



THE DISTURBING JEWISH DEMOGRAPHY – WHERE ARE THE 300.000 AMERICAN JEWS?

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The summary of the demographic census and survey of the American Judaism was recently officially published by the central authority of the US Jewish communities.

The US Jewish communities are the sole Jewish conglomerate that each decade carries out a demographic survey and publishes its results.

The referenced survey is concentrated on the demographic situation of the mentioned community up to the year 2001. The importance of such survey and its conclusions has, per se, a twofold value: it gives us a picture of the situation and the demographic tendencies of the Jewish-American community, and simultaneously renders a base for studying the demographic tendencies of the Latin American communities. Almost all the American processes, especially within the social and cultural aspects in relation to the Judaism, also appear, with only slight changes, within the Latin-American Jewish communities.

The first fact delivered by the census is of vital importance and caused a great stir from which we shall extract some important conclusions: DURING THIS LAST DECADE THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN JEWS DESCENDED FROM 5.500.000 TO 5.200.000. ADDITIONALLY THE SURVEY MENTIONS SOMETHING MUCH MORE FRIGHTENING: FROM THESE 5.200.000, ONLY 4.300.000 CALL THEMSELVES JEWS OR THEY CLEARLY MENTION THAT THEY FEEL AS SUCH OR IN BEING JEWS THEY PERCEIVE SOMETHING SPECIAL, DIFFERENT, SOCIALLY OR CULTURALLY VALUED, AT LEAST BY THEMSELVES.

In other terms and in a more concise way we may see that 900.000 American Jews do not feel Jewish, they do not bother being or not Jewish, they do not see in their Judaism no significant ethnical specificity whatsoever, they do not define themselves particularly as Jews, they do not have any special relation towards the Jewish State they even do not feel as being a spiritual part of Judaism. Summarizing, they are Jews biologically and by the Halakha, but, in reality **THEY ARE NOT JEWS**.



Professor Sergio Della Pergola, the number one demographer of the Internationally renown Israeli Academy, in his specialty which is the “Jewish Demography in the world and in Israel”, mentions in his surveys and his conclusions over such subject that they exist three joining elements that establish the number and the quality of Jews at the “diasporic” communities, and they are:

a) The natural reproduction rate of the Jewish communities. The numbers show very clearly that the Jewish communities of the western world have a negative natural reproduction rate. There are more Jews dying than Jewish babies being born. The Jewish western typical family has only one child per family. This carries to a “natural” reduction of the number of Jews all over the world. The natural reproduction at the Jewish communities is meaningfully lower than the average rate of the whole population of the country in which such community lives.

b) The “natural assimilation” within the surrounding environment. In an environment of liberal democracies, where the anti-Semitism has little importance or its proportions are negligible, in a world-wide ambience where the ethnicity has been diluted within a fluid social, political and economical wholeness, in such a society

THE NATURAL INTEGRATION AND THE ASSIMILATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT INVOLVES THE JEW WITH ITS MOST SEDUCTIVE ATTRACTION, AND ESPECIALY THE YOUNGEST GENERATION. This drives the Jewish masses to loose their uniqueness and characteristics, integrating them gently to the hospitable, protective and promising environment. Such environment which opens his doors to the broad society, the economy and commerce, the culture and the politics of the country. To this natural process of assimilation we shall add another important cause like the mixed marriages, which, within the western culture, and especially in the US reaches an overwhelming 50%.

c) The intensity, prestige, the capability and the influence of the Jewish “establishment” within each community. It means the sequence and the influence of the Jewish schools, the synagogues, the youth movements and cultural and social centers. The action and the influence of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency through their envoys and their administrative and educational establishment it means the presence of Israel in the life of each Jewish community. The summary of these influences and action of the mentioned frames will decide the



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quality and intensity of the Jewish life and its possibilities of facing the reality of the natural assimilation and to increase the Jewish values and their identification with Israel and the Aliah.

Going back to Della Pergola, the joining of these three effects will set both, the Jewish level, quantity and quality, as well as the Judaism that will be able to survive during the next decade.