Special Articles
RECONSTRUCTIONISM IN AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE
by CHARLES S. LIEBMAN

INTRODUCTION

The Reconstructionist movement deserves more serious and systematic study than it has been given. It has recently laid claim to the status of denomination, the fourth in American Judaism, along with Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform. Its founder, Mordecai M. Kaplan, probably is the most creative Jewish thinker to concern himself with a program for American Judaism. He is one of the few intellectuals in Jewish life who have given serious consideration to Jewish tradition, American philosophical thought, and the experiences of the American Jew, and confronted each with the other. Reconstructionism is the only religious party in Jewish life whose origins are entirely American and whose leading personalities view Judaism from the perspective of the exclusively American Jewish experience. The Reconstructionist has been

Note. This study would not have been possible without the cooperation of many Reconstructionists, friends of Reconstructionism, and former Reconstructionists. All consented to lengthy interviews, and I am most grateful to them. I am especially indebted to Rabbi Ira Eisenstein, president of the Reconstructionist Foundation, who consented to seven interviews and innumerable telephone conversations, supplied me with all the information and material I requested, tolerated me through the many additional hours I spent searching for material in his office, and responded critically to an earlier version of this study. Rabbi Jack Cohen read the same version. He, too, pointed to several statements which, in his view, were unfair to Reconstructionism. Finally, I am grateful to Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan for granting me a number of interviews.
published since 1935. There are very few serious writers in American Jewish life outside the Orthodox camp who have not at some time contributed to the magazine. Through its symposia, lectures, and discussion groups, Reconstructionism has provided one of the few platforms bringing together Jewish personalities of Conservative, Reform, Zionist, and secular Jewish orientations. In 1968 the Reconstructionist movement opened a rabbinical training school, the most ambitious non-Orthodox effort of its kind since Rabbi Stephen S. Wise founded the Jewish Institute of Religion in 1922.

The significance of Reconstructionism and the importance of studying the movement extend beyond its accomplishments. This article will suggest that an understanding of Reconstructionism is basic to an understanding of American Judaism for three reasons:

(1) Reconstructionism is really a second-generation American Jewish phenomenon. It made its appearance during the 1920's and 1930's, when many children of East European immigrants were fleeing from Judaism. Little that was new, exciting, or creative, was taking place in the Jewish community. Reconstructionism was the exception. Besides, Kaplan and his early followers were honest, self-conscious, and articulate about the condition of American Judaism. The literature of Reconstructionism opens the door to an understanding of American Judaism in that period.

(2) Understanding Kaplan's special role in the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Conservative rabbinate illuminates the conditions prevailing in the Conservative movement roughly between 1920 and 1950. In this period Reconstructionism attracted a significant proportion of the most talented and idealistic students at the Jewish Theological Seminary, who now constitute an important segment of Jewish leadership in America. Perhaps Reconstructionism was only a stage through which they passed, but it was important in their lives. One cannot understand them unless one understands Kaplan's special appeal for them.

(3) An understanding of the sociological problematics of Reconstructionism leads us to the core problematic of American Judaism—the nature of Jewish identity. We will suggest that the attitudes of most American Jews are closer to Reconstructionism than to Orthodoxy, Conservatism, or Reform, and that Reconstructionism comes closer than any other movement or school of thought to articulating the meaning of Judaism for American Jews. This raises the question why Reconstructionism today is numerically and institutionally insignificant. Its
core institution, the Reconstructionist Foundation, commands the support of fewer individuals than does any one of a dozen hasidic rebbes. There are a number of synagogues in the United States each of which has a larger paid membership than the Reconstructionist Foundation. The annual dinner of a fair-sized elementary yeshivah attracts a larger crowd than the annual Reconstructionist dinner. The disparity between the acceptance of Reconstructionist ideas and the failure of the organized movement is striking. Exploring the reasons for this disparity helps shed light on the nature of American Judaism, and on the relationship between the ideologies and institutions of American Jews.

Limitation of space does not permit a thorough analysis of Reconstructionism. Here we will briefly review its history and major ideas. A more specialized social and intellectual history remains to be written, one that will trace the impact of pragmatism, positivism, and Marxism on Jewish intellectuals, and the intellectuals' responses, in the first decades of this century. Such a history would help us to understand American Orthodoxy in that period, as well as the evolution of Conservatism, Reform, Zionism, Jewish education, and the Jewish community center. Neither does this article touch on the organized Jewish community's reaction to a new movement, its receptivity or lack of receptivity to Reconstructionist attempts to gain recognition and acceptance within the institutional framework of American Judaism.

Reconstructionism might also be considered, within the categories of religious sociology, as the germination and growth of a religious movement, with the attendant problems of relationship to a mother church, leadership and succession, routinization of charisma, and deviance.

This essay is divided into five parts. The first three deal with ideology and programs, institutions, and constituency. The last two, "Reconstructionism as the Ideology of American Judaism" and "Folk and Elite Religion in American Judaism," attempting to view American Judaism from a new perspective, present evidence for Reconstructionism's ideological success, and seek to explain its institutional failure—i.e., to show why, when so many American Jews are reconstructionists, so few are Reconstructionists. The first three sections are helpful for understanding the last two.
THE NATURE OF RECONSTRUCTIONISM

Ideology, Beliefs, and Definitions

Among themselves, Reconstructionists are not in complete agreement on matters of ideology and belief. All do agree that Mordecai Kaplan is the founder of Reconstructionism and that his writings provide the major outline of the Reconstructionist ideology and program. Our discussion will center around the ideas of Kaplan.¹

Kaplan’s critics have accused him of being a sociologist rather than a theologian, but he accepts that accusation with pride. According to Kaplan, religion is a social phenomenon, and an understanding of Judaism must begin with an understanding of the Jewish people. He lays heavy stress on the definition of terms. Following John Dewey, he defines an idea or concept, or even an institution, by its function, by its affect and effect.

The core of Kaplan’s ideology is his definition of Judaism as a civilization whose standards of action are established by the Jewish people. This definition was a reaction to classical Reform Judaism, which had perceived Judaism as a set of beliefs about God and His relationship to the Jews; and to Orthodoxy, which defined Judaism by a set of laws and practices over which the living community exercised little control. To Kaplan, Judaism is a civilization that has evolved through different stages, whose common denominator is neither belief, nor tenet, nor


practice, but rather the continuous life of the Jewish people. The Jewish
religion, says Kaplan, exists for the Jewish people, not the Jewish
people for the Jewish religion. As he understands Judaism, he claims,
this idea constitutes a Copernican revolution. While it is to be found in
a number of 19th-century Jewish writers, none had pressed the point
into a program of Jewish life as consistently or thoroughly as Kaplan.

Kaplan’s definition of Judaism, focusing on community and people,
raises the question of the Jew’s relationship and responsibility to his
community. To this question he suggests a variety of answers. According
to Kaplan, antisemitism binds the Jews to each other despite themselves.
At the same time, it arouses feelings of inferiority and humiliation in
individual Jews that push them to seek an escape from the community.
If only because the Jews will not find acceptance and welcome among
non-Jews, it is necessary to strengthen Jewish civilization and make
Jewish life more meaningful. Elsewhere Kaplan talks about the obliga-
tions imposed by Jewish birth. Each historic group, he says, has a
responsibility to mankind to maintain “its own identity as a contributor
to the sum of knowledge and experience.” 2 Therefore it follows that
each person has responsibilities to the particular historic group into
which he is born.

The position Kaplan more generally espouses is that the Jew’s rela-
tionship to his community is really “a matter of feeling,” as ultimate as
the will to live. “The will to maintain and perpetuate Jewish life as
something desirable in and for itself” 3 simply exists, and Kaplan has
found no better explanation or justification for its existence than anyone
else. This does, however, have consequences for Reconstructionism. In
the first place, it acknowledges the limitations of audience. Kaplan’s
message, at least in Kaplanian terms, is confined to those who begin
with a sense of Jewish peoplehood—a fact which Reconstructionists
themselves are reluctant to admit. Secondly, Kaplan’s analysis of con-
temporary Judaism begins with the assertion that Jewish identity has
become attenuated with the breakdown of certain traditional Jewish
beliefs. According to him, Jews remained loyal to Judaism for thousands
of years despite hardship and suffering because they believed that ad-
herence to the precepts of Judaism assured them otherworldly salvation.
But, says Kaplan, people no longer believe in otherworldly salvation.

3 *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 47.
Consequently, Judaism must transform itself "into a religion which can help Jews attain this-worldly salvation." In other words, Judaism must be reconstructed because otherworldly salvation, the basis upon which Jewish identity rested, is no longer tenable. But for Kaplan the present basis of Jewish identity is "a matter of feeling as ultimate as the will to live." One may ask, therefore, whether the crisis in Jewish life may have nothing to do with the loss of faith in otherworldly salvation; and whether the survival of Judaism really depends on finding a rationale for this-worldly salvation.

Even if one disagrees with Kaplan's analysis as a general statement of the Jewish condition, there is no question that he spoke directly to the predicament of many of his followers: those who, in their own lives, experienced a loss of faith in otherworldly salvation; whose ties to the Jewish people was a matter of ultimate feeling, and who sought to ground that feeling in 20th-century terms. These were the Jews whom Kaplan himself describes as unable to be "spiritually whole and happy if they repudiate their Jewish heritage," but for whom the heritage was no longer as meaningful as it once had been, Reconstructionism, then, begins with a critique of the Jewish condition and an affirmation of Judaism—both more of the heart than of the mind. When Kaplan writes about the predicament of the modern Jew, he really is addressing himself to a certain kind of Jew, and to him he speaks with tremendous power and meaning. To others, he sometimes sounds trivial. The personal experiences and sentiments of his followers, not the persuasive logic of his argument, validated Kaplan's ideas.

Judaism, says Kaplan, is the civilization of the Jewish people. Like any civilization, it has a history, literature, language, social organization, folk sanctions, standards of conduct, social and spiritual ideals, aesthetic values, and religion. Influenced by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, Kaplan states that "whatever is an object of collective concern necessarily take on all the traits of a religion." Religion functions "to hold up to the individual the worth of the group and the importance of his complete identification with it." Therefore it lies at the heart of every civilization. The basic, or more important, elements in the life of a civilization are called its sancta:

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5 *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 83.
6 *Judaism Without Supernaturalism*, p. 216.
7 *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 333.
those institutions, places, historic events, heroes and all other objects of popular reverence to which superlative importance or sanctity is ascribed. These sancta, the attitude toward life that they imply and the conduct that they inspire, are the religion of that people.8

The focus of the Jewish religion is salvation, which Kaplan defines as the "progressive perfection of the human personality and the establishment of a free, just and cooperative social order."9 The desire for salvation is a constant, running throughout the Jewish tradition in its various stages of evolution. Though belief in the possibility of salvation is crucial to Kaplan’s own system, it rests on faith rather than empirical reality. Without such a belief, he notes, man is unlikely to strive for salvation. According to Kaplan, there are resources in the world and capacities in man that enable him to perfect progressively his own personality and establish a free, just, and cooperative social order (i.e. to achieve salvation). The "power that makes for salvation" is what Kaplan calls God. "God is the life of the life of the universe, immanent insofar as each part acts upon every other, and transcendent insofar as the whole acts upon each part." God conforms to our experience, since "we sense a power which orients us to life and elicits from us the best of which we are capable or renders us immune to the worst that may befall us."10

A number of commentators have criticized Kaplan’s concept of God. For Milton Steinberg, in Kaplan’s definition

the actuality of God is brought into question. Does God really exist or is he only man’s notion? Is there anything objective which corresponds to the subjective conception? And who adds up "the sum" in "the sum total of forces that make for salvation"? Is the sum added up "out there," or in the human imagination?11

More caustically, he noted that Kaplan defines God as "the power which endorses what we believe ought to be."12 Eugene Borowitz observes that, if God is an expression of hope that man may fulfill himself, He is real, but only in a subjective sense. If He corresponds to those factors in nature which make it possible for such ideals to be achieved, He may

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8 Greater Judaism in the Making, p. 460.
9 Future of the American Jew, p. xvii.
10 Judaism as a Civilization, p. 317.
be objectively real, but He is not a unity. God would then refer to many different forces in nature.\textsuperscript{13}

According to Kaplan, creativity and the impulse to help others or to act justly are forces, or powers, that make for salvation. I may have a desire to help others, and this Kaplan would call an experience of God. I may also feel the urge to write a poem or to paint a picture, and, according to Kaplan, this, too, would be an experience of God. What Steinberg and Borowitz suggest is that both these experiences may be a unity only in Kaplan’s mind, not in reality. Also, what I experience may not be based on any objective reality, on anything “out there,” but rather on my psychological or sociological condition. By calling God a Power in the singular, Kaplan suggests that He is both a unity and an objective reality. However, his use of the term suggests other meanings. Thus, for example:

The Jew will have to realize that religion is rooted in human nature, and that the belief in the existence of God, and the attributes ascribed to him, must be derived from and be made to refer to the experience of the average man and woman.\textsuperscript{14}

Kaplan acknowledges a lack of clarity among his students regarding his concept of God. Indeed, he states that he himself did not fully understand the concept when he first proposed it. But the problem is of primary importance to those who take seriously the traditional Jewish belief in God and are concerned with the essence of God. It is of secondary concern to Kaplan, who is not concerned with the essence of God, which man can never know, but with the function of God in man’s life. As Steinberg noted, the most serious deficiency in Kaplan’s theology is that, lacking a metaphysic, “it is really not a theology at all but an account of the psychological and ethical consequences of affirming one.”\textsuperscript{15} But Kaplan does not agree that this is a deficiency. He affirms that the main problem of the Jewish religion is

\text{"not what idea of God the individual Jew must hold in order that he find his Jewish life to be an asset. Rather is it to what common purpose, which makes for the enhancement of human life, the Jews as a people are willing to be committed, and to be so passionately devoted as to see in it a manifestation or revelation of God.\textsuperscript{16}\""}

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Judaism as a Civilization}, p. 306.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Anatomy of Faith}, pp. 181–182.
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Judaism Without Supernaturalism}, p. 216.
In one sense then, the critiques of Borowitz and Steinberg are one-sided because they miss the point of Kaplan’s definition. On the other hand, Kaplan’s definition misses the point of their religious concerns. At the very least, Steinberg and Borowitz find Kaplan’s definition of God inadequate, because irrelevant to their own questions.

However, acceptance of Kaplan’s definition of God is not essential for being a Reconstructionist. Steinberg himself identified with the movement despite the more traditionalist cast of his belief in God. Eugene Kohn, for many years managing editor of the *Reconstructionist* and probably more critical than Kaplan of traditional Jewish belief, has observed that, contrary to popular opinion, “there is no such thing as a Reconstructionist idea of God.” Yet, most books and articles published by the Reconstructionist movement accept Kaplan’s point of view. Kohn himself was the subject of an earlier attack by Steinberg on precisely this point. He charged that Kohn identified Reconstructionism with the attitude that God is not a Divine Person or Absolute Being but a “Process at work in the Universe,” and said that, while Kohn and

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17 There is some controversy as to whether Steinberg was a Reconstructionist at the time of his death. *Anatomy of Faith*, a collection of his essays published ten years after his death, the introduction to the volume by its editor Arthur A. Cohen, and the private testimony of some friends argue against Steinberg’s continuing identification with Reconstructionism. On the other hand, we have Steinberg’s own testimony, published a month before his death, that “the bulk of Reconstructionist theory, program, implementation seems to me to stand up under the test of the years and indeed to have been validated by it.” See his “Test of Time,” loc. cit.; also, Mordecai M. Kaplan, “Milton Steinberg’s Contribution to Reconstructionism,” *Reconstructionist*, May 19, 1950, pp. 9–16, and Ira Eisenstein, “Milton Steinberg’s Mind and Heart,” *ibid.*, October 21, 1960, pp. 9–16.

It seems clear that Steinberg remained a Reconstructionist. Evidence is the fact that his criticism of Kaplan, his refusal to participate in editing the *Reconstructionist High Holy Day Prayer Book*, and his association with Jewish existentialist thinkers came long enough before his death to have permitted him to disavow Reconstructionism, had he chosen to do so. Obviously, Steinberg was not a theological Kaplanian. But apparently other aspects of Reconstructionism—political, cultural, social, and educational—attracted him more strongly than Kaplan’s theology repelled him. Indeed, shortly before his death, he agreed to a merger of his own synagogue’s school with that of the Reconstructionists’ Society for the Advancement of Judaism, under the joint directorship of the Reconstructionist Jack Cohen. However, the lay leaders of his synagogue objected to the merger.

Kaplan shared this attitude, he, Steinberg, the publication’s associate editor, did not.19

Reconstructionism’s stress on the social function of religion, rather than on its individual function (answering questions of ultimate meaning, or assisting man in confronting problems of suffering, sin, evil, and the like), also troubles some Reconstructionists. Kaplan is not indifferent to this. For example, he observes that suffering is very real, and may raise doubts not only about a supernatural God, but even about God as the Power on whom man depends for salvation. The way to deal with such doubt, Kaplan states, is “to transcend it, by focussing our attention on the reality of happiness and virtue rather than on that of misery and vice, and by thinking of the problem not in terms of speculative thought but of ethical action.” 20 This statement is a clue to some of the Reconstructionists’ difficulties.

The last definition of significance in Kaplan’s lexicon is organic community. Since Judaism is a civilization, Kaplan holds, its parts can only function in interrelationship: “The organic character is maintained so long as all elements that constitute the civilization play a role in the life of the Jew.” 21 Kaplan transfers this “organic” concept to the structure of Jewish communal organization which, he maintains, must also be organic:

The basic unit of Jewish life cannot be any one agency. The entire aggregate of congregations, social service agencies, Zionist organizations, defense and fraternal bodies, and educational institutions, should be integrated into an organic or indivisible community.22

The notion of organic community, the creation of democratic local Jewish communal organizations and of democratically elected national leadership, was an exciting one for a number of Jewish rabbis, educators, communal workers, and even laymen in the 1930’s and 1940’s. It attracted to the banner of Reconstructionism people who were indifferent to its theology, but who saw in Kaplan’s proposals the possibility for a structural renewal of Jewish life. Kaplan’s idea of organic community is intimately related to his conception of Jewish civilization and religion. In his view, “whatever helps to produce creative social interaction

20 Future of the American Jew, p. 242.
21 Judaism as a Civilization, p. 515.
22 Future of the American Jew, p. 114
among Jews rightly belongs to the category of Jewish religion, because it contributes to the salvation of the Jew." 23

Kaplan distinguishes between the special, or sectional, program of Reconstructionism, with its particular religious theological formulation, and its general program, stressing the reorganization of Jewish social structure and the enrichment of all aspects of Jewish life. Presumably, one could be a Reconstructionist by accepting only the general program. In fact, the two programs are not quite readily distinguishable. As we shall see, the Reconstructionists' special and particular values have shaped their view of the general program for Judaism. Nevertheless, in the 1930's and 1940's one found in Reconstructionism, especially in the writings of Kaplan and Ira Eisenstein, a concern for Jewish communal life and a conception of what the structure of the Jewish civil community ought to be that existed in no other movement in Jewish life. The fact that Kaplan was somewhat naive about the possibility of creating such a community, or overly formalistic about constitutional and structural aspects, must not detract from our recognition of his contribution.

Programs and Practices

Reconstructionism has more than an ideology or a set of definitions and beliefs. It has a program, practices, and ritual standards. Indeed, there is greater consistency between ideology and program in Reconstructionism than in most other groups in Jewish life. However, consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds; and since Kaplan's mind is not small, his program and ideology are not always compatible. Also, ideology and beliefs do not establish the special order of priorities, or the hierarchy of emphases, which Reconstructionists give to their programs. This hierarchy may be understood in light of our definition of Reconstructionism. Like Kaplan's definition of God, our definition of Reconstructionism points to its functions rather than to its essence. We define it as the effort to find an intellectually acceptable rationale and program that affirm the positive value of living and identifying with Judaism and Americanism.

There have been various statements of the Reconstructionist platform, all showing similarity. We will focus on the first, issued in 1935, 24 which combines a set of proposals with a statement of definitions and beliefs. It defines Judaism as a religious civilization and articulates the need for

23 Judaism as a Civilization, p. 328.
a centralized and Jewish communal organization. It also has this to say about Americanism:

As American Jews we give first place in our lives to the American civilization which we share in common with our fellow Americans, and we seek to develop our Jewish heritage to the maximum degree consonant with the best in American life.

The platform 1) affirms the necessity for reinterpreting traditional beliefs and revising traditional practices; 2) calls for the establishment of a commonwealth in Palestine “indispensable to the life of Judaism in the diaspora,” since Jewish civilization must be rooted in the soil of Palestine, and 3) declares itself opposed to fascism, and economic imperialism, “the dominant cause of war in modern times,” and in favor of peace; for labor and social justice, against “an economic system that crushes the laboring masses and permits the existence of want in an economy of potential plenty,” and for a “cooperative society, elimination of the profit system, and the public ownership of all natural resources and basic industries.” Each of the three, belief and ritual, Zionism, and social action, deserves some elaboration.

BELIEF AND RITUAL

Reconstructionist leaders sought to reinterpret traditional beliefs and revise traditional practices through lectures, sermons, and publications. But they also engaged in two major efforts for institutional change: the development of new prayer books and the publication of a ritual guide.

As leaders of their congregation, the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, Kaplan and his associate (and son-in-law) Ira Eisenstein introduced a number of liturgical changes. In 1941 they sought a larger audience by publishing the New Haggadah. In 1945 they published a Sabbath Prayer Book, and afterward prayer books for festivals, the High Holy Days, and for daily use. In their introduction to the Sabbath prayer book, the editors—Kaplan, Eugene Kohn, Milton Steinberg, and Ira Eisenstein—argue in favor of modification to “retain the classical framework of the service and to adhere to the fundamental teachings of that tradition concerning God, man, and the world. However, ideas or beliefs in conflict with what has come to be regarded as true or right should be eliminated.”

25 The introduction was published in the first edition of the prayer book, but was also issued as a separate pamphlet, Introduction to the Sabbath Prayer Book (New York, Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, 1945); p. 9 cited here.
Reconstructionists have a tendency to identify whatever is "true or right" with their own ideology. In the *New Haggadah*, the editors write that "all references to events, real or imagined, in the Exodus story which might conflict with our own highest ethical standards have been omitted." Consistently with Kaplan's ideology, all references to Jews as a chosen people, the concept of revelation of the Torah by God to Moses, the concept of a personal Messiah, restoration of the sacrificial cultus, retribution, and resurrection of the dead were excised. Some traditional passages were retained, though conflictingly with Kaplan's ideology. Here the introduction and annotations suggest how these passages are to be understood. Thus, prayers for the restoration of Israel are included, but readers are told not to construe them "as the return of all Jews to Palestine." Statements to the effect that society's well-being depends on conforming to divine laws of justice and righteousness, and that the soul is immortal, are also retained, the latter to be interpreted as meaning that "the human spirit, in cleaving to God, transcends the brief span of the individual life and shares in the eternity of the Divine Life."

In response to the critique that if, as the Reconstructionists say, God is the power that makes for salvation but not a supernatural power, prayer is a meaningless enterprise, Kaplan demonstrates the function or utility of prayer without regard to the object of the prayer. He argues that "life's unity, creativity and worthwhileness" are the modern equivalent of communion with God. Worship, he says,

> should intensify one's Jewish consciousness . . . It should interpret the divine aspect of life as manifest in social idealism. It should emphasize the high worth and potentialities of the individual soul. It should voice the aspiration of Israel to serve the cause of humanity."

We might add, parenthetically, that, according to Kaplan "the language and the atmosphere of the worship should be entirely Hebraic" for the achievement of these goals.

Kaplan offers man little reason to pray, much less to pray in Hebrew. What he does, we suggest, is to offer a rationale for someone who wants

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27 Ibid., p. 12.
29 *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 347
30 Ibid., p. 348.
to pray anyway, but is embarrassed by what he regards as the anachronism of prayer, or the beliefs affirmed in the traditional prayer book. Kaplan provides a legitimation, not an impetus, for prayer. The rationale is meaningful only as long as the impetus is present. When impetus goes, rationale goes too. A graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who reports that he never felt comfortable praying, says he felt no more comfortable when he became a Reconstructionist and used the Reconstructionist prayer book.

In their *Guide to Jewish Ritual*, the Reconstructionists deny the binding character of Jewish law. Eugene Kohn has pointed to the inadequacy of any proposals that treat Jewish law as though "the traditional Halakah was a viable legal system capable of developing adequate norms and standards." 32

The *Guide* views ritual not as law, but as "a means to group survival and enhancement on the one hand, and on the other, a means to the spiritual growth of the individual Jew." 33 The individual is to decide which rituals or folkways should or should not be practiced, and, in so doing, strike a balance between his own needs and those of the group:

The circumstances of life are so different for different Jews, their economic needs and opportunities, their cultural background, their acquired skills and inherited capacities are so varied that it is unreasonable to expect all of them to evaluate the same rituals in the same way.34

It then follows that no stigma is attached to those who "permit themselves a wide latitude in the departure from traditional norms." The *Guide* suggests the significance of a set of rituals or a holiday, and recommends specific rituals conforming to the spirit of the system or the holiday, which can easily be observed. The *Guide* stresses that those not observing the rituals should avoid publicly flouting traditional standards where this is likely to be offensive to other Jews. But the ultimate criterion for what should be observed is the self-fulfillment of the individual. For example, the *Guide* suggests that work permitted on the Sabbath includes activity "which the individual is unable to engage in

31 The *Guide*, first published in 1941, called forth strong opposition from traditionalists close to the movement. It led to a break between one prominent rabbi and Reconstructionism. The edition discussed here was published by the Reconstructionist Press in 1962.
33 *Guide to Jewish Ritual*, p. 5.
during the week, and which constitutes not a means to making a living but a way of enjoying life." 35 According to the Reconstructionists, "what matters is not the ceremonial observance of the Sabbath but the extent to which these ceremonies help one to live and experience the Sabbath." 36 If one has the opportunity for a "congenial career" requiring work on the Sabbath, one need not necessarily reject it, since "observance should not involve the frustration of a legitimate and deeply felt ambition," the Guide states, and adds that "our will to live most happily and effectively must supersede the observance of the Sabbath." 37 In general, one celebrates the holidays by being with one's family and doing nice things.

The Guide is consistent with Kaplan's earliest work, which stresses that rituals or folkways, as he refers to them, should be practiced "whenever they do not involve an unreasonable amount of time, effort and expense." 38 Furthermore, he notes, the dietary and other practices are designed to enhance the Jewish atmosphere of the home and need not be observed outside the home, since they only add to inconvenience and self-deprivation, and foster the now "totally unwarranted" aloofness of the Jew. 39

As in prayer, Reconstructionists wish to retain the basic form of Jewish ritual without its traditional rationale, and to make observance convenient. Accordingly, the Reconstructionists developed a social rationale justifying ritual in general, and a personal rationale justifying the observance of one ritual rather than another. The first is borrowed from Durkheim, and the second is based primarily on the individual's convenience. In Kaplan's understanding of Durkheim, religion is essentially a matter of observance, ceremony, and ritual, and the values attached to these acts. Ritual is central to religion and functions "to preserve the integrity of the group and to protect those sancta, those holy devices by which the group was enabled to survive." 40 The ritual, in turn, is sanctioned by myth. According to Steinberg, Kaplan borrowed from Ahad Ha'am the idea that Judaism, as a culture or civilization, could replace the religious myth in support of the sancta. In fact, the new myth has not operated successfully, and, as we will see, Reconstructionism may

35 Ibid., p. 16.
36 Ibid., pp. 17–18.
37 Ibid., p. 21.
38 Judaism as a Civilization, p. 439.
39 Ibid., p. 441.
40 Steinberg, Anatomy of Faith, p. 247.
thus have paved the way to ritual laxity. As early as 1944 one Reconstructionist rabbi felt called upon to emphasize that “Reconstructionism was not intended to authorize laxity of observance among practicing Jews but rather to bring Jews to whom Judaism is meaningless closer to Jewish tradition.” 41 The fears expressed in 1944 reflect a continuing problem for the Reconstructionist movement.

ZIONISM

The second major plank in the practical program of Reconstructionism was the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Kaplan maintained that Jewish civilization in its fullest could only be lived in Palestine, and that a condition for the renascence of Jewish civilization in the diaspora was the development of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. Efforts toward upbuilding Palestine were also important, according to Kaplan, because it gave Jews something to do. “Take Palestine out of the Jew's life, and the only spheres of influence that remain to him as a Jew are the synagogue and the cemetery.” 42 Kaplan was later to reformulate this idea in terms of the role which “only the struggle to take root in a land can create, a collective consciousness which only a living language can beget, and common folkways which only the sharing of common practical concerns can evolve.” 43

On occasion, Kaplan also legitimized the upbuilding of Palestine in terms of a moral imperative: “It is a moral duty because it is nothing less than moral to carry out the promise implied in two thousand years of praying, the promise that, if we be given a chance to build Palestine, we shall do it.” 44

As with prayer, Kaplan’s rationale for Zionism does not really proceed from any of his philosophical premises. Kaplan and his early followers were ardent Zionists. They campaigned for the cause of Israel in the 1920’s, 1930’s, and into the 1940’s, when it was not altogether popular to do so. The pages of the Reconstructionist magazine blazed with editorials attacking the foes of Zionism. Although the magazine always reserved a special dislike for the Orthodox, its major villains in the 1930’s and 1940’s were the American Council for Judaism, Jewish Communists

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41 Maxwell Farber, chairman, in report of annual Reconstructionist conference, Reconstructionist, October 6, 1944, p. 22.
42 The Society for the Advancement of Judaism (New York: SAJ, 1923), p. 11.
43 Future of the American Jew, p. 141.
44 Society for Advancement of Judaism, p. 12.
and fellow-travellers, and the American Jewish Committee, whose policies the Reconstructionist's editors then regarded as assimilationist and anti-Zionist. Kaplan's loyalty to the upbuilding of Palestine is unquestionable. Zionism is a religion for many Jews, including Reconstructionists, and Kaplan seeks to give this religion a philosophical underpinning. The Zionist program of Reconstructionism is an outgrowth of its adherents' Jewish commitment, not their Reconstructionist philosophy.

However, Kaplan's Zionism is typically American. He rejects the necessity for 'aliyah (immigration to Palestine or Israel), kibbutz galuyot (the ingathering of exiles in Israel), and shelitat ha-golah (negation of the diaspora). An editorial in the magazine attacks the Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel for giving "religious sanction to the mischievous policy of associating the call for return of Jews to Zion with the state rather than some vague messianic period." 45 In typically American Zionist fashion, Kaplan declares that Israel must not seek kibbutz galuyot but should be a "haven of immigration for all Jews who are not able to feel at home in the lands where they now reside." 46 His ambitions for Palestine were modest. Jews, he felt, should be permitted to constitute a majority within a Jewish commonwealth, although they need not have exclusive responsibility for military defense and foreign policy. Before the creation of Israel many other Zionists, too, were prepared to accept such conditions, but few made a virtue of it. According to Kaplan, "relief from exclusive responsibility [in these matters] should be welcome." 47 In other words, Jews do not "require the sort of irresponsible and obsolete national sovereignty that modern nations claim for themselves." 48

SOCIAL ACTION

The third major plank in the Reconstructionist platform deals with social action. The early programs of Reconstructionism virtually endorsed socialism, and in the 1930's and early 1940's a few members even flirted with Communism. Kaplan himself is strongly anti-Marxist in his philosophical orientation, and the movement opposes the far Left, which it perceives as anti-Zionist, assimilationist, and, in the case of the Soviet Union, anti-Jewish as well.

45 Reconstructionist, November 12, 1948, p. 6.
46 Future of the American Jew, p. 124.
47 Ibid., p. 125.
48 Ibid.
Kaplan's belief in social amelioration is part of his religious-philosophical conviction. He holds that a primary function of religion is improving ethics,\(^49\) that ethical discussion is equivalent to study of Torah: "Any discussion carried on for the purpose of becoming clear as to the right and wrong of a matter is Torah."\(^50\) The particular ethical norms with which Kaplan is most concerned, those which he suggests as the central foci for the Jewish holidays, are correctives for social, rather than individual, evil.\(^51\) He inveighs against the evil that man commits by participating in the existing social structure.

In general, there has been a diminution in the radical political rhetoric of the Reconstructionists.

**Assessment of Ideology and Program**

Two philosophers, former Reconstructionists, have discussed the various influences on Reconstructionism. Sidney Morgenbesser and David Sidorsky observe that Reconstructionism has been influenced by both American and European ideas.\(^52\) They point to four major European ideas that Reconstructionism has recast into an American mold: Dubnow's emphasis on the organization and function of the local Jewish community; Ahad Ha'am's assumption that creative Jewish life outside the land of Israel depends on a community there, and his nontheological reinterpretation of Jewish values; the historical school's recognition of the natural origin and context of Judaism's most cherished institutions, and, finally, Durkheim's and Robertson-Smith's theories of religion as the expression of social life and the instrument of group cohesion and survival.

The primary influence, however, has been America. The American scene, with its political democracy, naturalistic philosophy, and pragmatic temper, has given rise to the Reconstructionist movement. At the same time, these characteristics serve as criteria by which Reconstructionism, in turn, assesses and reevaluates any current American Jewish movement.\(^53\)

\(^{49}\) See, for example, Mordecai M. Kaplan, *A New Approach to the Problems of Judaism* (New York: SAJ, 1924).

\(^{50}\) The Society for the Advancement of Judaism, p. 17.

\(^{51}\) See, for example, the *Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion*.


This influence is apparent in the major planks of the Reconstructionist platforms, as well as in the more detailed aspects of Reconstructionist thought. For example, *The Reconstructionist* has published articles opposing Jewish day schools because they fail to prepare students for democracy[^54] and because they indoctrinate students with a particular ideology.[^55] According to Kaplan, Jewish day schools are neither feasible nor desirable. They are but "a futile gesture of protest against the necessity of giving to Jewish civilization a position ancillary to the civilization of the majority."[^56]

Reconstructionists accept the American environment, and seek to mold a Jewish program to fit in with it. Of special interest in this regard is Kaplan’s rejection of the concept of the Jews as a "chosen people." Reinterpreting the concept of God, as Kaplan himself notes, he could have dealt with the "chosen people" in the same way—as by arguing that his conception of God does not permit of chosen peoples. Instead, he rejects the concept as undemocratic and unegalitarian. Eisenstein, in turn, suggests that though the Jews are at least unique, it is bad taste to talk about it.

We Jews have a remarkable history. In some respects we have been more preoccupied than other peoples with the belief in God and with the conception of God, with problems of life’s meaning and how best to achieve life’s purpose. But we should not boast about it. Humility is more befitting a people of such high aspirations. We ought not to say that God gave the Torah to us and to nobody else, particularly at a time when mankind seeks to foster the sense of the equality of peoples. We should be old enough and mature enough as a people to accept our history with dignity, without resort to comparisons which are generally odious.[^57]

The American influence is in the very marrow of Reconstructionism. In his first major book Kaplan observes that “since the civilization that can satisfy the primary interest of the Jew must necessarily be the civilization of the country he lives in, the Jew in America will be first and foremost an American, and only secondarily a Jew.”[^58] Even on so basic a Jewish issue as intermarriage Kaplan is influenced by notions of American legitimacy. He argues that Jews cannot legitimize their objection to intermarriage since America

[^56]: *Judaism as a Civilization*, op. cit., p. 489.
[^58]: *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 216.
is certain to look with disfavor upon any culture which seeks to maintain itself by decrying the intermarriage of its adherents with those of another culture. By accepting a policy which does not decry marriages of Jews with Gentiles, provided the homes they establish are Jewish and their children are given a Jewish upbringing, the charge of exclusiveness and tribalism falls to the ground.\(^59\)

Kaplan also strongly advocates separation of church and state. He believes that by supporting separation and helping to develop a separate religion for America, a civic religion independent of any church or of supernaturalism, Jews could make a contribution to American civilization.\(^60\) Indeed, Kaplan's belief that church and state must be separate, but that every civilization must have its own religion to assure social cohesion and unity, makes a civic religion a necessity. In 1951 Kaplan, Eugene Kohn, and a Christian, J. Paul Williams, edited Faith of America, a remarkable volume published by the Reconstructionist Press. It celebrates the sancta of American civilization in a series of non-denominational prayers, poems, songs, literary selections, and historical documents for use by churches, synagogues, public assemblies, and patriotic societies on national holidays.

The American influence is also evident in Kaplan's definition of Judaism as a religious civilization. Initially, he had referred to Judaism only as a civilization—without an adjective—because, in his view, all civilizations have religion and therefore what makes Judaism different from other civilizations is not that Judaism has a religion. Judaism's content, especially its salvation orientation, makes it different. Yet Kaplan now said he had always intended to define Judaism as a religious civilization, and that the omission of "religious" from his earlier formulation was pure oversight. Two of Kaplan's best students, scholars of distinction, said he had added the word at their insistence. Otherwise, they asked, what distinguishes Judaism from any other civilization? Their recommendation would suggest a total misunderstanding of Kaplan. But Kaplan accepted it.

This may be an instance of semantic clarity unconsciously giving way to the goals which the early Reconstructionists set for themselves. The early Reconstructionists were philosophical, but philosophic consistency was not their ultimate value. The ultimate value was a rationale and program that would affirm the positive value of living and identifying with both Judaism and Americanism. Kaplan had to introduce the term

\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 419.

\(^{60}\) Judaism Without Supernaturalism, p. 99.
religion into his definition of Judaism because, in the last analysis, Judaism is acceptable in the American environment only as a religion, not as a civilization. Only as a religion can Judaism legitimately demand the allegiance of its followers within the American context. Thus, when Kaplan defines Judaism as a religious civilization, he utilizes a popular definition of religion, not his own.

Kaplan and Reconstructionism reflect the American experience more than does any other Jewish religious group. Reconstructionists have been aware of this. Their problem has been to transform sociological fact into theological virtue. The difficulty of this enterprise—because self-conscious social theorists make poor religious leaders—may be inherent in the very essence of religious life.

A crucial function which religion serves for its adherents is determining ultimate values. Religion tells us what is ultimately right and wrong. The skeptical sociologist may suspect that ultimate values are influenced by, if not derived from, the physical, economic, social, and political environment. The skeptic may also suspect that a religious leader who asserts ultimate values has read them into his religion as much as from it. On the other hand, the religious leader will argue that all he did was to translate the ultimate standards of the tradition into contemporary terms. Nevertheless, many religious leaders are aware of the danger that, in the process of translation, they may simply sanctify whatever the prevailing standards of society, or their subjective standards of morality, happen to be. The skeptical sociologist may argue that this is inevitable. The religious leader will argue that it is a danger against which he must struggle. He cannot accept it as inevitable without denying one of the basic functions of religion.

Kaplan wishes to be both a religious leader and a skeptical sociologist. He believes that religion must constantly undergo what he calls transvaluation. Judaism, he says, can become creative only if its true scope and character are understood, and if it assimilates, in "deliberate and planned fashion," 61 the best in contemporary civilizations, even though, as Kaplan recognizes, such conscious assimilation is a departure from the tradition. What Kaplan fails to realize is that when traditional values are made secondary to contemporary ones, they lose their import, and the very necessity for transvaluation loses its urgency. Secondly, by self-consciously transvaluing traditional and ultimate values into con-

61 Judaism as a Civilization, p. 514.
temporary ones, Reconstructionism no longer has criteria for judging contemporary civilization.

As long as virtually all Reconstructionists came from the same background and environment, had a similar secular education and similar Jewish experiences, there were large areas of agreement on Jewish and ethical matters within the movement. Reconstructionists assumed that this agreement had something to do with their movement. We suggest that it did not, and that Reconstructionism may find itself increasingly divided over such issues as social action and Zionism. At present there are elements in Reconstructionism relatively unconcerned about Israel, and other elements oriented to the New-Left, even at the expense of Jewish self-interest. Reconstructionism has no intrinsic standards, as distinct from programmatic planks, to protect itself from these deviations. Indeed, there are indications that Reconstructionism itself may become transvalued, a process most compatible with its basic doctrines.

No doubt some Reconstructionists would question that the function of religion is to assert ultimate standards. They may argue that it is rather to sanctify the community's values and transmit them through symbols and rites, as well as to provide group cohesion. But these are legitimate only if one believes that the values being sanctified and transmitted are indeed inherently true. Social cohesion for the sake of cohesion, or of the self-conscious transmission of contemporary values through the use of traditional symbols for the furtherance of contemporary values, smacks of hypocrisy and sham. But, a Reconstructionist may ask, what is the alternative? If God is not a source of values and there is unwillingness to accept the authority of Torah values, how can religious leaders renew the tradition or generate new values? That question goes to the heart of the dilemma of religious liberalism. The Orthodox Jew certainly does not have the answer. He can only wonder at what he feels is a perversion of religion in the argument that Judaism must be brought "into harmony with the best ethical and social thought of the modern world" when best can only mean what a particular writer thinks is best at a particular moment of time, or the values that happen to have been current among a group of Jewish intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s.

The tradition is used without embarrassment as a means of strengthening group ties and legitimating the ethical values of the present. By way

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of illustration, Kaplan asks us to assume that research and reflection have demonstrated that the human personality must be treated as an end in itself. He then advocates drawing on the traditional values of Judaism to show that this principle has played a part "in shaping some of the most important laws and practices of the Jewish people":

This resort to the past for the confirmation of present is not a sop to conservative minds. Ethical principles require the sanction of history to show that they are in line with tendencies inherent in the very nature of man and in keeping with that character of the world which expresses itself as the power that makes for righteousness. To this end, it is necessary to select from the Jewish heritage whatever will verify the validity of the sanction which Judaism is urged to adopt.63

**HISTORY AND INSTITUTIONS** 64

**Early History**

The history of Reconstructionism begins with Mordecai Kaplan. He was born in Swenziany, Lithuania, in 1881, the son of a traditional Jew and distinguished Talmudic scholar, who came to New York in 1889 at the invitation of Rabbi Jacob Joseph, the foremost Orthodox rabbi of America in the last decades of the nineteenth century, to join him as dayyan (rabbinical judge). Young Mordecai attended public school. He received his Jewish education in heder, from private tutors, and from his father. Kaplan recalls that he was strongly influenced by the Bible scholar and critic Arnold Ehrlich, a frequent visitor in his father's home. When Kaplan was 12 years old, he was enrolled in the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). He reports that, by the time of his ordination in 1902, at the age of 21, he questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Bible and the historicity of miracles. While attending the seminary, he graduated from City College (1900), and received his M.A. from Columbia (1902). He read widely in philosophy, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. He was particularly influenced by anthropological and sociological studies of religion, especially comparative religion, and nonsupernaturalist religious developments in the first decades of the twentieth century.65

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63 *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 463.

64 A history of Reconstruction still remains to be written. The material presented here draws primarily on personal interviews, as well as on material in the *Reconstructionist* and its predecessor, the *SAJ Review*.

The first position Kaplan held was that of minister of Kehilath Jeshurun on New York's upper East Side, the most fashionable East European Orthodox congregation of its day. Kaplan was the first JTS graduate to hold a position in a New York congregation. Kehilath Jeshurun wanted an English-speaking rabbi, but was reluctant to give Kaplan the title since he did not have semikha (Orthodox ordination). In fact, at the urging of a prominent European rabbi who visited Kehilath Jeshurun, the congregation brought Rabbi Moses Z. Margolis from Boston to serve as its rabbi; Kaplan became his associate. On his honeymoon in Europe, in 1908, Kaplan received semikha from Rabbi Isaac Reines, the founder of the Mizrachi movement.

Kaplan reports that he felt increasingly uncomfortable in an Orthodox synagogue, and considered selling insurance. This, he believed, was of social value and would give him greater freedom. However, in 1909 Solomon Schechter, president of JTS, invited Kaplan to head its newly established Teachers Institute. Kaplan accepted and a year later also became professor of homiletics in the rabbinical school. Kaplan continued to hold both posts until 1946, when he became dean emeritus of the Teachers Institute. In 1947 he gave up his professorship in homiletics to become professor of philosophies of religion, a post created for him, which he held until his retirement in 1963 at the age of 82.

Kaplan's impact on his students, who were to become rabbis and educators, will be discussed later. As Samson Benderly's co-worker in the New York City Bureau of Jewish Education, Kaplan trained another group of educators, many of whom he recruited from the City College Menorah Society. Kaplan also exerted influence over Jewish social workers through his frequent lectures, articles, and books on Jewish communal affairs, and as faculty member of the Graduate School for Jewish Social Work, from 1925 until its closing in 1937.

According to Kaplan, the synagogue's function is to serve as the focal point for all Jewish life. Therefore, the synagogue had to be more than a place of worship, especially since increasing numbers of Jews felt no particular desire to worship. The synagogue had to serve as a cultural, educational, and recreational center as well, reflecting as far as possible the totality of Jewish civilization.

By 1915 New York's West Side was rapidly becoming the most fashionable place of residence for the city's Jews. A small group of Orthodox, interested in establishing a Jewish center, asked Kaplan to
serve as their rabbi. The center was built on West 86th Street, and Kaplan was its rabbi until 1921.

Kaplan's relationship with the Jewish Center might well be explored by the future historians. The lay leadership was strictly Orthodox. Kaplan did not conceal his heterodoxy. His journal records that he informed the founders of the Jewish Center of his position. How can one then explain their request that he serve as their rabbi, or his affiliation with them until 1921?

This question is of little consequence for the history of Reconstructionism, but important for an understanding of the history of American Orthodoxy, since it reveals the attitudes of at least one important group of Orthodox Jews in the World War I period. The answer may lie in files of the Jewish Center, but its lay leader refused permission to search old records. Here we will hazard some guesses, none of them mutually exclusive.

The Jewish Center leaders simply may not have believed that anyone with traditional ordination, who was punctilious in his own ritual observances, could really be saying what Kaplan seemed to be saying. They may not have understood what Kaplan was saying. They may have felt that Kaplan's idiom, though heterodox to their own ears, was necessary to attract youth. In 1917 there were not many alternatives for a congregation that wanted an English-speaking, traditionally-ordained rabbi, who was a bright fellow, a good orator, and socially acceptable. Kaplan's first wife, Lena, came from the large, wealthy Rubin family, which was affiliated with the Jewish Center. Members of her family married into other wealthy and influential Center families. In fact, these were the families that eventually left the Jewish Center with Kaplan and founded the Society for the Advancement of Judaism (SAJ), now located on the same street as the Jewish Center, just a block away.

66 Kaplan's diary or journal of his thoughts and activity, which he has kept since 1913, is an invaluable source of American Jewish history, Reconstructionism in particular. The journal cannot be seen without Kaplan's permission, which he no doubt would have granted for the purposes of this study. However, its extensive use did not seem necessary. During my interviews with Kaplan, he would refer to the journal to refresh his memory, or corroborate a point. At such times he would ask me to read aloud from it, and we would then discuss the passage in question.

67 See also Mordecai M. Kaplan. "The Influences That Have Shaped My Life," Reconstructionist, June 26, 1942, p. 34. Kaplan reports that he told the founders of the Jewish Center that he was not Orthodox and did not intend to use the Shulhan'Arukh as an authoritative guide.
Kaplan’s conflicts with the Jewish Center laity were not confined to religious matters. From the pulpit he accused some of them of unfair treatment of their employees. In 1921 the board voted by a small margin to retain Kaplan as rabbi. He, in turn, resigned and, in January 1922, founded SAJ with 22 or 23 families.

Kaplan did not conceive of SAJ as a new synagogue. He borrowed the name from a group established earlier in the century by a few wealthy Jews to aid Judah Magnes in his efforts to organize the New York Jewish community. Kaplan envisaged an organization which would support the dissemination of his point of view. Still, his supporters had resigned from one shul, and now needed another. He therefore agreed to serve as their spiritual leader. From the outset, SAJ provided for societal as well as congregational members.

Kaplan refused to use the title rabbi and instead borrowed the term leader from the Ethical Culture Society. The Reconstructionist magazine, created 13 years later, was also to copy the format of the society’s monthly publication. Kaplan’s conception of religion and religious motivations may be better understood in the context of his sensitivity regarding Ethical Culture, which he feared because of its attraction to Jews. Also, he was deeply impressed by an incident related by Felix Adler, founder of Ethical Culture, in his autobiography: When the Torah reading is completed in the synagogue, the scrolls are raised and the congregation recites the biblical verses, “And this is the Law [Torah] which Moses put before the children of Israel [Deuteronomy 4:44] according to the word of God, in the hand of Moses [Numbers 4:37 et passim].” Adler, who accepted neither Divine nor Mosaic authorship of the Torah, says he could not bring himself to recite these verses, and that this was the final impetus that drove him from Judaism. Kaplan is at a loss to understand why Adler did not do what the Reconstructionist prayer book does: omit the verses and remain a Jew.

Kaplan’s sensitivity about Ethical Culture can hardly be explained in terms of his experience with the first SAJ members, although some of their children may possibly have been attracted to it. Kaplan’s followers were largely first- and second-generation Americans of East European descent, and successful businessmen. Most were traditional in ritual observance and observed kashrut in their homes. Kaplan wanted to establish SAJ on the Lower East Side in order to reach the immigrant workers who, he felt, were not served by the religious establishments. However, the SAJ members objected because they wanted a place of
worship that would be reached without having to violate the Sabbath. Though they hardly were intellectuals, they had some pretension to learning. Many took courses at Cooper Union or the Educational Alliance. What drew them together were family ties, an intense personal loyalty to Kaplan, and a sense that he was saying something Jewish that was different and important.

By the end of the 1920's the membership had grown to about 150 families, most of whom resembled the founders. SAJ sponsored a number of pamphlets in which Kaplan set forth his program for the reconstruction of Jewish life. From 1922 Kaplan edited the *SAJ Bulletin*, which later became the *SAJ Review*. Of modest format, it was a forum for Kaplan and a number of JTS graduates. Many of Kaplan's articles, which he later incorporated into his books, were historical and theological in nature. But the magazine also contained many pieces on Jewish education and on the need for rethinking educational programs. Most of the contributors were identified with Conservative Judaism, and much of their writing was critical of the amorphous nature of Conservatism and bemoaned its lack of platform or the fact that it was united only by its opposition to Orthodoxy and Reform.

During this period Kaplan and his followers represented a sometimes inchoate, but generally identifiable, left wing within the Conservative movement. While Kaplan's theology was perhaps the most radical, he was publicly respectful of JTS leadership. Often at odds with Cyrus Adler, the seminary's president and Schechter's successor, Kaplan resigned from JTS in 1927. He withdrew his resignation at the urging of a committee appointed for that purpose by the Rabbinical Assembly, the organization of Conservative rabbis. Numerous efforts were made by Kaplan's followers, all of whom were affiliated with the Rabbinical Assembly, to improve the cohesion of the left wing within, or even outside, this body.68 The pattern that was to repeat itself for many years had already evolved in the 1920's. The left wing's strength was in the practicing rabbinate, the right wing's in the Jewish Theological Seminary. The left wing, correctly or incorrectly, believed that a majority of rabbis were behind it; but it always lacked the votes. Kaplan believed that it was only a matter of time before the older, right-wing leadership disappeared and his followers would control the Conservative movement.

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68 Some fascinating correspondence on this matter can be found in Herman H. and Mignon L. Rubenovitz, *The Waking Heart* (Cambridge, 1967).
He opposed splitting the Rabbinical Assembly, and refused the presidency of the Jewish Institute of Religion, a nondenominational rabbinical seminary founded by Stephen S. Wise in 1922. Wise offered the presidency to Kaplan at least once: in 1927, after Kaplan had resigned from JTS and before he withdrew his resignation.

The conventional view of Reconstructionism is that it did not develop as an independent movement because Kaplan was convinced his ideology would eventually capture the Conservative movement, and because he did not relish the responsibility of organizing a new movement. This is only partially correct. It is quite true that Kaplan discouraged the formation of a separatist movement in Jewish life. It is also true that he restrained many of his followers, particularly Ira Eisenstein, from moving in that direction. But, as we shall see, Kaplan and the Reconstructionists undertook many projects, any one of which might have catalyzed Reconstructionism into a movement if it had generated real enthusiasm among more than a handful of people.

The organization of a new religious movement requires at least three elements: There must be some central personality who evokes loyalty and dedication among his followers. There must be commitment to a set of beliefs and practices which can serve to integrate the followers and establish boundaries between themselves and nonmembers. And there must be willingness on the part of the followers to transfer their loyalties from an older institution, or set of institutions, to a new one. The first dimension was always present within Reconstructionism; the second existed to a lesser extent; the third was absent. The loyalty of Kaplan's early followers and their admiration for him, even their personal adherence to his point of view, disguised the fact that most of them were quite unprepared to do more than gather periodically to honor their mentor, subscribe to his books and publication, or discuss his ideas.

Kaplan discouraged the organization of a movement in opposition to Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform. But he and his closest followers certainly sought to bring Reconstructionist sympathizers together under one roof. Had Kaplan succeeded, or had there been enough such sympathizers, Reconstructionism would have become another religious denomination despite itself and despite Kaplan.

As early as 1928 a conference of rabbis, educators, and social workers was held in the Midwest to set up a national organization along the lines of SAJ. It resulted in the formation of the Mid-West Council of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism. Rabbis Felix Levy and
Max Kadushin, the educator Alexander Dushkin, and Kaplan constituted its executive committee. The success of the midwestern venture led to a similar conference in the East; but there was much greater division among its participants, some of whom were more traditional, and some more assimilationist than Kaplan. Consequently, no platform representing a consensus of the participants resulted from the second conference.

Meanwhile, through the dissemination of the *SAJ Review* and the growing influence of Kaplan’s students, the ideas of Reconstructionism spread. At the close of 1928 the Beth El synagogue in Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn, adopted the SAJ platform, which tended to stress the general nature of Reconstructionism, rather than what Kaplan later was to call its sectional program. For his part, Kaplan urged that only his program, and not Conservative Judaism, could unify the Jewish people. Conservatism, he said, deals with Judaism as a religion, and religion is divisive:

> The moment you propose one mode of worship or one attitude toward observance for another, you automatically divide. These very things depend on taste, habit, and pressure of necessity. A solution to the problem of Jewish life depends upon finding, or making a positive ideology which will enable Orthodox and Reform, both believers and nonbelievers, to meet in common and to work together.\(^{69}\)

If Reconstructionism was not to be competitive with Conservative Judaism, that was because, in a sense, it subsumed it. (Obviously, though, if more than a handful of people had taken this idea seriously, it inevitably would have been established as a movement.)

By the end of its first decade, the nascent organization was undergoing a crisis. Kaplan found himself unable to devote sufficient time to his organizational and literary efforts. SAJ was not growing as rapidly as Kaplan had hoped, although, by the late 1920’s, it had attracted a number of Zionist intellectuals and educators, such as Alexander Dushkin, Israel Chipkin, Jacob Golub, Judith Epstein, and Albert Schoolman, in addition to its earlier members. Kaplan’s sense of frustration was compounded when, as a result of the 1929 depression, funds for the publication of *SAJ Review* were no longer available.

Kaplan invited Milton Steinberg and Max Kadushin to serve as his assistants, and both refused. In 1930 he invited Ira Eisenstein, a senior at JTS who had been working at SAJ since 1928 and who later became

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his son-in-law, to join him. Eisenstein accepted. He became assistant leader in 1931, associate leader in 1933, and leader in 1945, when Kaplan became leader emeritus. (The title was changed from leader to rabbi in the 1950's.)

During the depression years a number of congregations affiliated with SAJ by accepting its platform. Such affiliation generally occurred at the urging of the congregation's rabbi. But most of the synagogues never took the affiliation seriously, and, in the course of years, as the rabbi left his pulpit or lost interest in Reconstructionism, the individual congregation would drop its affiliation. The core of the early Reconstructionist movement rested in the New York congregation which supported Kaplan's projects and publications financially, and a small group of sympathetic rabbis and educators around Kaplan. They included such men as Israel Goldstein, Ben Zion Bokser, Louis Levitsky, Israel Chipkin, Abraham Duker, and Samuel Dinin. In the group closest to Kaplan were Eugene Kohn, Milton Steinberg, and Ira Eisenstein.

Kaplan's *Judaism as a Civilization* appeared in 1934. It contained the major premises and programs of Reconstructionism. The only matter on which he later changed his mind, Kaplan says, was the retention of the chosen-people doctrine, which he still accepted in 1934.

In the same year Kaplan and some of his followers agreed to launch a successor to *SAJ Review*, which would disseminate the ideas of Reconstructionism and serve as a forum for contemporary Jewish thought. The SAJ board agreed to act as publisher and supply office facilities. The approval was by one vote; there was objection to the financial responsibility entailed, to the political radicalism of some among those associated with the magazine, and a general sense of localism—opposition to diverting energies from SAJ, as a congregation, to Reconstructionism, as a national movement. The new magazine, the *Reconstructionist*, began publication in 1935. The members of the first editorial board were strong Zionists and Hebraists, and all but two were identified with Conservative Judaism.

In 1936 Kaplan wrote that "Reconstructionism should become a quality of existing Jewish institutions and movements rather than another addition to their quantity." ⁷⁰ But in the same year a *Reconstructionist* editorial ⁷¹ invited readers to comment on whether Reconstructionism

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⁷⁰ *Jewish Reconstructionist Papers*, p. xvi.
should be a new movement or a school of thought. At the first Reconstructionist dinner, held at JTS in May 1935, friends were called upon to organize Reconstructionist clubs for the study and discussion of issues of concern and to plan how to influence their fellow Jews with Reconstructionist philosophy and program. Twenty prospective leaders announced their readiness to form such clubs. They usually were formed by rabbis, existed for a few years, sponsored a project or, more likely, a discussion group, and then died out as the moving spirits changed residence or lost interest. Had the number of such groups, or the number of members within each group, grown, or the first members retained their loyalties, Reconstructionism would have inevitably become a movement.

At a summer institute, sponsored by the magazine in 1938, it was decided to expand the scope of Reconstructionism and to publish pamphlets, text books, syllabuses, and "devotional literature." A new organization, the Friends of Reconstructionism, was created to provide a financial base for the realization of these objectives, with the help of an executive director. The magazine already had 2,000 subscribers, and Eisenstein now referred to Reconstructionism as a movement, whose origin he dated from publication of *Judaism as a Civilization* in 1934.72

The Friends of Reconstructionism consisted of a small group of wealthy laymen from SAJ and the Park Avenue synagogue, where Milton Steinberg served as rabbi. It was dissolved in 1940, and the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation was organized in its place. Its purpose was to act as publisher of the *Reconstructionist*, as well as of books, pamphlets, and educational material, and to encourage Jewish art. An editorial in the periodical denied that this was an effort to create a new organization. Reconstructionism, it said, seeks to influence Jewish life by infusing the existing institutions with its spirit.73

Associated with Reconstructionism in this period were a galaxy of Jewish rabbinical and educational personalities. In addition to those already indicated, we mention here only a few who were to leave a mark on American Jewish life: Max Arzt, Mortimer Cohen, Morris Adler, Joshua Trachtenberg, Roland Gitelsohn, and Theodore Friedman. A Reconstructionist group was formed in Chicago, whose president, in the early 1940's, was Solomon Goldman. Local members included

73 *Ibid.*, February 16, 1940, p. 3.
Samuel Blumenfield, Harry Essrig, Judah Goldin, Richard Hertz, Felix Levey, Judah Nadich, Maurice Pekarsky, Gunther Plaut, Charles Shulman, Jacob Weinstein, and Leo Honor. However, some of the early followers, including Max Kadushin, had already disassociated themselves from Reconstructionism; Ben Zion Bokser did so in the early 1940's.

During this period Reconstructionism had good reason to believe that it had captured the allegiance of the leading young men of the Conservative and Reform rabbinates. Growing somewhat bolder, in 1941 it published the New Haggadah. For this Kaplan was denounced in a letter from the JTS faculty, sent at the instigation of Professors Louis Ginzberg and Alexander Marx. It called upon him to cease his work, which was contrary to the principles of JTS. In 1945, after publication of the Reconstructionist Sabbath Prayer Book, another blast was leveled at Kaplan by a JTS faculty member. However, opposition to the prayer book within the Conservative movement diminished when a group of zealous Orthodox rabbis excommunicated Kaplan and burned his book in a public ceremony. Shortly thereafter, the attitude toward Kaplan at JTS changed. Moshe Davis was instrumental in convincing the JTS leadership that attacks on Kaplan were not in the institution's interest; on the contrary, his presence on the faculty demonstrated the freedom and diversity at JTS.

For his part, Kaplan remained faithful to the institution. In his later years it accorded him personal honor and recognition, though it never gave his followers, or his ideas, the place he felt they deserved, and indeed had been promised.

In 1943 the formation of Reconstructionist fellowships in different cities was recommended, under the direction of local rabbis who would interest laymen to meet frequently for study and action, and, annually, at a national convention. Eugene Kohn felt that the fellowships should appeal to Conservatives, Reform, and Zionists. The only ones that would have no place in the movement were the Orthodox, the group which, Kohn held, "by reason of its supernaturalism and dogmatic authoritarianism is so out of harmony with the whole scientific and philosophic outlook of the modern world that it is bound to diminish, although the hysteria attendant upon persecution and war may give it a new lease on life for a time." 74

The fellowships were in fact little different from the earlier Reconstructionist clubs, most of which were defunct by 1943. The new name was apparently an effort to invigorate the national movement. Within three years there were reports of Reconstructionist study groups and fellowships in Baltimore, Arlington, Alexandria, Chicago, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Los Angeles, Oakland, Orlando, Milwaukee, and Kansas City. Rabbi Jack Cohen became director of fellowship activities. Lest there be any mistake about the intentions of Reconstructionist leaders, an editorial in the magazine observed that “with the launching of the fellowship, Reconstructionism will enter on a new phase of its career. It will cease being a mere school of thought and will emerge as an activist religious movement.” \(^75\) Kaplan himself was more hesitant about organizing as a movement rather than a school of thought. Nevertheless, even he foresaw the alignment of synagogues with Reconstructionism and, perhaps, ultimately a union of Reconstructionist congregations.\(^76\)

The magazine continued to grow in size and to attract distinguished writers. In the late 1940’s its editorial board included such disparate figures as Will Herberg and Joshua Loth Lieberman, the latter much more of a Reconstructionist than the former. The major issues to which the editorials and articles were devoted included Israel, Jewish communal organization, the problem of Jewish law, and religious freedom in Israel. For Reconstructionism, the major villains were the anti-Zionists and the Orthodox. The magazine followed developments in Jewish art and music, devoting one issue annually to them.

Despite any impact the magazine may have had, the Reconstructionist movement did not grow. A Reconstructionist Youth Fellowship, formed in 1946, at first grew and then died. In December 1950 over 40 Conservative and Reform rabbis established the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Fellowship. By January 1951, 86 rabbis, as “proponents of the Reconstructionist philosophy of Judaism,” had signed a statement, “A Program for Jewish Life,” \(^77\) embodying the basic Reconstructionist program. Eventually the document bore the signatures of 250 educators, social workers, and laymen, and 285 rabbis. Although the Rabbinical Fellowship membership grew to 150 within two years, little more was heard from it later. In 1957 members were urged “to become vociferous and frank

\(^75\) *Reconstructionist*, January 7, 1944, p. 6.

\(^76\) Paper read before Reconstructionist Conference: “Reconstructionism as Both a Challenging and Unifying Influence,” *ibid.*, October 6, 1944, pp. 16–21.

in their espousal of the movement so that its message would be brought forcefully to the American Jewish public." 

Fellowships of laymen continued to spring up and disappear in cities all over the United States, but none ever attracted sizeable numbers.

In 1950 the Reconstructionist School of Jewish Studies was opened in New York, with the announcement that branches would be established in other cities. Its existence was cited as consistent with Reconstructionism's ideology that rejected the urgings of devoted followers to "become a separatist movement organized on a congregational bases like Orthodoxy, Conservatism and Reform in this country." No branches were ever opened, and the New York school itself soon closed down.

Reconstructionism's hesitation to declare itself unequivocally as an independent movement continued. Eisenstein urged Kaplan to break with JTS and lead such a movement. He argued that if Jewish unity were to be Reconstructionism's first concern, it should surrender such projects as the publication of its own Haggadah and prayer book, which were divisive rather than unifying. Eisenstein's own preference was for Reconstructionism to become a separate denomination. Kaplan resisted. According to Eisenstein, those closest to the movement were frustrated by their inability to do anything for Reconstructionism. The absence of a distinctive denominational structure also diminished the interest of potential contributors. Organizational aimlessness and financial problems meant the loss of talented staff members, who found other institutions more attractive.

In 1950 Eisenstein was elected vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly, which meant automatic succession to the presidency in 1952. Kaplan saw this as a tremendous opportunity for Reconstructionism, but Eisenstein's subsequent experience only confirmed his feeling that Reconstructionism could not succeed within the framework of the Conservative movement.

However, Reconstructionism continued to develop structures which would have forced it to become a separate denomination, if they had not floundered. In 1952 the Reconstructionist Foundation resolved to establish affiliated regions and chapters throughout the United States under the direction of a national policy committee which, in turn, would select an executive board. Although "no competition with other existing organization is envisaged, no 'fourth' Jewish religious denomination is

78 Ibid., March 22, 1957, p. 31.
79 Editorial, ibid., October 20, 1950, p. 6.
contemplated,” the basis for such a movement obviously was present. A budget of $150,000 (an increase of $100,000 over the previous year) was projected. Study groups, school projects, summer camps and weekend institutes, workshops for Sabbath and holiday observances were envisaged. An organization of Jewish professionals, besides the Rabbinical Fellowship, also was proposed.

The following year the Reconstructionist Press was organized, with plans to publish works in theology, art, music, fiction, liturgy, dance, social action, social science, religion, education, and textbooks. An editorial board of over 50 rabbis, scholars, writers, and leaders was formed. The press is still in existence, but its publications have been considerably more modest than originally contemplated.

A Reconstructionist Fellowship of Congregations was organized in 1955, with four affiliated congregations—SAJ and synagogues in Skokie, Buffalo, and Indianapolis. A few months later a synagogue in Cedarhurst joined, and by 1957 three others were members. In 1958 a new Reconstructionist congregation was formed in Whitestone, N.Y., but disbanded within a short time. The Cedarhurst and Indianapolis congregations, too, ended their affiliation with the Reconstructionists.

In the 1950's there were changes in the inner circle of the movement. In 1953 Eisenstein was offered the pulpit at Anshe Emet in Chicago, where Solomon Goldman had been rabbi until his death. SAJ asked Eisenstein to stay, and he agreed on condition that it raise a substantial endowment for the Reconstructionist Foundation. This could not be accomplished, and Eisenstein went to Chicago in the hope of establishing a Reconstructionist base in the Midwest. Jack Cohen succeeded him as leader of SAJ. A series of executive directors conducted the activities of the movement, but it continued to stagnate, rousing itself only for periodic testimonials and dinners in honor of Kaplan. The movement, as some Reconstructionist said, was living off Kaplan's birthdays.

The crisis was more than financial; it was intellectual as well. Many friends of the movement felt that American Judaism had accepted its general program. Reform was no longer antagonist to Zionism and Hebrew, and accepted the concept of Jewish peoplehood. On the other hand, Zionism had ceased to be the rallying point it once was. Existentialism, inimical to Reconstructionist thinking, was the current philosophy

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of intellectuals. The battles of the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's against Orthodox and anti-Zionism found little resonance. Reconstructionism, it appeared, had little to say to the generation of the 1950's and no longer attracted young rabbis and intellectuals. A contraction in the rabbinical base of Reconstructionism, which we will examine later, began in this period.

In Eisenstein's absence, David Sidorsky became de facto editor of the Reconstructionist. He raised its artistic, literary, and editorial standards, and attracted a large number of Jewish intellectuals as contributors. Some of them were quite marginal to the organized community, and they found in the Reconstructionist an outlet for Jewish expression. But from a self-interested, organizational point of view, the magazine did little more for the movement than increase its financial burden. In 1958 an executive director and fund raiser was hired at an annual salary of $15,000, which then represented a major investment for the movement. Results, however, were not satisfactory.

In 1959 Eisenstein returned to New York to become editor of the magazine and president of the Reconstructionist Foundation. He had not been successful in creating a Reconstructionist base in Chicago. Sidorsky had resigned as editor, and Kaplan, by then a widower, had married an Israeli and was expected to spend six months of each year in Israel. Eisenstein felt he was needed in New York, but his return was not unanimously hailed. Objections were directed not so much against him, as against the board, which welcomed his return as an opportunity to diminish its own activity and financial investment. The board, then as now, was composed primarily of laymen who followed the leadership of Kaplan and Eisenstein. The active members were SAJ people of long standing, relatives, and old family friends.

In 1960 the Reconstructionist Fellowship of Congregations was reorganized as the Fellowship of Reconstructionist Congregations, and a year later its name was changed to the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships. (The fellowships are the local chapters, havurot, too small to function as synagogues.) Congregations were invited to seek affiliation with the Federation, and congregational affiliates no longer had to belong also to an Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform association. In this period its leaders began to refer to Reconstructionism as a movement rather than a school of thought, a change that was rationalized by the hardening of organizational lines in Judaism at the
very time ideological walls were crumbling. In 1963 the Reconstructionist viewed the organization's recent history as follows:

As is well known, for many years Reconstructionism was regarded by its leaders, its followers and its critics as a "school of thought." The activities were confined to the publication of the magazine and books. Since 1959, however, when Dr. Eisenstein took over the leadership of the Foundation, he has been pressing for the adoption of a more active type of program, including the establishment of agencies and institutions which would embody the ideas and concepts of the movement.

Recent History

The formation of Reconstructionism as a self-conscious movement made little appreciable difference in its fortunes, and its growth continued to be sporadic. An organization for college students, T'hiyah, was formed in 1959, grew rapidly, and virtually ceased to function when its organizer and director, Jonathan Levine, left to lead the Conservative movement's Leadership Training Fellowship. Today, T'hiyah sponsors occasional seminars for college students. The women's organization of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, founded in 1957, to which T'hiyah is responsible, sends free Reconstructionist subscriptions to some 500 college students.

In 1961 the Foundation announced the opening of a summer camp. The event was postponed to 1962, but the camp in fact never opened. The Rabbinical Fellowship, which had ceased functioning a few years before, was reconvened under the directorship of Paul Ritterband, but attracted only a handful of rabbis and never became a force. Ritterband left the pulpit of a Reconstructionist synagogue for academic life, and the Rabbinical Fellowship again became defunct.

The Reconstructionist continued, and its present circulation is 6,000. However, its quality has declined considerably in the last decade and it no longer attracts the gifted writers it once did. Part of the problem is the existence of new outlets for articles of general Jewish interest.

In 1969 there were ten member congregations of the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships, the last established in 1968:

1. SAJ, founded in 1922 and located in New York City. It houses the offices of the Reconstructionist Foundation and still provides the

82 Ibid., May 17, 1963, p. 25.
bulk of financial support and lay leadership for the movement. When Rabbi Jack Cohen left for Israel in 1961, the synagogue could find no suitable rabbi in the United States who was willing to take the position. With the help of Wolfe Kelman, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly, it invited Allen Miller from England to take its pulpit. Under Miller's leadership, SAJ almost doubled its membership to about 500 families, but the newer members lack the older members' loyalty or ties to Reconstructionism. Thus, there is a possibility of tension between those primarily congregation-oriented and those more strongly Reconstructionist-oriented.

2. A synagogue in Pacific Palisades, Calif. whose origin goes back to the early 1950's, with about 175 families.

3. A synagogue in Skokie, Ill., founded in 1954, with about 800 families.

4. A synagogue in Buffalo, N.Y., founded in 1955, with about 250 families.

5. A synagogue in White Plains, N.Y., founded in 1958, with about 100 families.

6. A congregation in Great Neck, N.Y., which began holding regular services in 1959 and has about 60 families.

7. A synagogue in Montreal, Canada, founded in 1959 or 1960, with about 125 families.

8. A synagogue in Curacao, West Indies, founded in 1963 as a merger of two older synagogues, one Orthodox and one Reform, with about 150 families and a unique history.

9. A congregation in Evanston, Ill., which began holding regular services in 1966 and has about 60 families.

10. A congregation in Los Angeles, founded in the mid-1960's, which affiliated with the Federation in 1968 and has about 100 families.

Of the ten rabbis who serve these congregations (four in a part-time capacity), two were ordained in England (one Reform and one Orthodox); three at Reform institutions in America; two at JTS; one received his rabbinical training at JTS but was never ordained, and one studied at various institutions. One of the ten congregations is also affiliated


with the Reform congregational group, four with the Conservative congregational group, and five with the Federation only.

Most of the nine havurot, which also are affiliated with the Federation, consist each of 10 to 15 families who meet once every two weeks for study, and gather to observe Jewish holidays. These people are generally members of other synagogues as well, but in some havurot almost all the members belong to one synagogue. There is a fellowship in Brooklyn, Newark, Philadelphia, Whittier, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. There are three in Denver.

The Federation meets annually to discuss matters of common interest and to adopt resolutions. Two are of special interest. In 1968 the Federation resolved that under certain conditions the Reconstructionist movement would consider children of mixed marriages as Jewish, even though the mother did not convert to Judaism. These conditions are that boys be circumcised and that both boys and girls receive a Jewish education and fulfill the requirements for bar or bat mitzvah. However, the parents are to be told that "in many parts of the Jewish world their children would not be recognized as Jews without undergoing the traditional forms of conversion." This resolution is in accordance with proposals Kaplan made in Judaism as a Civilization. It is a departure from Jewish standards that constitutes a denominational step by Reconstructionism.

A second resolution with denominational implications, adopted in 1967, called for the establishment of a training center for Reconstructionist rabbis and teachers. Implementation of that resolution was in the hands of the Reconstructionist Foundation. In February 1968 the Foundation announced that applications would be accepted for enrollment in a new rabbinical seminary, which was to open in Philadelphia in September.

The Reconstructionist Foundation has a membership and a self-perpetuating board. The Reconstructionist Press and the magazine are activities of the board, as was the establishment of the Reconstructionist College. The college now is an independent agency, but, according to its bylaws, it must draw at least one-third of its board of governors from the Foundation board. The women's organization, of which T'hiya is an activity, and the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships are also represented on the board. Thus, the board is a

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powerful instrument in shaping the institutional destinies of Reconstructionism. In turn, the board is under the influence of Ira Eisenstein, who today is the one and only institutional leader of Reconstructionism. He serves as president of the foundation, editor of the magazine, president of the college, and de facto editor of the press. In 1967 Arthur Gilbert, a Reform rabbi, was hired as assistant to Eisenstein in his capacity as president of the foundation and the college. (Gilbert served as Dean of the College in its first year.) Gilbert's association with the Reconstructionist movement marks the first time a distinctively Reform personality has held a position of leadership in it. The importance he ascribes to ecumenical activity, his associations with Christians, and his general style are something quite new to Reconstructionism.

**Reconstructionist Rabbinical College**

Reconstructionism's self-designation as a new movement in 1960, or its demand for recognition as a fourth denomination in Jewish life, received little attention in the Jewish community. As a movement, it appeared to be going nowhere. Its membership never was large and since the 1950's it had ceased to attract intellectuals. Its alternatives were either to die a quiet, dignified death—which many of its friends urged upon its leaders—or to assert itself as an independent movement through some dramatic activity.

The founding of the rabbinical school is a potential turning point in the development of Reconstructionism, in several ways. First, its graduates may serve Reconstructionist-minded congregations or provide the havurot with professional leaders to help them develop into congregations. Reconstructionist congregations have difficulty in finding rabbis. From time to time synagogues ask Eisenstein to recommend rabbis. In 1968 he sent an inquiry to the approximately 1,500 rabbis belonging to the Conservative and Reform rabbinical organizations, asking whether they would like to have their names referred to Reconstructionist-minded congregations. Only 60 answered yes, and many of these were not among the most successful members of the American rabbinate. Thus the college may provide professional manpower for Reconstructionism.

Second, the college is a project meaningful to the layman and may therefore be a source of financial support for the movement. It is an enterprise which, in the view of the Reconstructionists, entitles them to financial support not only from their own ranks but also from the
Jewish community at large. In turn, such support may make it possible for the movement to reach more Jews.

In its first year of operation, the college was quite successful financially. By mid-1969 it had received pledges of about $150,000 for the year, and promises of endowments of close to $200,000. Seventy per cent of the 226 pledges and 40 per cent of the actual money pledged did not come from SAJ members, indicating a response from outside the traditional Reconstructionist base.

Third, the college has introduced innovations into rabbinical training. Whether or not they prove successful, the entire Jewish community may benefit from the college's experience. For the Reconstructionists necessity proved a virtue. Since they had insufficient resources for a full-time seminary of their own, the Reconstructionists sought to link themselves in some way to another institution. They first sought a relationship with Brandeis University, suggesting that prospective students take courses in the university's department of Near Eastern studies and rabbinical courses at a Reconstructionist school to be located nearby. A price tag of $5 million, which Brandeis put on this relationship, seemed excessive to the Reconstructionist donors, and they then entered into an understanding with Temple University at Philadelphia.

The basic program of study is five years, and for those with a minimal background in Hebrew six years. (Six-year students spend their first year in Israel.) Prerequisites for admission are an undergraduate degree and acceptance into a Ph.D. program in religion at an approved institution, preferably Temple. Of the 13 first-year students, 11 were accepted at Temple and two at neighboring Dropsie College. The college itself will grant a Doctor of Hebrew Letters (D.H.L.) and rabbinical ordination to those who complete its program, the successful completion of the Ph.D. program being a requirement for the D.H.L. and rabbinical ordination. At present students must take certain courses in the field of Jewish studies which are offered at Temple, but may also choose some electives. The arrangement with Temple is a particularly happy one for the Reconstructionists, since the university's religion department is one of the largest in the United States and expects to have five permanent full-time faculty members in Jewish studies alone. Although the initial publicity of the Reconstructionists, exaggerating their tie with Temple, called forth protests from that university, relations are now extremely cordial.

The college is particularly proud of its requirement that students
receive a Ph.D. in religion at a nonsectarian institution. This, it is believed, will expose them to a variety of scholars and differing points of view in an ecumenical setting. In fact, many students at other rabbinical seminaries simultaneously pursue graduate work, or at least take courses, at nonsectarian institutions. Assuming one favors such studies, the Reconstructionist innovation is the formalization of that requirement for all students and the adjustment of the institution’s courses to complement those of the nonsectarian school.

The truly innovative aspect of the Reconstructionist college is its own course of study. Each of the five years is organized around a different core curriculum: biblical civilization, rabbinic civilization, medieval Jewish civilization, modern Jewish civilization, and, in the final year, contemporary civilization and specialization in an area of practical rabbinics, Jewish education, or Jewish culture. The entering class spent approximately two hours a week in a seminar on biblical civilization, where various aspects of the Bible were discussed, and every second week there was a lecture by a distinguished Bible scholar. The students also attended four-hours-a-week classes in biblical text, an increase, at their request, over the initially planned two-hour classes. The time was equally divided between Wisdom literature and the textual background to the biblical-civilization seminar. Finally, the students had a weekly two-hour seminar in Reconstructionism. All students were required to enroll in a course in biblical theology taught by Robert Gordis at Temple University, and to take one or two more elective courses at Temple or Dropsie.

A comparable program was envisaged for second-year students, organized around rabbinic civilization, i.e., the talmudic period.

There is a great deal of merit in such a program: an integrated core curriculum has an obvious advantage, and if one believes Judaism to be an evolving religious civilization, it makes sense to study the civilization as it has evolved. However, there are dangers as well: very limited time is devoted to text, which means that the students will not be able to do significant independent research or feel at home with the actual raw material of the Jewish tradition. Besides, concentration on evolutionary or developmental patterns in Judaism at the expense of text means that the instructor is superimposing his own concepts on Judaism. Students will learn about the Bible, about the Talmud, about the medieval commentators, rather than Bible, Talmud, and the medieval commentators. And what they learn about these is what the instructor thinks.
However, the argument is not all one-sided. To be sure, limited textual preparation means that the students will not be familiar with the original sources; but the textual material of Jewish civilization is so vast that most rabbinical students at other seminaries, certainly at Conservative and Reform seminaries, are never really comfortable with the original sources anyway. Of course, this too is a matter of degree. One might argue that a little ignorance is better than a great deal of ignorance. But the Reconstructionists could maintain that, whereas they have sacrificed a familiarity with source material which most students will never master in any event, their students will have acquired a knowledge of the basic patterns in Jewish life and thought. They may agree that this pattern represents a set of concepts which modern man has superimposed on Judaism, but they can say that there really is no alternative. The tradition also imposes conceptual categories on Jewish history and sacred text. The Reconstructionist patterns, they can argue, are less arbitrary because they are self-conscious and scientific. And while Reconstructionists may insist that students know what the tradition says about the Bible or Talmud or history, the college liberates the minds of the students by providing alternative explanations and more contemporary categories, or patterns, of thought. Finally, to the claim that extensive textual study is a precondition to understanding Judaism, Reconstructionists may reply that this reflects the particular bias of traditionalists.

However there is another risk to which one can point: the danger that an antiseptic scientism may be built into the program, which may arouse neither passion, loyalty, nor dedication among the students. A Jewish civilization too objectified may be emptied of its religious meaning. But precisely by a denial of the reality of this danger does Reconstructionism legitimize itself as a religious movement rather than as a school of thought. In addition, the Reconstructionist college introduced certain curriculum changes in the 1969–1970 academic year which, it hopes, will evoke greater commitment and fervor among its student body. Reconstructionists also may argue that though all other major seminaries stress textual scholarship, none has been outstanding in producing dedicated, well-trained rabbis. The Jewish community has little to lose from experiments in a different direction.
A frequent and sympathetic contributor to the Reconstructionist once observed that Reconstructionism provides “a philosophy of life rather than a guide to living.” Not everybody needs or wants a “guide to living.” For those who look to the Jewish tradition rather than to themselves for standards of guidance, Reconstructionism is a less than satisfactory religious expression.

Religious personalities are unlikely to be comfortable with Reconstructionism. (It is always risky to talk about a “religious personality,” but the term has some intuitive meaning for most people.) Religious personalities are attracted to the beyond, or the totally other, as a source of values. They are attracted by the force, power, or majesty of the beyond which they are moved to worship—a concept that is foreign to Reconstructionism. They find in ritual not a force for social cohesion, but a source of excitement and a sense of power. Kaplan relies on Durkheim to explain the function of religion; but Durkheim also was aware that the meaning of the social function of religion for the observer was quite distinct from its meaning for the religious participant.

The men who lead the religious life and have a direct sensation of what it really is feel that the real function of religion is not to make us think, to enrich our knowledge, not to add to the conceptions which we owe to science but rather, it is to make us act, to aid us to live. The believer who has communicated with his god is not merely a man who sees new truths of which the unbeliever is ignorant; he is a man who is stronger.

Today there may be few religious personalities or believers, as Durkheim described them. Still, that Reconstructionism is unlikely to attract them is a problem. Many people who involve themselves in the institutional life of religion are attracted to a particular institution, or remain committed to it, because of the presence, or their belief in the presence, of such a person in it. Kaplan is certainly not a religious personality, as that term is commonly, and intuitively, understood. His own life, in the opinion of many of his former students, is not characterized by religious inner conflict. As a former admirer has put it, “he gave up supernaturalism too easily.” And we have seen that Kaplan is even reluctant to grapple with problems of an individual or personal religious nature.

Of course, it may be argued that Reconstructionism does not address itself to those who experience religion, but to modern man, the skeptic, the agnostic, the atheist. At a meeting of prospective members of his Reconstructionist synagogue, one rabbi distinguished between his congregation and the general Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform synagogue by asserting that the atheist could find his religious home in Reconstructionism. But the movement’s literature and program are not geared to the modern skeptic. Kaplan assumes that the major religious problem is the content of one’s belief. He dismisses supernaturalism and requires faith in the progress and goodness of man and his creative potential. According to Kaplan, “the persistent and patient application of human intelligence to life’s problems will release the creativity that will solve them. Whatever ought to be can be, even though it is not at present in existence.”

88 He affirms God as an expression of the belief that “what ought to be is in keeping with the very nature of things, and, secondly that what ought to be will ultimately be realized. God may therefore be defined as the Power that endorses what we believe ought to be, and that guarantees that it will be.”

89 This is a strong affirmation of faith, with questionable appeal for the contemporary skeptic. He wonders less about the content of his belief than about whether he can believe at all and, if so, whether he can stake anything on his beliefs.

Reconstructionism, we suggest, can appeal neither to the religious personality nor to the skeptic. To whom does it appeal? The answer depends on how one defines Reconstructionism. In the next section (p. 68) we will define Reconstructionists as people who call themselves by that name, or who affirm a set of ideas about Judaism and God resembling those of Reconstructionist leaders. In this section we will define Reconstructionism in more institutional terms. Our question is this: who, or what kinds of Jews, have identified themselves with the Reconstructionist movement, even though they may not have accepted all of Kaplan’s ideology or, for that matter, have not even called themselves Reconstructionists, as distinct from Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform Jews.

88 Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion, p. 80.
89 Ibid., pp. 323–24.
90 Much of the material in this section draws on personal interviews. Unless otherwise noted, the term respondent refers to one of the 50 individuals interviewed in person or, occasionally, by telephone or mail. A later section relies on data derived from responses to a questionnaire. In that context “respondent” refers to a person who filled out and returned the anonymous questionnaire.
First Constituents

The early membership of SAJ, as we have noted, was composed of ritually traditional, well-to-do Jews of East European origin, who admired Kaplan without always understanding what he was saying. However, Kaplan sought from the outset to reach beyond the SAJ membership. He was, and still is, especially attracted to youth and intellectuals. SAJ provided the financial base for Reconstructionism. Its synagogue offered the possibility for liturgical experimentation. But Kaplan's significant audience were his students, primarily those of the JTS rabbinical school.

Kaplan is not a sociologist, but a philosopher making selective use of early sociological concepts. He is least sociological about Reconstructionism and the nature of his constituenty. He believes that his own ideas are accepted or rejected by virtue of their intrinsic logic or the accuracy of his facts. He assumes that people construct their religion and their lives around an ideology which they have examined. But the audiences Kaplan attracts are of a special type. He himself describes them in his first book as the future saviors of Judaism. They are those to whom

... Judaism is a habit. Jewish modes of self-expression and association with fellow Jews are as indispensable to them as the very air they breathe. They would like to observe Jewish rites, but so many of those rites appear to them ill-adapted to the conditions and needs of our day.91

Steinberg puts the matter only slightly differently. With Orthodox Jews, he says,

Reconstructionism not only has no quarrel; it has, so far as theology goes, no message... it addresses itself to those who would like to make their peace with the Jewish religion but cannot; who, on matters of faith, stand at the temple doors, "heart in, head out." 92

A writer in the old SAJ Review maintained the need for a movement "of modernist Judaism to appeal to intellectuals, even if it lacks the sentimentality to appeal to masses," 93 and some people believe that this is what Reconstructionism has become. But it is precisely sentimentality that Reconstructionism seeks to preserve through a new intellectual formulation.

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91 Judaism as a Civilization, p. 511.
93 Isidor B. Hoffman, "Shall We Reckon With the Intellectuals?", SAJ Review, October 12, 1928.
JTS Rabbinical Students

Kaplan’s rather special kind of constituency was found in disproportionately large number at JTS, between the 1920’s and the end of World War II. This is reflected in the composition of JTS rabbinical alumni who are also members of the Reconstructionist Foundation. A 1968 inquiry showed 34 per cent of all living rabbinical alumni of JTS to have been ordained before 1945; correspondingly, an estimate of the year of ordination on the basis of age indicates that 59 per cent of the seminary’s rabbinical alumni affiliated with the Reconstructionist Foundation were ordained before 1945. While 33 per cent of all the JTS rabbinical alumni were under 40 in 1968, only 12 per cent of the JTS rabbinical alumni in the Reconstructionist Foundation were under 40. Of the Reconstructionist Foundation members who were alumni of Hebrew Union College, the Reform rabbinical seminary in Cincinnati, 26 per cent were under 40.

Kaplan’s impact at JTS before 1920 is difficult to evaluate. He certainly exercised great influence on such men as Solomon Goldman, Max Kadushin, Eugene Kohn (and his older brother Jacob ordained before Kaplan had come to JTS). But Kaplan’s greatest impact came in the 1920’s and lasted until the end of World War II. Beyond that, he remained a major influence until the end of the 1940’s, and, even after his influence had sharply diminished, he continued to attract some students. Of course, not all students at JTS between 1920 and 1945 were Reconstructionists. The best estimate is that roughly a quarter of them became his firm followers. But in that period he influenced all students who came into contact with him to reflect self-consciously on their own predispositions and assumptions about Judaism, and he left most of them with sympathy for his general program, if not his particular theology.

The factors contributing to Kaplan’s influence were student backgrounds, prevailing intellectual currents, and conditions at JTS before the end of World War II.

Background of JTS Students

Before 1945 virtually all JTS students came from Orthodox homes, and a majority had attended yeshivot. Thus JTS represented for them a break with the Judaism they had known in their homes and schools. Many report that their fathers, or fathers of fellow-students, were Ortho-
dox rabbis. Still, many add, their parents really did not object to their attending JTS. Their parents' attitudes seemed to be that to study Talmud one should attend a yeshivah, and if after that one wanted to become a rabbi, one was best advised to attend JTS. Traditional Jewish law was strictly observed at JTS, at least officially. By the 1920's, however, the institution had already ordained men like Solomon Goldman, who fought with members of his own congregation to introduce changes in synagogue practices that were contrary to halakhah, Jewish law. It had on its faculty a Mordecai Kaplan, who preached heresy. And even the traditionalist faculty members approached the sacred texts in a spirit of critical, "scientific" inquiry, without the traditional assumptions about their authorship and meaning.

Orthodox parents not unsympathetic to their sons' enrolling at JTS suffered, on the one hand, from what may be characterized as a failure of Orthodox nerve and, on the other, from a sympathy for careerism. The East European Jews who came to this country did not represent a typical cross-section of East European Jewry. 94 Even among the rabbis, a disproportionate number were open to new styles of life and new modes of thought—after all, people with this outlook were the most likely to emigrate. In the first decades of this century they may well have despaired that Orthodoxy, as they understood it, would ever strike roots in the United States. Thus, if their sons were to become successful rabbis, serving the Jewish community and advancing their own careers, they had to acquire a good secular education and converse in the contemporary idiom; adopt middle-class manners, and be tolerant of Jews who deviated from the tradition.

Consequently, students who came to JTS with their parents' approval came from a special type of background. (Those who came without parental approval were certainly of a special sort.) Almost all students shared the following attitudes.

1) They were attached by sentiment and emotion to the Jewish people, whom they wanted to serve. In the case of some, this was associated with an element of careerism. In the 1920's and 1930's there was discrimination against Jews in employment, in the 1930's there was the depression, graduate and professional schools limited the number of Jewish entrants, universities were reluctant to hire Jews. In those

circumstances the rabbinate was a desirable career. It permitted the student to capitalize on a background in Jewish studies, acquired even before entering JTS. It offered at least a living wage, and often much more. Later, during the war years, when rabbinical students had draft deferments, considerations of career and draft deferment probably were in the minds of all students, but were more pronounced with some than with others. Sensitivity on this point was also stronger among some than others. The Reconstructionist students were most critical—of themselves, the institution, and the rest of the student body. An unalloyed careerist had no need to justify himself for entering the rabbinate, despite religious skepticism. It was the other students who needed to legitimize to themselves their draft deferments or their rabbinical career.

2) Most JTS students were attached, at least by sentiment, to much of traditional Jewish ritual.

3) Most of the students felt that the ritual and ideological expression of the tradition could not adequately cope with the problems of Americans Jews and their own religious problems.

4) As the students saw it, the particular failure of the tradition was the inability to come to terms with modern Western civilization. This was reflected in unaesthetic synagogues and rituals, the meaninglessness of much ritual practice, and a belief system incompatible with modern thought.

PREVAILING INTELLECTUAL CURRENTS

The second major factor in Reconstructionism's success in attracting JTS students is its compatibility with one of the dominant philosophical trends in the first part of the 20th century, Deweyan pragmatism. Positivism and Marxism also were powerful forces, but they were less directly relevant to the environment of JTS. Positivism tended to make any religious enterprise irrelevant, while Marxism made Judaism irrelevant and religion pernicious. Thus, rabbinical students could think they had no alternative but Dewey.

As we have suggested, much of Kaplan's system is Deweyan. He defines ideas, concepts, and institutions by their functions. For him, the true test of an idea is its workability. Many of Dewey's Christian followers found in his system the basis for a naturalist religion.

Another mood of the period—at least in Jewish circles—was a still dominant belief in progress. There was optimism regarding the capacity
of the human mind to understand social, economic, and spiritual conditions, and continually to improve those conditions. Finally, the social climate among intellectuals and Jews, especially in New York, emphasized social action or economic justice. Their political sympathies ranged from New Deal liberalism to socialism and Communism. In this context, Reconstructionist rhetoric was in keeping with prevailing intellectual currents, but was not as radical as it sounds in retrospect.

NATURE OF JTS

The third major factor in understanding Kaplan's influence was the nature of JTS in that period, at least as the students perceived it. 95 The curriculum stressed the study of traditional texts. While the texts were approached critically, their mastery was accepted as an end in itself. The faculty was concerned with its own research. The quality of teaching was generally poor, and most of the faculty exhibited interest only in an occasional student. Few seemed concerned with the issues of the day, Jewish or non-Jewish, or with the students. Especially frustrating was that the professors at JTS seemed not to be concerned with the reconciliation of Judaism and modern thought. Students came to JTS with the assumption that Conservative Judaism meant more than opposition to Orthodoxy and Reform. They expected JTS to have some reasoned system of thought and practice, which would permit the introduction of change into Judaism without the excesses of Reform or paving the way to assimilation. They found that virtually no one was articulating such a position and, what was worse, almost no one seemed to care.

The one striking exception was Mordecai Kaplan. Asked what attracted them to him, almost all respondents answered first: his honesty.

95 We are reporting the views and perceptions of respondents interviewed in 1969 about events that occurred when they were students, ten, twenty, thirty and even forty years earlier. Also, we did not interview a random sample of alumni, but primarily those in New York City, whose names were known and who in some way were associated with Reconstructionism. However, the fact that the sample is a biased one in the sense of not being random, and that reliance is placed on remembered perceptions rather than on an examination of documents and on interviews of faculty and administration, does not necessarily mean that the perceptions are inaccurate or distorted. My own inclination is to feel that they are substantially correct, particularly in view of the virtual unanimity of all respondents, whether Reconstructionist, formerly Reconstructionist, or non-Reconstructionist.
He was honest in confronting the problems which, almost all the students agreed, were the most important. He wrestled with these problems honestly, and was willing to follow his solutions to their logical conclusions. Even those who rejected his theology expressed their gratitude to him for liberating their minds and forcing them to confront problems clearly. As a former student put it, “Other faculty were teaching texts, Kaplan was thinking thoughts.”

As professor of homiletics, Kaplan had the opportunity to disseminate his heterodox ideas about the Bible and the traditional values of Judaism. He had discussed his proposed lectures with Solomon Schechter whose only comment was that Kaplan was “walking on eggs.” According to Kaplan, Schechter accepted the basic tenets of biblical criticism and did not himself believe in the Mosaic authorship of the Torah. But he, and his successors at JTS, followed the pattern which had been established at the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, where biblical criticism was privately accepted but not publicly taught. Many students found it hypocritical of professors to hold private views which they would not express in class, and to refuse to teach the central text of Judaism because its traditional interpretations could not be reconciled with contemporary ones. The students, therefore, appreciated Kaplan all the more because he expressed himself on matters which, at least in the early years of the Seminary, were thought to be central.

Unlike most of the faculty, Kaplan was concerned with problems of economic justice and social action. Not only did he urge political activism upon his students, he also incorporated it into his program of Judaism. Students were especially embittered at JTS’s negative attitude toward the efforts of its employees to organize a local union during World War II. The issue was complex, and the merits on each side not entirely clear. But a number of students interpreted JTS behavior as exploitative of its employees, anti-union, and institutionally self-serving. Both the administration and the most prominent faculty were involved in self-justification, which many students believed to have been basically dishonest. The fact that the administration and prominent faculty were antagonistic to Kaplan at this time only raised his esteem in the eyes of the students.

Particularly as he got older, Kaplan was neither a very good teacher nor an especially warm person with whom students felt comfortable. But he had integrity; he confronted the problems of the day; he took ideas seriously, and he formulated them into a system. This leads us to a
third aspect of the JTS environment that accounts for Kaplan's influence.

Kaplan was the only major figure at JTS who attempted to formulate a philosophy of Judaism. Without belittling his formulations or the attraction of his particular philosophical position, one may say that Kaplan had the only philosophical game at JTS. This was true even in a later period, when his influence began to wane. Students could choose Abraham Heschel's theological-mystical game, Louis Ginzberg's and Saul Lieberman's halakhic-scholarship game, or Louis Finkelstein's and Simon Greenberg's institutional-eclectic game. For those attracted by a rational philosophic style, Kaplan was the only choice. When JTS students sponsored a series of debates in the 1940's between Robert Gordis and Milton Steinberg, they may have seen in Gordis a philosophical alternative to Reconstructionism. Gordis is of the opinion that as a result of the debates, Steinberg first became aware of the existence of a serious philosophical alternative to Reconstructionism within a Conservative Jewish context. But, perhaps because he was only a part-time instructor, Gordis's position did not influence the students.

Beyond style, the contents of Kaplan's formulation also was important. In the words of a former student, "Kaplan provided the only way I could continue as a functioning Jew and still retain theological doubts." His redefinition of God and his reorientation of Judaism to accent peoplehood allayed students' anxiety about their theological skepticism, rationalized their desire to retain most of the ritual tradition, and legitimized their choice of a rabbinic career, despite their religious doubts. All this was based on Dewey's philosophy and on the prevalent sociological conceptions among students of comparative religion in that period. Not all of Kaplan's followers accepted his philosophic conclusions. One respondent volunteered that he found him "unimpressive philosophically"; but they all felt that he was going about things in the right way and that "one could live with his system."

What struck the most responsive chord was Kaplan's accent on peoplehood and his commitment to Jewish survival. He built a system around that basic core of commitment. Orthodoxy, Reform, even Conservative Judaism begin with propositions concerning God and Torah about which the students have doubts. Kaplan's starting point is the Jewish people, the one a priori proposition the students could accept. And this justified a rabbinical career, the best means of serving the Jewish people. Also, Kaplan combines his definition of Judaism with an affirmation of American civilization. He not only sanctions, he insists
that Jews live in, and affirm a loyalty to, two civilizations—the American and Judaic. This, too, the students welcomed.

As noted, Kaplan influenced all students; roughly 25 per cent (respondents' estimates varied from one period to another) identified themselves as Reconstructionists. What distinguished the Reconstructionists from the other students? Most, but not all, respondents report that the Reconstructionists, on the whole, were brighter and more ideologically and philosophically inclined. All respondents state that, on the whole, Reconstructionist students were more sensitive to moral and ethical issues, and more politically concerned. Finally, in the post-war period, when an increasing minority of students came from non-Orthodox homes, a disproportionately large number of Reconstructionist students were from Orthodox homes.

DECLINE IN INFLUENCE AT JTS

After World War II, increasing numbers of students came from Conservative backgrounds, and JTS enrollment was a break neither with their families nor their backgrounds. The affirmation of Western culture and American civilization by a Jewish thinker represented nothing terribly new or daring.

The dominant intellectual currents were religious existentialism, a skeptical attitude toward human reason, an awareness of a basic perversity in man, and a stress on the importance of "religious" experience. All this was foreign to Reconstructionism. Whereas Kaplan had no rival who proposed an alternative philosophical system, there were faculty members, like Abraham Heschel who offered alternative religious systems more in sympathy with prevailing intellectual moods. Heschel was also concerned with social and political issues, and was a champion of liberal political causes. For a variety of reasons, his popularity among the students waned after a few years. However, he did serve as a bridge between Kaplan, from whom he weaned many students, to more traditionally Jewish points of view.

In this period JTS added younger faculty members, virtually all antagonistic to Reconstructionism. Kaplan no longer represented the image of youth battling the encrusted establishment. The encrusted establishment now was the leadership of the American Jewish community, which was anti-traditional in practice and Reconstructionist in orientation, though not by identification.
In 1956 Kaplan celebrated his 75th birthday. His lectures were no longer as sharp as they once had been. He had tried, but failed, to place younger Reconstructionists on the JTS faculty. He was permitted one assistant who, however, was denied faculty status. The appointment of another Reconstructionist to the faculty was promised, but later denied because the candidate would not pledge to observe the Sabbath laws and kashrut. The Reconstructionist presence at JTS gradually diminished. Today Kaplan’s influence stems from notions the students bring with them to JTS, rather than from currents within the institutions. In a 1967 survey of first- and last-year JTS rabbinical students, 17 per cent of first-year students, but only 10 per cent of last-year students, listed Kaplan as the single person best reflecting their own religious, philosophical, and theological positions.96

Among the older rabbinc alumni, very few of the once ardent Reconstructionists remained strongly committed. For some, there was gradual drifting. They became rabbis of congregations, assumed new responsibilities, and were more involved in the day-to-day problems of administration, pacifying congregants, building a religious school or a synagogue, even furthering their own careers, than in confronting the problems of their student days. But there was also gradual disaffection from the solutions offered by Kaplan. The average Conservative layman does not require a philosophic rationale for Judaism. He wants his religion to be a living experience; he wants to be touched or moved by his religion. What he does not want is to have to do much about it. Thus the modern Jew, especially the college student, may talk about hasidism as a superior mode of Jewish expression because it involves the total Jew, but he is quite ignorant of hasidism. He does not realize that one must give in order to receive. Hasidism lengthens the preliminary prayers incumbent on a Jew because it holds that before a Jew can touch the heart of the prayer and address God, he must prepare himself. Jews were more interested in Judaism after World War II than before, but they wanted to draw upon their religion emotionally without having the resources which religion could touch, or build upon. This condition presents difficulties even for Orthodox Judaism which, after all, has a notion equivalent to the Christian concept of Grace. But it is an even greater problem for Reconstructionism, with its concept of God who cannot reach out, but whom one must reach.

Reconstructionism has failed, in part, because—at least for many people and over a considerable period of time—it cannot be lived. It cannot give. Kaplan's followers at JTS report that for a year or two, they were able to pray as Reconstructionists. They were able to say "Blessed art Thou, God," while thinking, "Blessed are you, Power, that make for creativity, freedom, justice and salvation," but it did not last very long. The reliance on reason led some into positivism and atheism, which made the whole Reconstructionist enterprise appear trivial. Others took different paths. One respondent, who now worships in an Orthodox synagogue, found, as he grew older, that not everything in his life had to be consistent; all his actions did not have to fit into a philosophically rationalized pattern. Other respondents, even those who today still call themselves Reconstructionists, have adopted a more traditional theology. They continue to accept Kaplan's emphasis on peoplehood and his insistence on the necessity for ritual change, but not his opposition to supernaturalism.

As we have noted, Kaplan ascribes the drift of his former students from Reconstructionism to their inadequate understanding of his concept of God. In fact, Kaplan adds, he himself has arrived at an adequate understanding of it only in recent years. Eisenstein's explanation of the drift is that Reconstructionism, as a school of thought rather than a movement, does not provide a focus of activity, or an outlet for expression. Our essay suggests that this is only partly true. If Reconstructionism had had the potential for a movement in the 1930's and 1940's, it would have become one in spite of Kaplan. The young rabbis, who preached Reconstructionism from their first pulpits, would have found some echo within their congregations. The havurot would have grown, and not withered. Synagogues would have come together of themselves to form a union of Reconstructionist synagogues.

Reform Rabbis and Rabbinical Students

Kaplan's influence on Reform rabbis and students at Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion was never as great as on Conservative rabbis and rabbinical students. Yet he certainly was a force among Reform Jews too. Kaplan was unknown at the Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Cincinnati during the 1920's, before the seminary merged with the Jewish Institute of Religion (JIR) in New York. He had been offered the presidency of JIR, where his ideas were especially popular. In Cincinnati Kaplan's ideas first spread with the publication
of *Judaism as a Civilization* in 1934. The book was widely read on the campus during the 1930's, and a small group of students called themselves Reconstructionists. The HUC students, like those of JTS, were especially attracted to Kaplan's concept of peoplehood.

In the 1930's HUC students could have looked to a number of faculty members for leadership. There were the textual scholars, traditional in their personal lives; the religious humanists who espoused social justice and universalism as opposed to Jewish particularism, and, in the congregational rabbinate, some of the great Zionist personalities of the period, preeminently Abba Hillel Silver. But the textualists did not concern themselves with social action, or with the relevance of their scholarship to contemporary Judaism. The religious humanists were anti-Zionist, and antitraditionalist in ritual. And Zionists like Silver held to a classical Reform theology.

Kaplan offered what some students found to be a happy combination of ritual traditionalism, Zionism, relevance to contemporary issues and social action, and, above all, a stress on peoplehood and a definition of Judaism as a civilization. The extent to which such a definition of Judaism posed both a real threat and a real alternative to many Reform leaders is evidenced in the fact that in 1935 Samuel Goldenson, then president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Reform rabbinical group, devoted his entire presidential message to a refutation of Kaplan's major thesis, without ever mentioning by name Kaplan or his book. According to Goldenson:

> Until very recently, the average Jew and even the most cultured one looked upon Judaism as a religion. Now an entirely new interpretation is offered. Instead of being regarded and accepted as a religion, we are now asked to believe that Judaism is primarily a civilization.\(^97\)

Unlike classical Reform, Kaplan found a place within Judaism for virtually every type of Jew, no matter how irreligious he might be or how he sought to express his affiliation. By offering a rationale for ritual, Kaplan represented a way back to the tradition for some Reform rabbis, who later were to exercise great influence on Reform Judaism. Kaplan articulated a mood that had come to be felt in Reform for a number of years; the anti-Zionism of early Reform was repudiated in the 1937 Columbus platform.

In the late 1930's the HUC student body was sharply and fairly

equally divided between Zionists and leftists. The crucial issue focused on attitudes toward American intervention in the war. As long as the Nazi-Soviet pact was in force, the Left opposed American intervention. All Reform Reconstructionists were Zionists, though not all Reform Zionists were Reconstructionists. Among those Reform rabbis who considered themselves Reconstructionists, many did not accept Kaplan's denial of a supernatural God.

Kaplan's influence began to wane after the war, particularly in the 1960's, when the dominant influences at HUC were religious existentialists, such as Borowitz and Petuchowski, who were more traditional than Kaplan, and religious radicals, who denied the continuity of any meaningful Jewish tradition, and questioned whether Reform even has a place in a unified Jewish community.

Reconstructionist Following Among Rabbis

Reconstructionism has greater resonance for young Reform rabbis than for young Conservative rabbis, but its meaning is not the same for Conservatives and Reform. Eighty-two Conservative and 50 Reform rabbis are affiliated with the Reconstructionist Foundation. Of the Conservatives 15 per cent are under 40 and 27 per cent over 60. Of the Reform rabbis, 24 per cent are under 40 and 10 per cent over 60. However, many of the members do not consider themselves Reconstructionists; they affiliate out of respect for Kaplan, or a past sympathy for his ideas. Many who do consider themselves Reconstructionists agree with Kaplan on the need for an organic community, or the centrality of peoplehood (the general program of Reconstructionism), but do not accept Kaplan's theology (the "sectional" program of Reconstructionism). The Reconstructionist, itself, tends to express Reconstructionism's general program rather than its special or sectional program. Not even all members of the editorial board would call themselves Reconstructionist, rather than Conservative, Reform, or secularist Jews. But there are rabbis who embrace Reconstructionism in most of its particulars and consider themselves Reconstructionists, as distinct from Conservative or Reform Jews, even though they may be affiliated with Conservative or Reform rabbinical organizations.

Organizational Affiliation of Rabbis

An analysis was made of differences between Reconstructionist rabbis affiliated with the Conservative rabbinical group and those affiliated with
Among the various groups of rabbis and Jewish lay leaders in the United States who received a questionnaire were 130 leading Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis, and 14 rabbis prominently identified with the Reconstructionist movement. All rabbis were asked to list the rabbinical organization with which they were affiliated, and to identify themselves ideologically without regard to organizational affiliation. Of the 14 Reconstructionist rabbis, 13 responded, and all identified themselves as Reconstructionists. Among 34 Reform rabbis who responded (out of 38 to whom the questionnaire was mailed), 4 identified themselves ideologically as Reconstructionists, besides, or instead of, Reform. (None of the Orthodox or Conservative rabbis did so.) Thus, a group of 17 rabbis are ideologically identified with Reconstructionism. They are not a random sample of Reconstructionist rabbis; but they are, without a doubt, representative of the majority of prominent rabbis in the United States ideologically identified with Reconstructionism. Of these 17 rabbis, 9 were also members of the Conservative and 8 of the Reform rabbinical associations. Here we will designate the first group C-R (Conservative-Reconstructionists) and the second group R-R (Reform-Reconstructionists).

These rabbis, along with the other Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis, were asked to say whether they agreed (strongly, somewhat, slightly) or disagreed (slightly, somewhat, or strongly) with 27 statements about ritual, Zionism, theology, and the relationship between Judaism and American life. From the responses one could discern distinctive Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist opinions on many, though not all, issues. There was also a typical rank-order response to most statements (though not to those concerning Zionism). Picturing the possible responses as a continuum from strong agreement to strong disagreement, we may say that, in general, Orthodox rabbis stand at one end of the continuum and Reconstructionist rabbis at the other. Conservative and Reform rabbis are in the middle: Conservatives generally to the Orthodox side and Reform to the Reconstructionist side, but closer to one another than to the two extremes.\(^\text{98}\)

\(^{98}\) The evidence for these last statements is not presented here because it would involve a highly technical discussion to demonstrate a point that really is peripheral to this essay. However, the point itself is of some interest. Readers desirous of pursuing the material may consult the statistical computations, as well
R-R and C-R rabbis were closer to one another in their responses than they were to Reform or Conservative, respectively, let alone to Orthodox rabbis. Nevertheless there were also distinct differences between C-R and R-R rabbis. Whereas one might have anticipated that C-R rabbis would most closely resemble Conservative rabbis, and R-R rabbis Reform rabbis, this was not the case. In most instances, R-R rabbis reflected attitudes closer to both Reform and Conservative rabbis. In other words, Reconstructionist rabbis belonging to the Conservative rabbinical group adopt a more radical position on Jewish questions than do Reconstructionist rabbis of the Reform rabbinical group.

This can be illustrated by citing some statements on which differences between C-R and R-R rabbis was greatest. (These differences were significant only at the .20 level.) C-R rabbis were less willing than R-R rabbis to accept the concept of Jews as a chosen people (Q.4 of questionnaire appended), and they disagreed more strongly than R-R rabbis with the proposition that only experts in Jewish law can interpret it with authority (Q.12). C-R rabbis agreed more strongly than R-R rabbis that the kind of Jewish life one ought to lead is a matter of individual conscience (Q.25); that Jews ought to help formulate a civic religion in which all Americans can participate (Q.27); that the primary loyalty of American Jews must be to American, rather than Jewish, culture and civilization (Q.29).

In all this, R-R rabbinical attitudes are close to those of Conservatism and Reform, whereas C-R rabbinical attitudes are close to the pure Kaplanian position. For Reform rabbis, we have suggested, Reconstructionism is a way back to the tradition. For Conservative rabbis, it would appear, Reconstructionism is a way out of the tradition. If future Reconstructionist growth occurs among Reform rather than Conservative Jews, there may be a moderation of aspects of Kaplan's religious radicalism. In that case, we would have the paradox of the Judaization of Reconstructionism through the influx of Reform Jews.

**Educators and Social Workers**

Reconstructionism had a special appeal not only for rabbis, but also for Jewish educators and some social workers, especially those whose Jewish identification was of a cultural-secular nature and who were un-
comfortable in most synagogues. It may have had a special attraction for those who realized that American Judaism was synagogue-oriented and that a Jew with no religious affiliation whatsoever was suspect. Also, educators knew Kaplan by virtue of his leadership of the JTS Teachers Institute, his activity in New York's Bureau of Jewish Education, and his speeches and publications in the field of Jewish education. Finally, older Jewish educators were often strong Hebraists, proponents of speaking Hebrew and consumers of Hebrew culture. Kaplan, personally and through SAJ, supported these activities. The Reconstructionist Press was anxious to publish educational material, and Reconstructionist leaders always placed great emphasis on education.

Not all secularist, Zionist, and Hebraist educators were sympathetic to Reconstructionism. To some of the more militant among them, Reconstructionism represented an unnecessary compromise with American values, an artificial creation. But to others it was a source of support and strength. Many educators are still identified with the Reconstructionist movement, but they tend to be of an older generation. Younger Jewish educators have different religious and cultural orientations.

Kaplan's special appeal for a third group of Jewish professionals, the Jewish social workers, goes back to 1925–37, when he served on the faculty of the Graduate School for Jewish Social Work. (The school closed in 1937 for lack of funds, after negotiations for affiliation with JTS and, later, with HUC, had come to naught.) Kaplan emphasized Jewish inclusiveness and the necessity for Jewish activity of a non-religious nature, and was concerned with communal problems and community structure. These emphases and concerns were welcomed by the more Jewishly committed social workers. Many others, however, were more sympathetic to Marxism than to Reconstructionism, to the Soviet Union than to Zion. In Kaplan's view, this large and articulate group within Jewish social work was especially dangerous because of the importance he ascribed to Jewish community centers, where these people functioned. In its early years the Reconstructionist published many editorials attacking the Jewish self-hatred of the Jewish Communists and their fellow-travelers, and Soviet antipathy to Zionism. According to Kaplan, these editorials were a response to the dangers from those social workers, rather than from leftists within the Reconstructionist movement.
From Professional to Lay Constituency

Among the three groups of Jewish professionals who, along with SAJ, constituted the core of Reconstructionist supporters, the rabbis were by far the largest and most influential. Perhaps they never really constituted a majority of Reconstructionists, but in the 1930's and 1940's, and even into the 1950's, Reconstructionism seemed to have had a pronounced rabbinic constituency. This no longer is the case.

Today one can identify institutionally with Reconstructionism through affiliation with the Reconstructionist Foundation or the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships. The Reconstructionist Foundation has approximately 900 paid members. Dues are $25 a year, and include a subscription to the magazine. Of the paid members, 149, or approximately 17 per cent, are rabbis. Eighty-two of these are members of the Conservative and 50 of the Reform rabbinical organization. The remaining rabbis come from a variety of places, including the Academy for Jewish Religion, a small nondenominational seminary in New York City where Eisenstein taught for a number of years. Since academy graduates are not accepted into any of the existing rabbinical organizations, some of them are especially anxious for Reconstructionism to organize its own.

As we have suggested, many, and probably most, of the rabbis affiliated with the Foundation do not consider themselves Reconstructionists, as distinct from Conservative or Reform Jews. Their membership is a tribute to Dr. Kaplan and an expression of the sympathy they had, or may still have, for Reconstructionism as a school of thought.

In 1966 the Reconstructionist announced that June 11 was to be declared Kaplan Shabbat in honor of his 85th birthday, and some 400 rabbis dedicated the day to its observance.\(^9\) By contrast, the 1969 annual Reconstructionist Foundation dinner, which was dedicated to its new Reconstructionist College, was attended by only three rabbis who were paid members of the Reconstructionist Foundation, and one of them was the main speaker. This despite the fact that the dinner was held on a Sunday evening in New York City, and more than 50 rabbinical members of the Foundation live in that area. Of the 226 contributors to the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, only 17 are rabbis.

As noted, some rabbis who identify themselves as Reconstructionists have opposed denominationalizing the movement. The launching of a

\(^9\) Reconstructionist, June 24, 1966, pp. 34–35.
rabbinical school is embarrassing to a number of staunch friends, who are unwilling to choose between Reconstructionism and Conservatism or Reform. The movement recognizes their embarrassment but does not sympathize with it. From time to time Reconstructionism denies that it is a denomination, or is in competition with Orthodoxy, Conservatism, or Reform. However, the fact of the matter is that Kaplan has publicly declared the existence of Reconstructionism as an independent denomination.

Among those who have opposed denominationalizing Reconstructionism are also rabbis who serve member congregations of the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships. The Federation, we have noted, has about 2,300 family members, but 1,300 come from two of its ten member congregations. According to the estimates of rabbis, fewer than half of the member families think of themselves as Reconstructionists. Roughly 20 per cent are affiliated with the Reconstructionist Foundation; many others receive the magazine, often at special rates, as part of an arrangement between their synagogue and the Foundation.

To many members of Federation synagogues, Reconstructionism does not represent a way of life, a broad culture and civilization, which is experienced through language, study, art, music, and ethical and political action, in addition to prayers. Rather, it is an excuse not to observe Jewish law and ritual. A number of rabbis serving Reconstructionist congregations report that, when they urge stricter observance on their congregants, the latter say it is unnecessary because they are Reconstructionists. Some rabbis comment that, in their view, the committed Reconstructionists in their synagogues have a higher secular education than the rest of the membership, but they are no more committed to, or concerned with, problems of Zionism, the general welfare of Jewry, or the United Jewish Appeal than the non-Reconstructionists. The rabbis also state that most of their Reconstructionist members come from Orthodox backgrounds. As we will see, there is reason to believe that the backgrounds of most lay Reconstructionists is traditional rather than Orthodox.

Federation synagogues differ in the extent to which Reconstructionism is part of their program. In some, the only concrete expression of affiliation, besides dues, is use of the Reconstructionist prayerbook. It is not used on all occasions in all the synagogues. Some engage in liturgical experimentation, or substitute study for traditional worship. In others,
experiments of the past seem to have hardened into rituals sanctioned only by the particular congregation’s tradition.

Among the Fellowships (havurot) there is a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, Reconstructionism. While the individual havurot tend to be homogeneous, they differ in the type of members they attract. One has a generally younger professional membership with nontraditional background; a second is composed of middle-aged members from Orthodox backgrounds, who were first drawn to a Conservative synagogue but found it too impersonal and overly decorous. Members of a third havurah come from a Labor Zionist background.

In addition to the congregations and havurot which are Federation members, there are three congregations which do not belong, but whose leading members or rabbi have considered affiliation, and may yet affiliate with the Reconstructionists. Jews who call themselves Reconstructionists, or who are Reconstructionists attitudinally, but are not institutionally affiliated with the movement, will be discussed later.

Prospects

Whatever hope the Reconstructionist movement has rests with its rabbinical school, which now is a focus for the energies of its leaders. Eisenstein has observed that “people are devoted to institutions and not ideas.” This, more than any other statement, distinguishes him from Kaplan in approach to Reconstructionism, and from the very forces which were attracted to Reconstructionism in the past. Eisenstein is probably correct. For, as a former Reconstructionist puts it, “Kaplan may have failed because he took theology too seriously. He kept insisting on thinking through God, but American Jews don’t want to think theology, they are action-oriented.” The college represents both an institution and a focus for action.

Leaders of Reconstructionism also are aware of their intellectual problems. According to one, “the movement is drawing on the past capital of Kaplan and Eisenstein.” In fact, nothing of ideological significance has been written since the 1940’s. Even Reconstructionists who argue that Kaplan’s ideas are still valid admit the necessity for a new idiom. But Reconstructionist leaders are open to more than this. They are prepared to reformulate, and even rethink, the Reconstructionist program and philosophy. This in itself is a sign of Reconstructionism’s institutionalization as a movement. After all, the proponents of a school of thought can hardly rethink and reformulate its basic program. If they
did, it would become a different school of thought. The task of reformulation is expected to be undertaken by the graduates of the college.

It is too early to predict how successful the college will be from either a broadly Jewish or a particularly Reconstructionist point of view. At this point, we can only point to some of its strengths and problem areas.

The entering class of 13 first-year students at the Reconstructionist College in 1969 came from good undergraduate colleges (two from Yale, two from Brandeis, one from Columbia, and one from Harvard), and had fine academic records, some outstanding (four were Phi Beta Kappas). Most of them had good Jewish educational backgrounds as well. They came primarily from Conservative homes. Seven had taken courses at the Hebrew University, JTS, or at a Hebrew teachers' college, as undergraduates or immediately after graduation. The remaining six had participated in Jewish life on their college campuses.

These first-year students would have been admitted to JTS or HUC-JIR. The fact that they chose the Reconstructionist College suggests that it already is able to compete with the older seminaries for talented students. Fifty applications for the entering class confirm this fact. Those who chose the Reconstructionist College were attracted by the opportunity for a Ph.D. from a secular university; but they also were attracted by the characteristics of the college itself. Among these are its deemphasis of Jewish denominationalism, which is increasingly meaningless to most young Jews; its openness to divergent points of view or to experimentation in liturgy and ritual, and the opportunity for a variety of Jewish experiences. It is hardly likely that the older, established seminaries will ever be able to compete with the college in these respects.

On the other hand, the college may not live up to the hopes and expectations invested in it. What may seem radical, daring, and challenging one year, can quickly become dull and routine the next. The Reconstructionist movement was charged by a college student (though not from its rabbinical school—which was to be established only later) with being not radical enough in religious matters. The students of the college may quickly stretch the limits of the administration's or movement's tolerance of change. Reconstructionism has a history, an ideology, an adult constituency, all building some constraints into its program. In this respect, the college differs from a second Jewish seminary that opened its doors in 1968, the Havurat Shalom Community Seminary in

Boston. Significantly, that seminary, whose administrative and financial conditions were far less secure than those of the Reconstructionist College but whose program was far more radical in experimentation of all kinds, admitted 11 first-year students.

Midway through their first year, Reconstructionist College students demanded abolition of grades and course requirements, such as term papers and examinations. How the college will work out these problems, and others that will continue to arise in a period of student ferment and revolution, remains to be seen. Morale among the first-year students remained high and the administration was most accommodating to their demands. But given a radical student body, the college may find itself under increased attack.

Not all, perhaps not even most, of the students who enrolled in the college did so in order to prepare for rabbinical ordination. Many enrolled in order to receive draft deferments as divinity students. Once the draft pressure on college students abates, enrollment may drop. Those who were attracted by the opportunity to combine rabbinical training with a Ph.D. may find an academic career more inviting. Since the students spend a good portion of their time in a secular academic environment, they may become socialized to the academy rather than to the rabbinate. And even those who choose to serve the Jewish community in some way may find a pulpit too confining or constricting. The synagogue today is still the center of Jewish life, but it is not "where the action is." Students may choose to work with Hillel, or with national Jewish organizations, or, to borrow a Christian term, they may choose an independent type of ministry as yet unforeseen.

Finally, some students preferring to serve in pulpits may be unable to secure one because Reconstructionist congregations cannot afford to pay them an adequate salary, and Conservative or Reform congregations prefer rabbis ordained by their own seminaries. It is possible that newly ordained rabbis of the college will have no special desire to serve Reconstructionist congregations. Indeed, after ordination they may not even consider themselves Reconstructionists. They were attracted to the college by its nondenominationalism and freedom from the constriction of the organized Jewish community. Why then should they prefer one denominational synagogue to another?

Our emphasis has been on the potential problems for the Reconstructionist movement in capitalizing on its new college as a source for leadership and growth. However, awareness of its problems should not
conceal the very real potential of the college for the movement, or its very remarkable success up to the end of 1969.

RECONSTRUCTIONISM AS THE IDEOLOGY OF AMERICAN JEWS

The first section of this essay outlined the major doctrines of Reconstructionism; the second traced the institutional history of the movement, and noted its failure as an institution, by any standard criteria; the third discussed the types of people who have identified with the Reconstructionist movement, why they have been attracted, and why some end by rejecting Reconstructionism. This section takes a somewhat different look at Reconstructionism, discussing it not as an institutionalized movement but as a set of identifiable ideas, beliefs, and attitudes. We will see that Reconstructionism, viewed in this manner, has many followers. We will ask what distinguishes these Reconstructionist-minded Jews from other Jews. Finally, we will speculate on why they do not affiliate with the Reconstructionist movement, or at least identify themselves as Reconstructionists.

American Judaism and Reconstructionism

A comparison of the major values or principles of most American Jews, as gleaned from their behavior, with the major values or principles of Reconstructionism suggests that many of them are potential Reconstructionists. Here, in brief, and not necessarily in order of importance, are what this author believes to be the major ideas, symbols, and institutions arousing the deepest loyalties and passions of American Jews. At a later point we will seek to demonstrate that most American Jews share these values. Here we merely assert them:

1. There is nothing incompatible between being a good Jew and a good American, or between Jewish and American standards of behavior. In fact, for a Jew, the better an American one is, the better Jew one is. If, however, one must choose between the two, one's first loyalty is to American standards of behavior, and to American rather than to Jewish culture.

2. Separation of church and state is an absolute essential. It protects America from being controlled by religious groups; it protects Judaism from having alien standards forced upon it, and, most importantly, it protects the Jew from being continually reminded of his minority status.
Only the separation of church and state assures the existence of religiously neutral areas of life, where the status of the Jew as a Jew is irrelevant to his function.

3. The Jews constitute one indivisible people. It is their common history and experience, not a common religious belief, that define them as a people. What makes one a Jew is identification with the Jewish people, and this is not quite the same as identification with the Jewish religion. Denominational differences within Judaism must not be allowed to threaten the basic unity of the people.

4. One consequence of defining Judaism as a shared history and experience is that problems of theology are not only likely to be divisive, they are also somewhat irrelevant. On the one hand, God is not some supernatural being, some grandfather image; but, on the other hand, there is a force in the universe besides man. But whatever one's definition of God, the entire matter is not terribly crucial. There are many more important things of a Jewish nature for the Jew to do, i.e., insuring the physical and spiritual survival of the Jewish people, than to expend his energy or attention on theological matters.

5. Jewish rituals are nice, up to a point. Going to a synagogue a few times a year, or lighting candles on Friday evening, having the family together for a Seder, or celebrating a son's bar mitzvah are proper ways of expressing one's Jewishness and keeping the family united. But Jews cannot be expected to observe all the rituals and practices of traditional Judaism. These were suitable, perhaps, to different countries or cultures, but not to the American Jew of the 20th century. Many rituals ought to be changed; it is up to each person to decide for himself what he should or should not observe.

6. Among the major tasks facing Judaism is insuring the survival of the State of Israel. This is every Jew's obligation. But support for Israel does not necessarily mean that one must settle there, or that living outside Israel is wrong, or that living in Israel makes one a better Jew.

Reconstructionism shares these basic values, standards, and attitudes of American Jews. In fact, they constitute the bulk of the Reconstructionist program, shorn of its philosophical underpinning. As we have seen, Reconstructionism maintains that:

1. Jews must live in two civilizations or cultures, Jewish and American, but their first loyalty must be to American civilization.

2. Separation of church and state is more than merely desirable as a practical matter; it is a religious principle.
3. Judaism is defined by peoplehood, not religion. Religion must serve Jews, and not the other way around. Since religious differences tend to be divisive, the community must be organized and unified on a nonreligious basis; particular denominational identifications must be secondary to the unifying principles of one community.

4. God is the Power that makes for salvation, not a supernatural being. But a person's theology is generally unimportant, as long as he is active in some way in the Jewish community.

5. Ritual represents the folkways of the people, and should be retained for communal and personal needs. Rituals that are not functional, or that conflict with prevailing ethical standards, or that are hard to observe should be modified or abolished.

6. Jews have a religious obligation to support Israel, but they have no obligation of 'aliyah. The notion of shelilat ha-golah (negation of the diaspora) is wrong.

What, one asks, could be more Jewish-American than Reconstructionism? With some minor exceptions, it virtually embodies the major values and attitudes of American Jews. By this we do not intend to vulgarize Reconstructionism. Certainly Mordecai Kaplan, who has been so critical of American Judaism, would be the last to welcome the idea that the majority of American Jews actually accept his principles. We do not mean to imply that Kaplan, or Reconstructionism, is understood by the American Jews. Most of them surely have never heard of Kaplan, or of Reconstructionism. But we do maintain that by extracting and oversimplifying the principles of Reconstructionism one arrives at the grass-roots or folk religion of American Jews. Folk religion is often an oversimplification of a more complex religious system.

But if this is so, why is it that most Jews do not identify with Reconstructionism?

It may be argued that the other groups in American Judaism—Orthodoxy, Reform, and especially Conservatism—also embody most, if not all, these values. However, none has articulated them so explicitly as Reconstructionism, so elevated them to the status of basic principles, or so incorporated them into ideology and prayer. Only Reconstructionism really has made them into a religion. Also, the agreement with these principles among non-Reconstructionist leaders is much lower than among Reconstructionist leaders. For example, in the questionnaire mentioned above, Reconstructionist rabbis were in greater agreement than non-Reconstructionist rabbis with the statements embodying these basic
values. Not all differences between Reconstructionist and non-Reconstructionist rabbis were statistically significant, but they were always in the expected direction. That is, Reconstructionist rabbis always expressed greater agreement with statements reflecting Reconstructionist ideology than did Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis. The only issue on which Reconstructionist rabbis did not stand at an extreme of the attitudinal continuum was Israel. They were more sympathetic to the role of Israel in Jewish life than were Conservative and Reform rabbis, but less than the Orthodox. This is consistent with Reconstructionist ideology, which transformed Zionism into a religious ideology earlier and more radically than Conservatism and Reform, but which, unlike Orthodoxy, adopted a position against negation of the diaspora and did not stress the religious importance of ‘aliyah.

In summary: We suggested a set of major values or principles determining the behavior of American Jews. We found that these coincided with basic Reconstructionist ideology, as elaborated by Kaplan. Finally, we found that Reconstructionist rabbis were distinguishable from non-Reconstructionist rabbis by their agreement with those values or principles. In order to demonstrate the extent to which American Jews actually do accept Reconstructionist values, we will determine to what extent American Jews are in greater agreement with Reconstructionist rabbis than with Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform rabbis.

The Survey

The distribution of religious beliefs and attitudes among all American Jews, even by sampling procedures, could not be established within the limitations of this study. For this reason, it was decided to sample lay leaders of Jewish organizations, whose opinions, in the last analysis, are more crucial in determining the ideological direction of the community than a random sample of Jews, most of whom are likely to be apathetic anyway. Questionnaires were sent to presidents of all member congregations of Reform and Conservative synagogue groups. There is no listing of presidents of all Orthodox synagogues; but questionnaires were mailed to all presidents on the best available list, containing some 800 names, roughly the same number as Conservative presidents and about 150 more than Reform. The mailing reached an estimated 70 per cent of all synagogue presidents in the United States. The synagogues excluded were generally the small, unstable, or quite new.

Obtaining a sample of lay leaders from secular (nonreligious) Jewish
organizations was more difficult. Two of the larger Jewish organizations, with chapters throughout the country, one an organization of men and the other of women, were approached for lists of their presidents. They were assured of anonymity, if desired. The mens' organization agreed to cooperate, but asked to remain unidentified. For purposes of presentation, we will call it the National Jewish Organization (NJO). NJO has many local chapters engaging in a variety of social, educational, pro-Israel, and Jewish-defense activities. Its membership is predominantly middle-class. The women's organization, Hadassah, unfortunately kept postponing a decision on cooperation beyond the time limit of the study and, in fact, never actually agreed or refused. Therefore, the only women respondents are the few women presidents of synagogues (less than one per cent of the total sample). Since women play an important leadership role in local Jewish organizations, their virtual absence in the sample may have biased the findings. We cannot predict whether their reactions to questions of religious ideology would be different from those of men. They might identify with Reconstructionism more than men because Reconstructionism has insisted that women be assigned religious roles, traditionally the exclusive prerogative of men, and has been more critical than any other religious group of those aspects of the tradition which discriminate against women, or relegate them to an inferior position. On the other hand, women generally tend to be religiously more conservative than men, and may therefore be in greater disagreement with attitudes reflecting Reconstructionist points of view.

The percentage of returns can be reported only with some vagueness, in part to conceal the exact number of presidents on different lists, in part because some of the organizations did their own mailing of the questionnaires, and one was not certain of the precise number sent out. Approximately 40 per cent (variations from 38 to 42 per cent) of presidents of Reform congregations, Conservative synagogues, and NJO chapters returned the questionnaire, but only 16 per cent or so of Orthodox presidents. Non-Orthodox responses therefore can be treated with a great deal more confidence than Orthodox. This is a not too serious problem for us, since Reconstructionist-type responses, in which we are interested, are least likely to come from the Orthodox.

The low return from the Orthodox may be explained by the fact that they generally respond in smaller numbers than do the non-Orthodox, possibly because of their inferior secular education, the lower rate of
native Americans among them, greater suspicion of questionnaires, greater demand for privacy, less confidence in the value of social-science research, or greater time pressures. Another factor may also help to account for the low return. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. In order to correct for any tendency on the part of respondents to agree or disagree automatically with all statements, some were worded in agreement with traditional Jewish attitudes, others in disagreement. It is conceivable then that an Orthodox Jew, who is very sensitive about his traditional beliefs and is unaccustomed to responding to attitudinal statements, would have found some formulations so offensive as to refuse to respond. Thus, the actual Orthodox returns are likely to be biased in favor of the more acculturated, Americanized, secularly better educated, and religiously less sensitive—toward the religious left or modern Orthodox, rather than the right.

Finally, there always is the possibility that the questionnaires did not reach all the approximately 800 Orthodox synagogue presidents because of incorrect addresses, or for some other, similar reason.

Results

The lay leaders were presented with a set of statements which were similar to, though not identical with, those sent to the rabbis. Changes in a few questions were made on the basis of the rabbis' earlier, open-ended responses. Like the rabbis, these respondents were asked to check whether they agreed strongly, somewhat, or slightly, or disagreed slightly, somewhat, or strongly with each statement. Each answer was assigned a score from 1 (agree strongly) to 6 (disagree strongly). An average, or mean, score was then tabulated on each question for each group of rabbis, for each group of synagogue presidents, and for NJO presidents. A comparison could then be made between the attitudes of different groups of rabbis and of different groups of laymen in the six major areas of Jewish values, at least for questions that were unchanged or had only minor stylistic modifications. The tables that follow present the mean score for each group, the number of responses from each group, and the standard error of the mean. (The standard error of the mean, computed by dividing the standard deviation by the square root of the number of responses, is most useful for readers who wish to calculate tests of significance not reported here.)

1. Judaism and Americanism. Reconstructionist rabbis agreed most
strongly that an American Jew's first loyalty must be to American rather than Jewish culture and civilization. The mean scores of both synagogue and NJO presidents were closer to the Reconstructionist than to any other group of rabbis.

**Table 1.**

Agree or disagree: American Jews' first loyalty must be to American not Jewish culture and civilization (Q.29)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox rabbis</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative rabbis</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform rabbis</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative synagogue presidents</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform synagogue presidents</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All synagogue presidents</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>656*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJO presidents</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly  
6.00 = disagree strongly

2. **Church and state.** Reconstructionist rabbis agreed most strongly on the necessity and religious importance of separation of church and state. The mean scores of both synagogue and NJO presidents were closer to the Reconstructionist than to any other group of rabbis.

**Table 2.**

Agree or disagree: Separation of church and state is essential (Q.28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox rabbis</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative rabbis</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform rabbis</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative synagogue presidents</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform synagogue presidents</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All synagogue presidents</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJO presidents</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly  
6.00 = disagree strongly

* The synagogue president total in this and subsequent tables is slightly larger than the total of all Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform synagogue presidents. The difference is accounted for by synagogue presidents who failed to list their denominational affiliation, or who were affiliated with synagogues of more than one denomination.
3. **Peoplehood.**

a. **Loyalty.** Reconstructionist rabbis agreed most strongly that loyalty to the Jewish people is more important than loyalty to Judaism as a religion. Again the mean scores of both synagogue and NJO presidents were closer to the Reconstructionist than to any other group of rabbis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox rabbis</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative rabbis</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform rabbis</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJO presidents</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly
6.00 = disagree strongly

b. **Community.** Reconstructionist rabbis also agreed most strongly on the need for a single unified Jewish community with democratically selected leaders. Orthodox and Reform rabbis disagreed most strongly. In this instance, all groups of laymen were closer to Orthodox and Reform than to Reconstructionist rabbis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox rabbis</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative rabbis</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform rabbis</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>289</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform synagogue presidents</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>270</td>
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<tr>
<td>All synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJO presidents</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly
6.00 = disagree strongly
c. Judaism. Reconstructionist rabbis disagreed most strongly with the statement that Judaism was best defined as a religion rather than as a culture or civilization. Orthodox rabbis agreed most strongly, and Reform followed. The mean scores of the responses of synagogue and NJO presidents were closest to Reform.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
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<th>Standard Error</th>
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<tr>
<td>Orthodox rabbis</td>
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<td>4.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>NJO presidents</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly  
6.00 = disagree strongly

The scores in Tables 4 and 5 suggest a problem for Reconstructionism in its appeal to American Jews. Jews are unwilling to surrender their autonomy to more centralized communal agencies. Also, whereas Jews agree that Jewish peoplehood is of a more binding character than Jewish religion, they are not willing to accept this as part of their definition of Judaism (p. 69).

d. Jewish religion. Finally, the mean scores of laymen on the statement that the Jewish religion must be made to serve the Jewish people rather than having the people serve religion was closest to Conservative and Reform rabbis who, in turn, stood between the Reconstructionist rabbis' strongest agreement and Orthodox rabbis' strongest disagreement.

Jews may act as though their religion must be made to serve them rather than the reverse, but they are hardly prepared to acknowledge it. This, too, has deeper implications, to which we will return in the final discussion.

4. Theology. Mean scores of synagogue and NJO presidents were somewhat closer to those of Reconstructionist rabbis, who agreed most
Table 6.

Agree or disagree: Jewish religion must serve Jews, not Jews the religion (Q.19)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
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<td>Reform rabbis</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
<td>2.06</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform synagogue presidents</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>277</td>
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<tr>
<td>All synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJO presidents</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly
6.00 = disagree strongly

strongly that God is not a supernatural being but the Power that makes for salvation.

Table 7.

Agree or disagree: God is Power that makes for salvation, not a supernatural being (Q.21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>.09</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative synagogue presidents</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>.11</td>
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<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJO presidents</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly
6.00 = disagree strongly

Presidents also agreed somewhat more strongly with Reconstructionist rabbis, who of all rabbis agreed most strongly, that Jews are not a chosen people.

5. Ritual. Thus far, all NJO presidents have been considered one group, although we could have subdivided them into those defining themselves as Orthodox, as Conservatives, and as Reform. Had we done so, we would have found the same results as we did when subdividing synagogue presidents: While Orthodox presidents deviated from all
**Table 8.**

Agree or disagree: Jews are not a chosen people (Q.4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox rabbis</td>
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<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative rabbis</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform rabbis</td>
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<td>.34</td>
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<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4.51</td>
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<td>111</td>
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<td>Conservative synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJO presidents</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly  
6.00 = disagree strongly

other respondents, they constituted such a small part of the sample that their deviation did not affect the totals. Conservative and Reform synagogue presidents and NJO presidents who identified themselves as Conservative or Reform, gave virtually identical responses to all the statements. This does not apply to the following series of statements dealing with ritual. Consequently, in the tables that follow data are reported

**Table 9.**

Agree or disagree: Jews should observe all rituals including those having no meaning for them (Q.8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative rabbis</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform rabbis</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative synagogue presidents</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform synagogue presidents</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All synagogue presidents</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox NJO presidents</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative NJO presidents</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform NJO presidents</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All NJO presidents</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>490*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly  
6.00 = disagree strongly

* In this and subsequent tables the NJO total is greater than Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform NJO presidents since it includes NJO presidents who defined themselves as Reconstructionists, or secularists or other (see Q.3, Appendix).
for NJO as well as synagogue president sub-groups. However, the reader should bear in mind the different definitions. In the case of synagogue presidents, the denominational differences denote the different institutions which respondents lead (Q.1). In the case of NJO presidents, denominational differences denote a respondent's reply to a question asking him to define himself denominationally, without regard to synagogue affiliation (Q.3).

Respondents were asked to react to six statements which probed their attitude toward ritual. Three statements related to the determination of proper ritual behavior. Tables 9, 10, and 11 indicate the responses to these statements.

**Table 10.**

Agree or disagree: Very inconvenient rituals can be ignored (Q.18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>.31</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative rabbis</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform rabbis</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>.12</td>
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<td>Conservative synagogue presidents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform synagogue presidents</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All synagogue presidents</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>703</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthodox NJO presidents</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative NJO presidents</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform NJO presidents</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All NJO presidents</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly  
6.00 = disagree strongly

Reconstructionist rabbis agreed most strongly, and Orthodox rabbis disagreed most strongly, that the individual's conscience and convenience should determine proper Jewish behavior. As was the case in response to previous statements, the responses of Orthodox laymen (synagogue and NJO presidents) were similar to those of Orthodox rabbis. Conservative laymen agreed with Conservative rabbis on two statements, and with Reconstructionists on the statement that the kind of Jewish life one should lead should be left to the individual's conscience (Q.25). Reform laymen generally were in greater agreement with Reconstructionist rabbis than with Reform rabbis.
**Table 11.**

Agree or disagree: The kind of Jewish life one should lead should be left to the individual’s conscience (Q.25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox rabbis</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative rabbis</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform rabbis</td>
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<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
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<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Orthodox NJO presidents</td>
<td>2.85</td>
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<td>Conservative NJO presidents</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform NJO presidents</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>All NJO presidents</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly
6.00 = disagree strongly

A second aspect of attitudes toward ritual relates not to standards of proper ritual behavior but to authority and sources for ritual and ritual change. Responses to three statements on this aspect of ritual will be found in Tables 12, 13, and 14.

**Table 12.**

Agree or disagree: A fundamental principle of contemporary Judaism must be adaptation of the tradition to contemporary man (Q.9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Reform rabbis</td>
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<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox synagogue presidents</td>
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<td>294</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform synagogue presidents</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All synagogue presidents</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox NJO presidents</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.06</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly
6.00 = disagree strongly
Table 13.

Agree or disagree: Authentic guidance for Jewish behavior comes from masters of Jewish law (Q.10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Reform rabbis</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>3.27</td>
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<td>486</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly
6.00 = disagree strongly

Table 14.

Agree or disagree: Only experts in Jewish law can interpret it with authority, but such experts must be knowledgeable in secular culture (Q.12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative rabbis</td>
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<td>.31</td>
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<td>Reform rabbis</td>
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<td>Reconstructionist rabbis</td>
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<td>.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>All NJO presidents</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>482</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.00 = agree strongly
6.00 = disagree strongly

Among rabbis, Reconstructionists were in greatest agreement that tradition must be adapted to contemporary man and that masters of the law are not the authority for change. Orthodox rabbis were generally in greatest disagreement, except for Table 14. Here it may be assumed that Orthodox rabbis demurred not at the importance of experts in the
law, but rather at the declaration that the experts must also be knowledgeable in secular and non-Jewish culture. (The statement was designed to distinguish Conservative from non-Conservative attitudes, which it did among the rabbis.) In general, the attitudes of each group of laymen resembled those of their own denomination's rabbis more closely than those of any other group of rabbis.

Regarding ritual attitudes, then, non-Orthodox laymen (the vast majority of the sample) tended to agree with Reconstructionists on the behavioral dimension of how one should act, but agreed with their own rabbis on the more theoretical dimension of the sources and authority for ritual and ritual change.

6. Israel. As noted, no Orthodox-Conservative-Reform-Reconstructionist order existed in the rabbis' attitudes toward Israel. Orthodox rabbis were most sympathetic toward the role of Israel in Jewish life; Reconstructionists, Conservative, and Reform followed, in that order. Orthodox laymen, less Zionist than Orthodox rabbis, had a mean score closest to the Reconstructionist position. Other laymen were generally closest to the position of Reform rabbis.

* * *

To sum up the findings regarding the six areas in which the major values of American Jews are expressed: In three of them, attitudes toward America, separation of church and state, and theology, presidents of Conservative and Reform synagogues and of NJO chapters were closer to Reconstructionist than Conservative, or Reform attitudes. About Israel they were closest to Reform. There was ambiguity regarding attitudes toward peoplehood and toward ritual: The lay respondents agreed with the Reconstructionist position on the primacy of the Jewish people, rather than its religion, but they disagreed with Reconstructionism on the consequences of this position. That is, they did not agree that Judaism should therefore be defined more properly in terms of peoplehood than of religion, or that religion should be made subservient to the people. Nor did they agree that, because they feel no obligation to observe meaningless or inconvenient rituals, these should be changed to suit the convenience of modern man, or that authoritative changes in ritual should be taken out of the exclusive control of "experts

in the law.” In simple terms, respondents agreed with the Reconstructionist rabbis on those statements which came closest to expressing behavioral norms; on statements expressing definitions, or rationalizations of behavior, they took a more traditionalist position. American Jews may act like Reconstructionists, but they neither think nor talk like them.

This is true even with regard to theological matters. Reconstructionist rabbis unanimously reported strong disagreement (6.00) with the statement that the Pentateuch (Humash), as we know it today, was given by God to Moses at Sinai. Conservative and Reform rabbis expressed equally strong disagreement (5.45). Conservative and Reform laymen expressed much less disagreement (3.86 and 4.47 respectively); Orthodox laymen were in agreement. The behavior of American Jews is consistent with that of practitioners of what we will call folk religion. They may deviate from the established religion in ritual, but are less likely to do so in matters of belief or doctrine (p. 95–96).

Reconstructionists’ Characteristics

In most instances, therefore, laymen (except for the Orthodox) were in greater agreement with Reconstructionist rabbis than with the rabbis of their own denominations. Reconstructionist rabbis, in turn, are indeed Reconstructionist in their acceptance of the major outlines of Kaplan’s position. The question then arises why, if most Jews adopt positions congruent with Reconstructionism, they neither affiliate with the movement nor identify themselves as Reconstructionists. First, however, let us explore two related questions.

Whereas the attitudes of most laymen on most issues were closer to Reconstructionism than to Orthodoxy, Conservatism, or Reform, this was not necessarily true of all laymen. We will call the Reconstructionist-minded laymen potential Reconstructionists, since with few exceptions they are neither affiliated nor self-identified as Reconstructionists. What characteristics, if any, distinguish potential Reconstructionists from other respondents?

Potential Reconstructionists

To isolate the potential Reconstructionists, we must cut through our former classifications. We chose from our questionnaire selected statements on which Reconstructionist rabbis significantly differed from non-Reconstructionist rabbis, and for each such statement we construct a
frequency distribution for laymen. Potential Reconstructionists are defined as those who agree strongly or somewhat, or disagree strongly or somewhat, with statements to which Reconstructionist rabbis have responded with significantly greater agreement or disagreement, respectively, than non-Reconstructionist rabbis. We then examine differences between non-Reconstructionists and potential Reconstructionists with respect to the following:

a) The role of religion in their lives (Q.31); of great importance, of some, of little, or of none.

b) Secular education (Q.32).

c) Jewish education (Q.33 and 34).

d) Age (Q.35).

e) Religious environment in parents' home (Q.37).

f) Income (Q.38).

Unless otherwise noted, whenever a difference between potential Reconstructionists and non-Reconstructionists is mentioned in the discussion that follows, it is stastically significant at the .05 level.

1) Relationship to America. Sixty-one per cent of the respondents agree strongly, or somewhat, that a Jew's first loyalty is to American not Jewish culture and civilization (Q.29). Thus 61 per cent of the respondents to this question are potential Reconstructionists. Here the only difference between non-Reconstructionists (other respondents) and potential Reconstructionists is that 35 per cent of the potential Reconstructionists, and 45 per cent of the non-Reconstructionists, report that religion plays a very important role in their lives. There are no other statistically significant differences.

2) Church and state. Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents agree with the Reconstructionist position that separation of church and state is a religious value, and is also essential for harmony and fair play (Q.28). With respect to this question, therefore, 68 per cent of the respondents fall into the category of potential Reconstructionists. Forty per cent of the potential Reconstructionists, and 30 per cent of the non-Reconstructionists (the remaining respondents), report that religion plays a very important role in their lives. People to whom religion is not very important would normally be the potential Reconstructionists. Here, however, people for whom religion is not very important may also have been more inclined to deny that separation of church and state is a religious value: it may have been a value, a significant one, but not a religious one. The injudicious use of the word "religious" in the question
is probably responsible for the blurring of differences here, or actually for a reversal of positions between non-Reconstructionists and potential Reconstructionists.

3) Theology. Thirty-three per cent of the respondents agree strongly or somewhat with the Reconstructionist position that Jews are not a chosen people (Q.4). In this case, therefore, only 33 per cent of the respondents are potential Reconstructionists. Thirty-four per cent of these, and 46 per cent of the others, report that religion plays a very important role in their lives.

Sixty-three per cent of the respondents agree with the Reconstructionist position that God is a force making for human betterment, but not a supernatural being (Q.30). We divide the non-Reconstructionists into two groups: those believing in a personal, supernatural God (27 per cent of the respondents), whom we label supernaturalists, and those classifying themselves as agnostics, atheists, or not having any strong beliefs about God, whom we called agnostics, as a matter of convenience (10 per cent of the respondents). Thirty-eight per cent of the potential Reconstructionists report that religion plays a very important role in their lives, compared with 62 per cent of the supernaturalists and 14 per cent of the agnostics. Sixty-six per cent of the potential Reconstructionists and 62 per cent of the agnostics, but only 49 per cent of the supernaturalists, are at least college graduates. Seventeen per cent of the potential Reconstructionists and 16 per cent of the agnostics, but 27

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**Table 15.**

Differences in selected characteristics between potential Reconstructionists, supernaturalists, and agnostics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Potential Reconstructionists</th>
<th>Supernaturalists</th>
<th>Agnostics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion plays a very important role in my life</td>
<td>38*</td>
<td>62*</td>
<td>14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49*</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine years or more of Jewish education</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27*</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under age 45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditional</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>49*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of respondents</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Differences significant at the .05 level.
per cent of the supernaturalists, have had nine or more years of Jewish education. Thirty-seven per cent of the potential Reconstructionists and 35 per cent of the supernaturalists, but 49 per cent of the agnostics, are below 45 years of age. Sixty-two per cent of the potential Reconstructionists and 75 per cent of the supernaturalists, but only 49 per cent of the agnostics, come from Orthodox or traditional backgrounds.

4) Peoplehood. Forty-seven per cent of the respondents agree strongly or somewhat with the Reconstructionists that the Jewish religion should serve the people, not the reverse (Q.19)—i.e., in this respect 47 per cent of the respondents are potential Reconstructionists. Thirty per cent of these potential Reconstructionists, compared with 50 per cent of the non-Reconstructionists, report that religion plays a very important role in their lives. Thirty-one per cent of the potential Reconstructionists, compared with 38 per cent of the others, were under the age of 45. Fifty-five per cent of the potential Reconstructionists, compared with 63 per cent of the others, came from Orthodox or traditional backgrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Potential Reconstructionists</th>
<th>Non-Reconstructionists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion plays a very important role in my life</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under age 45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' home Orthodox or Traditional</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' home Orthodox or traditional</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of respondents</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All differences significant at the .05 level.

Forty per cent of the respondents agree strongly or somewhat that loyalty to the Jewish people is more important than loyalty to the Jewish religion (Q.22). Again, fewer of these potential Reconstructionists than of non-Reconstructionists report that religion plays a very important role in their lives (31 as against 40 per cent), but more come from Orthodox or traditional backgrounds (65 and 55 per cent, respectively).

Thirty-seven per cent of the respondents agree strongly or somewhat with Reconstructionists that it is a matter of religious urgency to create
a single, unified Jewish community, with democratically elected leaders, to constitute the basic structure of Jewish life (Q.23). Fewer potential Reconstructionists are at least college graduates (50 per cent, compared with 66 per cent of the non-Reconstructionists), fewer are under the age of 45 (23 and 42 per cent, respectively), fewer have incomes of $20,000 a year or more (46 compared to 54 per cent), but more come from Orthodox or traditional backgrounds (64 compared to 56 per cent).

### Table 17.

Differences* in selected characteristics between those who agree strongly or somewhat on the need for a centrally organized Jewish community (potential Reconstructionists) and those who do not (non-Reconstructionists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Potential Reconstructionists</th>
<th>Non-Reconstructionists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under age 45</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual income $20,000 or more</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' home Orthodox or traditional</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of respondents</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>805</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All differences significant at the .05 level.

5) **Ritual.** Seventy per cent of the respondents agree strongly or somewhat that the kind of Jewish life a person leads ought to be left to his conscience (Q.25). Once again, there are significantly fewer potential Reconstructionists than non-Reconstructionists who say that religion plays a very important role in their lives (33 and 46 per cent, respectively).

6) **Israel.** We cannot isolate the attitudes of potential Reconstructionists toward Israel, since Reconstructionist rabbis do not differ significantly from all other rabbis in their responses to statements concerning the proper role of Israel in Jewish life.

***

In summary, potential Reconstructionists are generally indistinguishable from other respondents in such characteristics as secular and Jewish education, age, and income. Among respondents to questions relating to peoplehood, significantly more potential Reconstructionists than non-Reconstructionists come from Orthodox or traditional homes. The most marked difference between potential Reconstructionists and others is
that significantly fewer of the former report that religion plays a very important role in their lives.

Thus, examining the responses to eight statements, we find that, on the basis of four, over 60 per cent of the respondents can be classified as potential Reconstructionists. On the remaining four, the proportion of potential Reconstructionists varies from 33 to 47 per cent. Nevertheless, very few Jews identify themselves as Reconstructionists, much less affiliate. Some do. We shall use the term "Reconstructionist laymen" to refer to those respondents who, in response to a question asking them to describe their religious identification (Q.3), checked Reconstructionist.

**Reconstructionist Laymen**

Respondents were asked to characterize themselves by religious identification, without regard to synagogue affiliation. Fifty-one respondents (4 per cent of the total sample) identified themselves as either Reconstructionist, or Reconstructionist and Conservative (6 cases), or Reconstructionist and Reform (2 cases). This group of 51 respondents we call Reconstructionist laymen. Here we discuss their distinctive attitudes and social characteristics.

Of the 51 respondents who characterize themselves as Reconstructionists, 4 per cent are affiliated with an Orthodox synagogue, 69 per cent with a Conservative synagogue, 18 per cent with a Reform synagogue, and 10 per cent with other synagogues (perhaps synagogues affiliated with the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Fellowships). Of the Reconstructionists, 57 per cent were presidents of synagogues, and 43 per cent presidents of NJO chapters.

As might be expected, attitudes of Reconstructionist laymen conform more closely to those of Reconstructionist rabbis than do the attitudes of other groups of laymen. In social characteristics, the differences between Reconstructionist and non-Reconstructionist laymen resemble differences between potential Reconstructionists and non-Reconstructionists (p. 84). Significantly fewer Reconstructionist laymen (21 per cent) report that religion plays a very important role in their lives (Q.31). The figure for the rest of the sample was 40 per cent.

The other difference between Reconstructionist laymen and non-Reconstructionists has to do with religious background (Q.37). Twenty-two per cent of the Reconstructionists report that they were raised in Orthodox and observant homes, and the proportion for Reform Jews
was about the same—lower than the 31 per cent reported by the Conservatives, and considerably lower than the 70 per cent reported by the Orthodox. Reconstructionists and Reform differed in that 47 per cent of the former and 28 per cent of the latter report having been raised in traditional, but not meticulously observant homes. For the Orthodox and Conservatives, these figures are 27 and 40 per cent, respectively.

The pattern here, while statistically not significant, is nevertheless interesting. Most Reconstructionists (67 per cent) come from either Orthodox and observant homes, or traditional though not ritually meticulous ones. In this respect they are like the Orthodox and Conservative respondents, most of whom also come from either Orthodox or traditional homes. But whereas most of the Orthodox are from Orthodox homes, and only slightly more Conservatives come from traditional than from Orthodox homes, for Reconstructionists the traditional rather than the Orthodox home is clearly the norm. (Over one half of the Reform respondents come from non-Orthodox and nontraditional homes.)

### Table 18.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home</th>
<th>(Per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orthodox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, indifferent to religion, indifferent to Judaism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number responding (excluding secularists and persons who did not respond to question)</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The secular education of Reconstructionist laymen is comparable to that of all other groups: seventy-three per cent of the Reconstructionists, compared with 67 per cent of the total sample, reported having at least a college degree. Jewish education, too, is roughly the same for all groups, except for the Orthodox who have had appreciably more, and more intensive, Jewish education. The age distribution among all groups, except the Orthodox, is the same. Considerably more of the latter are at least 55 years of age, and considerable fewer are under 45. Reconstructionist laymen also are indistinguishable by income. Sixty-three per cent reported income of over $20,000 a year, as compared with 55 per cent
of the total sample—a difference that is statistically not significant. The percentage of Reconstructionist in this income bracket is equalled by presidents of Conservative synagogues and exceeded by presidents of Reform synagogues. Among NJO presidents, fewer Reconstructionist than Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform earn more than $20,000 annually.

Thus, Reconstructionist laymen differ from non-Reconstructionists only in the role religion plays in their lives and in their religious background—not in their secular education, Jewish education, age, or income.

The distinguishing characteristics of Reconstructionist laymen are consistent with the distinguishing characteristics of potential Reconstructionists. Now we can ask why there are so many of the latter and so few of the former.

FOLK AND ELITE RELIGION IN AMERICAN JUDAISM

Reconstructionist ideology is an articulation of the folk religion of American Jews. Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform represent the three elitist ideologies of the American Jewish religion. Folk religion can be thought of as the popular religious culture. The elite religion is the ritual, belief, and doctrine which the acknowledged religious leaders teach to be the religion. Thus the elite religion includes rituals and ceremonials (the cult), doctrines and beliefs (ideology), and a religious organization headed by the religious leaders. Their authority, the source of their authority, and the rights and obligations of the members of the organization are part of the beliefs and ideologies of the elite religion.

When we refer to Christianity, Islam, or Judaism, or when within Judaism we distinguish Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform, we are really referring to the elitist formulations of these religions or groups. But not all who identify or affiliate with a religion accept its elitist formulation in its entirety. A subculture may exist within a religion, which the acknowledged leaders ignore or even condemn, but in which many, and perhaps a majority, of the members participate. The subculture may fall into the category of folk religion.

What, we may ask, is the difference between folk religion and denominationalism? Why call folk and elite religion two aspects of the same religion, rather than two separate religions? The answer is that both share the same organization, and both recognize, at least nominally, the authoritative nature of the cult and ideology, which the elite leadership affirms. Folk religion is not self-conscious; it does not articulate its own rituals and beliefs, or demand recognition for its informal leaders. Therefore, in the eyes of the elite religion, folk religion is not a movement but an error, or a set of errors, shared by many people.

Folk religion is expressed primarily through ritual and symbol. It tends to accept the organizational structure, and is relatively indifferent to the belief structure, of the elite religion. Of course, the rituals and symbols of folk religion imply a belief system, but one tending to be mythical rather than rational and ideational, and hence not in opposition to the more complex theological elaboration of the elite religion. Where the beliefs of the folk religion are self-conscious and articulated, the elite religion may prefer to ignore them. The fact that the folk religion of American Jews affirms belief in the separation of church and state as a cardinal principle of Judaism creates no problems as long as the elite leadership does not state the opposite.

There is always some tension between folk and elite religion. The danger always exists that folk religion will become institutionalized and articulated, in which case it will become a separate religion or an officially anathematized heresy. (The history of Catholicism abounds in examples of this.) On the other hand, for many people folk religion permits a more intimate religious expression and experience. It may in fact integrate them into organizational channels of the elite religion.

Folk religion is not necessarily more primitive than elite religion. While its ceremony and ritual may evoke emotions and inchoate ideas, associated with basic instincts and emotions, its very lack of interest in ideological or doctrinal consistency makes it more flexible than elite religion. Hence folk religion can develop ceremonial responses to new needs, which may then be incorporated into the elite religion—whose leaders must find a way of rationalizing the new ritual with prevailing doctrine. Much liturgy arises from folk religion and is then incorporated into elite religion.

The absence of an articulated theological position in folk religion, and the appeal to primal instincts and emotions, does not mean that intellectuals will necessarily find it less attractive than elite religion. Quite
the opposite may be true. In secular America, elite religion has been forced to retreat before the challenges of science, biblical scholarship, the relativism implicit in social science, and the entire mood of intellectual life today. The foundations of religion are most critically shaken in doctrine and belief, which often represent elitist formulations rationalizing religious organization and cult. The religious elite's problem has been that most intellectuals cannot accept dogmatic formulations purporting to be truth assertions or to have arisen independently of time and place. Intellectuals have special difficulty with elite religion. But the same intellectual currents which challenge religious doctrine can also serve to defend behavioral and even organizational forms against the onslaught of secular doctrines, such as twentieth-century positivism or eighteenth- and nineteenth-century deism. Folk religion, with its stress on customary behavior or traditional practices, may be legitimized functionally, without the prop of elitist doctrine. An intellectual may be attracted to folk religion because it provides him with comfort and solace, a sense of tradition, a feeling of rootedness, or a source of family unity. Since his world view may remain secular, from the point of view of elite religion his beliefs will be quite unsatisfactory. But, at least in the first instance, it is elite and not folk religion which is challenged by his world view.

Most East European Jews who came to the United States between 1880 and 1920 identified in some way with Orthodox Judaism, though they did not necessarily accept its elitist formulation. They acquiesced to its authority structure (recognizing the religious authority of those who were ordained in accordance with elitist standards). They even accepted, though passively, its belief structure. What they demurred at, in practice, was its elaborate ritual structure. They developed their own hierarchy of the rituals—accepting some, modifying others, and rejecting still others, on the basis of values that had little to do with the elite religion itself. Those values were, preeminently, integration and acceptance into American society, but also ingrained customs and life styles, and superstitions of East European origin. Thus, at the turn of the century, there existed in the United States both an elite and a folk religion of Orthodox Judaism.

As the century advanced, the Orthodox folk found themselves increasingly uncomfortable. The elitist leaders were too rigid, uncompromising, and foreign in outlook. The synagogue those rabbis controlled was aesthetically unattractive. Even the belief and ideological system
became increasingly intolerable, particularly as it seemed to foreclose the possibility for any modernization. As most Jews moved from older areas of Jewish settlement and established new synagogues in middle-class neighborhoods, they were physically freed from the constraints of the Orthodox elite, who tended to remain in the older neighborhoods. The Orthodox folk began withdrawing from Orthodoxy. But they neither desired nor could they articulate their own brand of Judaism. Rather, they sought a new elitist formulation with which they might be more comfortable. Some found it in Jewish organizational life outside the synagogue. Others, socially more mobile, found it in Reform. Many, probably most, found it in Conservative Judaism.

However, the folk religion cut across Conservative, Reform, and many nonreligious organizational lines. Its adherents reshaping all the institutions with which they affiliated, a greater uniformity now emerged in Jewish life. To some extent, the immigrants' children were differentially socialized by their different institutions, and a certain divisiveness resulted. But in general the homogenizing process was the more pronounced. By the end of World War II virtually all major non-Orthodox organizations expressed the six major attitudes and values of the Jewish folk (p. 68). The Orthodox alone were excluded, because only an elite or the most passive remained Orthodox.

Our special concern here is with Conservatism, which rapidly became the dominant religious institution and expression of American Jews. However, the fact that the folk identified with Conservative Judaism did not mean that they were Conservative Jews as the Conservative elite, JTS leaders and alumni, understood Conservatism. An elaboration of the differences and tensions between the rabbinate and the congregants of the early Conservative synagogues would take us too far afield, and besides much of the basic research remains to be done. Suffice it to point out here that while the folk were more traditional in some respects and less so in others, in most respects they tended to be indifferent to Conservatism's elitist formulations.

Coincident with this development, and not entirely unaffected by it, was the effort to formulate the folk religion in elitist terms. This, we suggest, is Reconstructionism. We do not suggest that Kaplan deliberately fashioned an ideology to suit the basic attitudes of most American Jews. We do suggest that this is what Reconstructionism is. But the very nature of folk religion makes it unsuitable for elitist formulation.
In an elitist formulation folk religion is often unrecognizable to the folk.

Elite religion is expressed in ideology, folk religion in ritual and symbol. Indeed, the beliefs and ideas underlying the different folk rituals may be incompatible. This becomes a problem only if one actually bothers to formulate them philosophically. Then, with their contradictions apparent, the ideologist of the folk religion seeks to adjust them. He does this by establishing the primacy of ideology over ritual and ceremony. But that negates the essence of folk religion.

The constituents of early Reconstructionism were the religious left wing among the JTS alumni. It was these men who pressed their congregations for change and innovation. It was they who insisted on seating men and women together, shortening services, abolishing the second day of festivals, introducing organ music, abolishing the priestly blessing, and, in a later period, inviting women to recite the blessings before the reading of the Torah. To the left wing these changes were consistent with their ideology and with their understanding of Judaism. They never perceived why many of their congregants, who had ceased to observe such basic Jewish practices as Sabbath and kashrut in their private lives, were reluctant to accept changes in the public sphere. The failure to perceive derives from the elitist assumption that authority systems, belief systems, and ritual or cultic systems within a religion must be consistent. Also, what an elitist system may consider to be superficial or secondary—food styles, recreational and leisure styles, a spouse’s family background, status of Jews, the celebration of bar mitzvah, or funeral services—a folk system may consider to be essential.

Influenced by prevailing Western thought, the left-wing rabbis sought to modify their congregants’ beliefs. Kaplan holds that God, as Judaism understands Him, does not exist, but that there are forces in the universe that help man to be good, creative, free. These Kaplan calls God. He was not the only Jew who had gone to college and stopped believing in the traditional God of Western religion. When he redefined God to his own satisfaction, that was also apparently to the satisfaction of most American Jews who had never heard of him.

Kaplan drew certain consequences from his definition: If there was no traditional God, one could not pray to Him for help or direct intervention. But what follows for Kaplan does not necessarily follow in folk religion. One may admit in one’s living-room that there is no supernatural God, no miracle, no divine intervention in the affairs of men. But this,
after all, is living-room talk. When a folk Jew’s child is sick, or when he is concerned about the safety of Israel, or even when he is grateful and elated to be alive, he can still open his siddur and pray to God—not a living-room God but the traditional God. Who can say that conclusions reached in one’s living-room are more compelling than what one knows to be true when one prays? If one has doubts as to which is the more compelling, one must reject Reconstructionism—precisely because it demands the supremacy of rational formulations of ideology. On the other hand, complete reliance on intellectual consistency, the rejection of what one’s heart knows to be true, also leads to a rejection of Reconstructionism—because its very foundation lies in undemonstrable sentiments about man, progress, Judaism, Zionism. Reconstructionism is midway between religious belief and intellectual rigor, based on a minimum of axiomatic postulates. It is most likely to appeal precisely to those who waver. In fact, it has served as a two-way bridge between Jewish commitment and marginalism.

If people took seriously the intellectual formulation of their religion as a basic Weltanschauung, Reconstructionism might be a more significant alternative for some Jews. Certainly, its critique of Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform would be more compelling. But most people today, recognize, at least implicitly, that different institutions provide them with sources of understanding or cues to proper behavior, each in a different segment of life. Neither Orthodoxy nor Conservatism nor Reform has much to say about aspects of life that most American Jews take very seriously, such as social relationships, politics, economics, and war. But most Jews do not really expect their synagogue to have anything to say about these beyond elementary moralizing. The intellectual thinness of American Judaism is a tragedy only to the elite.

There are other reasons for Reconstructionism’s failure. It may be a religion by a sociologist’s standards, but it is not quite a religion by American standards of what religion ought to be. After all, it denies belief in a supernatural God. The fact that most American Jews do so, too, is immaterial. For most Jews their denial is a personal attitude; but affiliation with a synagogue which accepts their own theology will cause them embarrassment. Synagogue affiliation is more than a private act. It is public identification with a major American religion, and the American thing to do. But how American is it if, by American standards, the synagogue is not really religious?

American Jews no doubt are more ethnic, or peoplehood-oriented,
than religion-oriented. But only Reconstructionism makes a virtue of this, and most American Jews are not quite willing to admit to this virtue publicly. The entire basis of Jewish accommodation to America, of the legitimacy of Jewish separateness, has been that Judaism is a religion, like Catholicism and Protestantism, and that the Jews are not merely an ethnic group, like the Irish or the Italians. America tolerates Jewish afternoon or Sunday schools, interdictions on intermarriage, and a fair degree of social isolation and exclusiveness. Would these be tolerated if Jews were considered to be an ethnic group like the Irish, Italians, or even Negroes? Though there are many more Negroes than Jews in the United States, the desire of some Negro spokesmen for separatism still has not attained the legitimacy of Jewish separatism precisely because Negroes are not defined as a religious group. Although Jews may know in their hearts that their identity stems from peoplehood and ethnicity, they are reluctant to display this truth in public. This is not a matter of deluding the American public. Above all, Jews delude themselves.

Reconstructionism’s response has been to redefine religion. Kaplan has argued the need to redefine the symbolic nature of American public life and to express it in a civic non-supernatural religion that all Americans could share. Thus, since every American lives in two civilizations, he would also have two religions. Jews could then acknowledge that they are a civilization rather than a religion. At the same time, it would be understandable that the Jews’ civilization must also have religious expression. At this point, one suspects, the folk find themselves “turned off.”

Reconstructionism’s problems are compounded by the fact that its ideology has greatest appeal to the Jews least interested in synagogue activity or organized religious life. The outstanding difference between potential Reconstructionists and all other respondents, as revealed by the answers to our questionnaire, is that proportionately fewer of the former said religion plays a very important role in their lives. De facto, Reconstructionism is widespread among leaders of Jewish community centers and secular Jewish organizations—all of them people who have found, for expressing their Jewish and Reconstructionist values, quite acceptable alternatives to the synagogue.

Finally, once Reconstructionism institutionalized itself, once it became a denomination, it violated a cardinal principle of Jewish folk religion: the unity of the Jewish people and the consequent irrelevance of denominational distinctions. Reconstructionism can demand that its ideol-
ogy be taken seriously, but it cannot make the same demand for its distinctive institutional claims without asserting that differences between itself and other denominations are significant. And this is precisely what folk religion abjures. This is also what caused special difficulty for Reconstructionism among many close friends when it decided to establish a rabbinical college.

This essay is not to be construed as an epitaph on Reconstructionism. Twenty-five years ago, the Reconstructionist predicted the demise of Orthodox Judaism. Orthodoxy has since experienced renewal and growth. The same may happen to Reconstructionism. It has the financial support of a number of rich people. It has a flourishing publication, and a press. It has a few dedicated leaders and a few zealous members. Its college offers the potential for recruiting new leaders and expanding the base of lay support. Should the present condition of Jews in America change; should cultural and ethnic, as distinct from religious, separatism achieve greater respectability, Reconstructionism may yet emerge as a most significant force in American Jewish life.

APPENDIX

REPRODUCTIVE IDEOLOGY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. With what type of synagogue (if any) are you affiliated?

2. Are you now or have you been president of a synagogue within the past 3 years?
   Yes__1. No__2.

3. Without regard to your synagogue affiliation which of the following best describes your religious identification?

Please indicate in the appropriate box * whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, agree slightly, or disagree slightly, disagree somewhat, disagree strongly with the following statements. Some statements contain two parts. Please respond to the entire statement; thus disagreement with one part means disagreement with the whole statement.

4. The Jews are not a “chosen people.”

5. While there must be a warm fraternal relation between Jews of the U.S. and Israel, the center of American Jewish life must be American Judaism rather than a Jewish culture which has developed or will develop in the State of Israel.

6. Israel should become the spiritual center of world Jewry.

* Boxes for checking the degree of agreement or disagreement are eliminated here for reasons of space. For this reason, text of instruction was slightly altered.
7. A Jew who really wants to do what Judaism requires of him should move to Israel.
8. The American Jew should observe even those aspects of Jewish ritual which have no meaning or relevance to him.
9. The freedom to adapt the Jewish tradition to the situation of modern man must become a fundamental principle of contemporary Judaism.
10. The authentic guidance for what a Jew should do is to be found by consulting the masters of Jewish law.
11. I would be willing to consider a rabbi as an outstanding interpreter of Jewish tradition today even though that rabbi had never applied secular academic or "scientific" procedures to its understanding.
12. Only experts in Jewish law can interpret it with authority, but such individuals must also be conversant with currents in secular and non-Jewish culture.
13. Judaism can more appropriately be defined as a religion than a culture or civilization.
15. The Pentateuch or Chumash, as we know it today, was given by God to Moses at Sinai.
16. The study of Bible and rabbinic texts is of greater religious value than the study of other aspects of Judaism.
17. Modern man is very different from the kind of person to whom the Torah and the Rabbis of the Talmud addressed themselves.
18. Jewish rituals which an individual finds very inconvenient to observe, can properly be ignored.
19. Jewish religion must be made to serve the Jewish people rather than having the people serve religion.
20. Jews are obligated to observe traditional Jewish laws; but just as those laws have been changed in the past they should again be changed by experts in the law who should assess the contemporary condition of man and make the necessary adjustment.
21. God is the power that makes for Salvation or human betterment; not a supernatural being.
22. Loyalty to the Jewish people is more important than loyalty to Judaism as a religion.
23. It is a matter of religious urgency to create a single unified Jewish community in each locality in the U.S. with democratically selected leaders. It is this community, linked to all other communities which must constitute the basic structure of Jewish life.
24. Although the early Reform Jews in Germany misunderstood the nature of Judaism, Judaism still owes a great debt to them.
25. The decision as to the kind of Jewish life one ought to live should be left to the individual's conscience.
26. All study dealing with the improvement of human life—social or individual—may be considered study of Torah.
27. Jews can make a vital contribution to American life by formulating American ideals and beliefs into an American or "civic religion" in which all citizens—Jews and Gentiles—can participate.
28. Separation of church and state is not only essential for the sake of harmony and fair play but also because it is a religious value.
29. Although American Jews must remain loyal to and participate in Jewish religion, culture, and civilization, their primary loyalty must be to American culture and civilization.
30. Which statement best describes your beliefs about God?
   I believe in a personal supernatural God—1.
   I believe that God is the force in life that makes for human betterment but
   not in a supernatural being—2.
   I consider myself an agnostic—3.
   I consider myself an atheist—4.
   I don’t have very strong beliefs about God one way or the other—5.

31. Which statement best describes the role religion plays in your life?
   Very important—1. Of some importance—2. Of little importance—3. No
   importance—4.

32. How much general or secular education did you have?
   High school or less—1. Some college—2. College graduate—3. Post grad-
   uate or professional school—4.

33. How many years of formal Jewish education did you have?
   Less than four years—1. Four to eight years—2. Nine to twelve years—3.
   Over twelve years—4.

34. Where did you receive most of your formal Jewish education?
   Talmud Torah or afternoon school—4. Yeshiva or Day School—5.
   Other—6.

35. What is your age?
   Under 25—1. 25-34—2. 35-44—3. 45-54—4. 55-64—5. 65 or over—6.

36. What is your sex?
   Male—1. Female—2.

37. Without regard to synagogue affiliation, which statement best describes the
   home in which you were raised?
   Orthodox and observant—1.
   Traditional but not meticulous in observance—2.
   Conservative—3.
   Reform—4.
   Reconstructionist—5.
   Generally indifferent to religious aspects of Judaism, but Jewish in orienta-
   tion—6.
   Generally indifferent to Jewish concerns—7.

38. What was your own and your spouse’s approximate combined income last year?
   Retired—1. Under $7,999—2. $8,000-$9,999—3. $10,000-$11,999—4.
   $12,000-$13,999—5. $14,000-$15,999—6. $16,000-$17,999—7. $18,000-
   19,999—8. $20,000 or more—9.
Intermarriage in the United States

INTERMARRIAGE, said Robert Gordis, is “part of the price that modern Jewry must pay for freedom and equality in an open society.” ¹ Rabbi Gordis is not alone in urging a reluctant acceptance of an inevitable but tolerable level of intermarriage. In 1965 Rabbi Judah Cahn wrote:

I believe that such marriages and such losses are part of the price that we must pay for the freedom we have gained. Social equality, intellectual equality, economic equality have made inevitable a greater number of social contacts between people of different faiths. We must, therefore, recognize and accept that this greater freedom will result in a greater number of mixed marriages.²

More recently, at the 1970 convention of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, outgoing president Rabbi Ralph Simon declared, “The inevitable price we pay for living in an open society is the possibility that our children may desire to marry persons of another faith.”³

However, from time to time, anxious observers, raising demographic-survivalist concerns, proclaim that the price being paid may be too dear. A rising incidence of intermarriage, they fear, may steadily diminish the size of the American Jewish community, ultimately to the point of its disappearance. As Rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein observed, “Few problems concern the Jewish community more directly than that of intermarriage. On it hinges the community’s continuing ability to maintain itself.”⁴ Rabbi Leo Jung characterized intermarriage as “one of the fastest ways toward the destruction of our religion.”⁵ Others, both within and outside the rabbinate, share these anxieties over the demographic losses intermarriage exacts from the Jewish community.⁶ Recent studies bearing on intermarriage rates and their demographic consequences are reviewed here in an attempt to evaluate the grounds for these concerns.

³ Jewish Chronicle (London), April 10, 1970.
Definitions

In its simplest sense, Jewish intermarriage refers to the marriage between Jew and non-Jew. But the definition is no simple matter. Jewish intermarriage may refer to those Jewish by birth alone, who may be only nominally Jewish, or to those now actively identifying as Jews. Rates of intermarriage will vary depending on which definition is chosen. Ultimately, choosing among them reflects a position on the question of "who is a Jew," though in practice the choice is often dictated by the urgencies of gathering data.

A recent dictionary of sociology adds to the concept the element of communal disapproval:

Marriage between persons belonging to two social groups or categories, the members of one or both of which normally disapprove, at least to some extent, of marriage with members of the other, thereby creating possible difficulties between the husband and wife and/or between them and their respective groups or families of origin. Usually intermarriage is described as involving persons from different religious, social, or ethnic backgrounds.” 7

It is useful to distinguish between marriages in which the partners retain their original religious identification and marriages in which one partner assumes, usually by conversion, the religious identification of the spouse. This distinction is sometimes noted terminologically, “mixed marriage” referring to the former situation and “intermarriage” to the latter. When involving a conversion to Judaism, intermarriage has also been called “mitzvah marriage,” the mitzvah being that “the faith and identity of the Jew was strong enough to bring the Gentile partner into the household of Israel.” 8

For evaluating Jewish demographic losses it may be useful to refine the concept further. The sociologist J. Milton Yinger, for example, suggests conceiving of intermarriage as a variable. Individuals, then, would be considered not either intermarried or intramarried, but intermarried to a greater or lesser degree:

If we begin to take account of the several dimensions of religion, we may discover that those who are intermarried when viewed in terms of one dimension may be intramarried when viewed in terms of another. . . . Once we think of intermarriage as a variable, not an attribute, we can turn to the task of designing scales to measure it. Two scales, I think, are needed. The first will measure the degree to which the couple is intramarried, considering similarity on the many possible religious factors. . . . The second scale will measure the extent to which a married couple is bound

into an “integrating” or “separating” network of other persons and groups. If all the persons with whom they interact and all of their significant others are of the same faith, then they are strongly intramarried on this group dimension. If they interact with many other persons of a different faith, if some of their relatives are intermarried, then they are partially intermarried, even if they are members of the same church and hold the same beliefs.9

It may be useful to devise ways of tracing significant events in the careers of intermarried couples and individuals, such as changes in the religious or ethnic self-identification of the partners, formal conversions, the times at which Jewish identifications submerge, and when they surface. These suggestions, useful as they may be, have not yet been taken up in intermarriage studies. Furthermore, there has yet to be developed a calculus of the demographic consequences of Jewish intermarriage that would include all the relevant factors—the intermarriage rate, the conversion rate, the divorce rate, the comparative fertility of intermarriages, the proportion of children reared as Jews, the eventual self-identifications of the children of intermarried couples, and their marital choices. Nevertheless, in an attempt to assess the current intermarriage situation the available data for each of these characteristics, at best sparse and fragmentary, will be reviewed in turn.

**Interracial Marriage Rates**

**U.S. Census Sample Survey**

Estimates of the rate of Jewish intermarriage derive primarily from government records, Jewish community studies, and sample surveys. Among the data collected by government, the potentially most important are census materials. However, because of American sensitivity to governmental inquiry into matters of religion, questions on religious identification were excluded from most censuses, including that of 1970. The last to include questions pertaining to religion was the sample census of 1957.10

Though already dated, the 1957 U.S. Census National Sample Survey yielded valuable benchmark figures on Jewish intermarriage, which could be compared with those of local community studies. Presumably, it had the advantage of including Jews on the periphery of Jewish community life, who are generally excluded or underrepresented in community surveys.

Interracial marriage was defined in the 1957 census in terms of the current self-identification of respondents and their spouses. The sample therefore did not include marriages in which the non-Jewish partner had converted to Judaism, nor those in which the Jewish partner no longer identified as a

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Jew. Of all married couples with at least one Jewish partner, 7.2 per cent included a non-Jewish partner.

SURVEYS OF MARRIAGE RECORDS

Marriage records maintained by government are another source of intermarriage data. Only in two states, Iowa and Indiana—neither of which has a large Jewish population—do these records include the religious identification of registrants.

Iowa marriage records were analyzed by Erich Rosenthal. Intermarriage was defined in terms of the religious identification of bride and groom at the time of marriage, as confirmed by two witnesses and the officiant. A total of 676 marriages involving Jews and contracted between 1953 and 1959 were examined. Of all marriages involving a Jewish spouse, 42.2 per cent were intermarriages.

The Iowa figure should not be generalized. It includes only marriages contracted within the state, and therefore excludes marriages of Iowa residents contracted outside the state, where presumably more Jewish partners could be found. Also, the small, relatively isolated Jewish population of Iowa is not typical of the national Jewish population as a whole, of which 80 per cent are concentrated in urban areas of 500,000 or more.

Rabbi David Eichhorn, conducting his own investigation of the intermarriage situation in Iowa, has come up with considerably different results. He made inquiry of all Iowa rabbis who had been with their congregations for two or more years. The total membership of their congregations equalled half of the state’s estimated Jewish population. During their incumbencies they had officiated at 551 marriages, of which 51, or 9.3 per cent, had been intermarriages. Eichhorn’s figures, of course, are restricted to marriages conducted under religious auspices, whereas many of the intermarried couples in Rosenthal’s data were probably married in civil ceremonies.

Rosenthal has also examined records of all marriages in Indiana involving Jews over a four-year period, from 1960 through 1963. Intermarriage was defined in terms of the religious self-identification of groom and bride at the time of marriage. Of the 785 marriages involving a Jew, 48.8 per cent were intermarriages.

Indiana marriage records were also studied by Christensen and Barber, whose findings closely resemble those of Rosenthal. Of 762 marriages

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involving Jews, solemnized from 1960 to 1963, 47.3 per cent were intermarriages. Of all Jews marrying, 31 per cent married a non-Jew.\(^5\)

As in the case of Iowa, the Indiana figures represent the intermarriage rate of an atypical Jewish community. Similarly, they exclude the marriages of Indiana residents which took place out of state. As Rosenthal has indicated, they also include a significant proportion of couples from out of the state, who presumably eloped and were married in Indiana. The eloped couple is more likely to be an intermarried couple escaping parental and family sanctions.

**COMMUNITY POPULATION STUDIES**

Population studies conducted by the Jewish community are another source of intermarriage data. Usually undertaken by local Jewish community councils or federations, primarily for planning purposes, these studies frequently include questions relating to intermarriage. But their samples, usually cast from master membership lists of Jewish organizations, tend to exclude intermarried Jews who are only marginally involved with the Jewish community. They also cannot include Jewish intermarriages in which the Jewish partner no longer identifies as a Jew. Community studies therefore report *minimal* intermarriage rates. Their findings are remarkably similar; taken together, they report the relatively narrow range of 4 to 9 per cent. Of course, the main drawback of the studies is the diversity of the samples. They are not representative of the country's Jewish population, if for no other reason than that there has been no study of the Greater New York area, with fully 40 per cent of the country's Jewish population. It is to be hoped that the national sample population survey now being conducted by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds will overcome some of these shortcomings.

Since 1960 the following Jewish communities have gathered data on intermarriage: Rochester, N.Y.; Long Beach, Cal.; Providence, R.I.; Camden, N.J.; Boston and Springfield, Mass.; Baltimore, Md. and Los Angeles, Cal.

a) **Rochester.** A survey of this Jewish community of 20,000 was conducted in 1961 under the auspices of the city's Jewish Community Council. The sample was drawn largely from a master membership list of Jewish organizations. Intermarriage rates were reported in terms of both religion at birth and religious self-identification after marriage. Of all married couples 8.0 per cent included a non-Jew. In 2.7 per cent of all couples the non-Jewish partner had converted to Judaism.\(^6\)

\(^{15}\) Intermarriage rates based on individuals and those based on couples are often conflated. The distinction, however, is significant. Couple rates are always higher: If for example, of 100 Jews, 80 are intramarried (forming 40 couples) and 20 are married to non-Jews, the intermarriage rate by individuals would be 20 per cent (20/100); by couples it would be 33 per cent (20/60 couples).

b) Long Beach. The Jewish community of Long Beach, Lakewood, and Los Alamitos, California (some 14,000 to 15,000 individuals), was studied in 1961–62 under the auspices of the Jewish Community Federation. Of all married couples 9.0 per cent included a non-Jew. In 1.9 per cent the non-Jewish partner had converted.17

c) Providence. A study of the Greater Providence Jewish community of some 20,000 was conducted in 1963 under the sponsorship of the General Jewish Committee of Greater Providence. In terms of the stated religion at birth of respondent and spouse, 4.5 per cent of all married couples were intermarried. Rates were also reported by individuals, reflecting whether or not the non-Jewish spouse had converted to Judaism. Of all Jewish married men, 4.4 per cent were married to non-Jews: 1.8 per cent to a spouse who had converted, and 2.6 per cent to one who had not.18

d) Camden. The Jewish community of Camden (some 15,000 individuals) was studied in 1964. A sample was drawn from a master list of Jewish residents supplemented from other sources. Intermarriage rates were reported in terms both of religion at birth and current religious identification, as reported by those interviewed. Of all married couples between 5 and 6 per cent included a non-Jew. In 2 per cent the non-Jewish partner had converted to Judaism.19

e) Boston. The Greater Boston Jewish population of approximately 208,000 was surveyed in 1965 under the auspices of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston. Advanced sampling techniques assured the inclusion of even those Jews who usually slip through uncounted in Jewish community surveys. An individual was considered to be a Jew if he so considered himself, or if his parents identified as Jews. Of all married couples involving a Jew 7 per cent were intermarried couples.20

f) Springfield. This small Jewish community was studied in 1966–67, under the auspices of the Springfield Jewish Community Council. Of all married couples 4.4 per cent included a non-Jew. In 2.6 per cent the non-Jewish partner had converted.21

g) Baltimore. The Greater Baltimore Jewish community was studied in 1967–68 under the auspices of Baltimore’s Associated Jewish Charities. The sample for the study was drawn primarily from Associated Jewish Charities and Welfare Fund master lists, with some attempt to add names from other

sources. Religion of spouses was determined by self-identification. Presumably, these referred to current religious identification and therefore included both individuals born into and converted to Judaism. Of all married couples 4.9 per cent included a non-Jew.22

h) Los Angeles. A 1968 study found that 5.4 per cent of all married couples involving a Jew constituted intermarriages.23

ANALYSIS BY AGE AND GENERATION

From the perspective of demographic concern, the intermarriage situation reflected in these studies would seem small cause for alarm. A rate of 4 to 9 per cent, one would imagine, is a price the Jewish community can afford to pay—but only if it reflects current trends. These studies report overall ratios of intermarried couples to all marriages involving Jews and, as such, include marriages contracted forty, fifty, or more years ago. But how many young Jews, the perpetuators of the Jewish community, are currently marrying non-Jews. Some of the community studies touch upon this question.

A cross-sectional analysis by age of the Providence data did not reveal a marked pattern of intermarriage increasing among the young. While the youngest husbands, those between 20 and 29, had the highest intermarriage rate—7.7 per cent, compared to 1.7 per cent for those between 30 and 39—intermarriage was nearly as frequent (7 per cent), among those between 40 and 49. Rate differentials according to generational status showed much the same weak pattern. Slightly more than 5 per cent of third-generation men were intermarried, compared to slightly more than 1 per cent of first-generation men; but, again, slightly more than 5 per cent of second-generation men had intermarried.

One might expect to find the highest intermarriage rate among young third-generation Jews. Actually, the highest rate, over 12 per cent, was found among third-generation men between the ages of 40 and 59. Third-generation men between the ages of 20 and 39 intermarried at a rate of less than 4 per cent.24

The Springfield study also included cross-sectional analysis by age and generation, and again a clear trend was not apparent. The rate for men between 20 and 29 was about 4 per cent; it was about the same for those between 30 and 39, and was higher, nearly 6 per cent, for those between 40 and 49. By generational status, the rate was lowest among third-generation men, below 2 per cent.25

The figures from Boston tell a different story, one of increasing incidence of intermarriage among younger couples. Seven per cent of the marriages in

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24 Goldstein and Goldscheider, op. cit., p. 159 ff.
which the husband was between 31 and 50 were intermarriages, but of marriages in which the husband was under 30, 20 per cent were intermarriages.\footnote{Axelrod et al., op. cit., p. 169.}

Marshall Sklare has extrapolated from the Boston figures to a serious nationwide situation. "If by 1965 one in five young Jewish couples in Boston constituted a case of intermarriage, we can safely assume that the figure is now approaching one in four. And if this is true in so conservative a city as Boston, it must mean that intermarriage has reached large-scale proportions throughout the country as a whole."\footnote{Marshall Sklare, "Intermarriage and Jewish Survival," Commentary, March 1970, p. 52.}

Boston, however, includes a large student and graduate-student population, as well as individuals employed by universities and the super-modern technical industries that surround Boston. It is a highly mobile population, fully 31 per cent having lived at their current address for less than five years. It is difficult to determine the extent to which these factors affect the results, but they do put in question the "conservative" character of the Boston Jewish community. That Boston's 20 per cent is a good indicator of the national situation cannot so readily be assumed.

\textbf{NORC STUDY}

A better source than the Boston study for information on current intermarriage rates is a large-scale national sample survey undertaken in 1961 by the National Opinion Research Council (NORC), which collected data for a study of career plans from members of the 1961 graduating class at 135 American colleges and universities. Of the 34,000 respondents in the initial survey in 1961, some 3,650 were Jews. In 1964 a follow-up questionnaire was returned by 23,000 respondents, about 10 per cent of them Jews. In the interval between the first survey and the 1964 follow-up, 60 per cent of the respondents had married; the percentage among Jewish students was 57. Since the survey instrument included questions on the religious identification and marital status of the students, the data collected are a valuable source of information on the current intermarriage situation. They reach beyond the local scope of community studies. They have drawn into their net Jews who might not be included in samples drawn from Jewish community master lists—i.e., any student who declared that he was a Jew or was willing to acknowledge that his parents were Jews—at a time when the large majority of young Jews are in college: a rich catch, indeed. The data are currently being analyzed for a study of intermarriage by Fred Sherrow of Columbia University.\footnote{Fred Sherrow, Patterns of Intermarriage Among Recent College Graduates, Ph.D. dissertation (in process), Columbia University. We thank Mr. Sherrow for having shared his preliminary findings with us.}

However valuable and inclusive, the findings of the NORC survey, too,
must be regarded as underestimating the extent of current intermarriage. The data refer to a young population of whom only a portion had married; available evidence suggests that those who intermarry tend to marry at a later age than those who remain endogamous. It is therefore likely that the intermarriage rate of the 43 per cent not yet married in 1964 will be somewhat higher than that reported for the already married population.

Sherrow derives various Jewish intermarriage rates from the NORC data, ranging from 5 to 21 per cent. Twenty-one per cent of all married couples with at least one partner a Jew by birth are intermarried couples, one spouse being a non-Jew by birth. This figure is comparable to the 20 per cent found in Boston. But when current religion, rather than religion of origin, is examined, the rate falls sharply, to 12 per cent. A considerable portion of the drop is to be attributed to conversion of non-Jewish spouses to Judaism. Another part is to be attributed to an opposite cause, the abandonment of Jewish identification by the Jewish partner.

These rates are for couples. The intermarriage rates of individuals are considerably lower. The NORC data reveal that between 10 and 12 per cent of individuals who were Jews by birth married a spouse of non-Jewish origin. With current religious identification, the individual rate drops to 7 per cent.

It is frequently stated that more Jewish men than women intermarry. Israel Ellman reports that "An outstanding feature in all surveys of Jewish intermarriage, not only in America, is the fact that a far larger number of Jewish males marry out than do Jewish females. The evidence is overwhelming." Berman, who agrees with the finding, speculates about why this is so:

In a society in which exogamy is strongly discouraged, the taboo is more likely to be violated by males, whose sex role designates a greater degree of independence and aggressiveness. The Jewish daughter, on the other hand, would seem to be more vulnerable to threats of ostracism.

Rabbi Eichhorn, on the other hand, suggests that this is no longer the case:

This was true until perhaps about ten years ago, but it is true no longer. Time was when a Jewish daughter was subjected to much stronger family and communal pressure in an intermarriage situation than was a Jewish son, and many a fearful Jewish girl chose to die an old maid rather than marry a dearly

29 The reasons for this phenomenon usually refer to the limited availability of marriage partners of one’s own religion, and the loosening of ties with parents, who are a force against intermarriage, as one gets older. “After a certain number of marriageable years have passed and a Jew has been unable to find a Jewish mate, the intermarriage taboo apparently loses some of its force”: Louis A. Berman, Jews and Intermarriage: A Study in Personality and Culture (New York, 1968), pp. 94–95. See also Jerrold S. Heiss, “Premarital Characteristics of Religiously Intermarried,” American Sociological Review, 1960, pp. 47–55, and Erich Rosenthal, "Jewish Intermarriage in Iowa," American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 64 (1963), pp. 46–49.


31 Berman, op. cit., p. 94.
beloved non-Jewish boy. This particular species of Jewish female is getting rarer.32

Sherrow's analysis of the NORC data contributes significantly to resolving the question of differential intermarriage rates for Jewish men and women. A difference was found, though not nearly as great as some community studies indicate. (In Providence, for example, only 0.1 of the 4.5 per cent of intermarriages involved a woman.) By religious origin, the rates for men and women are 14 and 10 per cent, respectively; by current religious preference, they are 8 and 5 per cent, respectively. The narrowing gap between male and female intermarriage rates may have resulted from the inclusion of that portion of the Jewish population most frequently underrepresented in intermarriage studies—the Jewish girl who marries out and is lost to the Jewish community—as well as from real changes in intermarriage patterns.

**Effect on Jewish Community**

Summing up the various studies of intermarriage rates and recognizing the limitations of the available data, one can hazard a guess that in the United States somewhere between 10 and 15 per cent of all married persons who are Jews by birth have spouses who are non-Jews by birth. This estimate is higher than the figures given in most of the studies reviewed here, which, for the most part and for various reasons, report minimal estimates. About the same percentage probably is currently intermarrying. These figures are higher than in earlier decades, when the Jewish commitment to endogamy was stronger (or when the welcome from Gentile quarters was less warm). But the rates are not yet high enough to warrant fear of an imminent dissolution of the American Jewish community by intermarriage.

Interrmarriage results in losses to the Jewish community, but the net loss is less than the gross intermarriage.

**CONVERSION**

First of all, there are the non-Jewish spouses who convert to Judaism. The various community studies indicate that their number is sizable: in Rochester almost 30 per cent; about 20 per cent in Long Beach; more than 40 per cent in Providence; about 30 per cent in Camden; more than 50 per cent in Springfield.

And there is some evidence suggesting an increasing rate of conversion to Judaism. In Providence, Goldstein and Goldscheider found that there had been no conversion of spouses in intermarriages where the husband was over 60; that where the husband was between 40 and 59, 4 out of every 10 spouses had converted; in the youngest group, with the husband under 40,

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32 Eichhorn, loc. cit., p. 19.
there were 7 conversions for every 10 intermarriages. The same trend was noted when generational comparisons were made. In intermarriages involving the foreign born one-third of the non-Jewish spouses had converted, but in those involving the third generation more than half. Similar results were found in Springfield. In intermarriages involving Jewish men over 50 about a quarter of the non-Jewish wives had converted, but in those involving men under 30 two-thirds of the non-Jewish wives.

Speculation about the reasons for the apparent increase in conversions has focused on the improved status and successful acculturation of the Jew in America. As Jews have risen in status and adopted American ways, they have become more acceptable to Gentiles, and thus conversion to Judaism has become a more viable option for the non-Jewish spouse. As Berman put it, "Today a Jewish father-in-law is more likely to be a well-educated professional and member of a Reform temple, than an immigrant peddler who daven in the Anotevsker shul." 

Data from the NORC study do not corroborate a trend toward increasing conversion among the young. They show a conversion rate in intermarriages of less than 20 per cent, far lower than that of the younger population of the community studies. Eighteen per cent of the Protestant wives of Jewish husbands, and 15 per cent of Protestant husbands of Jewish wives, converted to Judaism. Eighteen per cent of Catholic women married to Jews converted, and 13 per cent of Catholic men. Fourteen per cent of women with no religious identification who married Jews converted to Judaism, and 9 per cent of no-religion men.

The substantially lower conversion rate among the NORC respondents can be variously explained. The conversion rates found in Providence and Springfield may not be representative of the national situation. It also may be that the NORC data suggest a newly emerging conversion pattern reflecting a weakening of proscription against intermarriage. The process leading to such a change may be this:

While the proscription still retains effectiveness, it is breached, even as it is acknowledged. The intermarrying couple's attempt to make their act acceptable by formal conversion is an expression of that acknowledgment. As the proscription is breached with increased frequency, conversions, too, increase, but grow ever more formal, until they come to be regarded as only a formality. Eventually conversion is seen by the marrying couple, their peers, their parents, and, in some instances, by their rabbi, as dispensable and unnecessary. At that point in the weakening of the intermarriage proscription, conversions can be expected to decline. The NORC data may suggest that we are now at that point.

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33 Goldstein and Goldscheider, op. cit., p. 157.
34 Berman, op. cit., p. 44.
JEWISH IDENTIFICATION OF INTERMARRIED INDIVIDUALS

Many intermarried Jews continue to identify as Jews, even where spouses do not convert. Indeed, intermarriage may spur an individual's discovery of his Jewish identity. Thinking himself indifferent toward his Jewish background, of which he is largely ignorant; tempted by the Gentile world; lured by an ideal of romantic love and a democratic universalism, both of which disregard group distinctions and allegiances, he may enter into an intermarriage innocently and in good faith, and only later discover significance. He may discover basic values or orientations, or small phrases rich with familial meaning, or an occasional and surprising emotional stirring at small or great events in the Jewish world that cannot be shared or appreciated by the non-Jewish spouse. From the demographic perspective, the new recognition is of significance only if it culminates in a reaffirmation of Jewish identity. Of course, no data are available on the frequency of such recognitions resulting in reaffirmation of Jewish identity.

The NORC study does provide data on the retention of Jewish identification among those who intermarry. Sixty-six per cent of Jewish men married to Protestants remained Jews, and 58 per cent of Jewish girls married to Protestants. Of Jews married to Catholics, 62 per cent of the men and 53 per cent of the women remained Jews. Of Jewish men married to spouses having no religious identification, 38 per cent continued to identify as Jews; of Jewish women, 50 per cent. In sum, more than 55 per cent of all intermarried individuals retained their Jewish identification.

By considering the retention of Jewish identification and conversion to Judaism, on the one hand, and the abandonment of Jewish identification through indifference or active conversion, on the other, Sherrow has calculated from the NORC data the demographic loss to the Jewish population caused by various types of intermarriage. In intermarriages involving Protestants, the net loss for Jews was 20 per cent; in marriages involving Catholics, 26 per cent, and in marriages between Jews and those of no religious identification, 47 per cent. The net demographic loss from all Jewish intermarriages was 30 per cent of the population involved in intermarriages.

Elsewhere, and especially in a study of the small town, it was found that many of those who intermarry remain actively involved in the structures and forms of Jewish life. Nearly all the intermarried individuals attended services and observed some Jewish rituals. The exogamous person remained "part of the Jewish community, maintaining his position in the temple and other Jewish organizations. Even . . . as teachers of religion and community leaders, exogamous Jews are accepted." 35

The retention of Jewish identity and the continued involvement in Jewish activity by those who intermarry diminish Jewish losses. But the situation has another aspect. The example of the intermarried Jew who retains a

position in the Jewish community, often of influence and leadership, may weaken the effectiveness of the intermarriage proscription. As Rabbi Henry Kagan has asserted, "To our youth it appears that as long as a high status as a Jew is achieved it is all right to marry a Christian."\(^{36}\) Schoenfield has in fact described an ideological shift in the small towns from compulsory to "preferred" endogamy.

DIVORCE

Divorce has for long been the workhorse argument of those who would discourage intermarriage. Under the best circumstances, the argument runs, marriage requires a difficult adjustment and accommodation between two very different individuals. The introduction of religious differences only complicates the marital adjustment, causing additional conflict and unhappiness. Intermarriage, the argument continues, is most likely to end in divorce. Among its recent proponents are Rabbis Allen S. Maller, Ira Eisenstein, and William Berkowitz.\(^{37}\) This argument is today losing ground. The individual to whom it is addressed, who is challenged, in effect, to weigh the strength of his love or his will against the odds for marital happiness, need find only one successful intermarriage to be encouraged in his plans. Finding such a marriage has become increasingly less difficult. Also, the individual may claim, and today often with some justification, that between him and his prospective spouse there are no religious differences, only differences in religious labels. Still, what little recent statistical evidence there is—and it hardly is compelling—suggests that divorce is more frequent among intermarried than among intramarrried Jews.

In an examination of marriages in Indiana which were contracted in 1960 and ended in divorce or annulment within five years, Christensen and Barber found divorce more frequent in mixed marriages involving Jews than among Jewish intramarriages. Using a standard whereby one (1) equalled the average Indiana divorce rate of 8.4 per cent, they found the divorce rate among intramarried Jews to be .31 and among intermarried Jews 1.83. However, the findings are based on only 52 marriages and are limited to a five-year period after marriage, and therefore are not conclusive.\(^{38}\)

In Providence, Goldstein and Goldscheider found a higher intermarriage rate for remarriages than for first marriages. Among men between 40 and 59, married twice or more often, 25 per cent intermarried; for those married


\(^{38}\) Christensen and Barber, op. cit.
once, the intermarriage rate was only 4 per cent. Rosenthal found a similar situation in Iowa and Indiana.

These findings do not deal directly with marital instability as a consequence of intermarriage, for we do not know whether the first marriages were inter- or intramarriages. Indeed, those who remarried non-Jews may have first been married unsuccessfully to Jewish partners. But the findings are suggestive, and lend some indirect support to the contention that intermarriage and marital instability are related. Berman suggested that those who intermarry are prone to divorce: “Attitudes which predispose a person to flout society’s opposition to intermarriage should also help him flout society’s opposition to divorce. In each case the individual is guided by the dictum that his marital state is a private affair.” In some instances, intermarriages ending in divorce may be followed by endogamous remarriages, thus further diminishing demographic losses.

CHILDREN

It is sometimes suggested that intermarried couples have fewer children than intramarried couples. However, data are sparse, the only recent findings being those of Goldstein and Goldscheider in Providence. There a significantly higher proportion of intermarried than of intramarried couples were childless, 26.1 per cent compared to 9.7 per cent among those couples where the wife was over 45, and 14.3 per cent compared to 8.0 per cent where the wife was under 45. Similarly, the mean number of children ever born to intermarried couples was lower than of those born to intramarried couples: 1.6, compared to 2.2, in the older group. Goldstein and Goldscheider speculate that the narrowing of the fertility gap among the younger intermarried couples may reflect an increase in the social acceptability of interfaith marriages. Others, speculating on the reasons for inconclusively demonstrated lower fertility among the intermarried, have suggested that it reflects a poor marital adjustment, or an awareness by intermarried couples of the problems their children would have to face. Berman sees the lower fertility, together with the willingness to intermarry and the proneness to divorce, as manifestations of weak commitment to the norms of marriage and parenthood. The intermarried individual may have instead a greater commitment to a professional career, to leisure interests, or personal comfort.

The children of intermarried couples whose non-Jewish partner has converted tend to be raised as Jews. In Camden, Providence, and Spring-

\[\text{Goldstein and Goldscheider, op. cit., p. 164.}\]
\[\text{Berman, op. cit., p. 178 ff.}\]
\[\text{Goldstein and Goldscheider, op. cit., p. 167 ff.}\]
\[\text{Berman, op. cit., p. 179.}\]
\[\text{Westoff, op. cit., p. 88.}\]
\[\text{Goldstein and Goldscheider, op. cit., p. 168.}\]
field,\textsuperscript{46} all such children were being raised as Jews. A significant proportion of the children in homes where the non-Jewish spouse has not converted were also being raised as Jews: a third in Camden, about two-fifths in Providence, and more than two-thirds in Springfield. Additional data concerning the children of intermarried couples—the religious identifications they eventually adopt and their marriage choices—are not available.

**THE FUTURE**

Sociological factors bringing young marriageable Jews and Gentiles into contact (or, conversely, keeping them apart), or separating young marriageable Jews from one another, will play a major part in determining the future of Jewish intermarriage in the United States. A consideration of these factors suggests that the stage is set, at least sociologically, for a rising incidence of intermarriage.

First, the cultural differences between Jew and non-Jew have diminished, allowing for extensive and deep personal contact. For the most part, American Jews have improved their status and entered the mainstream of American life. Their levels of education, income, and occupation are as high as those of virtually any other religious group in the country. Besides, according to some observers, differences have further narrowed, as "the tastes, ideas, cultural performance, and life styles professed by many Jews are more and more becoming to be shared by non-Jews."\textsuperscript{47}

Secondly, there are forces bringing Jew and Gentile into more immediate contact, the most important of them related to education and occupation. About 85 per cent of Jewish youth attend colleges and universities, which are also attended by non-Jewish youth. The college campus and the college years, a place and time of personal growth in which religious and ethnic boundaries are often viewed as confining parochialisms, provide favorable opportunities for deep and intimate contact between people from various religious and ethnic backgrounds.

The challenge of the campus to Jewish endogamy has for some time been the focus of acute and concerned attention. In partial response to the challenge, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations have sought to improve the understanding and counseling skills of Hillel directors. Parents have sometimes responded by sending their sons and daughters to schools with large Jewish student populations. Choosing such a school is facilitated by the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations and B'nai B'rith Vocational Service *College Guide for Jewish Youth*, which gives information on the Jewish populations and facilities of American colleges. It is, of course, impossible to say how far such measures reach, or how effective they are in stemming the extremely

\textsuperscript{46} Goldstein, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

\textsuperscript{47} Ellman, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
powerful forces encouraging the kinds of contact that may lead to intermarriage.

Changes in the occupations of Jews also have brought Jew and Gentile into contact. As Ellman notes, "The general tendency of the young generation to leave the traditional Jewish occupations, with their strong Jewish family and social associations, and the shift to the salaried professions combine to make the changing Jewish occupational structure one of the most potent causes of Jewish intermarriage. Jews are now working with Gentiles as colleagues instead of serving them as merchants and professionals." 48

A recent study of Jewish college freshmen undertaken by the American Council of Education for the American Jewish Committee shows that their career plans would continue to place them in occupations fostering contacts with Gentiles.

Interrmarriage would be further encouraged within the context of cultural convergence and personal contact if a special complementarity or mutual affinity existed between Jew and Gentile. It has been suggested that at times this is the case. Berman hypothesizes that the Jewish ethos fosters traits fitting exceedingly well the masculine role in Western society. The Jewish male tends to be serious-minded, hard-working, ambitious, and intellectual, all of which make him an attractive potential mate for the Gentile girl. Berman further suggests that the traits fostered in Jewish girls may, by comparison, make Gentile girls more attractive to the Jewish male. He approvingly cites Werner Cahnman: 49 "Jewish mothers sensitize their daughters more to their rights than to their obligations, so that they insist that their future husbands be conveniently docile in the home, moderately 'ambitious' in the market place, and capable of satisfying the highest material expectations of 'happiness.' " Berman continues: "Jewish men 'feel oppressed by the expectations of the relentless pressure of the obligations to which they will be subjected in the families of prosperous Jewish spouses,' a burden which he need not shoulder if he married 'a simple Gentile girl.' " 50

Hacker, perhaps more facilely, offers a suggestion along similar lines: "Both Jews and women are outsiders; neither feel entirely comfortable in a world dominated by Gentile males." 51

The proscriptions against intermarriage, if powerful, could effectively neutralize the sociological factors encouraging intermarriage. The relatively low incidence of intermarriage indicates that the proscription does retain force. Intermarriage still is disapproved in large measure. But the signs are that the intermarriage ban is being weakened. Studies of parental attitudes

50 Berman, op. cit., p. 341.
indicate that disapproval is often balanced by a significant incidence of only mild disapprobation, or indifference, or even approval.

In Kansas City 54 per cent of Jewish parents strongly disapproved of intermarriage, 20 per cent indicated mild disapproval, 13 per cent were indifferent, while 8 per cent indicated mild or strong approval. In Baltimore 67 per cent disapproved outright, while 20 per cent expressed reserved opposition, and another 8 per cent expressed either indifference or approval. In Fargo, North Dakota, 46 per cent disapproved and 47.2 approved. In Boston 26 per cent strongly approved, 44 per cent would discourage it, while an additional 25 per cent were neutral or accepted it. In Lakeville 29 per cent would be very unhappy, 43 per cent somewhat unhappy, and 24 per cent indifferent.

Disapproval itself is generally tempered by the American ethos, shared by most American Jews, which places primary emphasis on the individual—his will, his choices, his personal well-being. Young people about to marry participate in this ethos when they conceive of marriage as a path to personal happiness, as personal fulfillment. The individual weighing a marriage decision expresses the ethos when, in considering a potential spouse, he brings to bear the egalitarian, universalist principles upon which he had been nurtured: that people should be judged by their personal merits, not by race or religion. Parents acknowledge it when they argue against intermarriage as allegedly leading to marital discord and unhappiness, instead of invoking the religious prohibitions. (In Lakeville, for one, the most frequent objections to intermarriage have to do with just such issues of personal happiness.) Similarly, parents acknowledge the primacy of individual choice when, however heavy-hearted, they accept their children's intermarriages, rather than go into mourning, as was traditionally done. Lakeville parents were wont to say:

I would make every effort to show him the error of his way. Then I'd accept the situation, but I'd be broken-hearted.

I'd accept it, but my heart would bleed.

I'd do everything in my power to make them see the light. Then if they did marry non-Jews, I'd accept it.

Potentially and in fact, this ethos is in conflict with the proscription against intermarriage. In purpose and consequence the proscription is trans-individual, expressing the will of the group and its law. Where Jewish conscious-

53 As We See Ourselves (American Jewish Committee, 1964), p. 7.
55 Axelrod et al., op. cit.
57 Ibid., p. 319.
ness is not particularly strong, the ethos of individual well-being and of individual will can lead effortlessly to intermarriage. Where a commitment to Jewish existence retains any force at all, conflict between the ethos of the individual and the intermarriage ban is felt on all levels: by the young couple, by their parents, at times even by their rabbis. It is frequently the intermarriage ban that gives ground. The dilemma described by Rabbi Richard J. Israel, Hillel director at Yale University, is a case in point.

When confronted by a student considering intermarriage, he finds his goals as campus rabbi and as counselor incompatible. As counselor, his role is to help the counselee understand as clearly as possible his situation, to help him “come to the best possible decision he can.” As counselor, therefore, his commitment is to the individual, who, in his freedom and in the best understanding of his situation, may very well choose to go ahead with his intermarriage plans. But as rabbi, Israel’s goals refer to his Jewish commitment, and he wants “very much to break up the impending marriage.” Caught in this crosscurrent, he resolves to “go about doing the best possible counseling job he can, permitting the students to come to their own decisions in the presence of one who accepts them as people, while not sharing their value systems.”

To do otherwise, to admonish, Rabbi Israel declares, simply does not work:

Whether storming about abominations or coolly reeling off the latest statistics on intermarriage divorces—I have thus far achieved a perfect record: I have not yet been involved in a single case of intermarriage counseling in which either my threats or sage advice were recognizable factors in effecting a break-up. The only wedding cancellations in which I have been involved were those in which the counselee himself decided that he was getting involved in a mismatch because of a number of areas of potential conflict, among which the Jewish issue generally is only a small factor. The people we counsel in these matters either do not care much about the perpetuation of the Jewish tradition, or their present commitment to their partner has taken them beyond the point of no return. Their immediate experience of love far outweighs what is for them the more impersonal claim of a tradition.

Rabbi Israel accepts the individual’s decision as a consequence of his assumption of the counsellor role. Other members of the rabbinate have acknowledged the primacy of individual choice in their role as rabbis, even when that choice leads to intermarriage. Whether as a strategy for Jewish survival or as religious conviction, the position of these rabbis tends to weaken the effectiveness of the intermarriage proscription within the larger community.

At the extreme are those whose acceptance of individual decision is so radical that they are prepared to accept as its consequence the dissolution

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69 Ibid., pp. 49–50.
of Judaism. They are few in number. Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, the “ignostic” rabbi of Detroit, expresses that viewpoint: ⁶⁰

We must be willing to enter into meaningful human relations without persistently asking, “Is it good for the Jews?” We must be daring enough and free enough to see that when two people of different religious families love each other in a bond of shared values and beliefs, their marriage is neither a disaster nor an unavoidable evil, but a beautiful harboring of a better world. ⁶¹

Similarly, Rabbi Everett Gendler sees the possibility of a new religion in the making, and would encourage its development by having established Judaism support interfaith marriages:

There is indeed the possibility that a new religion is in the making.” Its birthplace may be the lives of the youth, especially those most devotedly involved in bringing about desperately needed social change. It may be, if it develops, the new Judaism, or the re-Judaized Christianity, or the new cosmic humanism, or ?????? As we consider soberly, not hysterically, the circumstances of its emergence; as we anticipate its likely embodiment of many traditional values; as we reflect on the inadequacy to the present crisis, both societal and personal, of any traditional structure; and as we realize how desperate is the need for the developing “invisible religion,” now private, subjective, and split off from social concerns, to become visible, public, objective, and effective once again in civilization; how, then, can we do other than relate supportively to such a development? ⁶²

More typical is the position, based in part on religious persuasion, that inwardness and sincere conviction are the only grounds for establishing what is religiously valid—a position which justifies itself as one way of assuring Jewish survival. Its proponents accede to an individual’s desire to intermarry, but with the ostensible purpose of demonstrating the reasonableness of Judaism, and hoping thereby to gain adherents. It is, one would suspect, the position taken by the majority of Reform rabbis willing to officiate at mixed marriages without requiring conversion of the non-Jewish partner. According to Rabbi David Max Eichhorn, today they number well over 100. ⁶³

Rabbi Eichhorn, himself a leading advocate of this position, sought to compile and make public a list of Reform rabbis willing to officiate at mixed marriages. In a letter to those rabbis, stating the rationale for his position, Eichhorn called attention to the problem of defection from Judaism:

It is clear that the unrestricted availability of this list will help to combat the

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defection of many of our people who are being lost to Judaism because of the spiritual insensibility of so many of our colleagues. 64

The argument in support of this position was advanced by Rabbi Charles E. Shulman:

If the end sought by the rabbi is adequate Jewish living and closer affiliation with the lot of the Jewish people, the personal conversation which he holds with the mixed couple may do more to portray to them the character and beauty of the Jewish religious experience than all the impersonal instruction in a class for converts can possibly do. Per contra, a rabbi's negative attitude . . . may create an impression of Judaism that will not evoke much appreciation of its merits in the minds of the mixed couple. The rabbi's refusal to officiate will have no bearing on their intentions, but may serve only to create an image in their eyes of a harsh and unyielding religion. 65

Almost total accession to individual choice may be based on an unabashed universalism unqualified by a belief in the necessity and the mystery of Jewish continuity. Or, it may be based on a belief that the only important Jewish allegiance is one freely chosen by the individual, without the compulsion of objective law. In either case, it seriously undercuts the intermarriage proscription. As has been argued, to officiate at mixed marriages is to encourage them by bestowing upon them a legitimacy, making them acceptable to the Jewish community. Rabbi Eichhorn, himself, has expressed only a lukewarm disapproval of intermarriage:

Differences in educational and economic backgrounds, different basic personality and outlook, sexual incompatibility—these are the most frequent causes that impel married couples to separate and divorce. Religious differences play a quite secondary role in this very complicated process known as “marital adjustment.” The sooner the Jewish community comes to understand that this is so, the sooner will it put the whole matter of intermarriage in its proper place and begin to deal with it intelligently. Religious intermarriages are not to be encouraged or welcomed, but neither are they to be execrated and abominated. 66

The legitimation of intermarriage by sectors of the rabbinate creates structural problems for the Jewish community, establishing or emphasizing divisions that may become unbridgeable. Rabbi Jakob Petuchowski has pointed to these: Whereas the ostensible goal of officiation at mixed marriage is to keep individuals within the Jewish fold (by not antagonizing them), its effect is to bring down the fences defining that fold. Within the realm of marriage, the ultimate consequence of polydoxy—the view that Reform Judaism “has only one dogma, the absolute freedom of the individual to think and do what he likes”—is to isolate Reform Judaism from other forms of historical Judaism by creating “a state of affairs where the offspring of

64 Ibid., p. 40.
66 David Max Eichhorn, “Comments on ‘Who is a Jew’,” loc. cit., p. 20.
the marriage at which we 'officiate' is unable to intermarry with the offspring of the other heirs of historical Judaism." 67

The violation of a group's prohibition focuses consciousness on the transgression, and, by doing so, often provides occasion for recommitment to the group's traditional values. The violation of the intermarriage proscription in some sectors of the American Jewish community may serve to encourage its reaffirmation in other sectors. Certainly, the Orthodox and Conservative branches have remained unwavering in their assertion of the ban on intermarriage. The Orthodox position has recently been restated by Rabbi Chaim Rozwaski:

The Torah prohibits marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew and violation of this injunction is to be punished. Such a marriage is banned and not legally binding or effective. Consequently, an intermarried Jew does not live in a state of marriage at all, but rather in that of promiscuity. . . . A Jew living with a non-Jewess lives in a state of harlotry and is responsible for violating all the moral laws concerning such behavior. . . . [Judaism] leaves no room for intermarriage within the Jewish way of life and grants it no quarter within its faith. 68

The Conservative position, while less severe in tone, also reaffirms "unqualified opposition to the marriage of a Jew to a non-Jew." 69

Even within the Reform rabbinate, the willingness to make concessions to individual will, at the expense of the intermarriage law, has not spread deep, far, or wide. As Mirsky notes, "Reform rabbis are still not happy with those of their colleagues who perform [mixed marriages]." 70

The (Reform) Central Conference of American Rabbis has consistently rejected attempts to modify its official position on intermarriage, adopted in 1909:

[Intermarriages] are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American Rabbinate. 71

* * *

The future of Jewish intermarriage in America cannot be forecast. On the one hand, powerful influences from within the Jewish community, and from without, encourage its increase. On the other hand, currents in American and Jewish life, at this moment only dimly noted, may tend to curb it. Major shifts in the sociological position of the Jews in America could have unforeseen consequences for the future of intermarriage, as could radical alterations in the level and intensity of Jewish religious or group consciousness.

ARNOLD SCHWARTZ

70 Mirsky, loc. cit., p. 42.
Antisemitism as a Policy Tool in the Soviet Bloc

The use of antisemitism in fostering government policy objectives has a notoriously long tradition in Eastern Europe, one that reaches back to the massacres of Ukraine's Jews in seventeenth-century Poland, and even beyond. More recently, antisemitism was used at the turn of this century by tsarist Russia's reactionary authorities in a vain effort to prop their crumbling regime. At that time, a number of Russia's leading writers and public figures, including Tolstoi, Korolenko, Chekhov and Gorki, denounced the state-condoned, if not, indeed, state-inspired, pogroms as an outrage against humanity and a blot on Russia's national honor. Lenin, a man far less susceptible to moral considerations, denounced antisemitism primarily as a ploy invented by the capitalists to distract workers and peasants from class struggle.

End of Stalin Era

Opinions differ regarding the exact stage at which antisemitism was first used in the USSR as a policy tool; but most students of Soviet history agree that, by the end of World War II, the Jews had become convenient scapegoats for a variety of failures of the Soviet regime. In other words, Lenin's successors have availed themselves of an instrument that the founder of their state found despicable. In the mid-1940s and early 1950s, i.e., during the last decade of Stalin's life, abundant use was made of antisemitism, most of it overt and virulent, in the USSR proper, as well as in the newly established Soviet satellite states of Eastern Europe. The Soviet "anti-cosmopolitan" campaigns of the late 1940s, which culminated in the abortive 1953 trial of a group of Jewish physicians accused of having plotted, in cooperation with Jewish organizations in the West, the mass medical murder of Soviet leaders, are often viewed as aberrations of the diseased mind of an aging dictator. This they no doubt were, but they were also the circuses offered by the Soviet caesars to their subjects in lieu of the bread and freedom they had hoped to obtain after victory over Nazism.

Similarly, in Eastern Europe, the nationalist frustrations generated by a failure to regain true national independence and by the replacement of Nazi occupation armies and Quisling governments with Soviet Russian armies and their local puppets, often led to antisemitic excesses. This solution, encouraged as an outlet, was facilitated by the all-too-visible fact that Communists of Jewish extraction were quite prominent in the hated Soviet-imposed regimes. There is strong evidence to support the contention that the
1946 Kielce pogrom in Poland, in which several scores of survivors of the Nazi holocaust were killed only a year after the defeat of Nazi Germany, was instigated by Soviet agents in the hope that this would "ease" nationalist tensions and, incidentally, manufacture another excuse for the Soviet military presence in Poland. Similar objectives may well have been behind the shrill antisemitic atmosphere of the November 1952 Prague trial of Rudolf Slansky, a former head of Czechoslovakia's Communist party who was of Jewish origin.

In the aftermath of Stalin's death in 1953, there was a revulsion against many of the dictator's policies, including his state-fostered antisemitism. Indeed, attitudes toward antisemitism in time became a litmus test separating Stalinist conservatives from their foes, the relatively liberal reformers in the Communist parties of Eastern Europe and Russia. The Stalinists denied that antisemitism was an issue worth discussing, while their opponents pointed to it as one of the most reprehensible features of Stalin's heritage. Some use of antisemitism was made in the struggle between the two factions, but not too much. In the popular mind, "official" antisemitism was too closely associated with the other wounds of Stalinism, then still very fresh. Nevertheless, there were some exceptions. Thus, in 1956, Pravda cited Hungary's Jewish-born Communist boss Matyas Rakosi as an example of an "anti-patriotic" party chieftain in what was an obvious attempt to channel anti-Soviet sentiments in the direction of antisemitism.

**Khrushchev Regime**

It was under Nikita Khrushchev that state-instigated antisemitism reappeared in the USSR on a large scale. Again, it is our contention that, while his personal antisemitic sentiments might have been a contributing factor, Khrushchev, probably the most pragmatic politician so far produced by the Soviet system, must have had some practical considerations in mind. The one that most readily suggests itself is that antisemitism might serve as a lightning-rod in the threatening storm of discontent over the country's serious economic ills which now could no longer be blamed solely on the consequences of Nazi occupation and general wartime devastation. Appetites for a more abundant life were whetted only lately by Khrushchev himself. On the other hand, economic grievances played an important part in the recent dangerous disturbances among East German and Polish workers, and were a leading factor in the Hungarian revolution of 1956, second only to nationalist and political factors.

All these considerations probably contributed to the Soviet decision to introduce, in 1961, the death penalty for such economic offenses as embezzlement, theft, graft, and black marketeering. It should be noted that no precedent is known to exist anywhere for such draconic punishment for economic crimes committed in peacetime, i.e., when they could not directly threaten or adversely affect a country's survival. However, there was reason to
believe that the stamping out of such crimes could help the survival of Khrushchev as the master of the Soviet state. Also, a crusade against such offenses had the added attraction of making it possible to give the campaign an antisemitic flavor, which was impossible in other campaigns (e.g., the never-ceasing attempts to rid the Soviet state of the burdensome problem of alcoholism). For in the popular image, one partly borne out by fact, Russia's Jews have traditionally been attracted to such "economic" occupations as minor managerial jobs, accounting, etc. Of course, the fallacy lay in the fact that, while the number of accountants and petty managers among Soviet Russia's Jews may have been high, the percentage of Jews in the country's total population was such that they could not but constitute a miniscule part of all managers and accountants. Nevertheless, of the more than 100 persons executed for economic crimes in 1961–62, the large majority were Jews, and their trials had strongly antisemitic overtones. The obvious insinuation therefore was that shortages of consumer goods and their shabby quality were not to be blamed on the country's leadership or on the Soviet economic system, but on a handful of Jewish black marketeers and corrupt petty officials. In time, the number of trials fell off, or, if nothing more, they were given less publicity, at least in part because of the uproar they stirred abroad. Nevertheless, such trials continued well into the mid-1960s.

Antisemitism was occasionally resorted to in the skirmishes between the Stalinists and the reformists within the Soviet bloc throughout the 1960s. It was generally used by the conservatives who were fond of hinting that "revisionism" was a Jewish invention and that "true" Russians (or "true" Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, etc.) should not be deceived by its alien heresies. But the true explosion of state-sponsored antisemitism in the USSR and the Soviet allies in Eastern Europe, and its sudden escalation into a prime policy tool, began in June 1967, immediately after Israel's lightning victory in the six-day war.

Aftermath of the Six-Day War

The diplomatic position taken by the USSR and its neighbors was one of unequivocal support of the Arab cause, and consequent hostility toward Israel. The exception was Rumania which, alone among members of the Warsaw Pact, refused to sever relations with Israel. By contrast, Tito's Yugoslavia, otherwise independent in its foreign policy, reentered the ranks of Soviet satellites on this particular issue, at least partly because of Tito's fears caused by the recent disintegration of the "neutralist bloc," and his long personal friendship with Nasser.

That opposition to Israel, however bitter, did not necessarily imply an espousal of antisemitic policies at home has been demonstrated since the war by several East European Communist countries. Understandably, there has been no upsurge of antisemitism in Rumania. In Yugoslavia a series of
newspaper articles at first attempted to establish a link between Israel’s “aggression” and the “perfidious” teachings of Judaism. However, this was soon squashed on the ground that it actually constituted a disservice to the Arab cause, and no major evidence of antisemitism was found in the Yugoslav press thereafter. (In fact, a year later, it repeatedly denounced the antisemitic campaign then in full swing in Poland, rejecting the official Polish disclaimers that only “Zionism” was under attack.) Similarly, while Bulgaria’s attacks on Israel at the United Nations were often more poisonous than those of the Arabs themselves, the country’s Prime Minister Todor Zhivkov told the General Assembly that “the Bulgarian people have never been and never will be against the Jewish people,”¹ and in the last three years there has been no significant use of antisemitism in Bulgaria to complement the strongly anti-Israeli tone of its press. Still more emphatic was the stance of the Hungarian government. Soon after the cease-fire in the Middle East, Gyula Kallái, speaker of the Hungarian parliament, denounced “certain people who try to exploit the Arab-Israeli conflict for antisemitic incitement,” while Zoltán Komocsin, a Politbureau member, declared in a television appearance that “we disassociate ourselves from any symptom of antisemitism in our country and shall, as always, fight against it with all our might.”² Again, there has been no indication of any large-scale use of antisemitism in that country since these assurances were given.

The countries of the Soviet bloc where, in the post-1967 period, antisemitism emerged as a conscious tool of foreign and domestic policy were Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, as well as the USSR. While a study of possible contributing historical factors is outside the scope of this survey, it is worth pointing out that, paradoxically, both East Germany and Czechoslovakia, i.e., the countries with the most and least intense antisemitic traditions in East Central Europe, respectively, “imported” post-1967 antisemitism from the Soviet Union. In Poland, on the other hand, much of the antisemitic campaign was spontaneous and of domestic origin, largely manufactured by Poland’s own Communist party. Apparently it only was manipulated by the Soviet Union which, at first, found it useful but, ultimately, became aware of the inherent dangers of nationalist frenzy of any sort in an East European satellite.

Polish Antisemitism

The now notorious wave of antisemitism in Poland, which already has resulted in the virtual disappearance of organized Jewish life in that country and the emigration of all but some 10,000 of its Jews (p. 470), began in the wake of the six-day war. At that time Israel’s victory was widely hailed in

¹ Quoted in William Korey, “Anti-Israel Policies Split Communist World,” Hadassah Magazine, May 1968, p. 13. It is worth pointing out that Bulgaria’s record of saving Jews threatened by deportation to Nazi death camps is unrivaled by any European country, with the sole exception of Denmark.

² Ibid.
traditionally anti-Russian Poland as the triumph of “our Polish Jews” over “their” (the Russians’) Arabs. On June 19 Władysław Gomułka, the head of the Polish Communist party, warned “Polish citizens of Jewish nationality” against such jubilation. Poland’s authorities, Gomułka emphasized, “cannot remain indifferent toward people who . . . come out in favor of the aggressors.” Intentionally disregarding popular glee over the humiliation of the Soviet Union and its friends, Gomułka pretended that those disagreeing with Poland’s official backing of the Arabs were not “true” Poles. He implied that they were only Zionist Jews.

At the time Gomułka threatened the Jews, his own rule was being challenged by General Mieczysław Moczar, the secret police boss, standard-bearer of a nationalist group within the Communist party and head of the Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (ZBOWiD), a veterans’ organization. Gomułka’s position was made even more precarious by the country’s economic difficulties and, with the whittling away of the democratic freedoms attained during the Polish October 1956 anti-Stalinist and anti-Soviet revolt that swept Gomułka into power, he also by and large lost the support of the liberal segments of the population.

In the months following, antisemitism was to become a political football. The use of the “Zionist” bogey became more attractive after a stage adaptation of a Polish classic poem, Adam Mickiewicz’s Forefathers Eve, was closed in January of 1968 (the play’s anti-Russian lines were demonstratively applauded). This incident later resulted in large-scale student demonstrations, some of whose leaders, as it turned out, were Jewish. From now on, each side—Gomułka’s “moderates” and Moczar’s “nationalists”—tried to outbid the other in blaming the country’s foreign and domestic ills on the “Zionists.”

As suggested before, there was every indication that the Soviet authorities at first were only too pleased to see a potentially anti-Russian explosion channeled in the direction of antisemitism in a wave of nationalism and chauvinism that represented no threat to them—at least for the time being.

Until then, antisemitic attacks were directed, in the main, on such writers as Jerzy Kosinski, and Jean François Steiner, whose books on the Nazi holocaust—all published in the West—suggested that, during World War II, many Poles were active or passive Nazi accomplices in the extermination of Poland’s Jews. Such attacks were as useful as the constant reminders of the danger of a resurgence of Nazism in West Germany: they were likely to strike a responsive chord in every Pole, no matter what his political views. Similar objectives were now pursued by attacks on Jews still living in Poland, some 25,000 in 1967. Thus, attacks on Poland’s now pitifully small Jewish community as the main source of the country’s many misfortunes were, gruesomely and paradoxically, among the very few slogans that could rally and unite the otherwise hopelessly divided nation.

3 Of the eight student leaders named by the Communist party’s central newspaper Trybuna Ludu on March 10, 1968, five were Jews. On March 19, Gomułka declared that the demonstrations were the work of “over a dozen people, mainly students of Jewish origin.”
The anti-Jewish campaign grew in intensity and shrillness with lightning speed. On March 12, 1968, \textit{Slowo Powszechne}, organ of a pseudo-Catholic puppet organization directed by Boleslaw Piasecki, a prominent member of the pre-war Polish fascist party, carried an appeal “To the Students at Warsaw University.” It cautioned Polish students that they were being led astray by a Szlajfer, a Werfel, a Blumsztajn, and a Rubinsztajn. The danger was then spelled out: “The foremost aim of the Zionists in Poland was to influence intellectuals and young people to oppose the national interests of People’s Poland.”

On the same day, \textit{Trybuna Ludu}, official organ of Poland’s Communist party, warned that “we will not allow ourselves to be blackmailed by the bogey of antisemitism” and, furthermore, “we will not allow the Zionists to seek protection in accusing others of antisemitism.” This blunt statement, in effect, amounted to a proclamation of an open season on the Jews.

On the following day, March 13, the same top authoritative paper accused Jewish students of a nasty provocation. The students themselves, it claimed, smeared some buildings with swastikas, and then pointed to these daubings as evidence of antisemitism. \textit{Trybuna Ludu} then described how a mob was given an antisemitic pep-talk before marching to break up a student demonstration: “This morning, when our comrades were mobilized to take part in the operation, they had certain doubts and inhibitions. They had to be told who the instigators were, and with whom they were linked. Then all of the comrades went into action.”

Two days later, the same newspaper informed its readers that the Zionists coerce Jews, wherever they may live, to give Israel “economic aid, political assistance (defense of its policies, particularly in the press), supplying of intelligence information etc.” \textit{Glos Pracy}, a trade union newspaper, provided a more exhaustive list on March 18:

\begin{quote}
In its struggle against Communism, Zionism resorts to a variety of methods. These include provocation, blackmail, subversion, the sowing of unrest and, until recently, the red herring of antisemitism. The Zionists are very adept in resorting to the latter device.
\end{quote}

On March 19, Gomulka addressed some 3,000 Communist party activists; his speech was relayed by radio and television. Gomulka’s questions “Are there in Poland any Jewish nationalists? Are there any supporters of Zionist ideology?” elicited roars of approval that sounded familiar to those who remembered Hitler’s speeches. There is some evidence that Gomulka was already beginning to have second thoughts about the wisdom of using antisemitism for political purposes, but it was too late. Antisemitic hysteria raged throughout the country.

On March 23, 1968, Radio Warsaw broadcast a speech by General Tadeusz Pistrazak, local head of ZBOWiD, the veterans’ organization that was General Moczar’s center of power. General Pistrazak’s speech typically tried to link the “Zionists” with both the hated Stalinist past and present-day
troublemakers. Before 1956, said the general, the "Zionists" were in charge of Poland's dreaded secret police, and now they clamored for "democracy": "They [the "Zionists"] simply want the kind of democracy and freedom under which diehard Jewish nationalists and reactionaries of all kinds can implement anti-Polish and antinational plans that serve the interests of international Zionism and imperialism."

On April 1, 1968, Sztandar Mlodych, a youth newspaper, announced that the Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) was ordered to cease operating in Poland because its charitable activities were really a cover for espionage. The announcement had an ominous ring: at one time or another, most of Poland's Jews, left destitute after the war, had obtained some form of assistance from JDC and thus could be considered suspect of espionage. The announcement also bore sinister similarity to one made in the USSR when preparations for the trials of those accused of alleged participation in the notorious "doctor's plot" were under way.  

On April 5, 1968, General Moczar made yet another attempt to link the "Zionists" to the hated Stalinist regime, if not indeed to shift to them the blame for Poland's postwar status as a Soviet colony. In a television appearance, the general declared that the culprits actually responsible for present troubles were the "politicians" who arrived in Poland in 1944 with the victorious Soviet armies. Of the nine persons cited, eight were Jews and the ninth, a non-Jew, had a Jewish wife.  

As the campaign gained momentum, it turned with increasing frequency to familiar themes of prewar Polish, predominantly nonpolitical, antisemitism which was xenophobic, racist, and economic in nature. Thus, the April 15-31 issue of the Silesian bi-weekly Naodrze, published in Jelenia Góra, brought the sinister news that the Jewish Social and Cultural Society presents plays in Yiddish; that its library contained books printed in a mysterious script, and that the society ran its own summer camps for children—surely a suspicious activity.

On April 19, 1968, the 25th anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, Glos Koszaliński, a provincial newspaper, reported the expulsion from the Party of some Jewish tailors who had failed to condemn Israel with sufficient vigor and who had conveniently absented themselves from a meeting at which the 1968 student riots were condemned.

On April 28-29 the Wroclaw Slowo Polskie reported the discovery of yet another outrage. This time the target chosen for attack was the Jewish artisans' cooperatives, set up in postwar Silesia to provide employment for Yiddish-speaking tailors, shoemakers, mechanics, and others, who, for obvious psy-

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4 On April 21-22, 1968, Slowo Polskie, a newspaper published in the Silesian city of Wroclaw where relatively many Jews settled after 1945, revealed to its readers that, in the past, any Jew who visited the Israel embassy—even if only for a chat—received from the embassy a "gift" of 1,000 zlotys. The article was buttressed by a list of real persons who allegedly were recipients of such largesse. The implication of espionage was obvious.

chological reasons, preferred to work with other Jews. As Slowo Polskie interpreted it, this meant that true Poles were the victims of employment discrimination in their own country. The newspaper also accused the Jewish cooperatives of importing raw materials from abroad. In fact, these raw materials were donated by Jewish philanthropic agencies abroad, and were thus gifts rather than imports.  

In keeping with Soviet historian Pokrovsky's famous dictum that history is but politics projected into the past, Polish publications began to minimize the extent of wartime Jewish resistance to the Nazis. Thus, a reviewer of The Resistance Movement in the Bialystok Ghetto by the late Communist scholar Bernard Mark claimed that there actually never was any Jewish resistance movement in the area—there were just a few Jews who were hidden in the forests by Polish peasants.  

The most "rational" explanation of the success of the 1968 antisemitic campaign was written by Andrzej Werblan, a leading Party theoretician, in a long monograph published in the June 1968 issue of Miesiecznik Literacki:

Why is it that among certain groups of the intelligentsia in our country there are comparatively many people of Jewish origin? It was their cosmopolitan [i.e., Jewish] background that gave rise to the unjustified accusation of antisemitism, hurled at those comrades who understood that no society will tolerate an inflated representation of a national minority in its elite, particularly in national defense, security, propaganda, and diplomatic service. Experience has demonstrated that the majority of the personnel under discussion was ideologically alien, and subsequently chose the path of revisionism, while many have embraced Zionism.

And further:

Among the revisionists, both academic personnel at Warsaw University and the students involved in hostile revisionist activity, a considerable role was played by a large group of people of Jewish origin. The existence of specifically nationalist and ethnic solidarity exerted a powerful influence on the course of events in Warsaw academic circles. The favoritism demonstrated in the rapid advancement of persons of petit bourgeois Jewish origins, people who had no strong ties to Communism and often remained under Zionist influences, can only be ascribed to sheer thoughtlessness or to a clannishness based on racial ties.

According to Werblan, the evil's root was to be sought in the fact that, before the war, Jews constituted too high a percentage of Polish Communist party membership, and that this detracted from the party's popularity with the Polish masses, who justly regarded it as "Jewish." Thus, in Werblan's

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6 A similar charge that Jewish cooperatives were guilty of defrauding the Polish Treasury appeared in the specialized economic publication Zycie Gospodarcze on April 17-18, 1968.

7 Gazeta Bialostocka, May 4-5, 1968. Since then, Polish sources have consistently minimized the extent and importance of Jewish anti-Nazi resistance, while simultaneously emphasizing Jewish collaboration with the Nazis in Poland, e.g., Judenräte, and the complicity of Western Jewish organizations.

8 This part of Werblan's article was also reprinted in Trybuna Ludu, June 16, 1968.
opinion, the once excessively "Jewish" profile of the Polish Communist party led it to oppose Poland's national independence:

The distorted nature of the [pre-war Polish] Communist party's ethnic make-up would not have been a major problem were it not linked in a way with problems of ideological nature. Thus, the programmatic position of the Polish Communist party (KPP) on the problem of Polish independence was for a long time burdened with the errors of Luxemburgism.  

The circle was thus closed. The Jews of Poland stood accused not only of being allied with Poland's enemies, but also of blackening the country's name abroad, subverting its might at home, exploiting it economically, engaging in espionage, and of ruling Poland. And, according to Werblan, they have even traditionally opposed the existence of Poland as an independent state.

At the July 1968 meeting of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist party (officially called United Polish Workers' Party), some voices were raised in opposition to the antisemitic orgy. Thus, for example, Zenon Kliszko complained that "Jews are being equated with Zionists" (Trybuna Ludu, July 8, 1968), as did Boleslaw Ruminiski, another Central Committee member, who declared that the struggle against Zionism occasionally resulted in antisemitism (Trybuna Ludu, July 10, 1968). Even Gomulka warned in a Radio Warsaw speech, on July 12, that the anti-Zionist campaign was creating "an unfriendly attitude toward Jews in general." Gomulka's appeal for moderation went unheeded, while the much stronger warning by Minister of Finance Jerzy Albrecht that "all Jews, including good Communists, are sometimes being lumped together as Zionists" (Trybuna Ludu, July 10, 1968), may have contributed to his dismissal from the post the very next day. In fact, between 1967 and 1968 there existed within the Polish ministry of interior a special "Department of Zionist Affairs" headed by Colonel Tadeusz Walichnowski of the secret police who, within two years, produced seven "anti-Zionist" pamphlets under his name. The department was said to have maintained a card file of all persons of Jewish origin residing in Poland. According to some sources, the department was ordered closed only after it began investigating the antecedents of Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz and then Defense Minister Marian Spychalski.

At first, the Soviet authorities demonstratively applauded Poland's "anti-Zionist" purges. Later, their enthusiasm cooled when it gradually became apparent that Polish antisemitism, originally unleashed to avert an anti-Soviet outbreak, might ultimately revert to its original target. Gomulka who, in the

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9 Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919), a Polish-born Jewess and one of the founders of the German Communist party, was, for doctrinal reasons, opposed to the idea of Polish independence.

10 Thus, for example, the Soviet army newspaper Krasnaya zvezda wrote on August 17, 1968 that "The Polish comrades have convincingly demonstrated that anti-Zionism is not antisemitism." More authoritative support allegedly came from Vladimir Semyonov, Soviet deputy minister of foreign affairs who is rumored to write under the pseudonym "K. Ivanov." He approvingly repeated the Polish assertion that support of Zionism was tantamount to support of imperialism (International Affairs, Moscow, June 1968).
meantime, had demonstrated his fidelity to the Soviet cause by his all-out support of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, represented the "moderates" during the antisemitic purges.

Anti-Jewish articles continued to appear in Poland's press. Thus, on December 28, 1968, the Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy*, in a somewhat questionable attempt to shore up Franco-Polish relations, gleefully pointed to the fact that Poland and de Gaulle's France had common enemies—Baron Guy de Rothschild and the German Jew Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Truly pathological antisemitism may be found in Kazimierz Sidor's book *Behind the Pyramids* in which the author, a recent Polish ambassador to Egypt, indiscriminately used hundreds of antisemitic canards, ranging from the most recently manufactured in Eastern Europe to those of the ancient Greeks, who claimed that the Jews were descended from lepers.

**German Democratic Republic**

For obvious reasons, East Germany's Communist authorities long avoided antisemitism as a political weapon. Even though East Germany was one of the two successor states to Nazi Germany (with former Nazis occupying a number of important positions), unlike West Germany, it never paid any restitution to victims of Nazi persecutions. While, in the wake of the six-day war, denunciations of Israel's "aggression" were as virulent in East Germany as in the other Soviet satellites, a really drastic reversal took place in the summer of 1968, immediately before and after the Soviet bloc's armed invasion of Czechoslovakia in which East German forces participated. As in Poland, there were some purges of "Zionists," though necessarily on a smaller scale since East Germany had only slightly over 1,000 Jews in a total population of 17 million. On August 25, 1968, within days after the invasion, *Neues Deutschland*, central organ of the East German Communist party, charged that "Zionist forces have taken over the leadership of Czechoslovakia's Communist party." A week later, on September 1, the same newspaper carried an article entitled "Prague Is Ruled by the Zionists." By a macabre coincidence, Hitler's *Voelkischer Beobachter* carried the headline "Prague Is Ruled by the Jews" several days after Nazi Germany's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1939.

There has been little change in East Germany. On March 14, 1970, *Pravda* published an article by Fritz Noll, deputy editor of the Essen paper *Unsere Zeit*, in which the East German journalist pointed an accusing finger at those

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11 As Simon Wiesenthal, head of the Documentation Center of the Federation of Jewish Victims of Nazism in Vienna pointed out at a press conference, September 6, 1968, former Nazis now active in East Germany included Minister of Propaganda and press chief Kurt Blecha; Horst Dressler-Anders, an employe of the propaganda ministry who had been president of the Nazi state broadcasting system and editor of the *Krakauer Tageblatt* in occupied Poland; Hans-Walter Aust, editor-in-chief of *Deutsche Aussenpolitik*, a publication of East Germany's ministry of foreign affairs; and Herbert Kroeger, staff member of the same journal, the onetime head of the Gestapo in Cologne.
West Germans who “presently charge our country’s democratic citizens with antisemitism because they condemn Israel’s aggressive policies.”

**Czechoslovakia**

As already stated, by East European standards Czechoslovakia has traditionally been remarkably free of anti-Jewish prejudice. In the weeks following the six-day war, Czechoslovakia’s official reaction, then formulated by the Stalinist regime of Antonín Novotný, did not differ from that of its Soviet-bloc neighbors. Inevitably, the anti-Israel hysteria brought about a wave of antisemitism which affected the country’s approximately 15,000 Jews. However, there was some vocal opposition to it, as there was also criticism of the government’s unconditional support of the Arab cause. The most eloquent was the defection of the Slovak novelist Ladislav Mnáčko, who demonstratively went to Israel in order to denounce the Czechoslovak government’s position on both issues. The rapid liberalization in spring 1968, which resulted in Novotný’s downfall and swept into power Alexander Dubček’s liberal Communist government, muted the anti-Israel campaign, and temporarily brought to a halt state-inspired antisemitism.

However, antisemitism was soon to reemerge as one of the most important weapons of the enemies of Czechoslovakia’s liberals, both within the country and in the other Soviet bloc nations—first and foremost, in the USSR. Some of the antisemitic propaganda was open; much of it was clandestine and took the form of anonymous letters and pamphlets. Thus, for example, Eduard Goldstuecker, a Jew who was president of Czechoslovak Union of Writers and deputy rector of Prague’s Charles University, made public in the June 23, 1969 issue of *Rudé Právo*, the central organ of the Czech Communist party, an anonymous letter sent to him, which said in part:

> You are not content to rule in Israel alone; as Zionists, you want to rule the whole world. Here you have something in common with Hitler. And we know for a fact that the ringleaders of the latest events here and in Poland are Zionists who are planning the final victory of international Zionism. In any case, it will soon be all over with you; your days are numbered, you loathsome Jew.¹²

An anonymous pamphlet declared:

> The Federal [German] Republic is an agent of the USA, and Israel is an agent of the Federal Republic. Our working class understands that financial power is controlled by international monopoly capital, and that Jewry is an international race. And against these two enemies the international proletariat is taking its stand with the slogan “Let us unite.” The words of the Party’s present leader [Dubček] bear no relation to Socialism. They employ, it is said, the tactics of international capitalism “which in our country is represented by Jewry and its agents.” This “Jewry” shrinks from no kind of crime.¹³


A few days after the invasion, on August 26, 1968, the still defiant Czechoslovak radio commented:

At last we have learned who is responsible for the nonexistent Czechoslovak counterrevolution. We have been told this by the official press of the occupiers, and they have done so in their usual refined and euphemistic way. They did not say outright "the Jews"; they said "international Zionism." Apparently, our East German friends have been experts on this subject ever since World War II. Two million people allegedly are involved, and, after their liquidation, the soldiers apparently are to leave the country. Why cannot these two million Zionists be found if the Soviet army command, or perhaps Neues Deutschland, wishes to find them? At any rate, today the Germans are the only real experts capable of distinguishing with absolute accuracy between Aryans and inferior races.

The height of the insidiously antisemitic Soviet drive against the liberal Communist Czechoslovak regime was reached when, on September 4, 1968, two weeks after the invasion, Izvestia, the official newspaper of the Soviet government, printed a scurrilous attack on Jiří Hájek, Czechoslovakia's foreign minister who vainly attempted to mobilize world public opinion in support of his country's cause. Wrote Izvestia:

A question suggests itself: who is that J. Hájek? Who was Czechoslovak Socialist Republic's minister of foreign affairs? People say that, during the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, J. Hájek, in order to save his life, wrote flattering articles for the Gestapo. And that it was the Gestapo that saved J. Hájek's life, but that Hájek had to "earn" it by doing quite a bit of work for the Nazis. It was perhaps for that reason that he had, eventually, changed his name from Karpeles to Hájek. During the last two weeks Hájek-Karpeles had been running all over the world, from city to city and from village to village. He has been to Belgrade and to Vienna, to New York and to London, to Zurich and to Geneva. Some people intimate that he is getting ready to go overseas once again, to the United States. One of his "friends" there promised him a "big job" with an advertising agency.

The purpose of the article was all too transparent. The Soviet government's aim was to "expose" the liberal Czechoslovak minister as a shifty Jew, and a Nazi collaborator to boot. "Karpeles" is a fairly common Jewish name in Czechoslovakia. Jiří Hájek's answer appeared in the October 19, 1968 Prague magazine Reportér, one of the last issues of the publication. He stated that attacks on him had appeared in newspapers of certain (unnamed) Socialist countries:

Some of these attacks had a distinctly racist character and were without foundation. It is not true that I am of Jewish origin. But I must add that I would not be ashamed of it if I were, because I think a man should be judged on the basis of what he does and how he behaves, and because I think that, in this country, racism was disowned long ago.

Ultimately, Izvestia acknowledged its "innocent" error. Yet it is difficult to believe that the "misunderstanding" was anything but intentional (it is
hardly likely that the biography of a cabinet minister of a Soviet-bloc country was a secret in Moscow), but even if it were, the article would be no less revolting.

The Soviet press continued to blame the “Zionists” for the events in Czechoslovakia, though it was nearly two years since its occupation by the armies of Warsaw Pact countries. Thus, N. Gasarov, writing in the January 1969 issue of Sovetskie prostoizy, the trade union journal, blamed the Czechoslovak liberal interlude (and also, while on the subject, the 1956 workers’ uprising in Poland) on the “Zionists,” and ominously added that “since diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel were broken off, Israeli intelligence and Zionist organizations have been using Jewish citizens of other capitalist countries for conducting subversive activities aimed against the USSR.” On March 8, 1969, Izvestia quoted the Left-wing Lebanese newspaper Al Dunia, which claimed that Israel was privy to all of Czechoslovakia’s state secrets (including details of recent secret Czechoslovak-Soviet negotiations) “because many Jews residing in Czechoslovakia . . . occupy important political, scientific, and cultural positions, and favor the abolition of Socialism in Czechoslovakia and the restoration of a capitalist regime which would favor Israeli interests.” Then, on January 28, 1970, Moscow’s Literaturnaya gazeta printed an article by one Radoslav Čermak, judging from his name a Czech, which asserted that responsibility for the Czechoslovak debacle did not really lie with Dubček, who was merely a figurehead, but with Smrkovský, Kriegel and Šik. Of the three, Kriegel is a Jew and Šik is always described as one. The statement was reinforced by being ascribed to Ludek Pachman, a Jew, who allegedly gave this information to the Israeli newspaper Al Hamishmar on December 27, 1968.

Soviet Russia

The year 1967 marked a watershed in the use of antisemitism as a policy tool within the USSR proper. The Soviet Union’s unconditional support of the Arab cause was motivated by a number of considerations. There was, first of all, the desire to gain a foothold in the Mediterranean—an old dream of Russian statesmen, tsarist and Soviet alike—which the Soviet rulers hoped to realize by backing the numerically and otherwise much stronger side in the conflict. There was also, no doubt, the hope of propping up the anti-American forces within the neutralist bloc still smarting under the impact of ignominious defeats in Ghana, Indonesia, and the former Belgian Congo. There was too, no doubt, the need to demonstrate to the Afro-Asians that the Soviet Union, and not Communist China, could be counted on to bail out its allies, should the need arise. Then, of course, support of the Arabs would gain the Soviet Union the sympathies of Moslems everywhere, not least among Russia’s own Turkic minorities along the now sensitive Chinese frontier. Last, but not least, an anti-Israeli stance would of necessity result in some spillover of antisemitism, a posture that might alienate small
segments of the Soviet liberal intelligentsia, but one that would prove popular with more numerous and more significant segments of the population, including the army and the party bureaucracy.

Chronologically, the wave of state-inspired domestic antisemitism in the USSR followed, rather than preceded, similar campaigns in the satellite states. This situation was not without precedent: the antisemitic witchhunts in Czechoslovakia (including Slansky's trial in 1952) antedated by approximately one year the announcement of the discovery of the Soviet "doctors' plot." One gets the impression that, in the wake of the six-day war, Soviet propaganda planners decided, as it were, first to "experiment" with the various uses of antisemitism on the satellites, and then, depending on the results, either denounce it as an aberration alien to true Marxism-Leninism, or adapt it for domestic use. For the time being, Soviet propaganda spewed out antisemitic materials in Czechoslovakia, and offered at least encouragement and moral support of antisemitism in Poland. However, at first, at least until the end of 1967, precautions were taken not to allow the anti-Israeli rhetoric to degenerate into ordinary antisemitism.

It may be argued, of course, that, given the intensity of Soviet propaganda and the sharp awareness of ethnic identity in the USSR, this desire to steer a middle course was unrealistic; and events of the last three years certainly bear out this belief. One could not, in the USSR, wage an embittered propaganda war against the Jews of Israel without contributing to the already tensely antisemitic atmosphere in the country. Every Soviet citizen remembered that when the USSR was attacked by Nazi Germany in 1941, all persons of German descent, including tens of thousands whose ancestors had settled in Russia centuries before, and even the dedicated Communists among them, were deported.

In the summer of 1967 the Soviet Union's unconditional support of the Arab cause resulted in a frenzied anti-Israeli campaign which made abundant use of traditional antisemitic stereotypes, particularly in cartoons that usually accompanied articles in Soviet newspapers and magazines. Then, early in 1968, came the stream of expressions of support for Poland's "anti-Zionist" drive and, some months later, the barrage of antisemitic propaganda unleashed against Czechoslovakia's liberals. But "anti-Zionism" and "anti-Judaism" began to grow increasingly fashionable within the USSR itself, and, in the absence of any attempt to combat them, could not but contribute to an exacerbation of antisemitic tensions within the country. Last but not least, an antisemitic tone was injected into the growing campaign against dissident Soviet intellectuals, among them a significant number of persons of Jewish origin, e.g., Pavel Litvinov, Larissa Daniel, Alexander Ginzburg.

A precursor of the resurgence of officially-sponsored antisemitism was the reappearance in print of Trofim Kichko, a former Nazi collaborator, whose *Judaism Without Embellishment*, a crude antisemitic tract published in 1964 was, after vehement protests abroad, disowned by the ideological commission.
of the party's Central Committee. On October 4, 1967 an article by Kichko appeared in *Komsomolskoye znamya*, a provincial newspaper published in the Ukraine; and on January 20, 1968, *Pravda Ukrainy*, the Republic's central newspaper, reported that Kichko was being rewarded with a scroll of honor for his "services to atheist propaganda," i.e., in effect his previously disowned tract. Soon thereafter, a new book by Kichko made its appearance. Its title, *Judaism and Zionism*, directly linked the practices and beliefs of Judaism to a hostile political ideology. One of the book's central theses was the claim that Judaism—i.e., a faith practiced by many of Russia's three million Jews—bears much of the responsibility for the "crimes" of Israeli "aggressors":

There is a direct connection between the morality of Judaism and the actions of the Israeli Zionists. Weren't the actions of the Israeli extremists during their latest aggression against the Arab countries in keeping with the Torah?

But then, Kichko continued, this should not be surprising. After all, "The Talmud does not even consider someone of another faith a man, but merely a creature created in the image of man." And, further, according to Kichko, Judaism claims that "the entire world belongs to the Jews."

Kichko's book was followed by Yuri Ivanov's monograph *Beware, Zionism!* If anything, Ivanov's book was even more poisonous than Kichko's. Raising the bogey of an international Jewish conspiracy, it said: "The Zionists are using the false and reactionary concept of a 'world Jewish nation' in order to establish control over citizens of diverse countries, as long as they are of Jewish origin." It intimated that Soviet Jews may not be immune to its blandishments by pointing out that Zionism's—and, by extension, American imperialism's—slogans "have evoked a response among some circles of the working Jewish intelligentsia" (author's emphasis). And, to top it all, it asserted that "Judaism is characterized by hatred of man, by preaching (in various forms and ways) genocide, by cultivating love of power, and praising criminal methods for achieving power." All this prompted a Soviet reviewer to point out approvingly that, "In contrast to other varieties of modern nationalism, Zionism, as Yu. Ivanov convincingly demonstrates, is completely devoid of any democratic elements." (*Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn',* Moscow, April 1969). The equation was thus completed:

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14 Trofim K. Kichko, *Iudaizm i sionizm* (Kiev: "Znanie," 1968) was published in a very inexpensive edition of 60,000, at 14 kopeks per copy.
16 The thesis had been advanced somewhat earlier in *Krasnaya zvezda*, the newspaper of the Soviet armed forces, on August 17, 1968: "The Zionists stubbornly strive to make all Jews, regardless of citizenship and Party loyalties, partners in the Israeli aggression and in the dirty actions of the Jewish big bourgeoisie and of international imperialism, which are aimed at the camp of peace and Socialism... Similar stratagems were once resorted to by the Nazis in order to form their 'fifth columns'..." It also noted that Israeli intelligence was trying to recruit "persons of Jewish origin residing in Socialist countries" (author's emphasis). Similar ideas were put forth in the January 24, 1969, issue of *Sovetskaya Rossiya*.
the world’s most inhuman religion spawned the world’s most vicious nationalism, the only one without any redeeming features. At one time or another, this assertion has been advanced by scores of Soviet publications.\textsuperscript{18}

In the last three years, sinister pictures of worldwide Jewish conspiracy have become a regular feature of Soviet periodicals. An article in \textit{Komso-molskaya pravda}, a Moscow youth newspaper, of October 4, 1967, offered a typical example of the genre:

Zionism is an invisible, but huge and mighty, empire of financiers and industrialists, an empire not to be found on any map of the world, but one which nonetheless exists and operates everywhere in the capitalist camp. The practical application of Zionism to Middle Eastern affairs includes genocide, racism, treachery, aggression and annexation.\textsuperscript{19} As testified by a series of foreign sources, Zionist adherents in the United States alone number between twenty and twenty-five million. There are Jews and non-Jews among them [sic]. They belong to associations, organizations, and societies that play a dominant role in America’s economy, politics, culture, and science. Zionist lawyers comprise about 70 per cent of all American lawyers; the physicists, including those engaged in secret work of preparing weapons for mass destruction, comprise 69 per cent, and the industrialists, more than 43 per cent. Adherents of Zionism among American Jews own 80 per cent of the local and international news agencies. In addition, about 60 per cent of the large publishing houses serve the aims of the Zionists.

These strikingly “exact” figures aroused the curiosity of some researchers who ultimately succeeded in tracking down the “series of foreign sources” referred to by the Soviet newspaper. It has now been established that the Soviet journalist’s authority was a pamphlet published by \textit{The Police Gazette}, a Cairo journal, in 1957, i.e., at a time when Egypt’s propaganda apparatus was headed by Johannes van Leers, a Nazi fugitive and a former associate of Hitler’s Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels.\textsuperscript{19} Of late there were indications that Soviet propaganda was resorting with increasing frequency to Arab sources which, needless to say, were overtly antisemitic. At the same time, the USSR increased the import of Arab “cultural materials,” such as feature films, with predictable results. Thus, on October 17, 1969, the London \textit{Jewish Chronicle} reported that antisemitic demonstrations followed the showing of an Egyptian film portraying bloodthirsty Israeli villains, in Bessarabia, a Rumanian province annexed by the USSR in 1940.

\textsuperscript{18} To cite two random examples from the central newspapers of the two union republics with the largest Jewish populations outside the Russian Federation: Zionism “promises the Jews that they will rule the entire world or, at the very least, enjoy a privileged position among the peoples of the entire world.” (\textit{Pravda Ukrainy}, Kiev, September 6, 1967); “He [Moshe Dayan] is a believer. He professes Judaism. In accordance with the tenets of his religion he considers himself ‘God-chosen’”; and that is why, according to the Minsk \textit{Sovetskaya Belorussiya} of March 9, 1969, he ordered fourteen Arabs buried alive, ostensibly in reprisal for the Baghdad “spy” hangings.

\textsuperscript{19} Yaakov Moriah, \textit{Anti-Semitism—Tool of Soviet Policy} (Tel Aviv, 1968), pp. 7–8. It is curious that the Soviet sources mistranslated “physicians” as “physicists,” and then proceeded to improve on the Egyptian original by adding the words “including those engaged in secret work of preparing weapons for mass destruction.”
In March 1970 the Soviet Union unleashed an unprecedented campaign of anti-Israel and "anti-Zionist" vilification, in which virulent attacks on Israel were completely merged with protestations that Jews in the USSR were a contented ethnic group, with no desire to leave for Israel. The latter element of the drive was a clear response to Western and Israeli protests against the disabilities suffered by Russia’s Jews, who continued to be deprived even of those elementary rights granted to other ethnic groups in the USSR, such as schools, theaters, and publications, all essential for the perpetuation of Jewish identity. For the first time, statements began to appear making official what had been known for a long time—that the Soviet authorities would do everything in their power to hasten the disappearance of Russia’s Jews as a distinct ethnic group. Cultural genocide has now been acknowledged as the aim. A particularly odious feature of the campaign—still in full swing at the time of writing, after a brief intermission for the Lenin centennial observances in April 1970—was the fact that the denunciations of “Nazi-like” Israeli actions and protestations of absolute contentment of Russia’s Jews with their position were all presented as having been voiced at “spontaneous” meetings organized by Soviet Jews and in letters written by them. Thus, among the authors of such declarations—now numbering in the hundreds—have been Jews from all walks of life, ranging from military specialists to scientists and poets, and from ordinary workers to Moscow’s aging rabbi and Russia’s greatest ballerina.

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The best explanation of the rationale making antisemitism an attractive policy tool for the authorities in the Soviet bloc countries miraculously appeared in the Czechoslovak journal Zitrek, named after the journal of prewar democratic Czechoslovakia’s President Eduard Beneš. The article was published on March 19, 1969, well after Czechoslovakia’s occupation by Soviet troops, and its tone of sad irony was typical of that country’s journalism in those tragic days. Written by Vilém Hejl a young novelist who was information officer of a now banned organization of former political prisoners during the Czechoslovak “liberal” period, it said in part:

In a classical recipe for saving an unsuccessful or shaken regime, or for saving power, it is advisable to channel dissatisfaction, resistance, and hatred in a direction which is not a threat to that power, and which may even be useful to it. Non-Aryans need not necessarily be the target, although it is precisely they who are tested and well-tried objects. Jews can be more easily set apart and defined than, for instance, intellectuals, the opposition, or deviationists. Neither janitor nor mailman can be one hundred per cent certain that an attack on the intelligentsia is not somehow also aimed at him. The term “opposition” or “those extremist forces” are even more oblique and flexible. But every Aryan knows quite definitely that he is not a Zionist. This ensures that he will not feel endangered, and that he will not

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20 The journal was published by a group of liberal Czech intellectuals and was suppressed shortly after it published this article.
object if an apparatus of espionage and repression is created because, after all, it is only the Jews who are affected. Therefore, even if he is not sufficiently "high-principled" to cooperate, at least he won't obstruct it.

Hejl continued:

At first, the psychological mechanism [of blaming everything on the Jews—author] works reliably. Scapegoats are found, and, at the same time, there must be something positive for all the Aryans exempt from the effects of repressive measures. All but the members of the minority under attack are automatically promoted to a caste of citizens of higher quality: this is Kronewetter's Socialism for imbeciles. Simultaneously, a generous amnesty is declared. The blame for negligence is shifted to those affected by it. If water is not running in a new building, it is not the Aryan plumber who is to blame, but the Zionist surgeon living on the second floor. This cheap, but tested, fiction increases the number of those who share in the power, and a degree of social consolidation immediately results. [But] after the first minority, the other minorities' turn inevitably must come. And everyone belongs to some minority—whether by origin, religion, profession, or by degree of commitment. And, the second time around, everything will go much more easily because the apparatus has had its workout in the first round. Coercion has come to be one of the well-tried and accepted methods of governing the state; and its success in solving the Jewish problem also intimidates those whose turn comes later.

Most of Hejl's observations do not appear to the Western reader as strikingly original. However, to the reader who was reared in Stalinist Czechoslovakia they must have been a revelation. Hejl's gloomy predictions unfortunately are being realized one by one, as a new era of repression gradually replaces the short-lived "thaw," not only in his homeland, but throughout the Soviet bloc.

MAURICE FRIEDBERG
The Soviet Jewish Problem at the United Nations

The emerging outspokenness of Soviet Jewry and the growing protest campaigns in the West continue to focus attention on the issue of Soviet antisemitism. An examination of the record of the United Nations in this area is therefore very much to the point. The questions to be considered are: How does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, rich in provisions of justice and equality, lend itself to the predicament of Soviet Jews, some 23 years after its adoption? How do member nations view the UN as a forum for focusing on Soviet antisemitism? How has the Kremlin treated accusations of Soviet antisemitism made in the UN?

In addressing these questions, certain political realities should be made clear: Despite the homilies of moralists, the UN is inherently a political body, and the drive for national power marks UN politics, as it does other arenas of international relations. The problem of Soviet Jewry is only one of many ideological and political contests between the superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, at the UN. Superficially, the fate of Soviet Jewry appears on the agenda as a human rights question; however, above and beyond human rights considerations, this issue is deeply rooted in cold war politics.

It should also be stressed that, procedurally, the UN cannot function while lacking agreement by the superpowers. Its impact on Soviet antisemitism will be marginal (as with both Vietnam and the Middle East) as long as Moscow and Washington are at odds in this area. Moreover, the human rights provisions of the UN Charter, while relevant to Soviet Jewry, remain unenforced because of the tendency of states to guard jealously the domestic jurisdiction clause (contained in Article 2, Paragraph 7 of the Charter), and to object to foreign criticism of matters they regard as essentially within their own national prerogatives.

CHALLENGE OF SOVIET POLICY IN UN

Nonetheless, UN public diplomacy provides a convenient vehicle for challenging Soviet mistreatment of Jews. More nations are actively represented at the UN than at any other world diplomatic site, promoting a climate of immediate and continuous communication. Focusing on Soviet antisemitism threatens the Kremlin’s image and forces it to defend itself against allegations of persecuting Jews. While traditional diplomacy (“quiet” diplomacy, as it is sometimes known) is marked by behind-the-scene negotiation, the UN
environment stresses open discussion and the value of world opinion. (In fact, the Preamble to the UN Charter takes the position that "We the peoples of the UN"—rather than of the sovereign nations—will promote human betterment.) The cutting of diplomatic ties between Israel and the Soviet Union, following the 1967 six-day war, which further tightened Soviet Jewry's isolation, enhances the UN's public exposure worth.

Public discussion is to the advantage of Soviet Jewry. According to Professor Thomas Hovet, Jr.:

By focusing the spotlight of public opinion on a situation it is felt that this public exposure can freeze a situation and prevent a chain of events that might lead to conflict. At the same time there is a feeling that public discussion of an issue provides an opportunity for states not directly involved in the situation to make their influence felt in resolving the issue. The focus of publicity on the actions of a particular state threatening the peace may place that state not in an offensive but rather in a defensive position in which it must justify and explain its action.¹

However, for all its strengths, the public spotlight does not necessarily resolve basic issues. Resolution ultimately arises from quiet diplomacy. In the human rights area, where UN enforcement is most unimpressive and nations tautly uphold domestic sovereignty, public diplomacy is especially weak. South Africa's snubbing its nose at the unending UN votes and resolutions condemning its policies in Southwest Africa is a classically case of the impotence of public diplomacy in this sphere.

Accordingly, the UN's usefulness in connection with Soviet antisemitism must be measured in perspective. It is no substitute for other forums—demonstrations, communications media, educational programs—in protesting Soviet injustice. To be sure, the UN has not always been used to challenge Soviet antisemitism. The five Black Years (shwartse yoren), 1948–1953, in which Stalin shut all Jewish theatres, schools, and publications, did not see the issue argued at the UN for two reasons:

The first, the inexperience of Jewish organizations with public diplomacy, and the resultant overall Jewish hesitancy to raise publicly charges of Soviet antisemitism was discussed by Ben Ami:

For generations the Jews maintained the dictum: "Do not provoke the gentiles." Taught by bitter experience, they were always afraid of making matters worse than they were. To raise an outcry, to protest, to stand up for their rights and lives, might make the gentiles all the angrier and provoke them into more violence and bloodshed . . . "sha, sha, don't make a row," frightened Jews would say when they learned of the bitter lot of their brethren in another town or another country. Rather than resort to open protest, the Jews developed a technique of peaceful intercession. This in time became the art of "Jewish diplomacy." The Jewish mediator would rush around discreetly and try through supplication, bribery, and self-debasement to moderate the ruler's decree.

A few years ago when Jewish leaders began asking themselves what to do about the problem of Soviet Jewry, many said "Sha sha." They claimed that ever loud protest and outcry would serve to anger the Soviet and harm the Jews in the Soviet Union.

Only when all attempts at discussions with the Soviet authorities failed and when the burden of eye-witness accounts continued to grow—only then did Jewish organizations, some slowly, others more rapidly, begin to raise their voices in behalf of the Jews of the Soviet Union.\(^2\)

The second reason was the fear that denunciations would prove counter-productive. In his last years, Stalin was considered mad and unresponsive to foreign opinion on almost everything, including Soviet persecution of the Jews, and it was held that pressures from abroad would only further enrage him. By 1961 the UN began to appear as a safer forum for attacking Soviet anti-Jewish policy. The Communist party's "liberal" wing was then in power, and, as a result of its greater tolerance of pluralism, experts felt it opportune to raise the issue of Soviet Jewish rights.

Coincidentally and in response to a multinational outbreak of swastika daubings on Jewish and other property, the Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities surveyed antisemitic practices in the early 1960s. But since the sub-commission's central work is the preparation of human rights studies (rather than the enforcement of those rights), it could do little about specific antisemitic incidents.

**Role of NGOs**

However, this first UN investigation of antisemitism set a precedent for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)\(^3\)—the 206 private national and international groups accredited to the UN at the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and in consultative status with it—to draw attention to Soviet Jewry's predicament, a factor hardly endearing them to Soviet UN representatives. But there are limitations to the effectiveness of NGOs challenging a member nation, especially a paranoid superpower such as the USSR; understandably, their criticisms are more muted than those of member nations.

NGOs have cited Soviet antisemitism in the context of debates on conventions dealing with racial discrimination and religious intolerance. But at least one official UN study also carries damaging material on Moscow's suppression of Jewish rights. Critical material submitted by the Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations (CBJO; representing its constituents: B'nai B'rith, Board of Deputies of British Jews, and South African Jewish Board of Deputies) was incorporated in this document dealing with the right of everyone to leave any country including his own, and to return to his

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country. Significantly, this information remained in the study despite Soviet demands for its suppression.

Disclosures in 1967 that certain NGOs and their affiliates were recipients of Central Intelligence Agency grants sharpened Soviet hostility. In 1969 ECOSOC launched its first full investigation in 19 years of the NGOs. In this survey, certain Jewish NGOs were assailed by Arab states for alleged support of Israel. The Soviet Union, too, denounced those NGOs claiming mistreatment of Soviet Jews. One question in the over-all inquiry of NGOs, used by the USSR to harass Jewish NGOs, was, “Have you in the past 10 years criticized any government in which you have no constituency?” While other Jewish NGOs met the investigation’s approval, the NGO investigatory committee refused to reach a final decision on the fate of the Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations, one of the most outspoken critics of Soviet antisemitism.4

What impact has NGO participation had on the problem of Soviet antisemitism? NGOs sharply differ in estimating the extent. According to the Consultative Council of Jewish Organization (CCJO; represents Alliance Israélite Universelle, Canadian Friends of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Anglo-Jewish Association), Jewish NGOs abuse their privileges by being too concerned with “defending their own particular interests.” In its view, “We can never, under existing regulations, present our case in an intelligent and meaningful way. All we do is to provoke the Soviet representatives and provide them with the opportunity to denounce us and libel us.”

By contrast, the Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations holds that Soviet Jewry will be aided only by a vigorous UN campaign. And, since governments do not generally supply critical information, CBJO argues, NGOs must spell out violations of human rights: “To the extent that NGO sources are not included, these studies will remain in the realm of abstraction.”5

While NGO criticism has successfully put the Soviet Union on the defensive, the intensity of UN dialogue vastly increased, once member nations entered the arena. Critics of Soviet antisemitism could be classified in three categories: Israel, United States, other nations.

Role of Israel

Experience with UN bloc voting has given Israel a valid skepticism toward the organization’s potential for fostering peace and security. Yet Israel is not powerful enough either in its own right or as a signatory to any major military treaty to remain oblivious to UN action. Thus, Israel puts together a motley coalition of allies in the recurring Middle East disputes before the

4 In 1970 the NGO investigatory committee and ECOSOC voted to retain the consultative status of CBJO as a nongovernmental organization.

UN. What is more, Israel's invective against Soviet support of the Arabs further predisposes Moscow to dismiss its protests. After attacking us for helping "peace loving" Arabs (so the Russians must reason), how dare the Israelis hold forth on Soviet internal policies!

Yet Israel cannot treat lightly the plight of Soviet Jewry: personal, cultural, and historic ties bar indifference. And Jewish religious imperatives—crying out for oppressed brethren—rule out vacillation. For these reasons and more, the ordeal of the world's second largest concentration of Jews is a diplomatic priority for Israel.

As a rule, the UN treats human rights issues not from the perspective of resolving specific problems in particular nations, but with the purpose of setting forth general human rights principles. Israel has not missed opportunities to relate the fate of Soviet Jewry to such broader UN human rights concerns. Israel has raised the issue in connection with human rights conventions of religious discrimination and racial prejudice, as well as before the plenary of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Most recently (November 10, 1969), upon a signed request of the petitioner, Israel submitted directly to UN Secretary General U Thant an appeal from 18 Jewish families living in Soviet Georgia, which accused the Soviet Union of preventing their emigration from the Soviet Union and settlement in Israel. In the past, Israel refrained from taking such public initiative on behalf of Soviet Jews because it feared reprisals against Jews who had smuggled out such documents. In this instance, Israeli diplomats felt that the petitioners themselves had decided to overlook the prospect of reprisals.

When Israel first raised the issue of Soviet antisemitism, it was deliberately vague in accusing the Soviet Union. It deplored discrimination against "a certain large Jewish community," "a large section of the Jewish people," "a great and ancient Jewish community resident in one of the world's mightiest states." Subsequently, Israel decided to do away with diplomatic niceties and became more blunt, quoting excerpts from more egregious Soviet antisemitic publications, as well as condemnations by a number of Western Communist parties of Soviet anti-Jewish policy.

What charges has Israel leveled against the Soviet Union? It must be stressed that, while opposing Soviet antisemitism, Israel has never extended these criticisms to other aspects of Soviet life and Communist ideology. It has attacked emigration curbs on Jewish families torn apart by World War II; restrictions on the production of Jewish religious articles, prayer books, ritual foods (matzot), and Yiddish literature and culture; the closing of synagogues and Yiddish theatres and the prohibition of private instruction in Judaism and Jewish culture; the singling out of Jews as economic criminals (especially

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6 Although Secretary General U Thant honored Israel's plea and circulated the document (A/7762) to every member nation of the UN, he refused to circulate other similar statements by Soviet Jews brought to his attention in 1970 by Israel Ambassador to the UN Yosef Tekoah.
in the early 1960s, when a disproportionate number of Jews were sentenced for alleged capitalist crimes); antisemitic references to Jews in the Soviet press; economic, political, social, and educational discrimination against Jews. Nevertheless, Israel has refused to exaggerate the suffering, never charging Moscow with physically persecuting Jews.

Israel also has appealed the plight of Soviet Jewry in the framework of UN human rights machinery. It has urged the appointment of a UN high commissioner for human rights who would receive public petitions on infringements, and conduct inquiries based on the information received. The appointment of a high commissioner was first recommended in the United States in December 1963 by Jacob Blaustein, and received wide support from international nongovernmental organizations concerned with human rights (AJYB, 1966 [Vol. 67], p. 469). Thus, Ambassador Joel Barromi argued in 1967:

Israel has more than once drawn attention to the thwarted aspirations of the second largest Jewish community. . . . Such a situation constituted an appropriate field of action for the High Commissioner, whose role would be to rekindle international awareness of human rights and give impetus to the process which would lead to constructive and voluntary international solutions. The establishment of a post of High Commissioner would assuage the bitterness of individuals and groups who felt that they had been forgotten and would provide a stimulus for those who wished to improve and liberalize laws, practices and policies.7

Another goal championed by Israel is a more potent role for NGOs. As already mentioned, certain NGOs drew Moscow's condemnation for referring to Soviet antisemitism. Commending NGOs, Ambassador Haim Cohen said in 1965:

... their reports might well be more objective than those made by governments, since they were made by private observers who had no interests at stake and were not actuated by considerations of prestige. The exceptions could not justify unfairness to the vast majority. Hence, the non-governmental organizations would be encouraged to submit reports which would assist the Commission to form an idea of the progress made in human rights; governments should be given an opportunity to comment if those reports implicated them.8

In 1968, Israel stepped up its attacks in an unprecedented move before the Security Council. Since human-rights problems are not debated in a vacuum, but in the politically charged atmosphere of the UN, Israel followed standard diplomatic procedure in introducing Soviet antisemitism into one of the perennial Security Council exchanges on the Middle East. The New York Times captured the drama:

Lord Caradon of Britain, this month's President of the Security Council, cut short an Israeli attack on "discrimination against the Jews" in the Soviet Union during a sharp debate today on Israeli rule in Jerusalem.

7 E/AC.7/S.R. 572. (This and similar notations refer to official UN documents.)
Lord Caradon's action was provoked by Yakov A. Malik, chief Soviet delegate, who interrupted Yosef Tekoah, the chief Israeli representative. Mr. Tekoah was replying to a Soviet denunciation of Israeli treatment of Arabs in territories occupied during the Middle East war last year.

Mr. Tekoah had said there was a "strange anomaly in the Soviet attitude toward human rights." Then he added:

"The discrimination and disabilities imposed against the Jews of the Soviet Union are generally known. In Moscow alone—"

The sentence was interrupted and the Security Council's attention was arrested by the amplified rapping of Mr. Malik's knuckles on the microphone before his seat at the oval Council table.

Lord Caradon gave Mr. Malik the floor "on a point of order."

"We are discussing here Israeli aggression and those illegal activities carried out by Israel in Jerusalem," said Mr. Malik. He said Mr. Tekoah's comments were an attempt to "divert attention from what is being done by Israel to prevent a settlement in the Middle East."

Lord Caradon asked Mr. Tekoah to continue, but to confine his remarks "specifically" to the subject of the agenda, or the situation in Jerusalem since Israel took over the Jordanian sector of the city.

Mr. Tekoah tried twice again to resume his statement where he had left off. Each time, Lord Caradon cut in again, insisting that Mr. Tekoah abide by his ruling.

After the second exchange, Mr. Tekoah asked:

"How can the Security Council consider as of any interest or validity Soviet views on the unhindered continuation of Arab cultural, religious, or public life in Jerusalem if half a million Jewish citizens of Moscow are deprived of it?"

The rapping of Mr. Malik's knuckles was heard again, and he was given the floor.

Mr. Malik said that Israel had no right "to speak on behalf of the Jews of the whole world." He said that Jews in the Soviet Union "enjoy all rights which are enjoyed by all other citizens."

Mr. Tekoah, after a new exhortation from Lord Caradon to confine himself to "the subject on which we are called," completed a statement saying that Arabs in the occupied areas enjoyed full civil rights. He concluded:

"When the Soviet Government will grant similar rights to its Jewish citizens, we in the world at large shall be able to recognize its right to speak on behalf of human rights." 9

Finally, Israeli accusations of Soviet antisemitism provoked responses from certain Arab nations, which fear appreciable Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel. While the Arabs do not necessarily endorse all Soviet human rights positions, they hardly pass up opportunities to take political swipes at Israel. They use the issue of Soviet Jewry to attack Israel's authority to represent world Jews, the alleged dual political allegiance of Jews, and alleged Israeli mistreatment of Arab nationals. Typical are the following statements:

Mrs. Ghorbal (U.A.R.). Furthermore, no one in the Committee spoke as the representative of Islam, Christianity, or Buddhism, and by the same token Israel was not entitled to speak for all the Jews in the world. Israel clearly sought to

claim the double allegiance of Jews wherever they were, and to convince the world that all states were accountable to it for acts committed against Jews. It was even said that political Zionism wishes to perpetuate the racial distinction theory in order to use it to further its political aims.  

Mrs. Afnan (Iraq). Some delegations have advised the Soviet Union to allow Russian Jews to leave the country, but their own immigration laws would not welcome them. They were offering the homes of a million Arab refugees. The Israeli representative had come to the Committee to complain of discrimination against Jews and said that one out of every ten Israelis was an Arab and that there was no discrimination against Arabs. Before Israel was established, out of ten Arabs only one was of the Jewish faith. In their own land, a majority of nine to one had been reduced to a minority of one to nine. And the Israeli representative had the cynicism to claim non-discrimination.  

Role of United States

A basic objective of United States foreign policy is support of the UN “to ensure the survival and prosperity of our political and social values in an era of protracted international disequilibrium.” The mutuality between UN human rights provisions and most American beliefs is clear-cut. The American political commitment to diversity and peaceful change lends force to the international application of this notion.

Strategically, references by the United States to Soviet antisemitism serve a dual purpose in its relations with the Kremlin. They promote the liberalization of Soviet society by exposing Soviet citizens, particularly the emerging young elite, to the advantages of personal freedom and an international philosophy of “live and let live.” Additionally, they “neutralize the ideological thrust of Communism.” Through indirectly contrasting the freedom of American Jews to the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union, Washington shows that a free and open society “can yield more ultimate satisfactions than a totalitarian system.” By refusing to overlook these human rights violations and by stressing the security dangers stemming from them, the United States, in effect, rejects what might appear as a detente, and puts international reconciliation on a far more realistic footing.

American compassion for Russia’s Jews is no recent phenomenon. Czarist pogroms shook the American conscience before the cold war and Stalin’s contrived suspicion of an “international Jewish conspiracy” became political facts. As for action on behalf of Soviet Jews, the State Department conceded the limitation of official governmental intervention. Its 1967 position paper, The Jews in the Soviet Union, stated:

10 AC.3/S.R. 1168.
13 Ibid., p. 45.
14 Ibid.
We have found from past experience that government-to-government approaches to Soviet officials at all levels are totally ineffective. Our approaches in the past have been brushed aside by claims that there is no antisemitism in the USSR and that, by raising the subject, we are attempting to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union for some "Cold War" purpose.

To be sure, the refusal of the United States to ratify, as of this writing, UN human rights conventions, despite presidential urgings, has not diminished American presidential support for more vigorous UN action. Since the early 1960s, when Soviet antisemitism was first confronted in the UN, the United States—second only to Israel—has pressed for the rights of Soviet Jews. At the outset, the United States, like Israel, was mild in voicing criticism in that it did not specifically name the Soviet Union.

Mrs. Means (U.S.A.). In countries where the Constitutions nominally guaranteed freedom of worship, religion, expression and thought, synagogues were stoned and desecrated without any attempt by the responsible authorities to apprehend the guilty and, together with other places of worship, were even closed. Jews were also discriminated against on the basis of nationality.  

However, like Israel, the United States has become increasingly outspoken in citing Soviet antisemitism. In its first references, the United States raised the situation of the Soviet Jews in the context of general human rights principles under discussion by different UN organs. Most recently, the United States representative to the Human Rights Commission sought a deliberate confrontation with the Soviet Union on the status of Soviet Jews. On November 25, 1969 Mrs. Rita E. Hauser, the American representative, made an independent statement on Soviet Jewry before the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, the first time the United States raised this issue not in the context of some general human rights discussion. In addition to citing over-all harassment of Soviet Jews, Mrs. Hauser read a letter from Mrs. Elizaveta Isaakovna Kapshitzer of Moscow, addressed to the UN General Assembly, which had been brought to her attention by the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry. In it, the writer accused the Soviet writer's union of ousting her son Vitold for asking to emigrate to Israel. He was later denied permission to leave the Soviet Union, and both he and his mother now were living on her pension, the equivalent of $40 a month.

Indicating their displeasure with this statement, the Soviet and Ukrainian delegates to the Third Committee interrupted Mrs. Hauser three times as she read Mrs. Kapshitzer's plea. According to Charles W. Yost, United States ambassador to the United Nations, the United States was pleased with the outcome of committee consideration of this case. He wrote to Congressman Jonathan B. Bingham on December 4, 1969, "The Soviets demonstrated exceptional sensitivity during the debate, and we feel that our

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19 E/AC.7/S.R. 473.
efforts resulted in worthwhile publicity and a good measure of sympathy
among other delegates, several of which also spoke out.”

The substance of United States criticism does not differ much from
Israel’s. The United States has publicly acknowledged consulting with Israel
on Soviet antisemitism. The United States took issue with Moscow’s
discrediting of all religions and then went on to cite specific hardships
imposed on Jews. In UN conventions on eliminating racial discrimination
and religious intolerance, the United States supported separate articles on
antisemitism. It compared antisemitism with apartheid; it warned that anti-
semitism constitutes a present, as well as historic, danger; it challenged the
notion (continually advanced by the Soviet Union) that antisemitism is
peculiarly an outgrowth of Nazism.

The most interesting difference between Israeli and United States ex-
changes with Soviet diplomats is the personal framework occasionally mark-
ing the American presentation. The tenure of Morris B. Abram as United
States Ambassador to the Human Rights Commission, while simultaneously
serving as president of the American Jewish Committee, may account for
this. Two examples are indicative:

In 1966 Ambassador Abram argued that no political system provides
absolute guarantees against intolerance. He cited the return to respectability
of Trofim Kichko (who had been silenced since the world-wide condemna-
tion of his vicious Judaism Without Embellishment in the early 1960s) in
the wake of the 1967 six-day war (AJYB, 1969 [Vol. 70], p. 391). Accord-
ing to Abram, the Kichko book contradicted a report of the Ukrainian
Soviet Socialist Republic which maintained that there was no racial prejudice
in that country. The report added that the Ukrainian criminal code provided
for imprisonment for stirring up such discord, but that the law had no real
function, since the younger generation was being educated in the spirit of
understanding, and Socialism (Communism) was incompatible with racism.

Abram thereupon sent Boris S. Ivanov (the Soviet diplomat) a copy of the
Kichko work,

... pointing out that Mr. Ivanov had inveighed against all forms of discrimina-
tion and had voted to include ethnic and national discrimination among the
forms of discrimination to be covered by the draft convention on the elimination
of all forms of racial discrimination.

After considerable delay, Mr. Ivanov had merely sent him a press release from
the Soviet Embassy at Washington on “Jews in the Soviet Union” which dis-
agreed with the author of the book on some points and stated that the work
contained some slipshod formulations and that its make-up left much to be
desired. He had then reiterated his questions to Mr. Ivanov, but had received

27 For instance, in a reply of December 10, 1969 to a letter from Congressman Jonathan B.
Bingham, H. G. Torbert, Jr., acting assistant secretary of state for congressional relations noted:
“The U.S. Delegation to the (Human Rights) Commission will, as in the past, consult with
the Delegation of Israel, which is also a member of the Commission, in order to determine the
best course of action to follow on this matter.”
no reply. Finally, he had written again soliciting a reply and suggesting that it might be useful for a delegation to visit the USSR with the same opportunities to observe facts at first hand as members of the Sub-Commission had had at Atlanta. That letter had also remained unanswered.18

While this episode lacked personal bitterness, the dialogue between Ambassador Abram and his Soviet counterpart, Ambassador Yakub A. Ostrovski before the 1967 meeting of the Human Rights Commission was heavy with antisemitic aspersions. The incident, which may well be one of the most antisemitic in the history of the UN, called forth formal representation to the UN Mission of the Soviet Union by Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Abram was attacked by Ostrovski simply because he was a Jew. The Soviet diplomat said Abram was conducting himself as though he were at a meeting of the American Jewish Committee, and members of the Human Rights Commission merited more respect. Subsequently, he accused Abram of serving two masters: the United States government and “the Zionist organization over which he presided.” The inability of the Soviet ambassador to restrain himself, despite rigorous professional training, illustrates perhaps more than anything else how unsettling Moscow finds critical references to its antisemitism.

Besides the formal use of UN organs for drawing attention to Soviet antisemitism, the UN also was increasingly considered as a forum for challenging Soviet policy by Americans concerned with this issue. A series of rallies were organized and advertisements placed by the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry for December 11, 1967, the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The following year, on Human Rights Day, the Conference submitted to the UN a petition with 250,000 signatures, protesting the violation of Soviet Jewry’s human rights spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In November, 1969, 59 members of the House of Representatives urged the State Department to support Israel’s request that the UN act on the plea of the 18 Jewish families from Soviet Georgia who sought permission to emigrate to Israel. Of course, these activities do not include the numerous protests held at the UN on other occasions particularly involving youth under the auspices of the New York Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (AJYB, 1969 [Vol. 70], pp. 113, 115).

Other Countries

Aside from the United States and Israel, other members of the UN took note of Soviet antisemitism only occasionally. Contrasted with ritualistic attacks on South African apartheid, the fate of Soviet Jewry seems of scant import. For smaller nations, motivated by humanitarian zeal, the UN offers

an accepted public forum for challenging human rights violations. Privately, these powers probably would not dare call attention to internal Soviet racism.

Thus far, some 15 UN members, including Israel and the United States, have addressed themselves to the issue of Soviet antisemitism. Moral rather than political considerations apparently motivate those countries which speak out from time to time. The absence of consistent condemnation of Soviet antisemitism by the most ardent anti-Communist bloc in the UN, the Latin American countries—perhaps for fear of indirectly taking sides in the Arab-Israeli conflict—bears out this conclusion. Nations raising the problem included Australia, Austria, Canada, Dahomey, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Great Britain, Italy, Madagascar, New Zealand, Sierre Leone, and Uruguay. What is most disappointing here is that the transcripts of UN human rights exchanges on antisemitism, relating to conventions subsequently adopted by the Human Rights Commission, show many overlooked opportunities for condemning Soviet policy. Invariably antisemitism was linked to Nazi atrocities in World War II, and current Soviet injustice was not mentioned.

References to Soviet antisemitism were both subtle and direct, with the former tactic dominating. Two examples of the subdued approach, in the context of the Kichko book, follow:

Mr. Juvigny (France). Turning more specifically to the objectionable publication mentioned by Mr. Abram, he said that if world public opinion had had to rely solely on Government sources of information, the publication in question would perhaps never have been known abroad. It could even be conjectured that no mean role had been played by world public opinion, aroused by articles in the press in influencing the authorities of the country concerned to suppress the publication in question.19

Mr. Ermacora (Austria). In conclusion, his delegation believed that the commitments entered into on an equal footing by all States parties to the convention would be meaningless if the States concerned permitted the publication of pamphlets and books of the kind the observer from Israel had mentioned at a previous meeting.20

A general reference to Soviet antisemitism:

Mrs. Ramaholimihaso (Madagascar) said that she had listened with great interest to the statement made at the previous meeting by the representative of Israel, and, like him, welcomed the fact that, increasingly, ethnic minorities had freedom to preserve their cultures and traditions. She hoped there would be further progress in that direction.21

By contrast, the following Australian statement was far more pointed. The date (1962) is worth noting because intensive Israeli and United States condemnations had not yet begun. Significantly, the Australian accusation

19 Ibid.
21 AC.3/S.R. 1392.
stemmed in part from pressure brought by the Jewish community on the Foreign Office.\textsuperscript{22}

Mr. White (Australia). I feel that I must also mention specifically the fact that the Jewish communities throughout the world have expressed concern at the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union. Representatives on the Committee will already be aware, from material reaching them in the press and in other ways, of the grounds stated for this concern—for example, criticism in the press and radio, and even by some Soviet officials, against the Jews. Official restriction of Jewish religious observance—a recent example being the ban on public baking of unleavened bread for the 1962 Passover; and official action against individual Jews, such as the fact that out of the death sentences for economic offenses imposed lately in the Soviet Union, an unduly high proportion has been passed on Jews.\textsuperscript{23}

**SOVIET POSITION**

Self-righteously, the Soviet Union sees the UN's human rights forum as a channel for berating Western shortcomings, while never admitting any of its own. Ethnic harmony, religious tolerance, and national understanding are held forth by Moscow's diplomats as the image of Soviet diversity. The West, by contrast, is derided for discrimination and minority abuses. This stance is at variance with the human rights position of the United States, which concedes past and present imperfections, particularly in race relations. Even if the Soviet Union had not so reassuringly hailed its human rights record, Moscow's hostility to strengthening the implementation machinery of the UN would pit it against further international protection of Soviet Jewry. Suspicious of NGOs, opposed to a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, whom it threatened to boycott, and vigilant of its domestic jurisdiction rights, the Soviet Union is in no frame of mind to bow to passing criticism by member nations of Jewish deprivations.

Although Communist commitment to scientific materialism sparks opposition to all religion, a whole cluster of circumstances cause Judaism and Jews singular hardship: Jewish individualism and legacy of freedom is anathema to Communist uniformity; Soviet Jewry's many relatives in the West arouse suspicion; cultural ties to Israel run counter to Soviet xenophobia; and the Jew is too convenient and indigenous a scapegoat—as he is for other East European regimes in suppressing liberalization—for the Kremlin to ignore.

And this is not discounting Arab admiration for Jew-baiting, although, in truth, the Arab position represents a dividend of, rather than incentive for, Moscow's racism. There is nothing especially new in harassing an ideology

\textsuperscript{22} The background of the Jewish community's role and the Australian intervention is explained in Isi Leibler, *Soviet Jewry and Human Rights* (Victoria, Australia: Human Rights Publications, 1963).

\textsuperscript{23} The verbatim text cited here was summarized in a press release of the Australian Mission to UN; AC.3/S.R. 1170.
internally, while reaching an accommodation with it internationally. Even UAR President Nasser's public identification with Soviet foreign policy does not prevent the suppression of the Egyptian Communist party.

Yet foreign condemnation at the UN of Soviet antisemitism gets on Moscow's nerves. (The Soviet Union's sensitivity to such accusations voiced in other forums is indicated by the distribution in the free world of a steady stream of publications denying discrimination against Jews.) It has made the fundamental policy decision that these charges will not go unanswered. Increasingly, the Soviet Union has developed a more systematic response to such criticisms, one that has gone through three stages: Originally, attacks at the UN were ignored. Then they were challenged by the Soviet Union on the ground that they constituted interference in the USSR's internal affairs, and thereby violated the UN Charter; occasionally Soviet diplomats mildly took issue with accusations of Soviet antisemitism. Now they are elaborately contested by the Soviet Union. Soviet diplomats take the offensive in rebutting such accusations. Nations raising charges of Soviet antisemitism are accused of attempting to subvert the Soviet Union by destroying its multinational character through the introduction of the poison of nationalism.

In rebutting allegations of antisemitism, Soviet delegates to the UN call on a mixed bag of arguments. As with many exchanges at the UN, their response has no relevance to the accusation. They cite carefully prepared statistics intended to do away with these charges. In taking the trouble to draw up these doctored arguments, Moscow shows it is disturbed.

It is revealing that Soviet UN denials of antisemitism contradict certain official admissions. On July 19, 1965, for the first time in decades, Premier Aleksei Kosygin surprised Soviet audiences by acknowledging the danger of antisemitism. On that occasion, the 25th anniversary of Latvia's "liberation" by the Soviet Union, he said that "nationalism, Great Power chauvinism, racism, and antisemitism are completely alien to our society and contradict our Weltanschauung."

In an editorial on the "friendship of peoples" in the USSR, Pravda, on September 5, 1965, also deplored antisemitism on Soviet soil. However, that condemnation of antisemitism rested not on morality, but on the practical ground that such manifestations blacken the Soviet image abroad. After underscoring the "international obligations" of the USSR, the editorial stated:

V. I. Lenin, the great creator of the Communist Party and founder of the Soviet State, bade our Party hold sacred the friendship of peoples of the USSR. He wrathfully assailed any manifestations of nationalism whatsoever, and in particular he demanded an unceasing "struggle against anti-Semitism, that foul fanning of racial specialness and national enmity" created by the exploiting classes.24

No such admissions intended for internal Soviet consumption have ever been voiced at the UN.

The procedures of UN bodies involved with human rights make for the discussion of broad areas of social justice rather than of concrete cases of repressions. USSR references to the status of its Jewish citizens most often occurred in debates on declarations outlawing religious and racial discrimination. These can be divided into defensive and offensive statements.

DEFENSIVE ARGUMENTS

Here are characteristic defensive arguments regarding Soviet antisemitism as they were used by Soviet diplomats, as they were summarized in UN documents:

1. The problem does not exist in law. The Soviet Constitution and laws are cited as placing Jews on an equal footing with other Soviet citizens.

No one was entitled to charge the USSR government with antisemitism when the USSR Constitution stipulated that any discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin was punishable by law.23

2. The problem does not exist in fact. Soviet diplomats further argue that anti-Jewish discrimination, at least so far as religious observance is concerned, is actually nonexistent in the USSR.

On the other hand, many of the Jewish inhabitants of the USSR did not practice their religion, since the number of believers in any faith was declining rapidly in that country, as in many others.26

It was regrettable that the delegation of a Member State should try to use for selfish and political ends an important discussion to which everyone should try to make a constructive contribution. The Israeli delegation was obsessed by a problem which existed only in its imagination and which it tried to relate to every question being dealt with by the different organs of the United Nations.27

3. Soviet Jews have no cause to complain. In attempting to show that Jews have no cause for complaint, Soviet representatives cite certain statistics of Jewish professional employment. They never concede existing discrimination in employment, particularly the bars against Jews in senior policy-making posts. Neither is mention made of the increasing difficulties for Jews to gain university admission, and of the pressure exerted on Soviet Jews after the six-day war to denounce Israeli policy. Most importantly, Soviet statements at the UN do not adequately answer charges that Jews are denied the essential religious and cultural institutions and other means for preserving their separate identity.28

28 In this connection see annual reviews of the USSR Jewish community in the AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK.
7,647 Jews were delegates to central and local public bodies and 290,707 had received diplomas from national universities or institutions of higher technical education; which meant that in the latter respect Jews ranked third after the Russians and the Ukrainians. Of Soviet scientific workers, 36,173 were Jews. In addition, more than 2,000 Jews had received doctorates in science and 13,000 had obtained advanced scientific diplomas; eighty Academicians or corresponding members of the Academy were Jews. Forty-two Jews had been given the highest awards for socialist labour and a large percentage of the members of various artistic and cultural associations were Jews. 14.7 per cent of Soviet physicians were Jews; 8.5 per cent were critics and newsmen; 10.4 per cent were prosecutors, lawyers and judges; 7 per cent actors, sculptors, etc. A Jewish-language cultural newspaper was published in Moscow. While Jews in Czarist Russia had lived in ghettos and had been subject to many measures of harassment, they were today better treated in the USSR than in most countries of the free world. Those facts proved how false the picture drawn by the Western Press was.29

[was] the United States representative. aware that in the Soviet Union there was not a single case in which a citizen had been prevented from taking part in elections—a frequent occurrence in the United States—and that in the USSR no one had ever been discriminated against in regard to his choice of dwelling, work or education—a form of discrimination which was widespread in the United States. In September 1959, in New York, Mr. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, replying to a question asked him at a press conference, had stated that in the USSR all nationals, including Jews, enjoyed equal rights and lived in peace and that, moreover, a substantial number of Jews were high in the ranks of those who worked on interplanetary travel. That was a clear reply to the United States representative's question.30

OFFENSIVE ARGUMENTS

From an offensive position, Soviet diplomats maintain that:

1) Charges of antisemitism represent a smoke screen.

This, they say, is used to conceal Israeli aggressive policies.

The object of those remarks had been simply to spread a smoke-screen to conceal the situation in Israel and the occupation of Arab territories brought about as a result of Israel's aggressive policies.31

How could the United States representative dare to raise his voice in an appeal for the freedom of nations when the soldiers of his country were killing thousands of people in Vietnam? The United States representative should read the newspaper; he should be informed about the crimes against humanity committed daily by his country in Vietnam.32

2) Balance is needed in assessing antisemitism.

While antisemitism is unjust, it is argued, it is no more loathsome than other types of racism including apartheid, Zionism and Nazism.

30 AC.3/S.R. 1171.
Anti-Semitism was a manifestation of discrimination against one particular race. Consequently, *apartheid* and anti-Semitism could not be placed on the same footing. The former was a general form of racial discrimination which might be applied at any period and against any race. The latter was merely one manifestation of racial discrimination in a particular case.\(^{33}\)

In this connection, the following episode is noteworthy. In drafting a convention in 1965 on the "Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination," the United States and Brazil proposed before the General Assembly's Third Committee an article to "condemn anti-Semitism and take appropriate action for its eradication" (AJYB, 1966 [Vol. 67], p. 263). The USSR proposed instead the following amendment:

> States Parties condemn anti-Semitism, Zionism, Nazism, neo-Nazism and all other forms of the policy and ideology of colonialism, national and race hatred and exclusiveness, and shall take action as appropriate for the speedy eradication of those inhuman ideas and practices in the territories subject to their jurisdiction.\(^{34}\)

Of course, the Committee turned down this absurd grouping. But the Soviet Union successfully used the ploy of grouping together antisemitism, Zionism and Nazism to bring about the rejection of the original amendment on antisemitism.

3) Antisemitism is peculiarly a product of Nazism; Zionism is the same as Judaism.

Here is a favorite Soviet device of linking odious strawmen. Antisemitism is continually said to originate in West Germany—a nation posing a compelling threat to the Soviet Union—and thereby to augur a revival of Nazism. Also, Jews are never attacked as Jews, but for their professional, cultural, or religious ties. Thus, in scoring Jewish NGOs, the Kremlin does not cite their religion, but their political support of Israel (Zionism) which, for certain NGOs, represents only a part of their UN responsibilities.

The wave of Nazi and anti-Semtic outbursts which, beginning in West Germany, had recently swept the whole of Western Europe and the United States of America, had focused world attention on the threat of a revival of Nazism and its terrible consequences...

Some United States Zionist organizations also tried to cover up the shameful situation by shifting the blame on the U.S.S.R. It was common knowledge, however, that the U.S.S.R. was one of the few European countries where there had been no manifestations of that kind and where Jews suffered no discrimination.\(^{35}\)

4) Antisemitism is an American phenomenon.

In an effort to undermine United States criticism of Soviet antisemitism, it

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\(^{33}\) E/CN.4/S.R. 784.

\(^{34}\) Decter, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

is stated that the United States has no right to sit in judgment on the Soviet Union inasmuch as antisemitism is still deeply rooted in Americans.

In regard to the Jewish question, which seemed to be of special interest to the United States representative, the book by Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Foster, *Some of My Best Friends*, published in 1962, showed that anti-semitism had not died with Hitler and was deeply imbedded in the American subconscious mind. That some 5.5 million Americans were discriminated against in various fields and particularly in the matters of education and accommodation.

**CONCLUSION**

While the Soviet Union remains faithful to its aim of wiping out the Jewish identity, it does not turn a deaf ear to foreign criticism. Protests have at least slowed the Kremlin's timetable for cultural genocide. The visit of Moscow's Chief Rabbi Judah Leib Levin to the United States in 1968; the availability of matzot in many large cities; the termination of trials of Jews as "economic criminals," and the removal of Kichko's *Judaism Without Embellishment*, all show that the Soviet Union will not defy completely outraged world opinion.

Realistically, what is the UN's role in fighting Soviet antisemitism? The complexities of international relations make it impossible to assess the actual effectiveness of the UN, as compared with other forums in which the Soviet Union has been assailed. Political interaction is hard enough to measure accurately nationally; it is 125 times more difficult to define in the UN organization. One can only point to the cumulative impact: Moscow's embarrassment with public attacks on its antisemitism.

Bolder use must be made of intergovernmental and interpersonal communication at the UN in drawing attention to the persecution of Soviet Jewry. Except for Israel and the United States, member nations have scarcely raised the question.

Its human rights apparatus makes the UN a natural milieu for sympathetic diplomats to raise again and again (as in the case of apartheid in South Africa) the tragedy of Soviet Jewry. Between formal sessions the UN also offers unique opportunities for personal contact. Face-to-face activity in this concentrated diplomatic setting—in the delegate's lounge, in the corridors, at cocktail parties, and receptions—will increase delegate awareness, while intensifying Soviet embarrassment. The following comment by an East European diplomat illustrates the UN's potential in that area:

The contact that you have here with other diplomats is ten or twenty times more than that which you would have in a national capital. This is especially

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36 AC.3/S.R. 1171.
true during the Assembly sessions. You have contacts every day not just with one person, but with many persons. Between sessions, there is still more contact here with diplomats from other countries than there would be in a national capital.\textsuperscript{38}

Besides, UN diplomats are rotated to other posts and they will take with them their understanding of, if not compassion for, Soviet Jewry, derived from their experience of public exchanges and face-to-face contact.

The opinion of mankind, represented in part by the UN, is a crucial factor of today's international relations. An increasingly informed world public judges rivalries between the Communist world and the West by their respective adherence to publicly professed values. Of course, nations do not carry out foreign policy on the strength of world opinion polls. Certain interests are sacrosanct. Thus, despite a shocked world opinion, the Soviet Union invaded Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. But the crushing of Jewish identity, while convenient for Soviet politics, is not essential to it.

Moscow's vulnerability must be trumpeted. In vying with the United States in the nonaligned world, Soviet diplomacy patiently projects a humanitarian image. The Kremlin, too, condemns racism in its attempt to undermine the social fabric of the Western democracies. Harlan Cleveland notes the illuminating role of the UN in this context:

Let no one believe that this is a pointless exercise, unrelated to political reality. Under the strong light of world opinion, a nation's prestige is engaged: and since national power is not unrelated to national prestige, governments are influenced by world opinion—even though it is hard to prove because they seldom admit it. The blended conscience of men of good will may wink at injustice in the dark; but when the lights are on, a good conscience must speak, or desert its possessor. No government anywhere is immune to the moral indignation of those, including its own citizens, who watch it at work.\textsuperscript{39}

But even if the UN does not deflect the USSR from its oppressive course, even if all the verbal exchanges fail to move the Kremlin, the suffering of Soviet Jewry must be registered for the record. How ironic if the Jew, whose teachings of brotherhood and justice are at the bedrock of the UN, would remain as obscure today in the council of nations as he was earlier in this generation when silence greeted Hitler's gathering storm.

\textbf{RONALD I. RUBIN}

\textsuperscript{38} Alger, \textit{ibid.}, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{39} Harlan Cleveland, \textit{The Obligations of Power} (New York, 1966), p. 133.
North American Jewish Settlers in Israel

This is a study of native American and Canadian Jews, who chose to go to Israel during the years 1950 through 1966, and became permanent residents of the country in 1962–1966. It presents their replies to a number of specific questions mailed to them between March and the end of August, 1967, inquiring about their American background; their reasons for leaving America, for going to Israel, and for remaining there; their view of why some Americans leave Israel, and their appraisal of the future of American Jewry.

Methodology

All native American and Canadian Jews who became permanent residents of Israel during the years 1962–1966, and who were at least 20 years old at the end of 1966—780 in all, were selected from an Israel government list of permanent residents. Ten per cent were from Canada, 90 per cent from the United States (the Jewish population of Canada is 4 per cent that of the United States). One-third left America between 1950 and 1962, and the rest during 1962–1966. After eliminating those who were either too young when they left America, or were not in Israel at the time, or deceased, questionnaires were sent to 703 potential participants; 443 or 63 per cent, responded.

For purposes of comparison, the respondents were divided into groups according to background and occupation in Israel at the time of the survey. Classifications were by sex; whether or not their childhood home was Zionist; whether or not they belonged to a Zionist youth organization; whether they were employed as professionals or nonprofessionals in 1967; whether they were living in Israel for less than five years, or five years or longer; whether they now considered themselves culturalists or religious.

According to Israeli law, Jews may become permanent residents by filing a declaration of intention; the Law of Return automatically gives every Jew the right to be a citizen. However, permanent residents must transfer their foreign (tax free) holdings within ten years of the declaration of intention. United States and Canadian citizens who become permanent residents of a foreign country may retain their citizenship under certain conditions. Canadians must not swear allegiance to a foreign state, but may bear arms for a friendly foreign power and vote in a foreign election. A law passed by the U.S. Congress in 1952 stated that citizens voting in foreign elections or bearing arms for a foreign country forfeited their citizenship. In 1957 the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the provision on voting in a foreign election. In 1969 the Attorney General interpreted the decision as permitting voluntary military service by a citizen in a foreign state at peace with the United States.

The last grouping does not necessarily reflect their religious identification in America. In Israel, 255 of the participants related to Jewish religious tradition: 138 were observant ( dati); 30 were keepers of commandments (shomer mitzvot), and 87 were traditionalists (mesorati). Of the remaining 188 nonreligious respondents, who were designated as culturalists, 27 were against observance (anti-dati); 80 were not observant (lo dati); 55 considered themselves secularists (hiloni); 24 wrote "don't know," and two called themselves Hebrew Christians.

The professionals, as a group, were divided into culturalist or religious, and Zionist or non-Zionist.

Forty-five per cent of the respondents were men, 55 per cent women. Forty per cent were 20 to 29 years of age; 31 per cent, 30 to 39; 17 per cent, 40 to 49; 10 per cent, 50 to 66; and 2 per cent were 67 years of age and older. Fifty-six per cent were living in Israel for five years or longer.

At the time of the survey, the women, as a group, were younger than the men. Taken as groups, former members of Zionist youth organizations, nonprofessionals, Zionist professionals, and religious professionals settled in Israel at a younger age than did their counterparts. Those who were in Israel for less than five years were younger than residents of five years and over, though they did not arrive at a younger age.

Eighty-four per cent of the respondents were married, 11 per cent single. Seventeen per cent of the men and 7 per cent of the women were unmarried. Over one third, 36 per cent, were married to native-born Americans; an equal number to persons born elsewhere; 28 per cent to sabras. More men (43 per cent) than women (31 per cent) were married to Americans, and more women (42 per cent) than men (28 per cent) to persons from other countries. Those who belonged to Zionist youth groups more readily married Americans, 42 per cent compared to 28 per cent of their opposites. More of those who did not belong to Zionist youth groups married sabras: 38 per cent, compared to 24 per cent of their counterparts. A greater proportion of those in Israel for less than five years (35 per cent) married Israelis, than of those in the country for five and more years (23 per cent). Twenty-three per cent of the respondents had children at the time of settlement. By 1967, 70 per cent had Israeli-born children.

Fifty-six per cent of the respondents grew up in Zionist homes, 44 per cent did not. Fifty-seven per cent participated in Zionist youth organizations, 43 per cent did not. During their first year in Israel, 25 per cent were employed as professionals (not including teachers), and 75 per cent as nonprofessionals (including 19 per cent who were teachers). Forty-two per cent were culturalists and 58 per cent religious. Forty-four per cent were in Israel for less than five years, 56 per cent for five years and longer. Of the professionals, 50 per cent did not participate in Zionist youth organizations, 50 per cent did; 48 per cent were culturalists, 52 per cent religious.
American Past

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The participants in the study were native-born American men and women. The fathers of 73 per cent, and the mothers of 63 per cent of these settlers were not born in North America. Though children of parents speaking with a foreign accent were less likely to feel at home with American standards and values than those with native-born parents and grandparents, physical rootlessness was not the criterion for aliyah. Had it been, the 1962-1966 permanent residents of Israel would represent the end of a line. In the United States today, college students are overwhelmingly third- and fourth-generation Americans. And it is only a matter of time before Canadian Jews become indigenous.

That Israel also can look inviting to secularist American Jewish youth is suggested by the fact that 37 per cent of the respondents had native-born mothers, and 27 per cent native-born fathers. More culturalists had American-born mothers: 43 per cent, compared to 32 per cent of the religious. However the vast majority of respondents came from religious or culturally Jewish homes: 73 per cent from religious, and 19 per cent from culturally Jewish backgrounds. Zionist home background did not provide all olim (settlers) with the motivation to live permanently in Israel. Forty-five per cent of the respondents came from non-Zionist homes. Among those who came from Zionist homes were 38 per cent of the culturalists and 68 per cent of the religious. While Zionism in the home was not necessarily what brought these olim to Israel, very few raised in an anti-Zionist atmosphere came; only 3 per cent of the respondents: 5 per cent of the women, as compared to 0.5 per cent of the men. Today, Zionism affects fewer young people in their homes in North America. It is gradually losing the importance it had for immigrants.

IDENTIFICATION AS JEWS

While there now is a noticeable generation gap regarding religion among American Jews, those who settled in Israel by and large retained the religious and cultural identification of their parents. They wanted to be almost as Jewish as their parents. Before coming to Israel, they did not share the growing alienation from Judaism of each new generation, as it sought to align itself with a religious group making fewer demands of ritual observance and personal mode of life.

Of the participants in the study, 41 per cent came from Orthodox homes, and 34 per cent were themselves Orthodox while in America; 25 per cent were raised by Conservative parents, and 24 per cent considered themselves Conservative; 7 per cent came from Reform homes, and 8 per cent said they were Reform Jews. Nineteen per cent came from culturally Jewish homes, but 23 per cent identified themselves as culturalists before leaving for Israel. Eight per cent grew up in homes labeled "other," and 11 per cent considered themselves "other" in America.

In America, 39 per cent of the culturalists identified religiously—as Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform. The changes that appeared to take place among olim, once they lived in Israel, as more of the former Conservative and Reform dropped their religious identification and became culturalists, was not belated adolescent rebellion. It was rather a redefinition of Jewish commitment. Being culturally Jewish is more meaningful in a Jewish than in a Christian society. But in America as well as in Israel all had in common identification with Judaism and a desire to be more, rather than less, Jewish.

In America, the respondents showed their Jewish commitment by joining a synagogue, Zionist group, or Hillel, or by attending Jewish schools. Though the synagogue has evolved as a Jewish community center, which should have appeal to anyone who identifies as a Jew, not all American Jews affiliate. Its strongest appeal is in suburbia and the smaller city. Fifty-six per cent of all olim did not belong to a congregation before coming to Israel. This was true of 70 per cent of the culturalists, as compared to 44 per cent of the religious. Yet, they all found their way to Israel. The very high percentage of nonaffiliation among the religious was in part due to their young age at the time they left America.

Membership in a Zionist organization was not a determining factor in aliyah. Thirty-two per cent of the respondents belonged to Zionist adult groups in America; 41 per cent of the religious, compared to 22 per cent of the culturalists. Because many of the permanent settlers were not old enough to join Zionist adult groups before leaving for Israel, for purposes of this study Zionist youth group identification was considered the key to Zionist affiliation.

Fifty-six per cent of respondents came from Zionist homes, and 57 per cent belonged to Zionist youth organizations, both culturalists and the religious joining to the same extent as they considered their parents to be Zionists. Of the culturalists, 58 per cent never joined Zionist youth groups; 59 per cent considered their parents neutral. Sixty-nine per cent of the religious affiliated with Zionist youth groups; 68 per cent rated their parents Zionists. More women than men joined Zionist youth groups. More women than men had Zionist-affiliated parents, 57 and 54 per cent, respectively.

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However, more women (5 per cent) than men (0.5 per cent) went against the anti-Zionist sentiments expressed at home.

Almost four-fifths (78 per cent) of the respondents attended college, and therefore were eligible for membership in B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, the Jewish campus community. Of these, only 24 per cent, or 30 per cent of the religious, as compared to 18 per cent of the culturalists, joined.

There was no single organization of which all olim were members. Some children coming from various backgrounds and participating in no organized Jewish activities also developed a sense of Jewish identification, which made them move to Israel. What bound the olim together was a common tie with the Jewish people, which usually was instilled by parents who religiously or culturally identified with the Jewish people. Almost all parents expressed this commitment by giving their children some formal Jewish education.

JEWISH EDUCATION

The one characteristic common to most of the American settlers was Jewish education. Ninety-one per cent had some Jewish schooling in America: 47 per cent attended afternoon classes; 32 per cent went to Sunday school, 26 per cent of the religious and 42 per cent of the culturalists, and more of the women (37 per cent) than men (26 per cent); 37 per cent attended all-day schools, 53 per cent of the religious and 11 per cent of the culturalists. The proportion of day-school attendance was much higher for settlers (37 per cent) than for all Jewish children in the United States (13 per cent). The percentage of Sunday school attendance was lower (32 and 42 per cent, respectively). Higher Jewish education among the olim was as follows: Eighteen per cent, more religious (27 per cent) than culturalists (6 per cent), attended Hebrew teachers seminaries. More women (23 per cent) than men (12 per cent) attended such seminaries in preparation for a profession offering women the same opportunity as men. Twenty-one per cent of the men attended rabbinical school, and almost all of them considered themselves religious. Nine per cent of the settlers took Jewish graduate studies, 12 per cent of the religious and 5 per cent of the culturalists. There were no comparable figures for the U.S. or Canada. A reflection of this schooling was the settlers' ability to speak Hebrew before coming to Israel. More of the religious spoke Hebrew than culturalists; there was no difference between men and women.

7 American Association for Jewish Education, Department of Statistical Research, National Census of Jewish Schools (New York, Information Bulletin No. 28, December 1967). No comparison data were available for Canada.
SECULAR EDUCATION

The secular education of the olim was above average: 78 per cent had some college training, and 33 per cent went on to graduate or professional school. While the religious had a better Jewish education, there were no group differences in secular education. Women with a high level of Jewish education, equal to that of the men, lagged behind in secular graduate studies. Ten per cent of the American settlers attended technical schools, again fewer women (6 per cent) than men (16 per cent).

ECONOMIC POSITION

Many young people left for Israel before being gainfully employed; 25 per cent were supported by their families and many others had only just begun their careers. Had they remained in America, their good education and professional skills most probably would have helped them obtain well paying jobs. Of the gainfully employed, 56 per cent had family incomes of $7,000 or over, 44 per cent had lower incomes. Fifty-three per cent of the religious reported family incomes of $7,000 and over, as compared to 52 per cent of the culturalists. However, a larger number of the religious were not self-supporting.

More women than men were not self-supporting. Of the working women, 47 per cent reported family incomes of over $7,000. The difference in income level between men and women reflected the difference in both age and education. Working women were younger, and fewer of them were professionals. The difference in income also reflected the double economic standard in America, where women generally earn less than men in comparable jobs. Since almost half the respondents were not married, sex difference was apparent.

According to the 1957 U.S. Census, the median income for Jewish men with one to three years of college was $5,026; with four years or more, $8,041. The median income for all Jewish families was $6,418. By comparison, the economic situation of the olim before leaving for Israel was good.

Critique of America

Participants in the study left the United States and Canada during the post-World War II period of growing prosperity and intergroup cooperation. They left because they felt a growing anxiety about being part of a society in which materialism and conformity threatened the realization of their human potential. While their parents, mostly immigrants, had become part of that society which accepted them and gave them the opportunity to live decently, the would-be olim were too American to feel grateful, and too Jewish to be satisfied. Their generation rarely voiced doubts about society;
but the dissatisfied left for Israel when the pressure mounted. As committed Jews, they were specifically affected by the threat of assimilation and antisemitism to the survival of the Jewish group. Assimilation disturbed 65 per cent of all respondents. For the religious it was the most disturbing problem they faced in America. Living in Israel made the question of antisemitism appear urgent. Though 73 per cent expressed past concern over it, 53 per cent now were only mildly disturbed. The level of reported concern about antisemitism was the same for the religious and culturalists, men and women.

Women expressed deeper anxieties than men regarding materialism and conformity. Culturalists were more troubled about conformity than were the religious. Culturalists, being secularists, were less involved in Jewish organizational activities while in America, and therefore worried more about their place in the general society. Other, less disturbing, issues were: aspects of dating and marriage, for 43 per cent of the respondents; the educational system, for 32 per cent; church-state relationships, for 30 per cent; dependence on family, for 28 per cent. No group differences by sex or religious outlook were apparent here. Table 1 presents, in descending order, the intensity of concerns.

It shows that, while antisemitism disturbed 73 per cent of the olim and assimilation only 65 per cent, they felt more intensely about assimilation. Despite difference in intensity between the religious and culturalists on specific items, including conformity and antisemitism, the difference in the total intensity was negligible, making for approximately the same anxiety level for both. There were fewer differences between men and women, but the latter were more vexed about conformity and materialism, and about the total situation in America. As a result women felt a greater need to leave at a younger age in order to reduce the greater pressure. The same was true of former members of Zionist youth groups and nonprofessionals, as compared to their counterparts.

**Attraction to Israel**

While the sum of concerns indicated how deeply troubled the future olim were by aspects of American life, part of the total pressure creating the movement to Israel was their attraction to that country. This attraction, in fact, seemed stronger than their disturbance about America. Over four-fifths were attracted by the idea of living in a Jewish homeland. They desired to live a Jewish life among Jews. The concept of Israel as the land of the Bible drew three-quarters of the settlers. Seventy-one per cent were attracted by Jewish education. The intensity of feeling on all aspects of Jewish life (except for Israel as the land of the Bible) was high, with almost twice as many feeling "much" attraction as "some" attraction. While the need to

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<td>Assimilation</td>
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<td>99</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>Antisemitism</td>
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<td>Dating and marriage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church-state relations</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>Dependence on family</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>644</td>
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<td>577</td>
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<tr>
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<td>+23</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>-42</td>
<td>+35</td>
<td>+23</td>
<td>-76</td>
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</table>

* Converted from percentages by giving "much" twice the weight as "somewhat."
### TABLE 2. INTENSITY* SCORE OF ATTRACTION OF ISRAEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Culturalists</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Non-Zionists</th>
<th>Zionists</th>
<th>Non-professionals</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
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<td>Homeland</td>
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<td>156</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>123</td>
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<td>Live with Jews</td>
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<td>161</td>
<td>115</td>
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<td>149</td>
<td>124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Live Jewish life</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>142</td>
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<td>118</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>143</td>
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<td>93</td>
</tr>
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<td>112</td>
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<td>145</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>127</td>
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<td>104</td>
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<td>Kibbutz life</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
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<td>750</td>
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<td>+101</td>
<td>-164</td>
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</table>

* See note to Table 1.
be at home in Israel, where Jewishness would be taken for granted, was a stronger motivational force for the religious than for the culturalists, the difference was one of degree. Both groups agreed on the relative importance of this factor.

*Kibbutz* life, which can be lived only in Israel, seemed to draw a minority of *olim*. As a cooperative venture, the *kibbutz* had greater appeal for culturalists who were more disturbed by conformity in America.

Career opportunity was not much of an attraction; only 40 per cent considered it so. There was no difference between the religious and culturalists, but men considered it more important than women.

The total intensity level of the respondents' attraction to Israel was higher than of their censure of conditions in America. This may not necessarily have been a true index of their feeling, for, in their replies, they may have tempered their criticism of America, while being expansive about Israel's attractions. Each scale is therefore considered separately to indicate differences between groups (Table 2). Here group differences were more numerous than in the respondents' disturbance about America. Differences between the sexes were least significant. The religious and nonprofessionals expressed stronger attraction to Israel than culturalists and professionals, respectively. The greatest disparity was between former members of Zionist youth groups and nonaffiliates.

Data in Tables 1 and 2 also provide a basis for understanding facts related to age differences at the time of emigration.

**Age at Emigration**

The large majority of respondents came to Israel before reaching the age of 35. Thirty-five per cent were below the age of 25; 34 per cent between 25 and 35; 17 per cent between 35 and 44; and 12 per cent between 45 and 64. Only 2 per cent were 65 years of age, or older. Age at settlement showed the following relationship to intensity of disturbance about America and attraction to Israel:

1. When both the intensity of disturbance about America and intensity of attraction to Israel were greater for one group than for its counterpart, the group with the higher scores settled in Israel at a younger age. This was true of members of Zionist youth groups and nonprofessionals, in contrast to the nonaffiliated and professionals.

2. When the intensity of disturbance about America was greater for one group than for its opposite, but its intensity of attraction to Israel was less, the more intensely disturbed but less attracted settled at an earlier age. This was true of women, in contrast to men.

3. When the intensity of disturbance about America was similar for both groups, but one was more intensely attracted to Israel than its counterpart, the more intensely attracted did not go to Israel at an earlier age. The religious and the culturalists were equally troubled by life in America, yet
the religious, though more intensely attracted to Israel, were not younger at the time of settlement.

4. When the intensity of disturbance about America of a subgroup and its counterpart was lower than that of the total group, the one attracted to Israel more than the total settled at a younger age. Lower intensity of disturbance about life in America was shared by all professionals: Zionist and non-Zionist, religious and culturalists. But the Zionist and religious professionals, who felt a stronger attraction to Israel, emigrated at an earlier age than their opposites.

The lower intensity of disturbance about conditions in America among men, and particularly professionals, allowed for delayed gratification of the wish to settle in Israel. A contributing factor, or perhaps a reason why men did not permit this concern to become strong enough for early emigration, was that they, as potential family providers, had greater incentive to remain in America and complete their schooling and professional training and, beyond that, to work and save money for family needs in Israel.

Destination Israel

Ninety per cent of American permanent residents came directly to Israel. Fewer of the religious than secularists (6 per cent, compared to 16 per cent) first lived in other countries. Ninety-three per cent of the women, compared to 86 per cent of the men, came directly to Israel. Only 42 per cent of American permanent settlers came to Israel for the first time with the intention of remaining there; 42 per cent had been to Israel once before; 16 per cent made three or more trips before deciding to settle. For 25 per cent there was an interval of five or more years between initial visit and settlement.

Historically, Zionists came in groups. So did the hundreds of thousands of refugees who were brought to Israel immediately after World War II. Although 57 per cent of American olim were former members of Zionist youth groups, only 7 per cent (2 per cent of the professionals and 9 per cent of the nonprofessionals) traveled to Israel with a group. The American settler came as an individual; 35 per cent came alone, and the others arrived with mates (30 per cent), with children (23 per cent), and/or parents (5 per cent).

Living in Israel

ADJUSTMENT TO ISRAEL

American immigrants, coming from the most affluent society in the world, faced the problem of finding jobs and a home in a new land with a markedly

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lower standard of living. Yet, from the moment of arrival, 75 per cent felt at home. More women were lonely, 29 per cent, compared to 21 per cent of the men. However, by the end of the first year, women were as relaxed as men, with 84 per cent feeling comfortable. By 1967, 95 per cent of the settlers were adjusted to Israeli life and felt at home.

LANGUAGE FACILITY

Israel is a nation of immigrants, built during years of the most intensive persecution in the history of the Jewish people. Those responsible for welding the newcomers into a nation emphasized the importance of learning Hebrew so that they could communicate with their neighbors and feel a link with the past. American immigrants came with considerable fluency in Hebrew. Thirty-eight per cent were able to speak Hebrew, and 27 per cent had some knowledge of it; 35 per cent knew no Hebrew. Fifty-three per cent studied Hebrew during their first year in Israel. Since the religious had more intensive Jewish schooling in America, only 44 per cent of them studied Hebrew upon arrival, compared to 65 per cent of the culturalists. By 1967, only 14 per cent of the settlers needed further study, again more culturalists than religious.

While command of language facilitates communication between neighbors and is valuable in daily work situations everywhere, Hebrew was not essential for making Jews feel at ease in Israel. But the intensity with which olim set out to master Hebrew clearly demonstrates that they wanted more than to feel at home. Language fluency was the first step in their adjustment, for it enabled them to work and socialize with Israelis. Many attended ulpan (Hebrew) courses; some studied at a university, learned a trade, or enrolled in teachers seminaries or yeshivot.

OCCUPATION OF NEWCOMERS

Upon arrival, 48 per cent found full-time employment; 20 per cent worked part time; 2 per cent, who came to retire, did not work. Employment figures were higher for men than for women: 64 per cent of the men worked full time, compared to 33 per cent of the women. Eighty-two per cent of the men were gainfully employed full- or part-time, compared to 56 per cent of the women, many of whom kept house. This indicated that employment could be found, despite language barrier.

Thirty-nine per cent of the olim were employed as professionals, another 30 per cent as teachers (English teachers were in short supply). Ten per cent were clerical workers, 9 per cent farmers, 4 per cent skilled workers, and 2 per cent manual laborers. Six per cent established their own businesses.

The percentage of new settlers employed as professionals and teachers was very high by Israeli, and even by American, standards. Forty-five per cent
of the men and 32 per cent of the women were in the professions; 41 per cent of the women and 21 per cent of the men were employed as teachers. In 1967, 13 per cent of the United States labor force were employed as professionals, including teachers;\(^{10}\) the 1961 figure for Canada was 10 per cent.\(^{11}\) More women than men were employed as clerks (15 and 6 per cent, respectively), while more men than women went into business (10 and 2 per cent, respectively). Only men (6 per cent) were employed as skilled workers.

By 1967, when fewer olim were full-time students, 55 per cent were employed full time and 22 per cent part time, with 3 per cent retired. Eighty per cent of the men were employed full time, and 14 per cent part time. Ninety-four per cent of the men were gainfully employed (29 per cent part time), compared to 62 per cent of the women. The economic recession before the six-day war affected mainly those who earned their living with their hands. Because of their technical skills and education, American newcomers generally found employment during that period.

In 1967, 56 per cent were doing work for which they had been trained: 67 per cent of the men, and 47 per cent of the women. Ten per cent of the men and 3 per cent of the women were learning trades they hoped to enter. Employment in one's field was not an automatic process, even for professionals. About one quarter of those employed as professionals in 1967 were doing other work when they first came: 6.5 per cent were students, 6.5 per cent teachers, 3 per cent farmers, 2 per cent in business, 4 per cent were housewives, and 2 per cent had come to retire. At the time of the survey, 92 per cent of the professionals were employed in their fields, compared to 43 per cent of the nonprofessionals. The higher the degree of specialization, the greater the possibility of employment in one’s field.

**Living within income**

When they arrived in Israel, 67 per cent of the settlers expected to manage on their income, a relatively high expectation since they considered job opportunity the least attractive aspect of Israeli life. After having lived in Israel, the percentage of those who found they could easily manage on their earnings dropped to 57 per cent. Sixty-four per cent of those who anticipated an adequate income actually found it to be so, while 57 per cent of the more pessimistic had financial difficulties. More of each group found what they anticipated. Fewer optimists (36 per cent) became pessimists, than the converse (43 per cent). The greater change among pessimists suggests that those having lower expectations more readily acknowledged things to be good when conditions were better than expected, while those with higher expectations adjusted their views to the new circumstances.

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expectations were more reluctant to admit the situation was worse than anticipated. The latter continued to assert it was easy to manage on Israeli income, giving a total effect of well-being among the *olim*. These same satisfied settlers often worked at more than one job in order to live comfortably.

HOUSING

In 1967, 77 per cent of American settlers owned their dwellings, mostly in cooperative apartment houses. This was true of more women than men, 82 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively, because more women were married and needed their own housing. (Rental was available mostly for rooms.) Evaluation of the adequacy of living quarters showed no sex difference. An over-all feeling of satisfaction with housing, by Israeli standards, was expressed by 90 per cent of the settlers, with 28 per cent calling it very adequate. The ability to accept the fact that one could not have in Israel what one had, or could have, in America, was an ingredient of the settlers' adjustment. Women were aware of the differences between an American and Israeli kitchen, with its inferior plumbing; but they also knew that many, who had lived in Israel all their lives, had poorer facilities. Besides, the American settlers were less interested in material things, preferring the kind of life that attracted them to Israel.

RURAL LIVING

Upon arrival in Israel, 38 per cent of the respondents lived in *kibbutzim* and 7 per cent in *moshavim*, which are cooperative only in that agricultural implements and machinery are shared. For example, the Jewish Agency encouraged newcomers to study and work at the *kibbutz ulpan*, where they worked half a day for their room and board, and spent the rest of the day learning Hebrew. Their integration into Israeli society began without the immediate responsibilities of food, housing, or employment. The *kibbutzim* welcomed American *olim* on the assumption that many of them were likely to prefer the simple *kibbutz* life to the more fashionable life in the cities, where 88 per cent of Israel's population are concentrated. Indeed, in 1967, 19 per cent of the *olim* were living in *kibbutzim*, and 6 per cent in *moshavim*. Yet, only 8 per cent of all gainfully employed settlers worked as farmers. The economy of the cooperative, though agriculture-oriented, includes light industry. Therefore industrial specialists, as well as teachers and other professionals, are needed in rural areas.

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Israel and America: A Comparison

As already stated, American settlers considered career opportunity the least important of Israel's attractions. More men than women, and more professionals than nonprofessionals, listed it as such. After having lived in Israel for some years, 31 per cent of the respondents felt that career opportunities in their fields were the same as in America; 23 per cent believed that they were better. More men (55 per cent) than women (36 per cent), and more professionals (63 per cent) than nonprofessionals (39 per cent), thought the situation in America was better. The higher the level of expectancy, the greater the disappointment. Eighty-one per cent (84 per cent of the men and 76 per cent of the women) believed their income in Israel was lower than it would have been in America. More professionals than nonprofessionals (86 and 78 per cent, respectively) shared this view. However, 72 per cent also believed that the Israeli standard of living was lower, and that it therefore was possible to manage with less money in Israel. This realization, too, was part of their adjustment to Israeli life.

In Israel the percentage of married women settlers working to supplement family incomes was higher than of Jewish women in America. Soon after they arrived, 56 per cent became part of the country's labor force: 33 per cent worked full time, 23 per cent, part time. By 1967, with 86 per cent of the women married, 62 per cent were working, with the increase essentially in part-time employment (29 per cent). In 1957, in the United States, 57 per cent of Jewish women between the ages of 18 to 24 were employed; 26 per cent of those between the ages of 25 to 34 (when more women are married and raising children); 34 per cent between 35 to 44, and 38 per cent between 45 to 64.13 In Canada, this was true of 25 per cent of Jewish women 15 years of age and older.14

On the whole, Americans in Israel were unlikely to return to America for the sole purpose of raising their income. Still, academics are happy to spend their sabbatical year in America to augment their income for the purchase of a new apartment, refrigerator, or washing machine.

American settlers found other aspects of their work comparing favorably with America. Forty-seven per cent said they derived greater satisfaction from their work; 34 per cent, about equal satisfaction, and 19 per cent, less. Thirty-nine per cent thought work in Israel brought them more prestige than it would in America; 33 per cent felt it was similar, 28 per cent that it was less. More men than women, most of them full-time employees, derived satisfaction from their work and enjoyed prestige. Women, who usually worked to supplement their husband's income while taking care of their

homes and families, did not feel the same psychological need for satisfaction.

Favorable employment opportunities in Israel also gave respondents considerable economic security. Twenty-four per cent believed there was less unemployment in their fields in Israel than in America; 51 per cent felt the situation was the same. Nonprofessionals were more optimistic than professionals about employment possibilities in Israel—30 and 15 per cent, respectively, although they had been less optimistic about career opportunities before settling. To some extent, this was because nonprofessionals found it easier to go from one type of work to another than did professionals, who were more limited to one field. Also, nonprofessionals had lower expectations, and therefore were more easily satisfied.

**Why Americans Stay in Israel**

In describing motivations for remaining in Israel, respondents emphasized the Jewish aspects of Israeli life. Eighty-eight per cent were attracted to Israel essentially because they wanted to live in a Jewish homeland. After having lived in Israel, a larger number, 94 per cent, were convinced that they stayed for this reason. The Israel experience strengthened the belief of the respondents, particularly of culturalists and non-Zionists, that it was the strongest factor in keeping Americans in Israel.

For 84 per cent of the \textit{olim}, the religious environment was the second most important reason why Americans remained in Israel. Thirty-nine per cent felt strongly about this. For 74 per cent of the religious, living a Jewish life, which to them was living a religious life, was the third most important reason for coming to Israel. The culturalists looked upon Jewish life as being too parochial, and were less attracted by it. Once in Israel, the religious lost much of their enthusiasm. They observed that official religious leaders operated the ministry of religion like bureaucrats. They also found the Israelis less spiritual than anticipated. In 1967 only 52 per cent considered the religious environment a means of keeping Americans in Israel. Former members of Zionist youth groups also expressed disappointment. The culturalists, on the other hand, who looked upon Jewish life as too parochial to be strongly attracted by it, now rated religious environment with the same intensity as living a Jewish life. Since their hopes had not been too high, they felt the situation could be much worse. The result was that 75 per cent were convinced that the religious environment helped keep Americans in Israel.

Israeli cultural life was considered among the major factors keeping Americans in Israel; 83 per cent thought it important, but here, too, emphasis was mild. Those in Israel for five years or longer thought it less of a reason for staying than did more recent arrivals. Their desire to attend lectures or join study groups had, in the meantime, been satisfied. Zionists and those

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\textsuperscript{15} For detailed tables see Engel, \textit{op. cit.}, "Part III, Predictions About America and Israel," \textit{The Journal of Psychology}, No. 73, pp. 33-39.
coming from Zionist homes were more inclined than non-Zionists to think it important, 88 and 77 per cent, respectively. More former Zionist youth affiliates (41 per cent) than nonaffiliates (29 per cent) considered it of great importance. Zionist professionals placed unusually strong emphasis on culture, with 41 per cent rating it very important, and 95 per cent, important. In their view, only living in a Jewish state was an important reason for staying in Israel.

Job opportunities ranked just below the three major reasons advanced by Americans for staying in Israel. Sixty-eight per cent considered it important. Those in Israel for five or more years emphasized that, while Americans came to Israel as idealists, their practical needs proved to be greater than expected, and they stayed if they found suitable work.

Jewish education, too, was a strong factor in drawing settlers to Israel. Forty-eight per cent of culturalists and religious were “much” attracted by Israel’s Jewish educational opportunities. However, only 28 per cent thought education, both Jewish and secular, had “much” influence on their decision to stay. American settlers did not expect to find top jobs in Israel; but they did expect learning of every kind to have priority. They were disappointed that compulsory free education extended only through eighth grade (since 1969, through tenth grade). The importance of education in holding Americans in Israel therefore was reduced.

Seventy-four per cent of the settlers believed social status kept Americans in Israel. But 55 per cent of these thought it only had some influence.

Family health was considered another retentive factor by 67 per cent of the respondents, with 45 per cent considering this of some influence only.

Housing was given as a factor keeping Americans in Israel by 57 per cent of the respondents; 28 per cent felt strongly about it. That housing was not stressed as a retentive factor should not suggest that adequate housing is unimportant. Almost all olim considered their own housing adequate by Israeli standards. However, Israeli housing standards cannot compare with American, and settlers assumed superior housing was not a factor in keeping Americans in Israel. But settlers believed that housing, considered inadequate by Israeli standards, would drive away olim.

Although, in 1967, only 19 per cent of American settlers remained in kibbutzim, 61 per cent of the respondents felt kibbutz life was a factor in keeping Americans in Israel. Culturalists and nonprofessionals, for whom kibbutz life was one of Israel’s attractions, continued to feel more strongly that it was a factor. Culturalists, who, in 1967, almost exclusively made up the American contingent in the kibbutz, were more positive in this view than professionals and the religious. For them, its unique way of life was among the most important reasons for remaining in Israel.

Americans felt at home in Israel, yet their acceptance by the Israelis was a minor reason why the settlers, who have the legal right to be citizens
of the Jewish homeland, remained in Israel. Acceptance was a factor for 59 per cent, of whom 40 per cent considered it only mildly helpful.

**Why Americans Leave Israel**

Respondents agreed that the major reasons for returning to America were lack of job opportunities, inadequate housing, high cost of living, and family concerns. Ninety-eight per cent considered lack of job opportunities the foremost reason; 73 per cent were very emphatic, while 25 per cent felt it had some relevance. In 1967 Israel did not have enough room at the top for the highly educated. Forty-six per cent of *olim* were dissatisfied with the availability of jobs. Even sabras with considerable training sometimes found it necessary to go abroad for suitable employment. For Americans, particularly men, job satisfaction and prestige had to be rewarding enough to compensate for curtailed opportunity and lower income. The difficulty of finding adequate jobs can be gauged by comparing moderately industrialized Israel with a highly urbanized population (88 per cent), to Canada, with 70 per cent of the population urban, and the highly industrialized United States, with 70 per cent of the population urban.

For 90 per cent of the American settlers their own housing was adequate. But 96 per cent maintained that inadequate housing drove Americans from Israel because, they emphasized, immigrants, who were used to American standards, find poor housing by Israeli standards intolerable. Respondents cautioned that increasing American *aliyah* was only half the problem; the other half was keeping the *olim* in Israel. The Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel advised the Jewish Agency that good housing was an essential in holding American settlers. This was especially true of professionals, who were being encouraged by the Agency to immigrate. Sixty-five per cent of the professionals strongly felt that inadequate housing caused Americans to leave. While Americans accepted the prospect of job limitations in a developing country, they expected a government that absorbed over a million refugees in the years following the establishment of the state to underwrite adequate housing for Americans. Voluntary settlers were not as likely to be satisfied with just a roof over their heads, as were refugees. Former members of Zionist youth groups, who were generally very understanding about other shortcomings of Israel, were almost as emphatic as the professionals in blaming lack of proper housing for the departure of Americans.

American settlers acknowledged that the much lower Israeli standard of living made it possible for them to live on a lower income than in America. However, 94 per cent felt that Americans left because the cost of living

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was higher than the standard of living Americans wanted to maintain in Israel. Fifty-five per cent believed it was a vital reason for Americans to leave, 38 per cent that it was of some importance. Ninety-seven per cent of former Zionist youth group affiliates and 90 per cent of nonaffiliates rated the cost-of-living factor important. A comparison of professionals and nonprofessionals showed 98 and 92 per cent, respectively, concerned over this issue.

Pressure of family was considered by 96 per cent of the participants another important factor in the return of some settlers to America. In responding to a list of eight possible reasons for the departure of Americans from Israel, the religious and culturalists differed only on family concerns. The religious professionals, Zionist youth group affiliates, and nonprofessionals were more sensitive to the influence of American relatives than were their counterparts. Their attitude reflected their own strong family attachments, which moved them to advise potential settlers to come to Israel with family and friends in order to minimize emotional ties with family and friends still in America.

Other reasons cited for the disenchantment of American settlers were relatively minor. Those who were unhappy with the moral climate in America and had very high expectations for Israel were often disappointed. Political parties, whether they be labor- or religious-oriented, are still political parties, and people are the same, especially under adverse conditions. Seventy-six per cent of the respondents asserted that the moral climate affected the decision of Americans to leave Israel: 50 per cent felt it had some effect, 26 per cent that it had a strong effect, and 24 per cent that it had none.

Only a small segment (3 per cent) of Israelis, compared to 19 per cent of the respondents, lived in kibbutzim in 1967. Almost 40 per cent of the settlers lived in kibbutzim upon arrival in Israel; the others, through kibbutz friends, also were personally informed about cooperative living. Six per cent considered disappointment with kibbutz life an important reason why Americans leave Israel; 58 per cent believed this was a minor consideration. Among former Zionist youth, 70 per cent felt it had some influence on the departure of Americans from Israel, compared to 54 per cent of nonaffiliates; strong feeling was expressed by only 7 and 6 per cent, respectively.

Most of the Americans responded to the survey in the hectic, anxious months before the six-day war, some afterwards. Their responses to a question regarding the threat of war as a reason why Americans leave Israel indicated only 5 per cent thought it would be important, while 56 per cent felt it would have some effect. These views were underscored by the fact that only 8 per cent of the 780 who became permanent residents in 1962 through 1966 left Israel immediately before, during, or after the confrontation.
Stay or Leave Israel?

The above discussion of factors, moving Americans to stay in Israel or to leave, emerged from a consideration of two separate lists of queries in our survey. Some items appeared on both lists. Participants were given a single list that included items from the two separate lists, plus several specifics. They were asked to indicate on this list whether, in their view, an item was an influence for staying or leaving. The respondents were inclined to be optimistic, viewing items as more apt to help Americans stay in Israel than to induce them to leave. Where the reply was not positive, it was generally neutral. For 75 per cent, the factors for optimum success include: arrival at an early age, fluency in Hebrew, cash reserve of $20,000 to $40,000, and decent housing.

Respondents were convinced that the seasoned businessman was least likely to stay. Forty-one per cent thought he was doomed to fail, though only one-tenth of all permanent residents were in business, and able to judge from personal experience. Professionals, who were farthest removed from the business world, were more emphatic than the others, with 53 per cent believing that experienced businessmen would return to America; 38 per cent of the nonprofessionals agreed. Fifty-four per cent of nonaffiliates of Zionist youth groups shared this conviction, compared to 31 per cent of former members.

Overall views of the settlers concerning reasons why Americans remain in Israel or leave are presented in descending order of intensity in Tables 3 and 4.

The following general conclusions regarding intensity of feeling may be drawn after analysis of Tables 1 and 2, 3 and 4.

1. The more intensely disturbed by America (Table 1) and more intensely attracted to Israel (Table 2) arrived in Israel at a relatively earlier age. They continued to be more emphatic in stating the reasons for remaining in Israel (Table 3). This correlation emerges from a comparison of nonprofessionals and former members of Zionist youth groups, who had greater need to leave America, with their counterparts.

2. The more intensely disturbed about America, but less intensely attracted to Israel, arrived in Israel at a relatively younger age. After having lived in Israel, they felt with as much intensity, as did the more attracted to Israel, the reasons for staying. This was demonstrated by women who felt more pressure to leave America and, though less attracted to Israel, came at a relatively younger age than men.

3. Among the equally disturbed about America, the more intensely attracted to Israel did not arrive at a relatively younger age; but after having lived in Israel, they felt more intensely about reasons for staying. This was true of the religious, who were more strongly attracted to Israel, came at a younger age, and continued to feel more intensely the reasons for staying, than the culturalists.
### TABLE 3. INTENSITY* SCORE OF REASONS AMERICANS STAY IN ISRAEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Cultural-</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Non-Zionists</th>
<th>Zionists</th>
<th>Non-professionals</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living in Jewish State</td>
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<td>163</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>176</td>
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<td>163</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious environment</td>
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<td>118</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural life</td>
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<td>122</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job opportunities</td>
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<td>105</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>101</td>
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<td>Position in society</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>108</td>
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<td>89</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>91</td>
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<td>84</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kibbutz life</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treatment of Americans</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>1017</td>
<td>1043</td>
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<td>1048</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>1109</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>980</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Differences from total</strong></td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>+14</td>
<td>-26</td>
<td>+19</td>
<td>-74</td>
<td>+80</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td>-49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See note, Table 1.
### TABLE 4. Intensity* Score of Reasons Americans Leave Israel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Culturalists</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Non-Zionists</th>
<th>Zionists</th>
<th>Non-professionals</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Job opportunities</td>
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<td>168</td>
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<td>169</td>
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<td>176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
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<td>152</td>
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<td>155</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of living</td>
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<td>148</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Family</td>
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<td>119</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral climate</td>
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<td>101</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>98</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kibbutz life</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat of war</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>839</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>856</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differences from total</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td>-18</td>
<td>+13</td>
<td>-29</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>+18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See note, Table 1.
4. The settlers who decided to remain in Israel showed greater similarity in the intensity rating of reasons why Americans leave Israel (Table 4) than of reasons why they stay (Table 3). Or, to express it in different terms, those who remained agreed more strongly on why the others left than on why they, themselves, decided against leaving.

In general, people left for practical reasons, and stayed because of ideological conviction. Job opportunities, housing, and cost of living were practical considerations for leaving. The desire to live in a Jewish state, experience a religious environment, and enjoy a cultural life were ideological motives for staying.

The Future

Jews find Israel increasingly attractive, even as it comes closer to resembling an armed camp. American Jews come, while most tourists choose safer lands. More Americans settle in Israel now, although women entering Jerusalem's supermarkets must open their handbags for inspection and students attending Hebrew University must show their identity cards at the newly erected campus gates.

LEAVING AMERICA

In America, most citizens face the next decade with considerable misgivings. While the most fantastic dream of man landing on the moon was realized, the serious problems of feeding the hungry, educating the illiterate, and training the unskilled remain largely unsolved. The rivers and the air have become dangerously polluted, symbols of the fate of an affluent society willing to send men to the moon, while standing knee-deep in garbage. Americans want to bring peace to Vietnam, but minimize the explosive nature of the hostility between blacks and whites at home. Law and order become means of cooling the confrontation between those who have much and those who have little.

The emotional unbalance of society is apparent in the practices of the young. Teenagers drink, use dope, and turn on sex as part of the "don't give a damn" way of life they observe among adults fighting for their share of the ersatz good life, produced by our technological society. Many collegians, euphemistically called forerunners, recognize that we are materially wealthy, but morally bankrupt. Most of them feel powerless to transform society, and plan to adjust to it by making only minor changes in their own life style.

Jews in America are among the elite of the establishment. Yet, they are among the most dissatisfied. Jewish parents feel a sense of frustration and guilt at what happened to their dream of a brave new world. Their children react to the condition of society by joining radical groups at college in disproportionately large numbers, in order to tear down the social system
and build anew. Eventually, however, most of them, too, will come to accept society as it is.

Some of the dissatisfied Jewish youth will make their way to Israel, hoping to find like-minded, socially alert human beings. Their own positive Jewish identity impels them to assume that, no matter how short Israel is of its humanitarian goals, its people are open to social change. Those who will leave America within the next decade and settle permanently in Israel should resemble American permanent settlers now in Israel. Thus, information from these settlers provides a basis for judging which of the dissatisfied will go to Israel. However, in an era of rapid social change, there may be a shift in emphasis on what impels them to leave.

Before going to Israel, permanent residents were most disturbed by conformity and materialism in America; assimilation and antisemitism were less significant. As a result of increased attendance at more demanding Jewish day and Hebrew schools in America, tomorrow's ohol may resemble the more Jewishly educated settlers in Israel, who were distressed primarily by the problem of assimilation (Table 1). After having lived in Israel, all American olim, including those who did not join Zionist groups in America, displayed considerable fear about assimilation in America.

On the whole, olim were less sensitive to the problem of antisemitism before migrating. Those who became permanent settlers in Israel during 1962 through 1966 have as neighbors victims of European and Arab antisemitism. Still, they find it difficult to be overly anxious about rising antisemitism in America. However, differences in the settlers' responses to the question on the future of antisemitism in America suggests that the more highly Jewishly educated olim of tomorrow may be significantly troubled about it.

The continued low level disturbance about future church-state relations emphasizes that those who migrated to Israel did not fear that America would become a Christian state. The religious expressed greater doubt—an additional incentive to leave America.

Assimilation should be the major concern of those who leave America during this decade. But fear of the disintegration of the American Jewish community should not be the motivating force. Seventy per cent of the olim shared an optimistic feeling about the survival of the American Jewish community, the religious more so than the others, despite their concern about assimilation. They anticipated that American Jewry's link with world Jewry will continue in its present form, or become stronger.

Proportionately more young men may be drawn to Israel as the United States continues to send soldiers overseas to fulfill what they consider morally questionable commitments. While American Jewish youth may object to serving in Vietnam, most view Israel military service as morally acceptable self-defense.

Subjects of this study of American permanent residents of Israel were
almost evenly divided between men and women. However, it is conceivable that more women than men may be attracted to Israel, as American society becomes more disoriented. The woman who goes to Israel views herself primarily as a homemaker. Her family concerns are paramount, and her feeling that Israel is a safer place for her children outweighs the attractions of a higher standard of living in America.

COMING TO ISRAEL

The assumptions that there will be a continuous increase in American aliya during the next decade is based not exclusively on the state of American society, but also on the improvement of economic conditions in Israel and the resultant need for the skills of highly educated Americans. Especially since the six-day war, Israel has been calling for more trained personnel to run the factories and to plan new ones, and America has become an indispensable source of this manpower. The numbers involved in the post-1967 war aliya are not spectacular: Some 4,300 olim came in 1968, and an additional 5,600 in 1969. However, in light of the estimated total of 15,000 Americans in Israel before the six-day war, this is remarkable progress.

Teachers continue to come in large numbers. Forty educators went to settle in developing areas early in 1969, followed by 60 more. They go to development areas where Israelis sometimes hesitate to live. Those with no previous knowledge of Hebrew are able to teach in Hebrew after six months' training.

In the next few years more academics will move to Israel, leaving American schools that have become centers of social unrest. Some professors have already lived and worked in Israel for short stints and during sabbatical years. Now they find full-time employment at burgeoning colleges and technical schools. Some of the science professors will teach in English until their Hebrew is adequate; others may continue to lecture in English to the increasing number of American students in Israel.

Professionals and industrialists, called in to provide short-term technical advice after the six-day war, have become aware of Israel's potential, and some are planning to settle permanently. The Israel government now welcomes industrialists with private capital. Ramat Shalom is an entirely new concept of a privately financed, self-contained village being established by Americans on Mount Hermon.

Israel will continue to have special appeal for those who shun private enterprise and competition, and prefer kibbutz living. American ingenuity is reflected in Shaal, a new city kibbutz movement started in 1968 by Americans in Carmiel, Western Galilee. Opportunities for kibbutz living are

18 Including temporary residents, hozrim (returning Israelis), and their children.
being promoted by the Jewish Agency through Habonim’s kibbutz aliyah desk, which represents all such movements, and Americans are responding: 1,500 in 1968. Programs are geared to attract adults who want to live in a kibbutz permanently or temporarily, as well as youths who wish to spend either a summer, or a year, there. They include: permanent residence (at ages 18–40); six months ulpan for Hebrew studies and work (18–35); temporary work (18–35); seven summer weeks of working and touring (16–17); summer camp at Gesher Haziv (13–16); Shaal’s cultural summer exchange program (14–16), and Habonim’s year-workship of work, touring, and study (high school graduates). Religious kibbutzim do not have to advertise for American high-school graduates to come for a year of hakhshara. Members of Bnei Akiva, the religious Zionist youth movement, vie for this opportunity.

The enlistment of volunteers, in the fashion of the Peace Corps, was begun four years ago, and has attracted almost 500 college graduates, who work as social workers and teachers in development areas. Between 25 and 28 per cent remain in Israel. Now, engineers and technicians, too, are invited to serve.

Israel has developed still other ways of encouraging American tourism and, more importantly, settlement. In 1964 the American summer school at Ulpan Akiva was established near the seashore town of Natanya for tourists, new immigrants, and Israeli residents. Schools of Jewish learning have considerable appeal for youths who would not come for college programs, which sometimes are below American standards and have limited laboratory facilities. Students from America participate in the intensive programs of yeshivot, and training institutes for Hebrew teachers and community workers. Such programs both secure Israel’s position as the spiritual center of all Jews and, indirectly, also promote aliyah.

The Orthodox will continue to come to Israel in larger numbers than any other segment of American Jewry because their concept that being a Jew is a full time task is coupled with a keen desire to leave the diaspora and return home.

RETENTION

Beyond attracting highly educated, relatively affluent Jews from America, Israel has the more crucial task of hastening their absorption into the total Israeli society. The deeper the roots, the less likely newcomers will think in terms of returning to America. The newly-created Ministry of Immigration and Absorption is now taking steps that the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI) has been calling for over the years. Since it is common practice for people to buy cooperative apartments or own their own homes, newcomers are encouraged to arrange for 25-year mortgages on 75 per cent of the total cost of their housing. Families who are
joined by relatives are given attractive terms for enlarging their quarters. Whenever possible, single settlers in development towns are given the same opportunities as families to obtain apartments. Higher standard public housing is now available on a rental basis, with newcomers having the option to buy within three years.

American *olim* are encouraged to maintain their higher standards by bringing personal goods, free of duty. Improved absorption centers, hostels, and *ulpanim* facilitate the immigrants' adjustment. They receive free health insurance during the first six months, and, since 1967, also have special income tax exemptions.¹⁹

Free education for the first two years of high school was introduced in Israel only after the six-day war. However, children of newcomers are assured a completely free high school education. Besides, students who come without their families receive help from the Student Authority of the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption in gaining admission to schools of higher learning; scholarships, based on financial need, are provided.

Reversing itself, the socialistic government of Israel now wishes to attract private enterprise. Newcomers with industrial and business abilities, and financial means, receive special loans.

Even before many of these incentives were offered, 86 per cent of the respondents in this study planned to remain in Israel. They felt just as strongly that their children should study, marry, and live in Israel.

The responses of participants in the study make it possible to predict that the post-June war spiral of American *aliyah* will continue under present conditions. But these settlers represent only a fraction of the people who came with high hopes; the others returned to America. The question is: will future American *olim* resemble those who remained in Israel or those who returned to America? A comparison between permanent settlers and returnees to America would be very helpful in finding the answer.

GERALD ENGEL