The case of this chapter is the question: can the Jewish dispersion in the modern time be a unique prototype model of a transnational diaspora? In principle, the two terms—uniqueness and prototype—contradict each other. But in this case they are dealt with on two different though connected levels: one historical and the other political, which accomplished each other in changing times. The historical level is unique and the political one may serve as a universal prototype by organizational activities in various social, political, and educational aspects. The uniqueness of the Jewish Diaspora since the Middle Ages derives from its history: the world-wide dispersion of the Jewish people; the absence of a home state on one hand, and the mythical religious connection to the Holy Land and Jerusalem on the other; the multicultural way of life in different countries and parts of the world, even in religious ritual; the movement of the centers of economic and cultural life in the diaspora—from Babylon to Spain, to Eastern Europe and at last to the USA; the different political status in the countries they lived in, especially since the American and French revolutions; and beyond or above this, the spiritual and psychological collective myth of Exile and Redemption, supported by the mythos and ethos of Jewish solidarity.

Following Sheffer and Roth-Toledano’s (2006) prototype, the Jewish diaspora in the last century might prove itself by its worldwide transnational activities. In this perspective, the Jewish diaspora represents a sheer model of transnational diasporas—a general model of the world diasporas. It is a transstate political entity. It was created by voluntary or forced migration. Its members reside permanently in the host-country. They share an explicit ethnic identity. Their members show a high level of coherence and solidarity. And transstate networks play an important role in the life of diasporas, especially in organizing political and economic support between the diasporas, as shown in the following.
Two features in this model don’t fit the Jewish diaspora. One—that in the host-country diasporas do not look for individual but for communal forms of integration. This generalization is only partially true regarding the Jewish diaspora. The second generalization, that diaspora members maintain contacts and exchange with their homeland, was unique on different political stages: before the Zionist movement; during the building of the Jewish national society in Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century, and after the founding of the State of Israel.

Here lies the unique character of the Jewish transnational diaspora. In the last hundred and fifty years it has been divided between diverging or splitting tendencies on one hand, and converging or unifying forces on the other. Those two opposite directions among the world Jewish people began in the nineteenth century, continued in the twentieth and exist as well at the present time.

**Jewish Diaspora: Convergence and Divergence**

*The Nineteenth Century*

In the nineteenth century, the dividing tendency included three political and cultural types. The first type was assimilation, which was a typical ideology of Jewish individuals—mostly intellectuals. Some were world-famous, such as Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg and others. Personal assimilation generally is not a uniquely Jewish phenomenon, but for the assimilating Jews it meant a denial of the existence of the Jewish collective ethnic entity.

The second type was the religious Reform movement in Germany, which started in the second decade of the nineteenth century. This movement principally and actually caused a very deep division in the Jewish religion, by changing the language of prayer from Hebrew to German and later on to English, in the USA. Forty years later, this Reform movement, at the Pittsburgh conference in 1885 declared, on the basis of universal humanitarian principles, that: “We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither return to Palestine…nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state (Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1995: 372)” . It should be emphasized that the Reform movement in Europe and the USA had a social and cultural character. It was a Jewish Western middle-class phenomenon, which was almost completely dif-