

Jewish Radicalism: A Selected Anthology

Edited and with an Introduction by

Jack Nusan Porter
and Peter Dreier

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Introduction

The Roots of Jewish Radicalism

In an essay on Jewish youth written in 1961, David Boroff lamented the retreat from radicalism among young, third-generation Jews. Their parents' generation, he wrote, "was characterized by a restless groping for meaning and identity . . . [but] as the doors of American society swing open hospitably to talented Jews, the impulse to castigate and criticize becomes attenuated."

Only a year before the beginnings of the New Left, Boroff predicted, with regret, that "as Jews increasingly become part of the 'Establishment,' intellectual teenagers will merely see themselves as apprentices rather than critics."¹

In retrospect, of course, we all know better. Jewish participation in the New Left was the Jewish Establishment's worst-kept secret. The visibility of the Mark Rudds, Jerry Rubins, and Abbie Hoffmans only underscored what observers of the new radicalism knew all along—that Jews were greatly over-represented among the leadership and activists of the student movement.

Nor would Boroff have expected a movement of young Jews directed at specifically Jewish issues. Yet, as the New Left began to wane, and in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War of 1967, an upsurge of Jewish consciousness hit the campuses, and a new voice—what we call the "Jewish Left"—appeared.² Young Jews began to make demands for

“Jewish studies” programs, to publish Jewish underground newspapers, to criticize Israeli policies while defending Zionism against Arab and pro-Arab attacks, to protest on behalf of Soviet Jewry, and to confront the Jewish Establishment for “selling out” to the “American dream” while ignoring the needs of the Jewish community.*

The focus of this anthology is the Jewish Left. It did not emerge in a vacuum. It is crucial to understand the experiences of these young Jews in the context of trends within the New Left, the American Jewish community and American society in general. So we shall discuss the participation of young Jews in the student movement and also the reaction within American Jewry to the radical activity of the past decade.

Most adult Jews are considered—and consider themselves—to be liberals and Democrats. Still, there has been a noticeable shift in recent years; not to the far right, but to a less vocal liberalism, a cautiousness when discussing “Jewish interests” and what are “liberal interests.” Especially on local issues—such as the mayoralty elections in New York and Philadelphia—Jews have split along class lines. Crime in the streets, open admissions to college, community control in black neighborhoods threaten those working class and lower-middle class Jews who remain in our cities’ transitional neighborhoods, in civil service and blue-collar occupations. Many Jews see the demands of the New Left and black militants as direct challenges to their own liberalism; others as threats to their neighborhoods or job security. At the same time that many Jews have begun to feel secure as Americans, accepting a mode of accommodation to middle-class life, many of their children are challenging the very foundations of this experience.

Thus, the American Jewish community now finds itself under attack by both Jewish radicals and radical Jews—each

group a small but outspoken minority among Jewish college students and young adults. In both the political and ethnic arenas, Jewish parents and the Jewish Establishment spokesmen are increasingly at odds with their sons and daughters.

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Between 1881 and 1914, the grandparents of many of today’s Jewish students brought with them from Eastern Europe a variety of radical ideologies. In America, predominantly working-class, having left behind many relatives and friends in the oppressive Old World, they retained their radicalism and internationalism. The early part of this century saw the simultaneous rise of two mass movements among Jews—a Jewish labor movement and a Jewish radical political movement.

In the midst of the formative period of the American labor movement, the Jews found work in the sweatshops of the “needle trades” in New York’s Lower East Side and other large ghettos. Often as not, their employers were German Jews of an earlier wave of immigration. Many elements of the labor union movement were extremely nativistic, excluding Jews and dividing the working class. Also, as Louis Ruchames has pointed out:

The motivation for a separate Jewish organization was neither religious nor nationalistic, but linguistic. Yiddish was the mother tongue of the masses of East European Jews who constituted the vast majority of Jewish immigrant workers and who, by and large, knew no other language. The idea of separate trade unions based on language was hardly new in the United States. German- and Russian-speaking union locals already existed and the formation of Yiddish-speaking unions therefore followed an established precedent.³

In 1907 the United Hebrew Trades comprised 74 affiliated unions and 50,000 members; by 1914 the numbers had soared to 104 and 250,000, respectively. The Jewish unions were the backbone of the Socialist Party, which had its own Yid-

* Throughout this introduction we shall refer to the “Jewish community.” The term is shorthand for six million American Jews. As we shall discuss below, however, we believe that little sense of “community” exists among American Jewry. Indeed, this belief is the point of the book.

dish-speaking wing. The radical Yiddish press—anarchist, communist, socialist, religious and secular, Zionist and anti-Zionist—was widely-read and influential. The largest and longest-lasting example, Abraham Cahan's *Jewish Daily Forward*, reached a circulation of over 200,000 in 1916. The radicalism of Yiddish-language playwrights, novelists, and poets also dramatized the plight of the Jewish masses.

Nathan Glazer has estimated that perhaps one-third of the American Communist Party membership was Jewish. And although the number of dues-paying C.P. members only briefly exceeded 50,000, "the turnover was so rapid that perhaps ten times that number or more were party members."⁴ And, of course, there were a great many nonmember party sympathizers among the Jews. Hal Draper* found that support for the 1934 "Student Strike for Peace" was strongest in New York City, especially at the three city colleges—C.C.N.Y., Brooklyn College, and Hunter College—each with high Jewish enrollments at that time.

We thus find a mixed bag of radical activity among the grandparents and parents of today's Jewish students. They were, unlike today's New Left activists, acutely aware of their Jewishness. Although they divided over issues of Zionism, religion, and assimilation, they united on issues of anti-Semitism, discrimination against Jews in colleges and employment, and encroaching fascism in Europe. They were, for better or worse, part of a Jewish milieu—outsiders looking in.

All that changed after World War II. The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and the hard line of the American Communist Party caused the desertion of many Jews from the radical ranks. Disenchanted with Stalinism and the cold war, and relentlessly upwardly mobile into the free professions, small businesses, the service bureaucracies, and the intellectual

* Hal Draper, "The Student Movement in the Thirties," in Rita James Simon, ed., *As We Saw the Thirties*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois, 1967.

world, the Old Left dissolved, only to spawn, in time, a different breed of radical—the New Left.

In the 1950's and early 1960's, spokesmen for the Jewish Establishment—that network of overlapping philanthropies, research and defense agencies, social clubs, religious and educational institutions and community centers—focused on two concerns. One was the changing occupational and residential character of American Jewry, into the middle-class and urban fringes and suburbs. The other was the fight against anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist attacks, especially from the right. The right-wing equations which peaked in the mid-1930's—international "Jewish" conspiracies, fierce isolationism and jingoism, and overt anti-Semitism—reemerged during the dark days of McCarthyism. In its pursuit of civil liberties and rights for Jews, the Jewish Establishment found a natural ally among blacks. The rhetoric and activities of liberalism won substantive gains.

While Jews built temples in the suburbs, fought restrictive clauses and quotas, and polemicized for Israel and against the John Birch Society, the Jewish Establishment attempted to wash out the stain of the label "commie Jews." To some extent, they were successful. Charles Stember reports that 32 percent of Americans surveyed in 1938 believed Jews to be more radical than others. Only 17 percent held this view in 1962.⁵ It is ironic, then, that the beginnings of the New Left that year (the S.D.S. "Port Huron Statement") coincided with a time in American history when anti-Jewish prejudice and overt discrimination were at a low ebb. With the coming of the New Left, the Jewish Establishment saw a threat to the Jews' new and hard-fought respectability—the threat of many of their own children challenging the very ladders of Jewish success, and the threat that the "stigma" of the Jew-as-radical would reappear.

Unable to ignore the obvious fact of Jewish visibility in the New Left, the Jewish Establishment addressed the question by whitewashing it.

Afraid of a backlash of anti-Semitism, they attempted to assure non-Jews that the Jew-as-radical picture was over-

blown; that while a good many New Left activists may be Jews, only a small number of Jews are New Leftists. They pointed out that over 80 percent—or approximately 350,000—of eligible college-age Jews are enrolled on campuses, and that the vast majority of them are, like their non-Jewish peers, apolitical or apathetic, but not active New Leftists. A recent example of this mentality is Norman Podhoretz's reminder in the American Jewish Committee's *Commentary* that:

David Dellinger is not Jewish; Tom Hayden is not Jewish; Staughton Lynd is not Jewish; Carl Oglesby is not Jewish; Timothy Leary is not Jewish; Kate Millett is not Jewish; and neither, it somehow seems necessary to add, is Stokely Carmichael Jewish, nor Huey Newton, nor Angela Davis.⁶

To their Jewish constituency they tried to explain the alleged turn of the New Left toward a posture of anti-Zionism and, they alleged, anti-Semitism.⁷ Many Jews had shared and supported the concerns of their sons and daughters—and some rabbis—in the civil rights movement (indeed, the names of the martyred Goodman and Schwerner remain symbols of that period) and their progression into the peace movement. But they were puzzled and angered by this new breed of militant radicals-who-happen-to-be-Jewish, who support the Black Panthers, the Palestinian guerrillas and other anti-Zionist groups. The Jewish Establishment's initial response was to label them "self-hating" Jews, outcasts, the offsprings of over-permissive parents, spiteful, and self-indulgent.

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Still, they failed to answer the question: Why were so many young Jews attracted to the New Left?

Kenneth Keniston, Richard Flacks, and others believe that the "continuity hypothesis" helps to explain New Left activism.⁸ Basically, it suggests that radicals share, rather than repudiate, the basic value commitments of their left-liberal parents. As Keniston writes:

... it may be that protesters receive both covert and overt support from their parents because the latter are secretly proud of the children's eagerness to implement the ideas that they as parents have only given lip service to. But whatever the ambivalences that bind parents with their activist children, it would be wrong to overemphasize them; what is most impressive is the solidarity of older and younger generations.

The basic formulas used to explain New Leftism correspond well with the American Jewish experience. Many Jewish parents are highly educated, urbanized, and cosmopolitan professionals, service workers (teachers and social workers, for example), or intellectuals. In rearing their children they stressed sensitivity to injustice and discrimination, distrust of irrational and bureaucratic authority, and urged their offspring to question, to make their own decisions, and to challenge the *status quo*.

The initial period of the New Left, that associated with the early Students for a Democratic Society (1962), was a predominantly WASP undertaking. Beginning with the Berkeley Free Speech Movement (1964), the Freedom Rides in the South, S.D.S.' community organizing projects in city ghettos, and later in the anti-war movement, resistance and mass protest, the New Left saw a large influx of Jews, centered on the selective elite and urban campuses with high Jewish enrollments.

If by New Leftist we mean one who participates in mass demonstrations, sit-ins, and picket lines, planning and organizing and publishing newspapers and ideological manifestos, then it is safe to say that Jews constituted at least 30 to 50 percent of the Movement's ranks. A study of Free Speech Movement advocates at Berkeley found that although only one-fifth of the student body was Jewish, 32 percent of the demonstrators were Jews.⁹ Flacks found that 45 percent of the University of Chicago students who took part in a sit-in against the Selective Service System in 1966 were Jews.¹⁰ Lucy Dawidowicz, in the *American Jewish Yearbook* for 1965, suggested that between one-

third and one-half of the student volunteers on the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project in 1964 were Jews. The first two high school S.D.S. chapters grew out of the Zionist youth group Habonim in 1965. Jewish students are also more likely to express "radical" attitudes about civil disobedience, the draft, racism, abortion, and other issues.¹¹

During the late 1960's, as militant activity spread from the urban and elite campuses (such as Oberlin, Cornell, Harvard, Chicago, Michigan, and Berkeley) to the less select colleges and universities, the *percentage* of Jews in the New Left decreased, but the *number* of Jews drawn into the radical whirlpool certainly increased. Put another way, Jews were disproportionately found among the "prophetic minority"¹² who built the New Left from the ashes of liberalism. But as the movement spread, it attracted students from a wide social base and more conventional backgrounds.¹³

* * *

In facing these facts, one wonders if there is anything specifically Jewish about these young Jews' radicalism. Talking to them, one does not get that impression. Few radicals deny their Jewish roots, but they do not see them as a determinant of their political activism. Still, there seems to be a vague understanding that, as Jews, they identify with oppressed peoples, despite their own affluence.¹⁴

Said one early S.D.S. community organizer:

We've all been messed over, but I feel its been more sharp for American Jews. What we detest about the lives of our parents, what we would talk about as emptiness, hypocrisy, and . . . materialism is the behavior that comes out of those insecurities, plus our own experiences of those insecurities. We see a way of getting beyond that . . . a possibility of the liberation from that.

The label of "self-hating" Jew—by that we mean a conscious attempt to escape one's Jewishness, to change one's name, or leave the neighborhood, and to "pass" as a non-Jew

—seems decidedly inappropriate and misleading.* Most radicals are what Isaac Deutscher called "non-Jewish Jews," singularly unself-conscious about their Jewishness. Among them there is scant knowledge of Jewish history—even the radical tradition of the prophets, the Maccabees' struggle for liberation or their Jewish counterparts in Eastern Europe and the Old Left. Their view of the Jewish community, if they articulate one at all, is ahistorical; all they perceive is the status-striving and middle-class entrenchment of their parents' generation, which they identify with the Establishment. Whatever Jewish education they received did not expose them to any alternative Jewish way of life.

Why do they turn their backs on their Jewishness? "Universalism"—the customary response—is not the answer, for it does not explain their support for national and racial liberation movements. The answer is far more subtle. In their view, the oppressed peoples of the Third World are attempting to overcome years of colonialism, including the negative stereotypes imposed on them by the colonialists. The cultural and political nationalism of these groups—blacks, Vietnamese, Quebec French, American Indians, and others—is seen as an essential ingredient toward liberation and self-determination. The important difference is that while the Third World peoples struggle to survive, to exist as self-conscious and autonomous entities, American Jews are passively, quietly watching their culture (Yiddish, for example) drift away, with only a trace of anguish or outrage. At the same time, they note the Jews' concentration in particularly visible middle-man occupations. Their estrangement is not unlike Jerry Rubin's:

I personally feel very torn about being Jewish. I know it made me feel like a minority or outsider in Amerika from my birth and helped me become a revolutionary. I am shocked at Julius Hoffman and Richard Schultz [Chicago 7 prosecutor] 'cause they try to be so Amerikan. Don't they know they're

* These tendencies were more characteristic of second-generation Jews.

still "Jewish" no matter how much "power" or "security" in Amerika they have? . . .

But despite this . . . Judaism no longer means much to us because the Judeo-Christian tradition has died of hypocrisy, Jews have become landlords, businessmen, and prosecutors in Amerika.¹⁵

In fact, among radical and non-radical Jews alike, positive Jewish identity is not particularly salient. The modal pattern among Jewish youth is not hostility, but indifference. The trend among third-generation Jews is away from ethnically-stigmatized occupations and into the salaried professions and out of ethnically segregated neighborhoods.*

A number of observers have characterized the campus as a "disaster area" for Jewish identity.¹⁷ In the early and mid-1960's, concerned articles on the "vanishing American Jew" and "our alienated Jewish youth" repeatedly appeared in the Jewish press. The traditional strongholds of Jewish activities—the Jewish fraternities and sororities and the Hillel Foundations—began to lose their effectiveness as deterrents to inter-dating and intermarriage. Many barriers were breaking down and the Jewish students were not looking to construct barriers of their own.

* * *

Beginning in 1967, however, several factors contributed to the emergence of the Jewish Left and a Jewish youth culture. In that year, the first signs of fragmentation within the New Left appeared. The cries of black power sprang up as Stokely Carmichael crusaded in the South and the consequences surfaced at the August, 1967, Conference on New Politics in

* For example, a study of college freshmen in the fall of 1969 showed that the fathers of 54.3 percent of the Jewish students, but only 28.6 percent of the non-Jewish students, were self-employed businessmen. When asked about their career intentions, only 9.2 percent of the Jews, but 11.3 percent of the non-Jews, said business.¹⁶

Chicago. This convention of leftist groups crystallized the black-white tensions within the movement. This event was a landmark in the history of American radicalism and an important crisis for many white—and Jewish—radicals. A number of Jews walked out when the black caucus demanded acceptance of an anti-Zionist platform. But it was significant in another respect. The blacks' advice to whites was to "organize among your own."

Another factor, the Six-Day War, awakened an entire generation to the possibility that Israel could be destroyed. One must remember that the present generation of young Jews had never known what it was like *not* to have a Jewish state. Israel was born in 1948. It had "always" existed. Many young Jews surprised even themselves by the extent of their sympathy for and identification with Israel during the crisis. One radical, a former S.D.S. leader at Michigan, told us he was "frightened" by his own "chauvinism." The Israelis' victory also effected the ambivalence toward militancy among many young Jews. It is unlikely that many of the present Jewish generation were even familiar with the Jewish partisans of the Warsaw Ghetto or the underground Haganah. The sudden Israeli triumph altered the stereotype of the Jew as the passive, book-loving scholar or economic hustler.

About the same time, the New Left was beginning to experience the strains of co-optation and repression. The Johnson Administration had pushed through a flurry of civil rights legislation. The violence during the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, despite the official finding that it was a "police riot," turned public opinion even more sharply against the radicals. Students began to question the wisdom of mass protest. Later answers would come from S. I. Hayakawa, who ordered a crackdown on dissent at San Francisco State College, and the National Guardsmen at Kent State and Jackson State. The election of Richard Nixon on the promise to end the war in Vietnam further took the initiative away from the New Left. During the November, 1969 moratorium, while more than half a million Americans protested the war outside

the White House, Nixon promised that he would ignore their peaceful dissent. The changing technological nature of the American presence in Indochina—sending troops home while continuing the impersonal, but more destructive, bombing—calls for a new era of teach-ins to a people who want to think of the war as past history.

In 1969, S.D.S. split and the Weathermen, a small, hardcore group of radicals who romanticized violence and terrorism, emerged. Following the “Days of Rage” protest in Chicago and the indictment of twelve radicals (eight of them Jews) by a Federal Grand Jury, the Weatherpeople went underground to avoid arrest. Most radicals reject the Weathermen’s violence though they understand the futility and desperation which led to this terrorism. Indeed, the 1970–71 academic year was notable for its absence of violence—or organized mass activism at all. The Movement for a New Congress—a within-the-system effort to elect anti-war Congressmen and Senators in November, 1970—attracted relatively few veteran radicals; most of those involved were first-time left-liberal activists. Many radicals reluctantly supported the Presidential candidacy of George McGovern, though few actively worked on his behalf.

It was this sense of chaos and lack of direction which caused a number of activists to seek other targets. Israel, the underdog, emerged from the Six-Day War as the “oppressor” and the “tool of Amerikan imperialism.” For some, a desperate attempt to “out-radicalize” each other led to glorifying the Palestinian terrorists as the Viet Cong of the Middle East instead of searching for a just plan to allow both the Jews and Palestinians self-determination.

Nevertheless, there is no monolithic New Left position toward Israel, as a reading of *Ramparts*, *The Guardian*, *Challenge*, *New Left Notes*, *New University Thought*, *Monthly Review*, and the *New Left Review* makes clear. Rather than labeling the entire New Left “anti-Zionist” or “anti-Semitic,” a more realistic appraisal might suggest that most radicals are not themselves opposed to Israel, but are unwilling to criticize the anti-Zionist statements of the Black Panthers and the

Progressive Labor Party. In truth, their silence and ambivalence is often due to uncertainty and the lack of reliable information, from the Jewish Establishment on one side and the supporters of Al Fatah (such as the Liberation News Service, which provided extremely biased reports to the influential underground press) on the other. To the former, almost any criticism of Israel is unwarranted and threatens American support for the Jewish state; all radicals are thus labeled “anti-Zionist.” On the other hand, Al Fatah and its supporters threaten to drive the Jews into the sea and anyone who suggests that Jews, too, have the right of self-determination is called a “Zionist.” In their uncertainty, and over fear of further fragmenting the left, many radicals said nothing, while a few, such as Noam Chomsky and Paul Jacobs (through the Committee on New Alternatives in the Middle East), began to formulate alternatives to the pictures painted by the immutable extremes.

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The sense of futility, frustration, and isolation caused by the black-white split and Establishment co-optation and repression made the movement particularly vulnerable to internal strains. As Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken suggest, “radical movements under duress and in close quarters have a tendency to convert minor interpersonal abrasions into major interpersonal sores.”¹⁸ Political weariness and despair often accompanied personal struggle and anxiety. Many committed radicals came to feel that the New Left failed to deal with personal adjustment and to provide support for their identities. Women often found themselves relegated to routine office chores. And many Jews began to feel uneasy about openly discussing their Jewishness. Both were made to believe that such private “hang ups” were superfluous to radical politics. In other words, the movement not only failed to deal with the oppression of women, Jews, and others, it actually reinforced it. This process undoubtedly raised the consciousness of these groups regarding the various forms of oppression within American society.

Underlying all this was the failure to achieve and sustain within the movement a sense of "community"—a dominant theme of New Left politics. By "community" the New Left meant the merging of politics and life style, the creation of a society based on cooperation rather than competition; the desire for intimate human relationships and the expression of emotion; the breakdown of impersonal bureaucracies* and support for personal fulfillment and creativity. The early New Left, those who built the movement, shared an optimism that "community" was possible.¹⁹ But the strains of movement work, and the recruitment of a new variety of young radicals with different backgrounds and motivations, caused many of the strong personal bonds to disintegrate.

Thus the desperation of the late 1960's led some to the senseless violence of the Weathermen. But others found new directions in their effort to build a viable radical community. Some turned inward—to encounter groups, experiments with Eastern religion and the occult,²⁰ or heavy use of drugs.²¹ Some, however, looked toward developing radical communities "with their own kind"—women, Catholics like Father Dan Berrigan, homosexuals, lawyers, Chicanos, teachers, and Jews. This development is an affirmation as well as a protest. Its implications are cultural as well as political. It emphasizes spiritual as well as material needs and suggests that a mass movement has to find room for primary bonds within which individuals feel comfortable. A radical strategy based on self-conscious group identities would orient itself to the basic needs of its constituents. It challenges the passive, socially-assigned roles with which so many Americans feel dissatisfied. It would also attract a great many people who previously felt unable to channel their discontent with American society into the politics of the New Left.

It was thus a convergence of several factors—the shifting politics and institutions of American Jews, the rise of black

* Recall the slogan: "I am a college student. Do not fold, bend or mutilate."

separatism as a legitimate expression of protest, the Six-Day War and the anti-Zionism which followed among segments of the New Left, and the fragmentation of the student movement leading to a realignment based on small scale communities—which led to the emergence of the Jewish Left.

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The Jewish Left is not a cohesive, overarching movement with prominent charismatic leaders (such as a Martin Luther King, a Tom Hayden, or a Gloria Steinem) nor does it have an official organization. It is, rather, an amalgam of local, indigenous groups with varied ideologies and appeals. It shares with the adult Jewish community the pluralism of Jewish experience—religious and secular, cultural and political, Israel- and Diaspora-oriented. Our discussion focuses only on the *collective* expressions of Jewish consciousness which have emerged among young Jews. In doing so, we are forced to overlook the no doubt thousands of young Jews who are dealing privately with their Jewishness but who have not found it necessary—or possible—to articulate their feelings publicly. Unlike their elders, however, the Jewish Left attaches no stigma to the unaffiliated and unattached.

Just when and where the movement began is difficult to pinpoint. Jewish youth movements existed long before the Six-Day War,²² but almost all of them—Young Judea, National Federation of Temple Youth, Student Zionist Organization, Hillel Foundations, United Synagogue Youth, Habonim, B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, and Hashomer Hatzair—were and are the "youth divisions" of large, adult organizations in America and Israel. And while we should not be surprised to find that much of the leadership of the Jewish liberation movement grew out of these groups, it differs in that the impetus and momentum came from the young Jews themselves.

During the early 1960's isolated incidents by radical Jews foreshadowed this new movement. For example, during a Free Speech Movement sit-in at Berkeley on Channukah eve in 1964, young Jewish demonstrators brought a menorah with

them, and in the midst of Sproul Plaza lit the candles and recited the traditional prayer. However, the first stirrings of a self-conscious movement and youth-initiated activities occurred in the academic year 1967-68, following the Six-Day War. That Yom Kippur, a group of civil rights and anti-war activists, calling themselves Jews for Urban Justice, demonstrated in front of a prestigious Washington, D.C., synagogue, protesting the involvement of individual Jews in the black community and the "insensitivity of Jewish organizations to social problems" such as open housing, welfare rights, and migrant workers.²³ *Response* magazine first opened its pages to a growing body of Jewish arts and letters that year. About the same time, a group of discontented, restless rabbinical students and their friends conceived the idea of an unstructured, experimental Jewish seminary; the Havurat Shalom opened its doors in Somerville, Massachusetts, during the fall of 1968. And that winter (1968-69), the first three Jewish "underground" student papers—*The Jewish Radical* in Berkeley, the *Otherstand* in Montreal, and *The Jewish Liberation Journal* in New York—issued their first numbers.

The number of groups has spiralled since then, spreading the movement to more than 100 campuses and cities in the United States and Canada. Rather than attempt to catalogue each group, we prefer to outline the major themes and activities around which the Jewish Left is organized. For the sake of simplicity, we shall divide the movement into its political and cultural focuses.

On the political side, the Jewish Left concerns itself primarily with four basic issues: Israel, Soviet Jewry, the Jewish Establishment, and Jewish oppression in America.

A conspicuous phenomenon is the revival of Zionist ideology on campus. Early in 1970, at a conference of local student Zionist groups, the Radical Zionist Alliance was founded. Claiming affiliates on 75 campuses, R.Z.A. aligns itself ideologically with Siach (ironically, Israel's "New Left") and other Israeli critics of the present government in Tel Aviv. Their heroes are the early Socialist-Zionists, such as Ber

Borochov (1881-1917) and Nachman Syrkin (1867-1924), whose classic works they reprint, study, and quote with enthusiasm. The R.Z.A. is critical of "checkbook Zionists"—those whose commitment to a Jewish state only goes so far as an annual contribution and an occasional trip to Israel—and their stranglehold on all matters related to Israel. R.Z.A.'s continuation is unclear, however. Its leadership seems unable to decide whether it should concentrate on "Judaizing" radicals or "radicalizing" young Zionists. While its official membership list claims 700 persons scattered on about 75 campuses, it is difficult to assess its impact in raising Jewish or Zionist consciousness among young Jews. Yet in an ironic way, R.Z.A. finds that it may have been too successful, for many of its most dynamic leaders have already settled in Israel.

The impetus for a new radical Zionism was, of course, the desire for counterattacks on Israel from the student left and the increasingly sophisticated Arab propaganda.²⁴ The first organized efforts were confrontations with Arab and anti-Israel spokesmen, in debates, symposia, and letters-to-the-editor. In doing so, they insisted that one can legitimately be both radical and Zionist. Zionism, they argued, is nothing less than the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. Critical of Israel's treatment of the Israeli-Arab minority and Palestinian refugees, R.Z.A. promotes the idea of changing Israeli society from within: "Be a Zionist in the revolution and a revolutionary in Zion."

A number of campus groups have organized the *irbutz* and the *garin**—Jewish collectives, both urban and rural—which they hope to transplant to Israel, as several have already. The number of young American Jews, visiting, studying, and settling in Israel has increased dramatically since the Six-Day War.²⁵

* An *irbutz* is an urban collective of professionals and workers; a *garin* is a collective of American Jews living and working together in the United States. The *garin* members expect to settle in Israel.

A growing interest in Israeli culture—what one R.Z.A. leader calls “Israelism”—is seen in the increasing numbers of Israeli coffee houses, Hebrew classes, discussions of Middle East politics, and folk dancing clubs around campuses.

Yet we should not overlook a decidedly nonradical approach which has attracted growing numbers of young Jews, particularly in working-class areas of New York. This is the other side of the ideological coin, the right-wing Zionism of the Jewish Defense League and Betar, and their own hero, Zev Jabotinsky. Their counterpart in Israel is the Gahal Party whose leader, Menachem Begin, a disciple of Jabotinsky and a member of the underground Irgun during the 1948 war, was ousted from the cabinet for his “Greater Israel” sentiments (he desired the annexation of the occupied territories).

The Jewish Left is ambivalent toward Rabbi Meir Kahane and his followers. Most radical Jews are critical of the J.D.L.’s strategy—harassing Russian diplomats, its symbolic alliance with Joseph Colombo’s Italian-American Civil Rights League, and its appeals to anticommunist sentiment. On the other hand, some view the J.D.L. as misguided “brothers” and “sisters,” as victims entrapped in transitional neighborhoods, isolated from the Jewish Establishment, symbols of the “forgotten Jews” in the lower and working classes. The Jewish Left’s confusion over the J.D.L. is reflected in the comment by one activist: “I like their style, but abhor their politics.”

Although the J.D.L. has attracted the most publicity in its protests on behalf of Soviet Jewry, it has no monopoly on the issue. The Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, organized in 1964, has intensified its efforts during the past four years in coordinating activities in behalf of the three million Russian Jews. S.S.S.J. conducted teach-ins and letter-writing campaigns to American and Russian officials and several leaders were personally responsible for the release of Leonid Rigerman of Moscow. S.S.S.J. was the major force behind the Passover Exodus March to the United Nations in New York (which attracted 25,000 participants) and in other cities in 1971. It has organized all-night vigils at the Soviet Embassy in Wash-

ington and the U.S.S.R. Mission to the United Nations in New York (where several activists chained themselves to the gate and were arrested). Soviet artists performing in the United States are confronted by young Jewish dissenters. At the opening of the Moscow Ice Circus in Madison Square Garden, S.S.S.J. staged a “counter-circus” with Soviet Jewry exhibits called “Judaism Under Ice.” During a performance of the Moiseyev Dance Company in Washington in September, 1970, several activists disrupted the Soviet national anthem by sounding the shofar (ram’s horn). The Soviet news agency Tass and the airline Aeroflot have been targets of pickets, and violence as well (though no one will claim credit for the latter). From October to December, 1971, a Soviet Jewry Freedom Bus carrying three American students and two young Russian Jewish *émigrés* toured the country. It stopped in 34 cities to bring the message of the growing resistance movement among Russian Jews, who risk the loss of their jobs and university student status, separation from their families, and imprisonment as alleged “Zionist spies” for demanding the right to leave. The Leningrad Trials in the spring of 1971 mobilized protests at Soviet embassies around the world. Elie Wiesel’s moving book, *The Jews of Silence*, has had an important impact on many young Jews and motivated many to join the movement to dramatize the Soviet Jews’ plight.

Early efforts focused on the “cultural genocide” of Soviet Jews by demanding the publication of Yiddish books and plays, opening of training schools for rabbis and Hebrew teachers and synagogues, and permission to manufacture or import religious articles. More recent protests have called for the mass exodus of all Soviet Jews who wish to leave.

Despite the urgent pleas to American policy makers to take diplomatic initiatives to help Russian Jews, few radicals have much faith in America’s interest in broaching the issue at the risk of threatening the U.S.–Soviet *détente*. Often they cite Arthur Morse’s *While Six Million Died*, which documents the reluctance of the Roosevelt Administration to save European Jews from the Nazi solution, as proof of an underlying anti-

Semitism, or indifference to the fate of Jews, in American society.

More salient than their ambivalence toward the J.D.L. is their condemnation of the Jewish Establishment's overreaction to Kahane's publicity. They see in the Establishment's attacks on J.D.L.²⁶ signs of "*galut* (Diaspora) mentality"—hypersensitivity, fear of what the *goyim* will think, and class snobbery. In February, 1971, the World Conference of Jewish Communities on Soviet Jewry, a prestigious *ad hoc* meeting in Brussels, refused to admit Kahane, or do more than pass resolutions. That, wrote Robert Goldman in *The Jewish Liberation Journal*, "was the most telling evidence of the moral bankruptcy of world Jewish leadership." Goldman further accused the representatives at the meeting of "organizational self-aggrandizement, bureaucratic buck-passing, cowardice, and cynicism" (see page 195).

Such indictments of the Jewish Establishment are standard fare among the Jewish Left. Judaism, they say, has been turned into a voluntary association rather than a community with cultural, political, or moral autonomy. And WASHs (White Anglo-Saxon Hebrews), who appoint themselves leaders, wrote Sherman Rosenfeld in Berkeley's *Jewish Radical*, "are chosen on the basis of their bank accounts, not integrity; the causes they discuss are overwhelmingly financial."*

They accuse spokesmen for the Jewish Establishment of lacking any knowledge of Jewish history and religion, and, as a result, of shortchanging Jewish education. An article in *The Jewish Liberation Journal* pointed out that in 1969-70, less

* This situation has its precedents. Discussing 17th-century Polish Jews, David Rudavsky has written: "The wealthier Jews and the intellectuals, who formed the ruling oligarchy in the self-governing *kahal*, did not distribute the tax burdens fairly, but favored their richer friends at the expense of the poor. Unfortunately, not all rabbis protested against this injustice. In fact, some were even parties to the evil, thereby losing their prestige among the common folk." (*Modern Jewish Religious Movements*, Behrman House, New York, 1967).

than 5 percent of the local New York City philanthropies' budget went toward education. To make their point, they occupied the offices of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York and called for the "democratization" of the Jewish community. A group was arrested—and soon labeled the "Federation 45."

By far the most dramatic confrontation took place at the annual meeting of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds in November, 1969, in Boston. Afraid that the young rebels would disrupt the meetings, the leaders permitted Hillel Levine, a young rabbi, to address the assembly.* And throughout the meetings, the students pressed their demands: increased subsidies for Jewish day schools, improved curriculum and teacher-training in Hebrew and religious schools, chairs, and departments of Jewish studies on college campuses, scholarship programs for students of Judaica, more dramatic efforts—political and educational—on behalf of Soviet Jews, student participation in Federation policy-making, and subsidies for student-initiated projects. While some of the Federation leaders at the Boston meeting looked at the students as ungrateful heretics, most took their demands seriously.²⁷

With or without adult support, the Jewish Left has lobbied for Jewish studies programs—courses in Hebrew, Yiddish, Middle Eastern politics and history, Jewish history, and theology—on their campuses and have been successful beyond expectations. By late 1971, 185 colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada sponsored credit courses in some area of Jewish studies. At Oberlin, for example, Hebrew House—a living center set up for and by Jewish students—was incorporated into the credit curriculum. Students have also established Jewish "free universities" with such courses as "Judaism and Conscientious Objection," "Jewish Mysticism, Chassidism, and Radical Theology," "Zionism and World Lib-

* See page 183.

eration," "The *Shtetl* Culture," "The Oppression of Jewish Women," "Marxism, Anarchism, and Judaism," and "Jewish Cooking," taught by professors, local Jewish professionals, and the students themselves.²⁸

A central theme of the Jewish Left is the entanglement of the Jewish community with America's power structure. The obsequiousness of the Jewish Establishment is a sign of the Jews' marginality and ultimate vulnerability. Despite popular stereotypes, studies show that few Jews are to be found among the corporate elite.* Rather, where Jews are involved at all, it is as technocrats; they may oil and run the machine, but they don't own it. Jewish success was bought at a price. It destroyed Jewish culture† and ethnic solidarity, forced Jews to rely on others' goodwill, and alienated masses of young Jews. It is a price the Jewish Left is unwilling to pay. A number of campus groups offer an "Uncle Jake" award to "the Jews who have outdistanced all competitors in the imagination and creativity with which they have ass-licked the Establishment." The "Uncle Jake" syndrome is reminiscent of the advice "enlightenment" poet Yehuda Leib Gordon gave to Russian Jews, to "be a Jew at home and a human being on the street." Confronting the "Uncle Jake" syndrome means challenging the legitimacy of wealthy Jews such as Max Fisher (a major Republican Party fund-raiser and President Nixon's advisor on Jewish affairs) and Henry Crown (a major shareholder in General Dynamics Corporation, which manufactures war machinery; the Crown family name is attached to many Jewish institutions in the Chicago area) to speak on be-

* The stereotypes persist, which perhaps explains why in a bookshop near the University of Chicago, Ferdinand Lundberg's book on the WASP corporate elite, *The Rich and the SuperRich*, was found in a section labeled "Jewish studies."

† For example, early in the century before the five-day work week, Jews had to choose between working on the Sabbath (Saturday) or keeping the tradition by becoming their own bosses—one reason for the concentration of Jews in self-employed business, especially among Orthodox Jews.

half of the Jewish community. It also means castigating Jews such as Henry Kissinger, whose positions in the American power structure are more obvious, even if their Jewish commitments are negligible.

When Jacques Torczyner, President of the Zionist Organization of America, publicly adopted a hawkish position on Vietnam, he did so, he announced, to guarantee the support of the Nixon Administration for Israel. *The Jewish Liberation Journal* called him "Nixon's hatchet man in the Jewish community," while the Jewish Liberation Project picketed the Z.O.A. building in New York.

A "Trees for Vietnam" campaign was organized to rally support within the Jewish community for a symbolic pledge of solidarity with the Vietnamese people by helping to rebuild the defoliated countryside destroyed by war. According to one radical Jew: "As long as there are 'gooks' there will be 'kikes.'" The Jewish Peace Fellowship encourages young Jews to learn the pacifist tradition within Judaism and to seek conscientious objector status on these grounds. In Chicago, the young Jews organized a Jewish draft counseling center and received enough support from the local Board of Rabbis to employ a full-time counselor.

The involvement of Jewish landlords and businessmen in black ghettos is another target. And in the San Fernando Valley, radical Jews picketed a Jewish-owned supermarket for selling nonunion California grapes and carried placards in English and Yiddish, quoting Isaiah: "Thou shalt not eat the fruit of the oppressed." Many young Jews resent their exposure to racism within Yiddish culture and object, for example, to the word "*schvartze*" when one means "black."

More than 500 radical Jews demonstrated outside a Los Angeles hotel in September, 1971, while Israel's Foreign Minister Abba Eban presented his country's Medallion of Valor to California Governor Ronald Reagan. A leaflet charged that "through his welfare and education program Ronald Reagan has consistently ignored the desperate needs of the poor and minorities of this state. . . . It is time for the Jewish community

to cease linking the Jewish homeland to the names and actions of men who perpetrate injustice in the United States.”

In November, 1970, the Philadelphia Histadrut campaign, a Labor-Zionist organization, honored then Police Chief Frank Rizzo. Na'aseh, a group of Reconstructionist rabbinical students and other Jewish activists, demonstrated outside the dinner. The following year, following a “law and order” campaign, Rizzo was elected mayor with substantial Jewish support.

In May of 1969, the Oakland chapter of B'nai B'rith bestowed its Man of the Year award to S. I. Hayakawa, the President of San Francisco State College. “We honor men whose exemplary conduct manifests the true spirit of America in its finest hour,” said the local lodge president of the man who ordered National Guard troops to quash a student protest. The Berkeley Radical Jewish Union picketed the “affair.”

In other ways, the responses of Jews and the Jewish Establishment to the social problems of today have enraged the Jewish Left.

In 1969, Los Angeles Mayor Sam Yorty conjured up images of black militants running city hall if his opponent, black moderate Thomas Bradley, overcame Yorty's reelection bid. Yorty's histrionics increased his support among Jews from 18 percent in the four-way primary (which Bradley won) to 48 percent in the two-way run-off against Bradley.²⁹

During the New York City school strike of 1968–69, Jewish spokesmen fanned the flames of racism and turned an essentially class and educational conflict into an ethnic and racial one.³⁰ Lower-class blacks demanded community control of the schools, while the predominantly Jewish United Federation of Teachers, feeling its job security threatened, resisted. Several anti-Semitic remarks by black leaders were seized upon by the U.F.T. head, Albert Shanker, who began a campaign against “Gestapo tactics” and “Nazis.” Local rabbis created hysteria by preaching sermons about alleged arson of synagogues by blacks. And the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith issued a report which warned that “raw, undis-

guised anti-Semitism is at a crisis level” in New York. The tensions created by that event are still being felt within the Jewish community. For example, in Forest Hills, the Queens Jewish Community Council clashed with Mayor Lindsay and the Department of Housing and Urban Development over a proposed low-income housing project in the predominantly middle-class Jewish neighborhood in late 1971.

During the spring of 1971, the A.D.L. mounted a campaign against a number of groups—Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Medical Committee for Human Rights, and the Student Health Organization—which called for better medical service in ghettos and the restructuring of the “health industry.” The A.D.L. implied these groups were anti-Semitic.³¹ The Jewish Left responded that rather than combatting anti-Semitism, the A.D.L. was creating it where there was none. “The A.D.L.'s preconception of what's good for the Jews is what's good for the established Jewish doctors,” said one Jewish activist.

Major Jewish organizations attempted to boycott the speaking tour of Uri Avneri, a member of the Israeli Knesset and outspoken opponent of Israel's power structure, to American campuses in the fall of 1970. Local groups were urged not to sponsor or promote appearances by Avneri, a popular figure within the Jewish Left.

A particularly stinging criticism centers on the Jewish Establishment's attempt to gather statistics on American Jews. Each year various Jewish communities undertake population surveys, usually for the purposes of identifying potential contributors to Jewish philanthropies. Despite enormous sums involved, major Jewish organizations (particularly the American Jewish Congress) have consistently fought against the inclusion of questions on religion in the U.S. Census which could provide sophisticated—and free—information. Many radical Jews see in this the persistence of the Jewish Establishment to define Jews as a religious, rather than an ethnic, group to insure their assimilation into what Will Herberg termed the “triple melting pot” of Protestants, Catholics, and

Jews. (The early Reform Jews called themselves "Americans of the Mosaic persuasion.") When the philanthropies launched the National Jewish Population Study (cost: \$650,000), Shelley Schreter, then a sociology student at Berkeley, scolded the Jewish Establishment's "reluctance to be collectively conspicuous"—that is, their fear that non-Jews might have access to figures on Jewish income, education, and residences.

The examples cited are symbolic rather than systematic evidence of a political realignment within the Jewish community, a shift in which Jews identify the interests and values of the American elite as their own. For most young Jews, such evidence is enough to "write off" Judaism and the Jewish community as hopelessly irrelevant to their central concerns. To the small, but growing, Jewish Left there is a faith that the Jewish community can be "saved" if confronted openly. Such confrontations are motivated by mixed emotions of love and hate, hope and despair. It suggests both an intense identification with, and deep estrangement from, the present condition of American Jewry.

As we noted earlier, the search for "community" is fundamentally an attempt to link radical politics and life style. A number of the more visible innovators of the past decade—Allen Ginsberg, Paul Goodman, Bob Dylan,³² Fritz Perls, Julian Beck, and Leonard Cohen—are Jews. And yet young Jews are more likely to be found among the political than the cultural radicals. Among the nonconformist "street people" around Berkeley in the mid-1960's, only 17 percent had Jewish parents, while 32 percent of the political radicals had Jewish parents. These early hippies were less likely to be drawn from the prototypical Jewish family. Rather, they tended to come from Protestant and Republican households, with little social consciousness or political involvement. Their parents' occupational and leisure concerns were more with status and materialism rather than with service or ideas. These parents were less supportive of their children's nonconformity. By dropping out of college, the hippies were repudiating the basic goals of their parents.³³

And just as the New Left widened its social base, so did the counterculture. Today, more young Jews are involved—living in communes, working on underground newspapers, performing with street theaters, and organizing free schools. The counterculture, however, cannot be so neatly labeled. It is unclear just who and what the counterculture is. The breakdown of traditional mores regarding sex, drugs, and dress is widespread, among all classes, religions, and ethnic groups. What was "underground" yesterday may be in *The New York Times* or Saks-Fifth Avenue tomorrow. Tie-dyed shirts are mass-produced and *The Los Angeles Free Press* recently installed a time clock for its staff. Or put another way, the counterculture has been co-opted, exploited, and robbed of its critical function. It points out America's capacity to absorb that which threatens its stability.

Like the radicals-who-happen-to-be-Jewish, the Jews within the counterculture do not see their estrangement as a particularly Jewish one. Yet others do, and among them a Jewish counterculture has emerged, an effort to translate the ethnic and religious distinctiveness of the Jewish experience into current relevance—an attempt at "creative Jewing."*

Jews, in particular, embody the tension between politics and life style. For many Jews, liberal ideology accompanies their preoccupations with bourgeois status-striving. What do their children identify as Jewish from the wasteland of American culture? Only, perhaps, the world popularized by Phillip Roth and symbolized by the Miami Beach and Catskill scenes.

To a young Jew like Sherman Rosenfeld, writing in *The Jewish Radical*, American Jewish life means "extravagant buildings, Friday night fashion shows, *bar mitzvah* exhibitions, and weddings smothered in wealth" (see page 222).

Offered no Jewish alternatives, they have had to create their own. They have rejected the prevailing Jewish life style without rejecting Judaism and Jewish culture.

* "Creative Jewing" was the theme of a World Union of Jewish Students conference near Philadelphia in the summer of 1971.

Among the most exciting experiments is the Havurat Shalom ("Fellowship of Peace") seminary in Somerville, Massachusetts, a religious "community" organized as an alternative to the standard, highly-structured institutions of Jewish higher learning.

Founded by young rabbis, disenchanted rabbinical students, and graduate students from Boston area colleges, the *havurah* is a self-conscious attempt to challenge the rigidity of structure and dogma within the rabbinical schools while retaining the "spirit" of Jewish tradition. At the *havurah*, as at the Fabranken* in Washington, Jewish tradition is a creative, on-going process. In trying to come to terms with *halakhah* (legal) problems in Judaism—such as blatant sexism—the members are developing their own midrash or commentary, on the traditional texts. There exist no course credits, no teacher-student relationships, no strict rules about riding on Sabbath. Instead, the *havurah* emphasizes learning together, sharing meals, and providing communal support for members' own explorations of Judaism. The Boston-area *havurah* has inspired other experimental Jewish communities (some real communes, some community centers) in New York City, Chicago, Ithaca, Philadelphia, and elsewhere. Chicago has HaMasmid, a "free *yeshivah*" where young Jews help each other to study Jewish sources.

Related to the *havurot* is the growing interest in neo-Chassidism and Jewish mysticism among many young Jews. Perhaps the principle living source of inspiration is Shlomo Carlebach, a striking figure with his beard, earlocks, and love

* The Fabranken is an outgrowth of the Jews for Urban Justice in Washington, D.C. Around 1969 the members of the group began to feel the need for more Jewish religious and cultural activities, more study, and more religious celebration to supplement their political activities. The Fabranken (literally, "to pass the time") is a rented house where young Jews come to study, pray, dance, plan political activities, etc. The members do not live in the house. But in the summer of 1972, several members were living on a Maryland farm owned by one of the group. They called it Kibbutz Micah.

beads. In 1968 he set up the House of Love and Prayer in San Francisco, a community center for hippies and drop-outs.³⁴ Carlebach tries to bring the messianic message of the Jewish mystics to a generation already involved with Eastern religion, psychedelics, and astrology. A scholar himself, Carlebach comes from a renowned family of European rabbis. But for the past ten years, beginning with his exploits around New York's Greenwich Village, Shlomo has "turned on" young Jews all over the world with his concerts, recordings, and Sabbath happenings of Chassidic prayer, songs, and dances. Another "guru" of modern neo-Chassidism, Rabbi Zalman Schachter of Winnepeg, is a Lubavitcher Chassid and was an early advocate of the religious use of L.S.D.; he now espouses a "post-drug" ideology. But by far the most influential figure in this Chassidic revival is Martin Buber, the German scholar who interpreted the Chassidic tales to generations, the Zionist whose *Paths in Utopia* analyzed the roots of kibbutz socialism, the radical who called for a bi-national Jewish-Palestinian state. But more important was his vision of a personal "I-Thou" dialogue between man and God, and man and his fellow man. Buber's prolific writings are increasingly popular, while more recent books—such as *9½ Mystics* by Eugene Weiner, a Reform rabbi—indicate the burgeoning interest in Chassidism among even scholars within the rationalist tradition.

Another example of this encounter with tradition is the "Freedom Seder" by Arthur Waskow, a radical historian and guiding spirit of the early New Left. Waskow's service draws parallels between the Exodus from Egypt and contemporary liberation movements. More than 10,000 students, Jews and non-Jews, celebrated the Passover with Waskow at Cornell University in the spring of 1970, which included an appearance by Father Daniel Berrigan, then a fugitive from the F.B.I. In small groups, on campuses across the country, students are using the Waskow Seder or creating ones of their own.

During the past year, young Jews have begun to challenge the rigid sex roles within the Jewish tradition. Young Jewish women, objecting to the stereotypic "Jewish mother," "Jewish princess," or "Hadassah lady" image, have organized "consciousness raising" groups to discuss their experiences. Some enter the Jewish movement through women's liberation. *Off Our Backs*, a radical feminist paper, recently devoted an entire issue to the position and problems of Jewish women. Orthodox women, while more hesitant to challenge the separation of the sexes in Judaism, are beginning to talk about reinterpreting, within the tradition, the role of single women, access of women to the rabbinate and to *yeshivahs* and Jewish education in general, and the participation of women in Jewish institutions. A group of Orthodox and Conservative Jewish women, *Ezrat Nashim* in New York City, recently presented a manifesto to the Rabbinical Assembly calling for equal status.

Gay Jews have until recently been "in the closet" in regard to Jewish issues. Now small groups of Jewish homosexuals have begun to express their Jewish identities. A few months after Robbie Skeist published his article, "Coming Out Jewish" (see page 314) in Chicago's underground paper the *Seed*, gay Jews held a gay Passover seder.

Finally, we see a renewed interest in Yiddish culture and Jewish arts and letters. Many second generation Jews ignored Yiddish, refusing to teach it to their children, but third generation Jews have created a renaissance of Yiddish theater, literature, and poetry. Several colleges, including Columbia and McGill, have added courses in Yiddish. *Yuguntruf*—"Youth for Yiddish"—publishes a journal with a circulation of 2,500. A Jewish arts festival at Brandeis University included readings by young Jewish poets, a Jewish choral group, a dance ensemble, production of original plays in Yiddish and Hebrew, and exhibits by Jewish photographers, filmmakers, sculptors, and artists. *Response* magazine, along with *Davka* (in Los Angeles) and *Strobe* (Montreal) are the major outlets for this body of poetry, essays, and other arts and letters.

* * *

Like all movements of dissent, the Jewish Left must confront a skeptical and often hostile Establishment, for it poses a symbolic threat and challenge to the Jewish leaders. *Commentary* magazine, once the flagship of Jewish liberalism, has in recent years turned full-steam-ahead to the right with bitter attacks on women's liberation, the counterculture, the New Left, black nationalism, and the Jewish Left. Editor Norman Podhoretz stigmatized Waskow as a "wicked son" and his Freedom Seder as a "document of self-loathing and self-abasement masquerading as a document of self-affirmation."³⁵

In Washington, the United Jewish Appeal withdrew its financial support of the Fabrangen community center following a vicious hate-campaign by the local Jewish press. In its short three-year existence, Fabrangen has managed to bring scores of alienated young Jews back to Judaism with its communal (kosher) meals, Sabbath services, study retreats and Jewish free school, and its free-wheeling spirit. But its support of radical politics and its attacks on the Jewish Establishment's stand on Israel, Soviet Jewry, and racism, spearheaded by Waskow and others, has created tensions with local Jewish leaders. Following an article in a local Jewish paper headed "Al Fatah in *Shul*," a completely misleading epithet concerning criticism of Israel by some Fabrangen members, the U.J.A. voted to discontinue its support. At this writing, its members were preparing to abandon the three-story frame house.

Nathan Glazer, writing in the Zionist monthly *Midstream*, talked about "Jewish interests" which he identified with lawyers, stockbrokers, businessmen, New York teachers, and students in elite colleges—categories "in which Jews are prominent." Radicalism, he suggested, threatens these interests, and thus threatens Jewish survival. To the Jewish community, Glazer wrote, "capitalism is not an enemy—it is a benign environment. When radicalism conquers, even if there is not a trace of anti-Semitism in it, the classic Jewish occupations suffer and individual Jews come upon hard times." Speaking

of the Jewish Left, he wrote, “[I] find it inconceivable that it can become the dominant sentiment among American Jews.”³⁶ And certainly not if influential Jewish intellectuals continue to ignore the Jewish role as both oppressor and oppressed in the “classic Jewish occupations.”

This is not to say that among the Jewish Establishment some members have not been hospitable to the Jewish student movement. More than fifty Jewish student newspapers are now being published, and many receive funds and encouragement from the local Jewish federation. Various projects, like the Jewish Student Press Service and several Jewish free universities, exist on support from sympathetic Establishmentarians. Nor do we claim that no parents have changed along with their children during the last, volatile decade. Indeed, it may be that some parents are adopting the political and ethnic perspectives of their offspring—a “continuity hypothesis” in reverse.

But despite this, the Jewish student movement has had to go it alone. They have learned to negotiate their way amid the hostility or indifference of their Jewish elders and student peers. As one young radical Jew remarked at a recent conference in Madison, Wisconsin: “Between us and our 100 members or so, and the 4,000 Jewish students on campus, there’s a tremendous gap. I’ve begun to realize what a marginal phenomenon we are.” And another explained: “In Bloomington, I’m sort of caught in the middle. I’m caught between the radicals I’m involved with and the Jewish Hillel kids.”

Thus, only a special kind of young Jew can survive and persist in this situation, a Jew who is willing to endure intense scrutiny from his peers and the Jewish Establishment, and to continually justify his stance without apology. He has had to create a role where none existed before.

Who are these radical Jews? Our recent survey of Jewish student leaders found that they are not drawn from any one segment of the Jewish community. Like many New Leftists, most had been brought up on what one leader called “*New York Post* liberalism.” Still others had parents in the Old Left

—one actually fought in Spain with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade—and at an early age accompanied their parents on ban-the-bomb marches and open housing demonstrations. Some are the sons and daughters of Jewish Establishment professionals. Many are from Zionist, but secular and unaffiliated homes, and were active in Zionist youth movements such as Habonim and Hashomer Hatzair. A significant number are what might be called “enlightened Orthodox,” with Jewish day school educations (*yeshivahs*) and from traditional homes whose ritualism they reject but whose spirit they retain. But not surprisingly, a plurality rediscovered Jewishness and Judaism on their own. They grew up in acculturated middle-class (and some working-class) homes where Judaism was a revolving door—in Rosh Hashana and out Yom Kippur. Their Jewish education lasted until *bar mitzvah* age at thirteen. Most, however, retain warm memories of close family occasions such as Passover. What was missing was some substance to their Jewish experience. For this last group, commitment to things Jewish was a process of changing identity—following a year or a summer living in a kibbutz or study at an Israeli university; a job as a counselor at a Jewish camp, disillusionment with the New Left, or being turned off by the Hillels and Jewish fraternities and sororities.

Relatively few have had direct experience with overt anti-Semitism, but almost all believe that the Jewish position in American society is a tenuous one—especially if he (or she) wants to live a Jewish life. Almost all were involved in civil rights, anti-war, and college protests. Along the way, they began to think about what it means to be a Jew. James Sleeper has written with insight:

Perhaps it begins as a curiosity. Jewishness becomes intriguing when you try to make sense out of the fact that as a Jew on the current scene you are a slumlord to blacks, a civil rights worker to Southern whites, a well-heeled business school opportunist to hippies, a student radical to WASP conservatives, an Old Testament witness to Vermont

Yankees, an atheist to Midwestern crusaders, a capitalist to leftists, a communist to rednecks.³⁷

Unlike the majority of American Jews, the Jewish Left sees this marginality as predisposing them toward a special kind of radicalism—Jewish radicalism. In “My Evolution as a Jew,” M. J. Rosenberg writes:

I had a problem. How could I reconcile my leftist proclivities with my now admittedly Zionist ones? Did I have to choose between the Fatah-supporting S.D.S. and the ultra-middle-class lox-and-bagel breakfast club Hillel society? There could be no doubt but that the most interesting Jewish kids were on the left. The Jews of the anti-war movement were infinitely more intellectually exciting than the business majors of State’s Hillel. The choice was an impossible one. I felt that there had to be a third route.³⁸

This third route, of course, is Jewish radicalism. Numerically, it cannot be considered a major force among Jewish students. It is the effort of a small group of Jews to synthesize their radical and Jewish identities, to create alternatives to the transient student culture and the intransigent Jewish Establishment.

What is the fate of the movement? Cynics predict that in ten years the bulk of the Jewish Left will be the next presidents of B’nai B’rith lodges and Hadassah chapters, watered-down radicals who copped out. For a host of reasons, this is unlikely.

What is more possible is that the hard-core leadership of the Jewish liberation movement might give up on America and settle in Israel, leaving behind the “checkbook Zionists” and “bagel and lox” Jews to lead the Jewish community. If this happens, then the future direction of the American Jewish community is uncertain.

What is more important, however, is that right now the role of the Jew in modern America is being seriously questioned by the young. The New Left and members of the counterculture excluded their Jewishness from their identities. Segments of the

Jewish Left and the Jewish counterculture are attempting to remake American Jewish life within a pluralistic framework; while to still others, like the Radical Zionists, the “Jewish question” can only be answered by living in Israel.

Jews define themselves in many ways. But also, as Sartre has pointed out in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, they are defined by others as well.³⁹ A group’s survival depends, to some extent, on its willingness to be unique, to emphasize its distinctiveness. The Jewish Left is warning that if the Jews do not assert their own uniqueness, then others will ultimately define the Jews’ uniqueness for them.

They fear America’s capacity to absorb its minorities, whether political or cultural. They fear the spiritual poverty of the so-called affluent society. They fear being overwhelmed by the grinding machine of technology, consumption, and bureaucratic impersonality. In their search for community, they are saying “No!” to the machine—what Herbert Marcuse calls the “Great Refusal.”

America must change, they are saying. It must reassess its priorities, its role in the world, its myths, its racism—indeed, its national character. Jews must change. Liberalism and assimilation are dead ends. America is *not* different. It is only bigger, and therefore more overwhelming, more dangerous, more destructive.

The message is clear: Be Jews at home AND Jews in the street.

References

1. David Boroff, “Jewish Teenage Culture,” *The Annals*, November, 1961, p. 90.
2. The term “Jewish Left” may be something of a misnomer. “Activist” rather than “radical” is perhaps more appropriate, for the movement includes a broad spectrum of political perspectives. Many participants

- have only vague notions rather than well-defined ideologies for programmatic social and political change. In this, however, they are no different from participants in other social movements. (In his book *Theory of Collective Behavior*, N.J. Smelser calls these notions "generalized beliefs.") Nevertheless, their "instincts"—about the distribution of wealth, political participation, the existence of a ruling elite, advocacy of extralegal channels to achieve change—as well as their self-images are radical. Except for the Jewish Defense League, there is a noticeable absence of "charismatic" leaders who define the ideologies and directions; this, in fact, is a healthy sign that the Jewish Left is built on grass-roots interests rather than the blind following of "true believers." With this in mind, we feel safe in referring to a "Jewish Left."
3. Louis Ruchames' excellent historical survey, "Jewish Radicalism in the United States," is found in Peter I. Rose, *The Ghetto and Beyond*, Random House, New York, 1969.
 4. See two articles by Nathan Glazer, "The New Left and the Jews," *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, December, 1969, and "The Jewish Role in Student Activism," *Fortune*, January, 1969.
 5. Charles Stember (ed.), *Jews in the Mind of America*, Basic Books, New York, 1966.
 6. Norman Podhoretz, "The Tribe of the Wicked Son," *Commentary*, February, 1971.
 7. It would be virtually impossible to document all the cases of this. One might look at the following: Geraldine Rosenfield, "Interim Report on the New Left and Alienated Youth," American Jewish Committee, December, 1967; Richard L. Rubenstein, "Israel, Zionism, and the New Left," Public Affairs Department, Zionist Organization of America, 1969; and the articles by Howe, Kahn, Lipset, Fein, Glazer, Chertoff, Rosenstreich, and Milstein in Mordechai S. Chertoff, (ed.), *The New Left and the Jews*, Pitman, New York, 1971.
 8. The first statements can be found in Kenneth Keniston, "The Sources of Student Dissent," and Richard Flacks, "The Liberated Generation: An Exploration of the Roots of Student Protest," in the *Journal of Social Issues*, July, 1967. See also Keniston's *Young Radicals*, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1968; and Flacks' "Who Protests: A Study of Student Activists," in Julian Foster and Durwood Long (eds.), *Protest: Student Activism in America*, Morrow, New York, 1970, and bibliography therein.
 9. William Watts and David Whittaker, "Free Speech Advocates at Berkeley," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, January-March, 1966.
 10. Flacks, "The Liberated Generation," *loc. cit.*
 11. See David Drew, "A Profile of Jewish Freshmen," *Research Reports, American Council on Education*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1970.
 12. See Jack Newfield, *A Prophetic Minority*, Signet, New York, 1970, for an excellent report on the early New Left.
 13. For these changes, see Milton Mankoff and Richard Flacks, "The Changing Social Base of the American Student Movement," *The Annals*, May, 1971; and Riley Dunlap, "Radicals and Conservative Student Activists," *Pacific Sociological Review*, Summer, 1970.
 14. For a psychoanalytic interpretation, see Robert Liebert, *Radical and Militant Youth*, Praeger, New York, 1971, especially p. 233.
 15. Jerry Rubin, *We Are Everywhere*, Harper and Row, New York, 1971, pp. 74-76.
 16. See Drew, *op. cit.*
 17. See Irving Greenberg, "Jewish Survival and the College Campus," *Judaism*, Summer, 1968.
 18. N. J. Demerath, Gerald Marwell, and Michael T. Aiken, "Criteria and Contingencies of Success in a Radical Political Movement," *Journal of Social Issues*, No. 1, 1971.
 19. See Rick Margolies, "On Community Building," in Priscilla Long (ed.), *The New Left*, Porter Sargent, Publisher, Boston, 1969; and Gerald Rosenfield, "Generational Revolt and the Free Speech Movement," in Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau (eds.), *The New Radicals*, Vintage, New York, 1966. One should explore other themes of the New Left in Massimo Teodori (ed.), *The New Left: A Documentary History*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1969; Michael Goodman (ed.), *The Movement Toward a New America*, Knopf, New York, 1970; and James P. O'Brien, "The Development of the New Left," *The Annals*, May, 1971. Also Paul Cowan's political autobiography, *The Making of an Un-American*, Viking, New York, 1970.
 20. See Andrew Greeley, "Implications for the Sociology of Religion of Occult Behavior in the Youth Culture," *Youth and Society*, December, 1970; and a forthcoming book edited by Irving I. Zaretsky on new marginal religious movements to be published by Princeton University Press.
 21. See a good collection of articles on the subject, without moralisms, in John McGrath and Frank R. Scarpitti (eds.), *Youth and Drugs*, Scott, Foresman and Co., Glenview, Ill., 1970.
 22. See Alfred Jospe, "Jewish College Students in the U.S.," in the 1964 *American Jewish Yearbook*; and Leonard Fein's excellent "Dilemmas of Jewish Identity on the College Campus," *Judaism*, Winter, 1968.

23. From an internal document of Jews for Urban Justice called "An Abbreviated History of Jews for Urban Justice, 1966-69." See also the book by Arthur Waskow, *The Bush Is Burning*, Macmillan, New York, 1971.
24. See the report by Mel Galun, "The New Tone of Arab Propaganda on Campus," American Zionist Youth Foundation, 515 Park Ave., New York, 10022, and, from a different point-of-view, Michael Lerner, "Jewish New Leftism at Berkeley," *Judaism*, Fall, 1969.
25. There are no exact figures on immigration to Israel from the U.S. and Canada by age. Some overall figures are available, although they do not give percentages of those who eventually returned.

Immigration from U.S. and Canada to Israel

1965	1,879	1968	5,599
1966	2,041	1969	6,831
1967	2,402	1970	8,014

Source: Israeli Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. Planning and Research Division; personal letter to Peter Dreier from S. Adler, Director.

Another index is the growth of the One Year Program at Hebrew University in Jerusalem among American college students, most of whom spend their junior year in Israel. Note increase in 1968.

	Applications	Participants in One Year Program
1965/66	not available	87
1966/67	not available	135
1967/68	238	177
1968/69	536	478
1969/70	738	529
1970/71	773	612
1971/72	824	624

Source: Personal letter from Mrs. Johanna Schlobohm, Office of Academic Affairs, American Friends of Hebrew University, December 3, 1971.

Further evidence is the number of participants in American Zionist Youth Foundation programs. For example, its Volunteers for Israel program, begun following the war:

1968	1,400
1969	1,700
1970	3,000
1971	4,200

26. Every major Jewish organization and publication has issued a statement or article on the Jewish Defense League. Check the Jewish press since 1968, especially *Commentary*, *Jewish Currents*, *American Zionist*, *Congress Bi-Weekly*, *Jewish Frontier*, and in particular, *Facts*, published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, February, 1971, called "The Jewish Defense League: Exploiter of Fear"; a controversy arose within the Jewish community early in 1971 when the ADL provided information on the Jewish Defense League to the FBI. See Mel Ziegler, "The Jewish Defense League and Its Invisible Constituency," *New York*, April 19, 1971.
27. "Hillel vs. the Elders," *Newsweek*, December 8, 1969.
28. See two reports by Alfred Jospe of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation: "Free Jewish University: An Experiment in Jewish Study" and "Jewish Studies in American Colleges and Universities," revised edition. See also Arnold Band, "Jewish Studies in American Universities," in the *American Jewish Yearbook*, Vol. 67. All of these reports, however, are by now outdated as the number of free universities and Jewish studies courses increases every month.
29. Richard L. Maullin, "Los Angeles Liberalism," *Trans-action*, May, 1971.
30. For several perspectives on the school strike in New York, see Nat Hentoff (ed.), *Black Anti-Semitism and Jewish Racism*, Schocken, New York, 1970. Also, Herbert Gans, "Negro-Jewish Conflict in New York," *Midstream*, March, 1969.
31. See Nat Hentoff's column in *The Village Voice*, February 18, 1971.
32. Rumors of Bob Dylan's "coming back" to Judaism have circulated for over a year. See Anthony Scaduto, "Won't You Listen to the Lambs, Bob Dylan?" *The New York Times Magazine*, November 28, 1971; and Jonathan Braun, "The Bob Dylan Rumor Machine," *The Flame* (New York Union of Jewish Students), March, 1971, which was reprinted in *Rolling Stone* several weeks later. One of Ginsberg's most popular works, of course, is his poem, *Kaddish*. For an excellent study of the roots of the counterculture, see Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture*, Doubleday, Garden City, 1969.
33. William Watts and David Whittaker, "Profile of a Non-Conformist Youth Culture: A Study of Berkeley Non-Students," *Sociology of Education*, Spring, 1968.
34. A provocative article on the House of Love and Prayer is Leo Skir, "Shlomo Carlebach and the House of Love and Prayer," *Midstream*, May, 1970, and Carlebach's reply in the same issue.
35. Podhoretz, *op. cit.*

36. Nathan Glazer, "The Crisis in American Jewry," *Midstream*, November, 1970, and Glazer's article in Chertoff, *op. cit.*
37. Sleeper's comments are to be found in an excellent book he co-edited with Alan Mintz, *The New Jews*, Vintage, New York, 1971.
38. M. J. Rosenberg, "My Evolution as a Jew," *Midstream*, August/September, 1970. See also the articles by Mintz, Danny Siegel, Kenneth Braiterman, Jonathan Braun, and Benjamin Ross in *Midstream*, March, 1970.
39. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Schocken, New York, 1965.