then I'll move into the gentleman in the center, and then the gentleman on the other aisle.

MR. RAFIK: My name is Rafik, and my question is to Dr. Wolfe.

Your book, as I understand, explains the reasons why Diaspora is suitable for Jews. You mentioned about (inaudible) America. In America in the 19th century there was discrimination against Jews even though there's no discrimination right now. In Europe, Jews experienced many waves of persecutions: Programs in Russia, massacres in dark ages.

Now I want to shift direction to the other part. It's a small country, Muslim country, Azerbaijan, where Jews and Muslims live in harmony. I don't know whether you know about this. They live in different religious parts of the city.

My question is did you ask yourself why in certain Diasporas Jews survived while in other parts they witnessed so many challenges? Thank you.

MR. WOLFE: Thank you. I'll only mention this briefly, and I maybe

should have gone into it in greater length, but the years in which I'm talking about from the 1940s to the present were years not only marked by the fact that Israel eventually was settled by roughly half the Jewish population and the rest were in the Diaspora, but that the entire nature of the Diaspora changed to the point where you have to wonder if even Diaspora is the right word.

Diaspora means a spreading out, a dispersion, but this Diaspora from the 1940s has been heavily concentrated. Jews used to live essentially everywhere. In every country there would be a Jewish community: In the Arab world, in Southeast Europe, and no matter where you went you would find a Jewish community of some sort.

Now the Jewish community in the world is heavily concentrated almost entirely in North America and in Western Europe. That's a change that somehow has to figure into the dynamics, but it's beyond the scope of my particular -- I certainly thought a lot about it, and I do touch on it in various ways.

I touch upon the out migration of the Jews of the (inaudible) both to France and to Israel. The fact that there are more Jews now living in France than there are in the former Soviet Union, in fact in all of the republics of the former Soviet Union combined, is, from the larger standpoint of Jewish history, a stunning development. A major, major, major development, but it's somewhat tangential to what I was talking about in the book.

MR. GALSTON: Gentleman with the white hair in the middle of that aisle.

SPEAKER: I'd like to ask the opposite of the first question. What if there were no Diaspora? Assume this came about in a peaceful, nontraumatic way: Either all the Jews moved to Israel in the 1940s or all Diaspora Jews became assimilated and lost their identity, and the Jews in Israel were the only Jews in the world. What would that do

to the state of Israel?

MR. WOLFE: I have to admit I've never thought about it. I don't mean to put down your question. I would just need time to reflect. I just don't think I can come up with a quick answer (inaudible) experiment question.

MR. KURTZER: In the 1960s, sociologists were convinced that Orthodox Judaism was going to be gone within 30 years. In the 1980s -- you would talk about this in the book -- there was one sociologist who writes that within 40 years there was going to be 10,072 Jews left in America. There's a long history of anticipating -- and this is Rawidowicz's famous essay The Ever-Dying People -- our own demise and using that as a catalyst for creating public policy.

I am just personally so skeptical of it that it's hard for me to enter into a space of thinking about assimilation as actually ending the presence of the Jewish community. I think a more useful theoretical is as the trends that Professor Wolfe talks about in his book take root of a more universalistically-oriented Jewish community becomes the dominant paradigm for who American Jews are as we have shifting sense of our own citizenship and so on, how does it change our relationship as American Jews institutionally and otherwise towards the state of Israel. The evidence that that's taking place is pretty far underway. The decentralization of power structures in the American Jewish community as one. The rise of now multiple Israel lobbies so that nobody really speaks for the organized Jewish community when it comes to Israel policy. Those are all reflections of the transformed nature of the American Jewish community, but it also is hard for me to imagine that the Jews are going to go away anytime soon.

MR. GALSTON: I'm going to take one more question on this side, the gentleman on the aisle, and then I'm going to move over to this side.

MR. WINETROUT: Thank you. I'm Leon Winetrout. This question,

perhaps, is related to the last one, but I was surprised that in all of the discussion I didn't hear any value of the Diaspora expressed in a geopolitical sense. I'm talking about the role of the Diaspora Jewish community in the United States similar to the role of the Cuban American community, the Armenian community, the Greek community, and other communities. It seems this is a very significant role. It's hard to imagine the performance of the United States at the Security Council of the United Nations were it not for this effect.

I was just very surprised. Was this a deliberate attempt to put this off to one side? It seems to me it was something that was hard to ignore.

MR. WOLFE: I'm not sure it is ignored. For me, as the person who wrote the book, I was trying to raise new questions, and I think the question, as least as I heard your question, I may have heard it incorrectly, but the role that Diaspora Jews would play vis-a-vis American foreign policy equivalent to the way Cuban Americans play with respect to policy towards Castro, that was a question that's been explored, huge debates. The Mir-Schiemer and Walt book generated all those kinds of debates, and I just think those questions were addressed by others not particularly satisfactorily, but nonetheless addressed.

MR. KURTZER: I think you do though in the chapter on secularity of particularism. I think that the nature of that argument is that the kind of politically pro-Israel, secular Jewish community has very much entrenched itself into a narrative that their active loyalty to the Jewish people is by being the kind of flank in the American Jewish community to enable support for Israel. I think that's both the stated view of that community and the critique of it. It's funny when those things actually align with each other.

I think that's a little bit of the book, but it's not -- in some ways we didn't

address it directly, but I think it's just a feature of what the nature of the American Jewish Diaspora actually consist of.

MR. GALSTON: As promised, I'm shifting over here. I'm going to start there and then move to you and then move to you.

MR. KRISTIV: I'm Sydney Kristiv of Financial University of Moscow, Russia. My question exactly about this book by (inaudible) could you elaborate in what aspects he is wrong about Israel (inaudible)? Thanks.

MR. WOLFE: I think Yehuda Kurtzer said it very, very well. One of the peculiarities of that book is that they claim that what they call -- is it Israeli lobby or Jewish lobby or do they use both?

MR. KURTZER: Israel lobby.

MR. WOLFE: Israel lobby has inordinate power, but when the so-called lobby itself brags about how much money it raises and how many congressmen it can (inaudible) it says the same thing.

It was such an odd controversy, and I'm not sure to this day how to respond to it. I think part of the reason why it was so controversial was not what the book said but the way it said it. I think the authors were probably right in a lot of what they said, but they were clearly aiming to be sensationalistic, and they generated a sensation.

MR. KURTZER: I think there is also a legitimate critique to be offered of the translation of a political phenomenon into the conspiratorial framework of it being about the Jews.

The minute someone comes along and says the Jews are acting in X way that implies it's against the larger public interest and in some ways against their own self-interest as Jews in America on behalf of somewhere else, it plants the seeds of being insidious and conspiratorial when a sheer analysis of what it means to lobby on behalf of

Israel, presenting that data doesn't have that.

It's a little bit to what Professor Wolfe indicated, but it reeked of classic, anti-Semitic tropes of how Jewish power is organized and mobilized in ways that are at odds with the needs and interests of the dominant state in which they live. There's too much good history on that conspiratorial language and how it's been used against Jews that I don't default those who gave that book a hard time.

MR. GALSTON: Yes, sir.

SPEAKER 2: From your universalistic and particularistic point of view, how would you characterize the growth of the Lubavitch movement in this country? I lived for many years in Tampa where there was one, small, Orthodox synagogue or a couple of reformed and a conservative, and it is now surrounded by thriving Abbas. Many other places have experienced this. The only place I couldn't find them was in Kigali, Rwanda, when I was looking for them. (Laughter)

What is this movement in your terms, and what does it mean for Jewry?

MR. WOLFE: It's a fascinating development. In many ways, the fact that you can find people associated with the Lubavitch movement everywhere is itself a remarkable thing. Ultra-Orthodox Jews traditionally named themselves after the town they lived in, and that included Lubavitch. The Lubavitchs named themselves after a town in Russia.

There was a tremendous localism and still is in part because of rules that you walk to (inaudible) and so on. There's a strong, geographically-bounded characteristic of most Ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities. Yet, they're now having missions all over. The most-prominent case of the two people from East New York who were murdered in Mumbai. What are they doing in Mumbai was my first reaction. That's what got me to realize that what I've always thought of as a very geographically tied,

specific religion was now becoming global. That in itself changed.

Also, all kinds of paradoxes emerge. Obviously there's a preference for having many children, but there's also a conversion phenomenon. People are converting to Ultra-Orthodox. Some of the most interesting scholars that I know have shown that people, women and men attracted to 1960s, the counterculture were actually ripe. Candidates were more like religious seekers, ripe candidates; it's a very complex, enormously complex movement.

I wouldn't overemphasize its growth. Reform Judaism is also growing, and the numbers still remain relatively small. Of course, the big change in Israel is someone that no one really predicted because Ben-Gurion gave the special exemptions on the military and so on through the Ultra-Orthodox thinking as we said earlier that they were going to die out. Why not give them privileges? Boy was that wrong.

MR. KURTZER: Let me just say there's the growth of the Ultra-Orthodox more broadly and then specifically Lubavitch as a subset of that.

Whenever you have a phenomenon like this, the question I ask is it hardware or software? Meaning is it the ideology of a particular version of Judaism or is it the way in which they're going out spreading their message? The Ultra-Orthodox community is convinced it's hardware, that they have a certain countercultural way of life that enables them to be more stable, that's attractive in a climate in which Jewishness is actually being rattled by all of these points, by the diminishment of boundaries, so they've been able to rearticulate their boundaries. But I think a lot of it is software, and I think that's certainly the case with Lubavitch.

The reason why they are successful on college campuses is because their outreach strategies are more welcoming, more warm, than those of Hellals, and there's a lot of reasons why. It has to do with they're mission-driven, they have a

message, they welcome everybody in, there's no cost or barrier to entry, and as opposed to Hellals, which almost by definition are cold spaces that are made up by those who are actually there.

I would say the curriculum to think about this question is to think about to what extent is this the rise of an ideological movement that seems countercultural to the rest of Jewishness in America and how much of it is really a good operating system that they've put into place in order to sustain themselves and grow.

MR. GALSTON: I have tried hard not to inject myself into this conversation, but as the father of a son who embraced Ultra-Orthodoxy and lives it and who studied on Har Nof, a hop, skip, and a jump from the very sad events of today, I think there's more hardware to it than your answer might suggest. The idea of an immersion in a tradition that provides a structured arena for reflection and decision can be extremely attractive, but this would be a longer conversation. You've been very patient.

SPEAKER 2: Quick comment and a question. I was in another meeting of something totally different this morning, and I was in probably the upper 10 percent of age. Here I feel like I'm basically the median, which I think has something to do with the nature of the topic that is being discussed. I don't mean this facetiously for age, but I think that the crowd that is talking on the topic is important.

I come from South America, and I think that one point that has not been explored is the following: There's some view of the world that the Diaspora has on Israel, but the other way around is particularly important. My country has the biggest Diaspora of Palestinians: 400,000 versus 20,000 Jews. Whatever happens in Israel is not irrelevant to whatever happens to the country, and I thought that it would be an interesting point to bring up if it hasn't been discussed.

MR. WOLFE: I'd love to know more. Can you say something more?

Would you be willing? Briefly of course.

SPEAKER 2: Country is Chile. For whatever reasons, there was a huge immigration during the Turkish Ottoman Empire, so these are mainly Christian Arabs who -- about 20 years ago there was a country club that was called Syria. Most were called Turks like the Jews, but as of about, I'd say, maybe 30 years ago, suddenly the Palestinian topic came up which before didn't exist. People would say they came from Jerusalem, but they would never say they were Palestinians. Suddenly, it's becoming a topic.

My point is that the relation between what happens in one place, Diaspora versus Israel, is much more entwined than just the spiritual aspect, which is very important of course, but this very practical point.

MR. GALSTON: Thank you. Let me take this one briefly because I absolutely agree with you. Because we're talking about a phenomenon, and I think this is one of the many areas where Alan Wolfe and Yehuda Kurtzer agree, of one people but multiple citizenships that we who are in the Diaspora have to understand that we do or refrain from doing will have a range of consequences for the state of Israel and for Jews in the state of Israel. Conversely, what the state of Israel does can have a profound impact on the standing and even the daily lives of Jews in the Diaspora.

One of the things that's so striking is the absence of formal and regular mechanisms to have a searching conversation about that mutual impact of these two different Jewish communities on each other. I don't think it's a breach of manners to ask senior officials in the government of Israel whether they have thought about the impact of particular actions that they're taking for domestic reasons on the lives of Jews of the Diaspora. I'm not saying that that would be a comfortable conversation, but I think

increasingly it's a necessary one. Good question and thank you for asking.

We have time for two more questions, and I'm going to go to Mr. Mitchell in the front row, but keep it brief, please, otherwise I won't be able to get in the last question.

MR. MITCHELL: Garrett Mitchell and I write The Mitchell Report. I want to come back to the question that Professor Birnbaum started with but try a different take.

Those who were paying attention would suggest that the concept of the two-state solution is as dead as it's ever been, and the likelihood that we're going to get there isn't much better, which if it's true means that in some period of time Israel will be neither a Jewish state nor a democratic state. My question is how do the particularism and universalism components of what it means to be a Jewish human being, how does that work with Israel no longer being either Jewish or democratic?

MR. KURTZER: Most of the time that I'm asked about the two-state solution, I reply by saying wrong Kurtzer. (Laughter) In this case, I don't think you're actually asking about the prospect of the two-state solution but about the possibility of a scenario in which, look, I'm still holding out hope that even in the absence of a two-state solution there is an awareness by especially Israel as a political actor. I'm not sure what to make of Abbas as a political actor today and whether he has any ability to move forward this agenda.

I still hold out hope that that doomsday scenario of a permanent, legally-entrenched occupation of the West Bank which creates a scenario of permanent, non-citizens under Israeli rule, the prospect of that is so concerning to Israel standing in the international community that it won't quite get there even as radical, right-wing elements in Israeli society are pushing to make that the case.

I don't know what happens. When the narrative that currently exists

about Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, as I understand it, operates on the premise that Israel is as Jewish as democratic principles allow and not the reverse. If that happens, if the reverse is true that Israel is only as democratic as its Jewish character will allow, it's an undue burden on those of us who believe that it's possible to live as a Jewish and democratic state.

I am basically still optimistic, not about the currently political reality, but that the avoidance of that scenario is still an Israeli political and diplomatic imperative, and that they will create the conditions that make it possible to avoid that whether it's through a different type of unilateral disengagement from portions of the West Bank that enable them to preserve a narrative of security or otherwise. But I'm not convinced that the Israeli political establishment will allow that to happen precisely because of the concerns that you raise up.

MR. GALSTON: Not the wrong Kurtzer after all. Yes, sir. You get the last question.

MR. SHARIQ: This is Dr. Nisar Shariq with (inaudible), and I really enjoy the distinction that I am the last man to ask a question.

My question is that, and (inaudible) also pointed out, the Greek community, the Cuban community, the Jewish community in America, they are so well-organized, and the Jewish community is very entrenched, and there are so many organizations. I just wanted to know when there are irritants between the state of Israel and United States commerce, does this community, these organizations, play a role to remove those irritants, and to which extent they do play a role? Does the State Department that moves into (inaudible) to help them to remove the irritants? Are the state of Brazil coming to us to remove the irritants? Thank you.

MR. WOLFE: I'm not sure I fully understood about the State

Department. US government in what context?

MR. SHARIQ: (inaudible) than the United States (inaudible) in the relationship, does this country with so much influence play a role in banishing these (inaudible) or removing those irritants? That's the question.

MR. WOLFE: Just on a historical note, the State Department itself was very filled to the brim with anti-Semites during the Hitler period and anything but actively behind the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. The Truman Administration has now been some very interesting historical works about it, but according to John Judas here in Washington in his new book, Truman's instincts and the State Department's instincts were against recognition of the state of Israel at the time.

I think the pressure really comes from the American people much more than from the elite, and it's always been the case with respect to Israel. The explanation for why this country tends to be so pro-Israel is not just the influence of this lobby but that it's a very, very, very popular cause in this country, Americans, Jewish and non-Jewish. You may even find more critics among the Jews these days than among the non-Jews. It's just an enormously popular cause. It's seen as a beseeched democracy. However much anti-Semitism there may have been in the United States, there still remains a tremendous -- I don't know if prejudice is the right word -- fear of the Arab communities. If it's a conflict between Muslims and Jews, most Christians would take the Jews over the Muslims and so on down the line.

MR. KURTZER: The other thing I would add to that is, if I'm not mistaken, I believe that the conference of presidents of major Jewish organizations, which is the lynchpin in that whole narrative, was created by Eisenhower out of a need to talk to one person and not a lot of people. (Applause) I'm not even making that up. The reason why it's important is because it tells the story of an American Jewish community

that was organized hierarchically in the forties and fifties, but is simply not organized with the same type of hierarchy today.

To the extent that there isn't an attempt by Jews and by Americans and Americans who are Jews to ease the tensions or irritants, as you said, between the Israeli government and the American government is much less through a pyramid-organized hierarchical structure and more just because of the changing nature of American Jewish power.

MR. GALSTON: Please join me in thanking this wonderful panel.

(Applause)

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