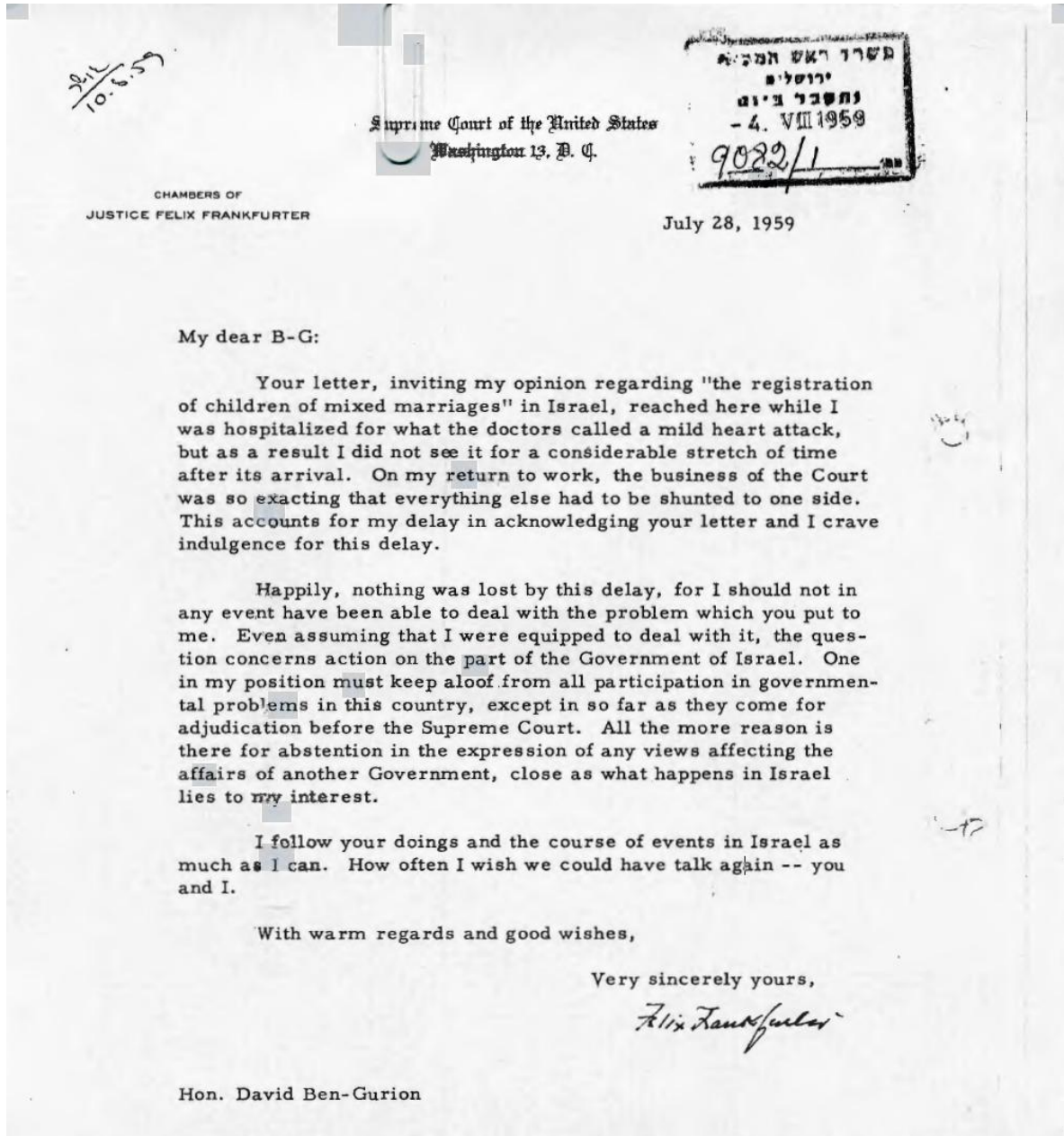


Jews do count (but who decides?)
Ben-Gurion asks 'Who is a Jew?'
Robin Moss, Limmud Festival 2025



"My dear B-G" – Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter's non-committal reply

"I also received the ... letter you send to 'Jewish intellectuals', although I have no relation to some of those intellectuals and I do not trust their intellect."

(Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hakohen Maimon's reply, 26 Kislev 5719)

"The main thing is, do not tamper with the word 'Jew'."

(Tzevi Wolfson's reply, 7 January 1959)



Ben-Gurion's letter inviting replies, 27 October 1958

- Ben-Gurion wrote to 47 people and received 46 replies
 - Rabbi Israel Brodie (Chief Rabbi of United Hebrew Congregations) was ill and his Beit Din (five dayanim) replied on his behalf
 - Soloveitchik and Heller replied jointly
- 20 of the replies are from Israel and 26 are from Diaspora:
 - 20 from Israel – 13 from Jerusalem, 3 from Haifa, 2 from Tel Aviv, 1 from Nahalal and 1 from Bnei Brak
 - 14 from USA – 9 from New York, 2 from Boston, 1 from New York/Boston (the joint letter from Soloveitchik and Heller), 1 from Pittsburgh and 1 from Washington DC
 - 3 from the UK (2 from London, 1 from Oxford)
 - 3 from France (2 from Paris, 1 from Strasbourg)
 - 3 from Italy (2 from Rome, 1 from Livorno)
 - 1 from Belgium (Brussels)
 - 1 from the Netherlands (Amsterdam)
 - 1 from Switzerland (Montreux)
- Of the 51 respondents (who authored 46 actual replies):
 - All 51 are men
 - 5 are Sephardi/Mizrachi, 3 are Italian and the rest are Ashkenazi
- Of the 46 replies:
 - 2 were written in French (Baruk, Perelman)
 - 5 were written in English (Berlin, Leon (Aryeh) Simon, Freehof, Frankfurter and Rifkind)
 - The rest (as well as Ben-Gurion's letter) were written in Hebrew
- Three of the replies stand out for being anomalous:
 - Felix Frankfurter and Simon Rifkind did not feel qualified to answer
 - Joseph Schechter, a physician from Haifa, received the letter by mistake (it was meant to be sent to the rabbi, philosopher and educationalist Joseph Schachter, also living in Haifa). Schechter replied anyway!

The Question – Ben-Gurion’s Letter (27 October 1958)

I am writing in the wake of the decision taken by the Government of Israel on 15 July 1958 ... to “consult with Jewish sages in Israel and abroad” and formulate registration guidelines “that accord with the tradition accepted by all circles of Judaism, the Orthodox and liberals of all trends, and with the special circumstances of Israel as a sovereign Jewish nation ensuring freedom of conscience and religion and as the centre for the ingathering of the exiles.”

...

The question has arisen of how to register the “religion” and “nationhood” of the children of mixed marriages when the father is Jewish and the mother is not Jewish and has not converted, but both agree to have the child registered as a Jew. Some contend that as it is a civil registry that does not serve for religious purposes (religious authorities are not required, and as a rule are reluctant, to accept it or rely on it alone), there is no cause to adopt religious criteria for the registry. Others maintain that since “religion” and “nationhood” cannot be separated, and since religious affiliation is by its very nature a religious issue, religious criteria should indeed be used for registering both nationhood and religion.

...

In order to ensure a thorough understanding of the problem, four considerations must be noted:

- 1. In the State of Israel, the principle of freedom of conscience and religion is ensured ... All forms of religious or anti-religious coercion are banned...*
- 2. Israel today serves as the centre of the ingathering of the exiles ... Efforts must be made to increase shared and unifying properties and eliminate as far as possible those that separate and divide*
- 3. The Jewish community in Israel is unlike the Jewish community in the Diaspora. Here ... there is no fear that the Jews will become assimilated amongst the non-Jews ... On the contrary, here there exists the possibility and trend for a certain assimilation of non-Jews into the Jewish people...*
- 4. On the other hand, the Israeli nation does not see itself as separate from Diaspora Jewry; on the contrary, no Jewish community in the world exhibits such a profound feeling of unity and identity with Jews the world over...*

In view of the above, I would be most grateful for your opinion as to how we should act in the matter of registering the children of mixed marriages both of whose parents, the Jewish father and the non-Jewish mother, wish them to be registered as Jews.

Ben-Rafael (2002)'s Framework – Three Syndromes

Caste syndrome – identity rooted in religious or ritual status; emphasises membership in a community defined by birth, observance, and endogamy, with Judaism as a closed, mostly-hereditary group

Ethno-cultural syndrome – identity based on shared language, culture, history, and traditions rather than religion; focuses on Jewish cultural continuity and heritage

National syndrome – identity linked to nationhood or statehood; emphasises political, territorial, or civic belonging, often associated with Zionism and the Jewish people as a nation

Syndromes	Commitment to the collective	Singularity of the collective	Place of the collective
Caste	Traditional way of life; desire to “bring the nation back in line”	Faith as central element of Judaism	Belief in Messianic return to Zion; halakhic demands on Israel
Ethno-cultural	“peoplehood” as central element of identity	Varied approaches to halakha; belief in need to adapt to modern secular world	Metaphoric interpretation; solidarity with the Jews in Israel
National	Distinction between Israeli nation and Jewish people	System of collective traditional and secular symbols	Central element of identity; extols value of Israeli Judaism

Jewish Identities: Fifty Intellectuals Answer Ben-Gurion
(Eliezer Ben-Rafael, 2002) p 104

By Ben-Rafael's analysis:

- 17 of the replies are from the Caste syndrome
- 12 are from the Ethno-cultural syndrome
- 15 from the National syndrome
- (Frankfurter and Rifkind replies deny they are qualified to answer the question so are not from any syndrome)

The Caste Syndrome

Halakha on this matter has never been in doubt. Anyone born to a non-Jewish mother, whether a child or an adult, is a non-Jew and cannot be considered or registered as a Jew by religion or nationality without being converted according to religious law by a recognised and authorised rabbinical court. In the State of Israel, this is, of course, only a court authorised by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. No political or civil authority is entitled to distort this fact and register as a Jew a person who was born to a non-Jewish mother and did not convert according to halakha.
(London Beit Din's reply, 14 Tevet 5719)

But this is Jewish law and cannot be ignored. Law is law.
(Zecharya Hacohen's reply, 5 Shevat 5719)

In my opinion, the indivisible identity between nationality and religion is one of the essential aspects of Judaism. In light of Jewish tradition, religion is not a supplement to nationality, but its very essence and root. The ancient Israelite tribes merged into a nation solely under the influence of religious experiences, and the history of the nation and the religion are identical. ... In the soul of the Jewish nation, religion and nationality have never clashed; on the contrary, the more a Jew strives to understand his Torah and God, the more he understands his nationality. The whole of the national effort of the Jewish people stems from unity between religious faith and the desire to ensure the survival of the nation. Anyone who jeopardises this unity is presumably jeopardising the very heart of the nation. It is clear, therefore, that there can be no recognition of Jewish nationality as separate from religion, and the answer to the question presented above is, absolutely, that the mere statements of the parents, no matter how sincerely they are made, do not have the power to make a child Jewish.
(Alexander Altmann's reply, 15 December 1958)

The declaration of the parents or of the [person themselves] are of no consequence. These laws constitute the foundations of the Torah and commandments, and require no explanation or interpretation. ... We are quite puzzled as to why the Government of the State of Israel should now wish to chop down what has been planted and bring down the ancient citadel of Judaism that has been sanctified by the blood and agony of previous generations. Only through them has our uniqueness as a holy people bound by ties of fervent sacred love to the Holy Land been preserved. Will the State of Israel be constructed upon the destruction of all that is holy to Israel?
(Joseph Dov Soloveitchik's and Chaim Heller's reply, 25 Shevat 5719)

The Ethno-Cultural Syndrome

[We are in a] state of confusion. On the one hand, the Government has no de jure authority to define who is a Jew, yet on the other hand the rabbinate has no de facto authority in the matter. Rabbinical rulings are not accepted by non-religious Jews, and if they are it is only because of coercion and not wholeheartedly or out of conviction.

(André Neher's reply, 22 January 1959)

In the matter of the registration of the children of mixed marriages whose parents—both the father and the mother—express the desire for them to be registered as Jews, I believe it is beneficial and desirable not to reject them and push them away, but to accept them into the Jewish people. Given that the registration has no relation to religion and does not serve religious purposes ... there is no doubt in my mind that it would be unjustified to deprive him of the right and honour of belonging to the Jewish people. Such a person is not a member of any other religion or nation; he is a citizen of Israel together with his parents; he attends or will attend Jewish schools, will speak Hebrew, and his entire upbringing and education will come from Israeli sources and its thousands-of-years-old history, from the time of Abraham to the present.

(Dante Lattes' reply, 25 January 1959)

Every definition distorts. "Jew" is both a religious and a national concept. As a religious concept, it has an immutable definition. As a national term, it is vague. In such a situation, it is advisable to say: better not to define than to define and thereby uproot what has been planted. If for reasons of national security there is a need for legal residents of Israel to identify themselves by means of some document, those who cannot call themselves "Jews" might be registered as "Hebrews." As for the Law of Return, "do not ask questions."

(Abraham Joshua Heschel's reply, 18 December 1958)

In view of [the history leading up to the foundation of the State of Israel], the Government took it upon itself to enact the Law of Return, which bestows on Jews abroad the special privilege of immigrating to Israel ... Accordingly, the Government must determine who is a Jew before their arrival in Israel in light of the authority it has been granted by the Jewish Agency, and not in light of religious tradition, as it is the function of the Government to establish a modern state and not a Jewish state, an Israeli state and not a Jewish state. I therefore conclude that if the Government of Israel considers that recognising the child of a non-Jewish mother as a Jew, should the parents wish to register him as a Jew, will help to increase and enhance the decisive majority of Jews in Israel, it is then permitted to do so."

(Mordechai Kaplan's reply, 2 December 1958)

The National Syndrome

The State of Israel arose out of the ashes of the cremation of Diaspora Jewry. For generations, the Jewish people bore terrible torments for its loyalty to Judaism. By virtue of that loyalty, the link with the land of the Patriarchs, the Holy Land, was maintained, and the remnant of our people was finally able to achieve independence. This history, fraught with suffering and abounding in heroism, obliges anyone wishing to join, or to have his children join, our nation, to accept, at least symbolically, the "yoke of Judaism" in a traditional ceremony. This traditional ritual is not sacred in the religious sense alone, but has also become a national symbol accepted by all generations of Jews who sacrificed themselves for their faith. Its performance links the Jews in Israel and world Jewry; its abolishment would break this fateful link, at least with a large part of world Jewry.

(Shin Shalom's reply, 30 November 1958)

Your letter stresses that "efforts must be made to increase shared and unifying properties and eliminate as far as possible those that separate and divide" the different communities arriving in Israel, and "to enhance [Israeli youth's] moral commitment to world Jewry." Without a doubt, this need obligates us to concede to the opinion of halakha on this issue, as it has been accepted for generations by the majority of the nation in all communities and countries. Contemporary Diaspora Jewry will undoubtedly lay greater stress on the religious element of the Jewish identity of its members.

(Moshe Maisels' reply, 9 December 1958)

In those circumstances it is probable that insistence by the Government on disregarding the halakha in this matter of the registration of children of non-Jewish mothers would precipitate a conflict between the "religious" and the "secular" conceptions of Judaism. Such a conflict is no doubt always threatening to break out; but from every point of view it seems to be the path of wisdom to hold it in check, if possible, until, with the passage of time, and the psychological adjustment of the Jewish people to the new situation created by the emergence of the State of Israel, an atmosphere less unfavourable to a peaceful solution is created.

(Leon (Arye) Simon's reply, 20 January 1959)

Some Other Interesting Responses/Reflections

Allow me to add something about which I was not asked. At the moment, state and religion are like two neighbours who do not regard each other amicably. As a person on whom the safety and welfare of the state rest, you would do well to refrain from concerning yourself with matters of religion, whether for good or ill, in order to leave yourself free for matters of state.

(S Y Agnon's reply, 6th day of Hanukkah 5719)

... we must distinguish between the concepts of "Jews by halakha" and "Jews by declaration who are not Jews by halakha." There are also Jews by halakha who are not Jews by declaration.

(Shmuel Bergmann's reply, 14 December 1958)

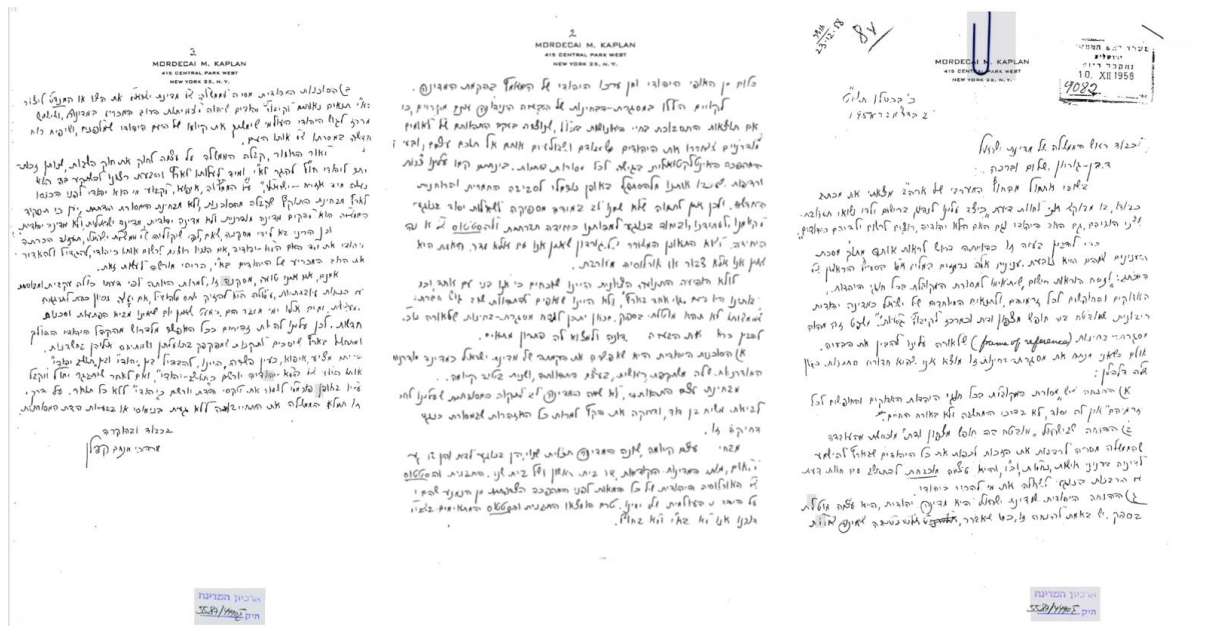
If we are to rule out religious coercion even of the mildest kind—by the pressure of custom and public opinion—as being incompatible with the minimum of requirements of individual liberty (and I cannot see how Israel can morally fail to do so—it was not denial of religious liberties that created Zionism) then there must exist a category of persons who will be entitled to register themselves as Jews by nationality, but not by religion. What criterion can be used in determining who these persons are? I must admit that the commonsense criterion, according to which anyone is a Jew who is taken to be a Jew, particularly by his Gentile neighbours in the countries of the Dispersion, seems to be near the mark but somewhat fluid and vague.

(Isaiah Berlin's reply, 23 January 1959)

I was quite surprised to receive your letter of 27 October. While I have acquired a certain amount of general knowledge, I have little Jewish learning. I shall therefore not presume to express my opinion on the question itself, but I can, perhaps, make a small contribution in respect to a matter to which I have devoted many years of my life. I am referring here to the issue of the proper approach to problem-solving. ... There will undoubtedly be those who claim that ancient rulings do not suit the spirit of our times. Again, there is no call for a probing investigation to prove that our times are among the darkest of ages and most likely the darkest in all history—a period in which the sins of humanity brought it to the brink of annihilation, much like the generation of the flood and the people of Sodom. Can anyone seriously argue that the Torah itself, which bears the imprint of divinity, should be adapted to the spirit of this time?

(Joseph Schecter's (the respondent who received the original letter in error) reply, December 1958)

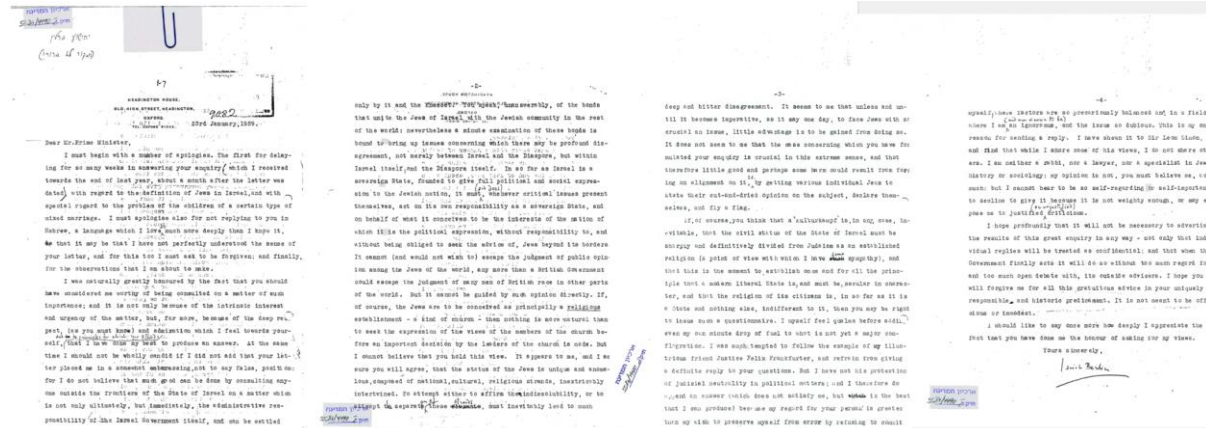
Some of the Original Letters from the Ben-Gurion Archive



Mordechai Kaplan's reply, 2 December 1958



Menachem Mendel Schneerson (the Lubavitcher Rebbe)'s reply, 9 Adar 5719



The preface to Isaiah Berlin's reply, 23 January 1959

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
1	Shmuel Yosef Agnon	Jerusalem	Nobel Prize–winning Hebrew writer rooted in traditional sources	National	Should not be registered as Jews	Halakhic definition is correct. It is best that the state stays out of matters of religion
2	Alexander Altmann	Boston	Scholar of Jewish thought and mysticism	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews, but potentially the Population Register could ask about ethnicity rather than religion/nationality in the future	Nationality and religion are indivisible in Judaism. Leaves open door for a more simple, more "modern" implementation of conversation
3	Henry Baruk	Paris	Psychiatrist and Jewish communal intellectual	Ethno-cultural	Open to registering them as Jews but only after a structured consultation process	Modifications to Judaism are inevitable and in the modern world, the matrilineal principle is no longer justifiable (particularly post-Shoah)
4	Shmuel Hugo Bergmann	Jerusalem	Philosopher, founder of the Histadrut and helped found the Hebrew University	Ethno-cultural	Should be registered as Jews	There are now two overlapping categories of Jews - self-declared Jews and Jews according to the halakha

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
5	Isaiah Berlin	Oxford	Liberal philosopher and historian of ideas	Ethno-cultural	Should be registered as Jews, though perhaps (in the interim) as "of Jewish origin: father a Jew"	Legal/halakhic definition of a Jew is too narrow for the actual reality of 20th Century Jewish life, especially in the Jewish public realm of Israel
6	Yehuda Bourla	Haifa	Sephardi Hebrew novelist	National	Should not be registered as Jews unless they have been circumcised (not clear his view on girls)	The rite of circumcision symbolises Jewish identity in an important sense. Stricter parts of the halakha are outdated and rabbis should move with the times
7	Haim Hermann Cohn	Jerusalem	Supreme Court justice and jurist, former Attorney General	Ethno-cultural	Should be registered as Jews	Parents have the exclusive right to determine their child's identity
8	Louis E H Finkelstein	New York	Conservative rabbi, Chancellor of Jewish Theological Seminary	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews. But should be treasured and respected as "righteous/wise gentiles"	Traditional view of Jewish status was formulated over centuries and we should not abandon it now

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
9	Felix Frankfurter	Washington DC	US Supreme Court Justice	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Does not feel qualified to give an answer</i>	<i>Does not feel qualified to give an answer</i>
10	Solomon B Freehof	Pittsburgh	Reform rabbi, liturgist and responsa writer	Ethno-cultural	Register them as "ger toshav" ("half-converts")	Judaism has within it considerable flexibility and leniency about status. Israel can separate the political/civil status of being Jewish from the religious question of who is a Jew
11	Shlomo Goren	Tel Aviv	Religious-Zionist rabbi and head of the Military Rabbinate of the IDF	National	Should not be registered as Jews but open to creating a temporary category of "professing Judaism"	Halakha is clear but the sociological reality means that administrative creativity may be necessary
12	London Beit Din (Grossnass, Lew, Rappoport, Steinberg and Swift) (joint)	London	London Beit Din - replied in absence (due to medical leave) of Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews and threatens Jewish unity if they are	Halakha is binding and eternal. In Israel, this is determined by the Chief Rabbinate

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
13	Zecharya Hacoen	Nahalal	Religious-Zionist educator	National	Should not be registered as Jews	Jewish law cannot be ignored - law is law
14	Shalom Yitzhak Halevi	Tel Aviv	Orthodox rabbi (Yemenite)	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews. Only the Chief Rabbinate has jurisdiction	Jewish faith existed prior to the Jewish people and Ezra only admitted non-Jewish wives who were willing to convert
15	Hayim Hazaz	Jerusalem	Hebrew writer	Ethno-cultural	Should be registered as Jews	Although Jewish tradition has kept the flame alive, now there is a State of Israel, we have to move to a new reality
16	Yitzhak Isaac Halevi Herzog	Jerusalem	Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel	National	Should not be registered as Jews	Only by virtue of Torah have the Jews survived - undermining it threatens the foundations of Judaism itself
17	Abraham Joshua Heschel	New York	Theologian; Conservative thinker	Ethno-cultural	Should not be registered as Jews but potentially as a new category of "Hebrew"	The State of Israel requires a clarification of the relationship between religion and nationhood. The key thing is to bolster the cultural foundations shared by all Jews

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
18	Joseph Shlomo Kahaneman	Bnei Brak	Ponovezh rosh yeshiva	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	Central task of Jewish people is redemption, so we must remain faithful to the halakha
19	Yossef Kappah	Jerusalem	Yemenite rabbi and scholar	National	Should not be registered as Jews	Judaism is not a race or tribe - it is a religious faith and national identity with centuries-old admission criteria
20	Jacob Kaplan	Paris	Chief Rabbi of France	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews. Israel should be actively discouraging mixed marriages	A secular government does not have the authority to determine "Who is a Jew". Only the halakha has that right
21	Mordecai Menahem Kaplan	New York	Founder of Reconstructionism	Ethno-cultural	Should be registered as a new category such as "resident Jew"	There is no one "Jewish tradition" and Israel is a secular state. Hence it should expand the definition of Jewish identity, but change will be fraught so a compromise should be implemented

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
22	Yekhezkel Kaufmann	Jerusalem	Professor of Bible Studies at the Hebrew University	National	Should not be registered as Jews	The State of Israel may have altered the conditions of the Jewish people but it has and cannot change the definition of a Jew
23	Aaron Kotler	New York	Founder of Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	No distinction between Jewish religion and nation
24	Dante Lattes	Rome	Secular Italian Jewish intellectual	Ethno-cultural	Should be registered as Jews	The term "Jew" in Israel is in effect a sociological category so does not need to cleave to religious definitions
25	Saul Lieberman	New York	Talmudist and Rector at Jewish Theological Seminary	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	We should be especially welcoming to potential, sincere converts - but they still need to convert to become Jewish
26	Yehuda Leib Hakohen Maimon	Jerusalem	Religious-Zionist leader; former government minister	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	It is disrespectful that this question is even being asked to non-orthodox rabbis

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
27	Moshe Maisels	New York	Jewish intellectual and editor-in-chief of the Hebrew paper HaDoar	National	Should not be registered as Jews	The state cannot have a halakhic definition of Jews for some purposes (eg marriage) and another for other purposes (eg registration of mixed marriage offspring)
28	André Neher	Strasbourg	Professor of Jewish Studies	Ethno-cultural	Should not be registered as Jews at the moment	It's true that religiously, the halakha defines who is a Jew. But we are in a new sociological/national reality. A worldwide body should be established to really understand modern Jewish identity
29	Salomon Rodrigues Pereira	Amsterdam	Chief Sephardi Rabbi of Amsterdam and Holland	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	Non-Israeli Jews (and certainly non-orthodox Jews) should not even be asked – they do not have standing to answer the question

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
30	Chaim Perelman	Brussels	Philosopher of law	Ethno-cultural	Should be registered as Jews	There must be a distinction between nation and religion, and a commission/court of public Jewish figures should be set up to devise a new religion/state compact for Israel
31	Simon H. Rifkind	New York	Jewish jurist and communal leader	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Does not feel qualified to give an answer</i>	<i>Does not feel qualified to give an answer</i>
32	Yechezkiel Sarne	Jerusalem	Orthodox rabbi, head of Hebron Yeshiva (which he relocated to Jerusalem)	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	The halakha is clear and immutable
33	Joseph Schecter	Haifa	Physician - <i>received the letter by mistake - was meant to go to Joseph Schachter, a rabbi, philosopher and educationalist</i>	National	Should not be registered as Jews	Modernisation has brought Jews to the brink of destruction and we are better off being loyal to tradition
34	Menachem Mendel Schneerson	New York	Lubavitcher Rebbe	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	Attempts to invent a new definition of a Jew are to be condemned. Halakha stands alone and forever

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
35	Shin (Shalom J) Shalom	Haifa	Hebrew writer	National	Should not be registered as Jews	The Jewish history of suffering due to loyalty to traditional Judaism means that it retains a veto on religious matters in the present
36	Moshe Silberg	Jerusalem	Supreme Court justice	National	Should not be registered as Jews	There is a fundamental tension between the secular state and religious control over status in Israel
37	Akiva Ernst Simon	Jerusalem	Professor of Philosophy and History of Education at the Hebrew University	National	Should not be registered as Jews	Even non-observant Jews keep many mitzvot, especially circumcision, so any entrant into Judaism should have to undergo some kind of religious ritual/ceremony
38	Leon (Arye) Simon	London	Literary scholar	National	Register them with a temporary status of "father is a Jew"	Unilateral decisions by the government will only create disunity, and tacitly most Israelis accept the halakhic definition

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
39	Joseph Dov Soloveitchik and Chaim Heller (joint)	Boston / New York	Orthodox halakhic authorities	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	Any attempt by the State of Israel to deviate from the halakha threaten to destroy the nation that Israel is meant to save
40	Alfredo Shabtai Toaff	Livorno	Italian Orthodox rabbi	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	If Israel does adopt a non-halakhic definition, Jews in the Diaspora will follow and assimilation is inevitable
41	Elio Raffaele Toaff	Rome	Chief Rabbi of Rome	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	Halakhic definition is the only way to ensure unity
42	Ephraim E Urbach	Jerusalem	Professor of Talmud at the Hebrew University	National	Should not be registered as Jews	Creating two categories of Jews will cause chaos. Legitimising mixed marriages risks contagion into the Diaspora

	Respondent(s)	Location	Biography	"Syndrome" (as per Ben-Rafael (2002))	Position on registration of children of mixed marriages	Overall view
43	Yekhiel Weinberg	Montreux (Switzerland)	Orthodox posek (Seridei Esh)	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	Without halakhic conversion, a non-Jew cannot become a Jew - to think otherwise ignores the history and theology of Judaism
44	Tsevi (Harry A) Wolfson	Boston	Historian of philosophy	Ethno-cultural	<i>Does not really answer the question directly</i>	The term "Jew" should remain a religious category, but a new term, "Hebrew", could suffice for those who wish to be Jewish in a secular-national sense
45	Aaron Zeitlin	New York	Yiddish poet and thinker	National	Should not be registered as Jews	The secular government has no jurisdiction over the question of who is a Jew
46	Shlomo Yosef Zevin	Jerusalem	Rabbinic scholar, editor-in-chief of the <i>Encyclopedia Talmudit</i> , and leading Religious-Zionist intellectual	Caste	Should not be registered as Jews	No government can make decisions concerning "Who is a Jew" - this is a purely religious question