



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 82, Folder 7, Family, 1972-1983.

# NEWS

FROM THE

# COMMITTEE



**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE** Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

*MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations*

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, June 24. . . Jewish children's formal ties to Judaism may be somewhat weakened by divorce, and Jewish religious and educational institutions have few organized structures to counteract this trend, according to a just-published pilot study of "The Jewish Community and Children of Divorce" sponsored by the American Jewish Committee's William Petschek National Jewish Family Center.

The study findings were announced this week by Dr. Nathalie Friedman, co-author of the study, at a conference at AJC national headquarters.

Dr. Friedman, a sociologist, is associated with Columbia University, as is her collaborator on the AJC project, Dr. Theresa F. Rogers.

Addressing an audience of rabbis, religious school educators, social scientists, and social workers, Dr. Friedman stressed that the study was a "preliminary investigation" whose findings "should not be considered conclusive." Its aims, she said, were "to gain some insights" into the effects of divorce on Jewish children's Jewish identity and activities, and to examine the ways in which synagogues, Hebrew schools, and other Jewish institutions were helping single-parent families.

The data were collected, she reported, through interviews, averaging two hours in length, with 25 persons who might be expected to have professional contact with Jewish single-parent families: rabbis, Hebrew school administrators, Jewish day school personnel, YMHA officials, a child psychiatrist who serves a largely Orthodox clientele, a pedagogical director at the Board of Jewish Education, and members of a Jewish Federation task force concerned with divorced families.

-more-

---

NOTE: For a copy of "The Jewish Community and Children of Divorce," write to Morton Yarmon, American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56 Street, New York, NY 10022.

One of her main findings, Dr. Friedman said, was that the communal representatives interviewed for the study could not give close estimates of how many divorced families were in their school, congregation, or Y group.

"They acknowledged that they really did not know," Dr. Friedman emphasized, "and this led to one of our central conclusions: most of the institutions are not geared to seeking out the divorced persons in their midst."

However, Dr. Friedman continued, many of the respondents, and most of the rabbis, remarked that their impression was that the divorce rate in their respective institutions was considerably lower than in the Jewish community as a whole.

"This bears out what has been found in other research," said Dr. Friedman, adding: "While we aren't certain which is the cause and which the effect -- do affiliated Jews refrain from divorcing, or do divorced Jews refrain from affiliating? -- we do know that single-parent families are underrepresented in organized Jewish religious and communal life."

Dr. Friedman also cited these findings:

1) While some institutions have formed programs to help divorced parents and their children, most have not viewed single-parent families "as an area of concern," and most have no formal methods of identifying the divorced persons affiliated with them. Some respondents acknowledged that the "stigma still attached to divorce" had probably prevented their institutions from developing programs for divorced persons.

2) Custodial arrangements -- particularly those in which the child spends weekends with the non-custodial parent -- often affect children's attendance at Hebrew school and synagogue.

3) Many households have ceased to have religious observances in the home because the mother, who is usually the custodial parent, does not know how to carry out rituals that had been led by the father, and does not realize that Judaism permits women to perform those rituals.

4) The severe scheduling problems faced by many working mothers make it difficult for these women to involve themselves or their children in religious activities.

5) Families that belonged to a synagogue or sent their children to a Hebrew school before a divorce do not usually leave the synagogue or school after the divorce, unless they leave the community.

6) Divorced parents usually try to work together amicably before and during a Bar Mitzvah, but if the problems between them have been severe, still greater bitterness can erupt around the Bar Mitzvah, making the event a painful one for the child. Similarly, divorced parents whose usual relations are hostile, and who tend to use their children as "footballs," use the children in the same manner in the religious arena.

7) All respondents said that no family was ever prevented from using synagogue or Hebrew school facilities by financial problems; the institutions always work out some arrangement.

8) All agreed that boys were more emotionally affected by divorce than girls, but there was no consensus as to whether age, degree of religiosity, or any other factor was related to children's emotional state after a divorce.

9) Current data are too sparse to indicate clearly whether divorce brings any great change to children's Jewish identity, but the emotional and logistical problems faced by single-parent families may affect children's active participation in Jewish life.

Two other speakers at the conference -- women who had been divorced and had sought solace, advice, and companionship from several segments of the Jewish community -- told of having received good counsel and strong support from some sources and complete lack of understanding from others. One problem they both cited was that most synagogues and Jewish institutions made it evident -- through advertisements, tickets for events, etc. -- that they assumed everyone they communicated with was part of a couple.

Other speakers included Drs. Marcy and Sylvan Schaffer, a lawyer-psychologist team; Toby Bremer, a member of the single-parent group at Park Avenue Synagogue in New York; Suri Kasirer, director of the Lincoln Square Synagogue (New York) Hebrew School; Barbara Zerzan, director of the "Parenting Center" at the 92nd Street YMHA in New York, and Rabbi Bennett Herman of Temple Emanu-El in East Meadow, L.I.

Chairmen of the consultation were Dr. Gladys Rosen, program specialist in AJC's Jewish Communal Affairs Department, and Dr. Anne Bloom, program and research specialist in the same department. Ira Schweitzer, director of family service and education at Temple Emanu-El in East Meadow, moderated the panel discussion.

Founded in 1906, the American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. It combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews at home and abroad, and seeks improved human relations for all people everywhere.

\* \* \* \* \*

December 1979



# The Christian Life Commission

OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
460 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37219  
FOY VALENTINE, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER

April 7, 1978

Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum  
American Jewish Committee  
165 East Fifty-sixth Street  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Marc:

As an American religious leader, you are aware that President Carter has called for a White House Conference on Families to be held in December 1979.

This Conference should provide a valuable opportunity to review, at the highest possible level, the current state of American families; and we may all hope that it will issue in the development of a sound national policy in support of family life, which is obviously the President's intention.

We are painfully aware, however, that there are those who see marriage and the family as outmoded institutions which now need to be replaced by a variety of what are called "alternative lifestyles." We believe and seriously fear that efforts may be made to use the Conference as a means of gaining public support for these undesirable alternatives.

Of course, exponents of this view are entitled to declare what they believe. But unless those of us who desire another emphasis speak up, the impression may be conveyed that we have nothing to say. It is therefore our opinion that the organizers of the Conference should, as they now begin to make their preparations, hear very clearly from those of us who have no wish to see the basic family structure further depreciated.

The enclosed statement has been prepared in the hope that you, and a few other religious leaders (whose names are on the attached sheet), may be willing to indicate your support for this approach. If you are willing to do so, please let us know within two weeks. At that time, we intend to forward word of your support in a letter to the organizers of the White House Conference.

As any further action on the part of religious leaders appears to be necessary, we may need to get in touch with you again. If in the meantime you have any suggestions to offer, we shall be glad to hear from you.

Cordially yours,

*Foy Valentine*  
Foy Valentine

*David Mace*  
David Mace

FV:fr  
Enclosure

TO THE ORGANIZERS OF THE  
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES

We warmly welcome the initiative of President Carter in calling for a White House Conference on Families. We strongly support the emphasis which the President and Mrs. Carter have placed, both by their precept and by their example, on the central importance of the family as the foundation of American society.

It is unfortunate that the United States of America lacks a coherent public policy in support of family life. The churches, in particular, and many responsible community leaders are beginning to ask why this issue has never been treated as a matter of national importance. Our efforts to deal directly with such issues as crime and delinquency, social maladjustment and personality disorder, and a host of similar ills can be only partially effective if we fail to recognize the fact that most of them have their roots in family malfunction.

We are disquieted by the many negative and deprecatory statements and actions which, in recent years, have sought to undermine many of our traditional family values. Powerful forces, representing highly explosive issues, may well attempt to use the White House Conference on Families to advance the causes they espouse. The family, in its broadest aspects, touches a very wide range of sensitive social and ethical concerns — living standards, job opportunities, housing, education, health, women's liberation, divorce law, abortion, juvenile delinquency, pornography — to name only a few at random. Moreover, putting otherwise unemotional matters in a family context could soon turn them into highly emotional issues. All kinds of pressure groups could see this Conference as offering convenient leverage for attempts at manipulation. These possibilities emphasize the paramount necessity for wise and firm leadership, and for

the establishment of clear criteria to define the scope and proper functions of the Conference.

It will be highly important that whatever assessment of American families is presented be kept in good balance. There are those who see almost all family problems in economic terms. There are those who would resolve the family's afflictions by legal changes. Some will see the answer in terms of increasing professional services, others in terms of a massive educational campaign, and yet others in terms of a stepped-up program of family research. Proposed solutions now widely publicized range from going back to the traditional patriarchal family pattern on the one hand, to acceptance and encouragement of the so-called "alternative life-styles." Even the "family specialists" are by no means unanimous about what needs to be done — they include devotees of a wide variety of schools of thought, movements, and cults. It would indeed be unfortunate if the Conference became little more than an open forum in which exponents of these and other doctrines debated with each other.

We recognize that families must adapt to cultural change; but we view as regrettable the implications from some quarters that marriage, parenthood, and family life represent outworn or obsolete social institutions.

We express the hope that the White House Conference on Families may give its major attention to developing a sound, workable national policy to provide all possible support for American families as they struggle to cope with the complex cultural changes of our time. As members of American communities representing many varieties of religious faith, we affirm the following as positive goals in support of which we can all unite:

1. All American families should be undergirded by basic economic security, so

that their members may live together and raise their children free from the threat of crippling poverty and want.

2. All families should be entitled to housing which can provide basic living conditions assuring them of the fundamental human dignities and decencies.

3. Neighborhood environments and their impact upon the family should be evaluated to the end that no family may be deprived of the minimal requirements for basic health and happiness.

4. The Conference should consider the services available to all families for the promotion of physical and mental health, and protection from avoidable illness.

5. Serious attention should be given working conditions so as to prevent the imposition of undue or avoidable hardship on the family life of the workers and their dependents.

6. Public policies, laws, and ordinances should be under continuous scrutiny to insure that their impact on American families is as far as possible always positive and supportive, and never damaging or destructive.

7. All possible protection should be afforded to families as consuming units, so that they may be encouraged and assisted in using their resources wisely, and protected from irresponsible exploitation.

8. Agencies of federal, state, and local governments, together with other responsible public agencies and the mass media, should be continually encouraged to maintain a broad policy of family advocacy, and to support forms of public education that seek to guide and assist families in their efforts to function successfully.

9. Every effort should be made to improve strategies for helping families in trouble, by coordinating our social and professional services to meet emerging needs



with the best available resources, and with the least possible delay.

10. Study and research in the long-neglected field of close relationships should be accelerated and coordinated so as to provide families with more and more of the new insights, skills and tools now becoming available, and vitally necessary if intimate relationships are to be creatively developed.

11. The promising possibilities of marriage and family enrichment, now being extensively developed by a growing number of professional and religious groups, should be explored as a means of matching our current remedial services with equally effective preventive services, thus enabling families to support, help, and model for each other in attaining relationship growth.

These are some of the clear practical goals which, in our judgment, should define the main tasks of the White House Conference, as it seeks to forge a national policy for the support of families. They are goals which we, along with many millions of other Americans, can heartily support.

Despite all hazards, the Conference presents us with an exciting opportunity, perhaps never likely to recur, to begin to develop at last a sound, sensible, and workable public policy — a policy that will give adequate recognition and support to the painfully difficult, yet vitally important, role of American families at a critical point in our nation's history. For a brief period of perhaps a couple of years, the spotlight of serious public attention may be focused on the family's importance at the oldest and most basic of all our social institutions. If this time could be used to reassess and readjust our family programs and policies, the gains could well prove to be incalculable. It is therefore our opinion that no effort should be spared to insure the success of the Conference in achieving this vital task.

In conclusion, we would express the hope that the Conference will also give recognition to the fact that, again and again in the history of our nation, the dynamic for loving and caring families has been provided by the uplifting and sustaining power of religious faith.



THOSE RECEIVING LETTERS FROM DAVID MACE AND FOY VALENTINE  
CONCERNING THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES

1. DR. JIMMY R. ALLEN, President  
Southern Baptist Convention  
515 McCullough Street  
San Antonio, Texas 78215
2. THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN M. ALLIN, Presiding Bishop  
The Episcopal Church  
815 Second Avenue  
New York, New York 10017
3. BISHOP JAMES ARMSTRONG  
Berkshire Plaza  
405 Northwest Eighth Avenue  
Aberdeen, South Dakota 57401
4. DR. ROBERT C. CAMPBELL, General Secretary  
American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.  
Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 19481
5. DR. BILLY GRAHAM  
Montreat, North Carolina 28757
6. THE REVEREND MONSIGNOR FRANCIS J. LALLY  
Department of Social Development and World Peace  
U. S. Catholic Conference  
1313 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20005
7. DR. ROBERT J. MARSHALL, President  
Lutheran Church in America  
231 Madison Avenue  
New York, New York 10016
8. BISHOP JAMES K. MATTHEWS  
United Methodist Church  
100 West Maryland Avenue, N. E.  
Washington, D. C. 20002
9. RABBI MARC TANNENBAUM  
American Jewish Committee  
165 East 56th Street  
New York, New York 10022

10. DR. WILLIAM P. THOMPSON, Stated Clerk  
The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.  
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1201  
New York, New York 10027
  
11. DR. ELTON TRUEBLOOD  
Professor of Philosophy  
Earlham College  
Richmond, Indiana 47374



# NEWS

FROM THE

# COMMITTEE

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE** Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

## ANNUAL NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Oct. 26-29

Hyatt Regency Cambridge  
575 Memorial Drive  
Cambridge, Mass. 02139  
617 - 492-1234

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

PRESS ROOM will be posted in lobby

CONTACT: Natalie Flatow, Press  
Frances Rosenberg, TV-Radio

FOR RELEASE AFTER 6 P.M.  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1978

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Oct. 26...The American Jewish Committee stated today that the survival of the American Jewish community might well depend on its willingness to maintain the kind of family life that has been "going out of style" in the United States.

At its meeting at the Hyatt Regency Cambridge Hotel here, the Committee's National Executive Council, its top policy-making body, released a report of its Task Force on the Jewish Family, prepared by Prof. Chaim Waxman, head of the Department of Sociology at Rutgers University, the Task Force chairman. Howard F. Gilbert, Chairman of AJC's National Committee on the Jewish Family, also discussed the report's findings.

Both the Task Force and the National Committee are part of AJC's Jewish Communal Affairs Department, of which Yehuda Rosenman is the director.

Among the report's conclusions were the following:

- \* Getting married and establishing a family is an important Jewish value, and constitutes a good in itself.
- \* There is a vital need for maintaining a wholesome Jewish family, which, as a minimum, reproduces itself.
- \* The Jewish family is still the most important agent for transmission of Jewish values and for preserving Jewish identity.

With reference to the latter, the report stated that research had shown that the family was much more important than formal Jewish schooling in creating adherence to Jewish traditions.

By maintaining the family as a strong, binding force, the report added, the Jewish community might influence the views of other groups, thus becoming a valuable source of support for the American family, which has, in recent years, become fragmented by divorce, the disillusion of its youth and other factors.

Richard Maass, President; Maynard I. Wishner, Chairman, Board of Governors; Morton K. Blaustein, Chairman, National Executive Council; Howard J. Freedman, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Bertram H. Gold, Executive Vice President

Washington Office, 818 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 • Europe hq.: 41 rue Paul Doumer, 75016, Paris, France • Israel hq.: 9 Ethiopia St., Jerusalem, 95149, Israel  
Mexico-Central America hq.: Av. E. National 533, Mexico 5, D.F.

Stating that the Jewish family needed support, Professor Waxman called for consideration of the following suggestions:

- \* The recognition of such support as a Jewish communal priority.
- \* The utilization of effective young leaders to encourage a change in values and to counteract current styles of behavior, which are destructive of Jewish life.
- \* The institution of family-life education courses as a regular part of rabbinic training.
- \* The encouragement of the organized Jewish community to take special notice of the need to program for singles, single-parent families, and divorcees.
- \* More opportunities for the active participation of the elderly in the strengthening of Jewish family life.
- \* The development of support, guidance, and self-help groups to deal with the special problems of middle-aged children of aging parents.
- \* Provisions for agency support of quality child care programs through support of day care centers, day schools, and after-school programs for children of working parents.

Among the other subjects covered by the report were intermarriage, birth control, divorce, the working mother, late marriages, and "alternative" life styles.

Founded in 1906, the American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. It combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of people at home and abroad, and seeks improved human relations for all people everywhere.

# NEWS

FROM THE

# COMMITTEE

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE** Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, PLaza 1-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, March 28...If the Carter Administration hopes to follow through on the campaign promise to develop a "coherent national family policy," it will have to be responsive to ethnic factors and to the wide variety of family life styles and cultural traditions that comprise the American social scene.

This is the conclusion reached by Joseph Giordano and Irving M. Levine of the American Jewish Committee's Institute on Pluralism and Group Identity in an article titled "Carter's Family Policy: The Pluralist's Challenge," published in the current issue of the Journal of Current Social Issues.\*

"The plight of the American family will not be relieved by traditional bureaucratic programs," the authors assert. "Universal social and economic policies must be fine-tuned to offer people choices and to strengthen the inherent capacity of families, neighborhood and ethnic and minority groups to care for their own."

The Giordano-Levine article is one of twenty essays in a special issue of the Journal devoted to an analysis of the contemporary American family and its problems. The issue was co-sponsored by 15 organizations, including Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups, as well as organizations concerned with education and human relations.

The special issue is available at \$2.95 for a single copy, or as part of an annual subscription at \$7.50 from the Journal of Current Social Issues, 287 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010.

---

\* For a review copy, write or call Colleen Meyers, Journal of Current Social Issues, 287 Park Ave. South, N.Y., N.Y. 10010 (212) 475-2121

Elmer L. Winter, President; Richard Maass, Chairman, Board of Governors; Maynard I. Wishner, Chairman, National Executive Council; Theodore Ellenoff, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Bertram H. Gold, Executive Vice President

Washington Office: 818 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 • European hq.: 30 Rue la Boetie, Paris, France 75008 • Israel hq.: 9 Ethiopia St., Jerusalem, Israel 95149  
So. Amer. hq.: Bartolome Mitre 1943, Buenos Aires, Argentina • Brazil: Av. Rio Branco 18, s/1109, Rio de Janeiro • Mexico-Cent. Amer. hq.: Av. E. National 533, Mexico 5, D.F.

CSAE 1707

In their article, Messrs. Giordano and Levine indicate their belief that the Carter Administration's efforts on behalf of the American family will benefit from lessons of the past.

"While the family policy agenda has not yet fully jelled," they state, "there is already an aspect to it that is decidedly different from other 'liberal' policy packages. Instead of the single-minded emphasis on sweeping programs, there is a recognition that much that was tried in the 'Great Society' failed because the programs were not sufficiently tuned into the tremendous diversity of the American public. Programs were not culturally compatible with clients in their method of operations, and usually polarized black and white ethnic groups."

While pointing to the potential power of developing coalitions of ethnic, religious and regional groupings around family concerns, the authors also warn of some of the dangers.

"The task of getting agreement on family policy is already highly politicized and polarizing," they state, "because of what people perceive as continued government interference in their daily lives. The Mondale-Brademas Child and Family Services Bill ran into a storm of highly organized protest, mostly by right wing extremist groups, but also by ordinary Americans who fear too close an intermingling of family and government."

On the other hand, they point out, there is liberal dissent as well as conservative opposition to a national family policy.

"There are some liberals who view concern about the family as support for conservative politics and thoughtlessly reject it on ideological grounds. Others feel that support of families will reduce individual freedom. Radicals believe that the family is dying and new alternative life styles are needed to insure individual freedom and self-fulfillment."

The authors predict that these various dissenting voices will increase in intensity as the nation moves toward a wider public debate on national family policy. But they urge that such dissent be balanced against the views of the majority of Americans who, they say, "hold a more traditional view."



Messrs. Giordano and Levine, while acknowledging that family life is changing, maintain that it is still very much alive.

"It is evident that we need a broader definition of family," they state, and add that the new definition must include "not only the realities of the nuclear family, but also single parent families, communal families, extended families, childless families and others."

They then conclude that "we need a national commitment to the primary importance of the family" and a "strategy that singles out the family as the most promising unit for social supports."

"The Constitution has wisely singled out the individual as the proper recipient for the protection of rights, but that should not be seen as a denial of government's responsibility to the family which, over time, has proved itself as the most effective source of nurture and social cohesion," they maintain.

The special family issue of the Journal of Current Social Issues also includes articles by Amitai Etzioni, Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, and Director of the Center for Policy Research; Edward Shorter, Associate Professor of History, University of Toronto; Walter Brueggemann, Academic Dean of Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo.; Eugene Bianchi, Associate Professor of Religion, Emory University; Sheila Collins, Director of Publications, Joint Strategy and Action Committee; and others.

There are also two verbatim conversations: one with Michael Novak, author of "The Unmeltable Ethnics": the other with Robert Staples, head of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of California at San Francisco, and author of "The Black Family: Essays and Studies."

Various articles in the issue deal with the economic basis of family unit living, the emotional quality of life in families, the impact of specific government policies on the formation and survival of family units, and changing definitions of families as well as those essential elements that do not change.

There are also a variety of personal reflections of a cross-section of individuals and couples on the subjects of changing sexual, marital and child-raising practices. The same issues are considered in articles written from religious, psychological and ethical perspectives.

# NEWS

FROM THE

# COMMITTEE

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE** Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

FOR RELEASE AFTER 12 NOON  
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1980

NEW YORK, Mar. 25....The increasing number of single-parent Jewish families should be a matter of high priority concern for the Jewish community and its communal agencies, even to the point of providing matchmakers for those who wish to remarry, according to a new booklet just issued by the American Jewish Committee.

"Single-Parent Families: A Challenge to the Jewish Community" by Dr. Chaim I. Waxman, is the first publication of AJC's recently established National Jewish Family Center. It was introduced at the Center's first public event, a press luncheon held today at AJC national headquarters here.

The National Jewish Family Center, coordinated by Yehuda Rosenman, who is Director of AJC's Jewish Communal Affairs Department, is a multifaceted program of research and action designed to support and strengthen Jewish family life.

"Because Jews more than any other group depend on the family to transmit their religion and tradition and ensure their continuity," Mr. Rosenman stated, "we have special reason to be concerned when families seem to be falling apart."

The luncheon also served to introduce the Center's first quarterly Newsletter as well as a "Jewish Family Impact Questionnaire." The latter is a device designed to help Jewish communal organizations evaluate how their policies and programs affect families and family life.

Guest speakers at the luncheon were Jim Guy Tucker, Chairperson of the White House Conference on Families, to be held next summer, and Joseph Giordano, Chairperson of the Coalition for the Conference, a group of 54 national organizations that are supporting the meetings.

-more-

Richard Maass, President; Maynard I. Wishner, Chairman, Board of Governors; Morton K. Blaustein, Chairman, National Executive Council; Howard I. Friedman, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Bertram H. Gold, Executive Vice President

Washington Office, 818 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 • Europe hq.: 41 rue Paul Doumer, 75016, Paris, France • Israel hq.: 9 Ethiopia St., Jerusalem, 95149, Israel  
Mexico-Central America hq.: Av. E. National 533, Mexico 5, D.F.

Mr. Rosenman, in addition to stressing the National Jewish Family Center's concern for single parents, discussed a wide variety of other projects on which the Center has already begun work or plans to embark in the near future. He cited the following:

- ."a conference on the historical evolution of the family;
- ."a pilot study of coping strategies used by two-career families with three or more children;
- ."an investigation of the effect of parental separation or divorce on the development of Jewish identity in children;
- ."studies of family patterns and needs among different ethnic and religious groups, and the particular dynamics of present-day Jewish family life;
- ."research on how Jewish living can enrich the quality of family life, and what communal agencies can do to foster Jewish living programs in this area;
- ."seminars bringing together research scholars and practitioners involved in family issues;
- ."training programs for lay leaders and professionals concerned with family policy and programming;
- ."efforts to make government and private agencies more responsive to family needs.

In his monograph on single-parent Jewish families, Dr. Waxman, who is Associate Professor and Chairman of the Department of Sociology at University College, Rutgers University, pointed out that although the divorce rate and single parenthood among Jews were lower than in the general American community, the numbers were continuously rising and therefore of major concern.

Stressing that accurate national figures were impossible to obtain, Dr. Waxman cited significant indicators from Jewish communal agencies across the country, as follows:

- . In New York City, the Jewish Family Service reported that the percentage of divorced or separated families in its case load had grown from 5 per cent in 1955 to 23 per cent in 1976.
- . In New York City, the Camping Division of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies reported that the number of children of divorced parents in its clientele had increased by 151 per cent between 1970 and 1976.
- . In Atlanta, the Jewish Community Center estimates that more than 20 per cent of the Jewish children enrolled in its day camp are from single-parent families.
- . In Miami, the Jewish Family and Children's Service states that 25 per cent of its caseload consists of single-parent families, with the overwhelming majority headed by divorced women.

- . A National Jewish Welfare Board Conference on Single-Parent Families, held in 1974, estimated that single parents accounted for 20 to 40 per cent of the nationwide membership of Jewish community centers.

"If Jewish single-parent families are here to stay, it behooves the Jewish community to address their problems and struggles," Dr. Waxman declared.

Too little had been done in this area in the past, he stated, because "the Jewish community is ambivalent toward single-parent families."

"Without acknowledging it in so many words," he said, "the community has been afraid to adopt policies and programs for helping and integrating single-parent families, lest by doing so it help legitimize a previously disapproved form of family life."

As a result, he added, "such families often drift outside the Jewish orbit." He continued:

"If the Jewish community were to show them interest and concern and to help meet some of their most pressing practical needs, they might be drawn back into communal life, or even drawn in for the first time. In the process, they might become a significant source of strength for American Jewry."

Among the steps that communal agencies might consider to help single-parent families, Dr. Waxman listed the following:

- . "appoint an internal review board to evaluate current policies, programs and procedures and recommend changes in those practices that hurt, or fail to help, single-parent families";
- . "see to it that the intended clients (single parents) are represented on their advisory and policy-making boards" where "they probably could suggest programs that would integrate them instead of possibly isolating them further";
- . "set up "a local referral mechanism, possibly in the form of one or several neighborhood storefront centers, and a 'hot line' for quick action. Besides serving as transmission belts to formal Jewish social service agencies, they could provide informally for some kinds of services"...i.e. baby-sitters available at short notice.
- . "reorganize their dues and rate structures" to offer "special half-price memberships";

"educational institutions, especially day schools, might consider free tuition for single-parent family members";

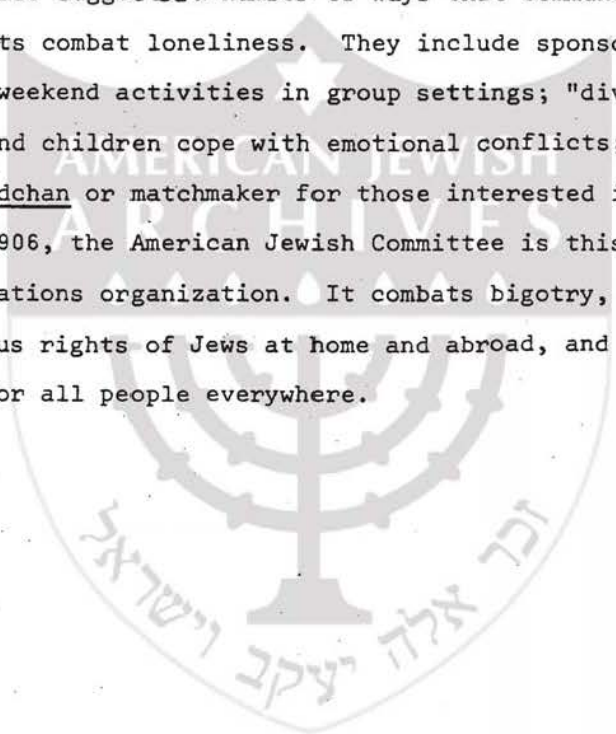
"vocational service agencies should make particular efforts to reach single parents with financial and job counseling."

In addition, Dr. Waxman recommended a variety of specific suggestions to help single parents "deal with the logistics of living." These included providing day care for children; organizing car pools for children in Hebrew school; person-to-person help to single parents whose children are due for Bar or Bat Mitzvah, or are about to be married; scheduling parent-teacher conferences outside of working hours.

Dr. Waxman also suggested a number of ways that communal agencies might help single parents combat loneliness. They include sponsorship of inexpensive, meaningful weekend activities in group settings; "divorce workshops" to help spouses and children cope with emotional conflicts; and even the services of a shadchan or matchmaker for those interested in remarriage.

Founded in 1906, the American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. It combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews at home and abroad, and seeks improved human relations for all people everywhere.

80-960-63  
3/3/80  
A, EJP, REL, WO



# NEWS COMMITTEE

FROM THE

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE** Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

PRESS ROOM May 14-18  
74TH ANNUAL MEETING  
Waldorf Astoria Hotel  
Park Ave. at 50 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10022

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

CONTACTS:  
Press - Natalie Flatow  
TV-Radio - Jonathan Schenker

VERTES SUITE  
212-355-3000

FOR RELEASE AFTER 10 A.M.  
THURSDAY, MAY 15, 1980

NEW YORK, May 15....To help synagogues, community centers, and other Jewish communal agencies adjust to the changing fabric of American family life, the American Jewish Committee today announced publication of a "Jewish Family Impact Questionnaire."

The questionnaire, prepared by the AJC's newly established National Jewish Family Center, provides these agencies with a series of questions by which they can start to reevaluate the impact of their programs in the family area.

It was made public today at a meeting of the AJC's Jewish Communal Affairs Commission, held in conjunction with the agency's 74th Annual Meeting, which continues through Sunday at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel here.

"The questionnaire will enable institutions to assess and evaluate the effects of their programming on families in their immediate community," noted Yehuda Rosenman, coordinator of the National Jewish Family Center and Director of the AJC's Jewish Communal Affairs Department.

"Communal organizations program religious, cultural, and social events in various ways to meet the needs of their community. The questionnaire can be applied to a wide range of institutions and families, enabling them to be in a better position to program activities in the future that serve families and support family life."

At the same session, moderated by Commission Chairman E. Robert Goodkind, Dr. Roz Horsch and her husband Robert of Washington, D.C., discussed the Family Center's study on Jewish Career Women with Large Families, in which they participated. The findings are scheduled to be published next month.

-more-

Commission members also heard Dr. Basil Bard and Mrs. Frances Rubens, President and Vice President of Great Britain's Anglo-Jewish Association, review the nature and concerns of Jewish communal life in England and possible areas of joint cooperation between the AJC and British Jewry.

Founded in 1906, the American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. It combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews at home and abroad, and seems improved human relations for all people everywhere.

80-960-124  
5/5/80  
EJP



**CONSULTATION  
ON THE  
JEWISH FAMILY**

**AND  
JEWISH IDENTITY**

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES

Proceedings  
April 23-24, 1972

Jewish Communal Affairs Department  
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE



CONTENTS

|   | <u>PAGE</u> |
|---|-------------|
| PROGRAM   |             |
| SESSION I   |             |
| Opening Remarks . . . . .   | 1           |
| Highlights of Basic Papers  |             |
| Rabbi Herman Pollack . . . . .  | 1           |
| Professor Sidney Goldstein . . . . .  | 2           |
| Professor Zena Smith Blau . . . . .   | 2           |
| Discussion . . . . .  | 3           |
| SESSION II  |             |
| Aspects of the Jewish Family and<br>Jewish Identity   |             |
| Dr. Marshall Sklare . . . . .   | 6           |
| Discussion . . . . .  | 11          |
| SESSION III   |             |
| Implications of the Current Trends in<br>the Jewish Family for the American-<br>Jewish Community  |             |
| Dr. Robert Gordis . . . . .   | 14          |
| Dr. Joseph Lukinsky . . . . .   | 19          |
| Mrs. Martha Selig . . . . .   | 23          |
| Discussion and Recommendations . . . . .  | 28          |
| PARTICIPANTS . . . . .  | 32          |
| APPENDICES  |             |
| I. The Jewish Family: A Historical Overview<br>Rabbi Herman Pollack   |             |
| II. The Demographic Aspects of the Jewish<br>Family in America<br>Dr. Sydney Goldstein  |             |
| III. A Comparative Study of Jewish and Non-Jewish<br>Families in the Context of Changing American<br>Family Life<br>Dr. Zena Smith Blau |             |

PROGRAM

CONSULTATION ON THE JEWISH FAMILY AND JEWISH IDENTITY

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 1972

SESSION I

CHAIRMAN - Bertram Gold

Opening Remarks - Yehuda Rosenman

Highlights of Basic Papers

"The Jewish Family - A Historical Overview"  
Rabbi Herman Pollack

"The Demographic Aspects of the Jewish  
Family in America"  
Dr. Sydney Goldstein

"A Comparative Study of Jewish and Non-Jewish  
Families in the Context of Changing  
American Family Life"  
Dr. Zena Smith Blau

Discussion

MONDAY, APRIL 24, 1972

SESSION II

CHAIRMAN - Dr. Marshall Sklare

Aspects of the Jewish Family and Jewish  
Identity

Discussion

SESSION III

CHAIRMAN - Dr. David Sidorsky

Implications of Current Trends in the Jewish  
Family for the American-Jewish Community

Religious Life - Dr. Robert Gordis

Jewish Education - Dr. Joseph Lukinsky

Jewish Social Service Agencies - Martha Selig

Discussion and Recommendations

## SESSION I

Yehuda Rosenman, Director of the Jewish Communal Affairs Department of AJC, which organized and arranged the Consultation, greeted the participants and expressed his gratitude to Professor Mirra Komarovsky, Dr. John Slawson, Professor Marshall Sklare and Dr. Gladys Rosen who helped in planning the Conference. Mr. Rosenman pointed out that recent developments in American society have resulted in increasing concern about the future of the family unit as a basic institution for social stability and continuity. Plans for this Consultation were determined by certain basic assumptions:

1. We are committed to Jewish continuity in its various forms.
2. The Jewish family is a major factor in Jewish survival -- the basic source of Jewish identity, education and life style.
3. We decry the post-Emancipation erosion and weakness of Jewish commitment and the role of the family.
4. We see the accelerated diminution of the family's role as it finds itself subjected to revolutionary social challenges as part of a general attack on established institutions by the so-called counter culture.

The changing definition of the family's role is reflected in such phenomena as the rising divorce rate, intergenerational discontinuity, the drug culture, loss of respect for authority, Women's Lib, the sexual revolution, etc. Our goals in calling together this cross-disciplinary group of experts was to share information and expertise. We hope to determine how much or how little we know about the Jewish family, what we need to know and how to determine the kind of research and programming which will support the Jewish family and Jewish continuity in the future.

To chair the first session, Mr. Rosenman introduced Bertram Gold, Executive Vice-President of the American Jewish Committee. Mr. Gold emphasized the importance of the family as the basic unit of society and as the essential element in Jewish communal life, both historically and sociologically. Mr. Gold stated that the first session would be devoted to a discussion based on the three papers prepared for the Consultation. To initiate the discussion, Mr. Gold called upon the authors to present the highlights of their respective papers.

Rabbi Herman Pollack opened the proceedings with a summary of his "Historical Overview of the Jewish Family." He described the evolution of the Jewish family and the respective roles of its individual members from Biblical times, through the Talmudic

period, the Middle Ages and early modern period ushered in by Jewish Emancipation. Problems of identity and the self-concept of the individual stem from the post-Emancipation efforts of the Jew to be part of the outside world while at the same time maintaining his individuality and his Jewishness.

Professor Sidney Goldstein followed with a review of the demographic aspects of the Jewish family in America. He pointed to the declining Jewish percentage in the total American population, geographic mobility and greater dispersion of the Jews, as well as socio-economic changes which include the rising percentage of native born Jews, lower fertility rate, the move from family owned business to professions and corporate executive positions. Professor Goldstein emphasized the importance of the strength and character of the Jewish family and decried the lack of available research. He pointed out that most information had to be gleaned from various community population surveys, most of which dealt with relatively moderate-sized Jewish communities.

The largest centers of Jewish population have been neglected in this regard, because of their very size and complexity. However, analysis of existing sources shows a sufficient similarity in demographic patterns and trends to enable us to reach certain general conclusions regarding the Jewish family. Patterns of family structure with a clear predominance of the nuclear rather than the extended family, low fertility and a rising rate of intermarriage evidence the impact of cultural assimilation in recent years. However, compared to the general population, the Jewish family continues to exhibit a relatively high degree of stability.

Professor Zena Smith Blau presented highlights of her paper "A Comparative Study of Jewish and non-Jewish Families in the Context of Changing American Family Life." Dr. Blau focused first on problems in family life emerging from the impact of World War II. There was a post-war eagerness to concentrate on internal family life and the attainment of material success. New opportunities for improving social and economic status were available. The decline in religion and ethnicity as central socializing factors tended to overburden the family and occupation as anchoring points of identity. Particularly unrealistic was the expectation that the family in its current form could fulfill all emotional needs.

Dr. Blau's comparative study of achievement levels in Jewish, High Protestant and non-Religious sample groups indicated a positive correlation between the maternal affection, non-coercive treatment and high cognitive stimulation of pre-school children typical of Jewish families and scholastic achievement. It is interesting to note that the trend to "Jewish mothering" has spread to WASPS and non-religious groups. Since Jews have until recently been less represented in high level, high mobility managerial positions, the resultant relative stability has

brought greater kinship continuity and organizational participation. Thus Jews may have overburdened the family less than other groups. In addition, fathers tend to share socialization of children within the family to a greater degree, an important source of family strength. Tolerance of childhood misbehavior is a positive correlate of achievement and Dr. Blau viewed with dismay an apparent rise in coercive discipline among Jewish mothers in her sample. However, this has not yet had a significant effect and is counterbalanced by such positive factors as extra-curricular cultural enrichment, high level of aspiration in attainment and amount of education. Of special interest in the light of current trends was Dr. Blau's observation that IQ achievement scores of children, in general, vary more with the educational attainment of their mother than with that of the father.

For the future Dr. Blau urged the Jewish community to develop institutions which would use the experience and capabilities of the elderly and to involve the young in decision making regarding Jewish programs and institutions in which they are expected to participate.

#### DISCUSSION

The discussion centered mainly on Dr. Blau's paper and the various questions it raised. There was interest in ascertaining the basis for her choice of high Protestant, Jewish and non-religious groups to be compared in regard to achievement, the neglect of the role of the husband in the research as well as the nature of the non-religious sample employed. Dr. Blau emphasized her interest in the success of children of the various groups in socialization and achievement. She felt that it was important to pinpoint gaps in information, to get to specific facts. She felt that the three groups chosen were similar enough in socio-economic areas to make comparisons fruitful. All three are upper middle class. Using Catholics as a group for comparison would involve sub-cultural factors which go beyond socio-economic differences and would complicate the research. There was no special reason for not including data on the paternal influences except that not everything could be included and that the role of the mother was crucial to achievement.

One participant asked about the effect on the family of the competitive individual entrepreneur as compared to the executive in upper management. If, as had been indicated, the growing Jewish participation in corporations tends to weaken the Jewish family because of the rootlessness and reliance on fellow executives rather than co-religionists for social support, perhaps that kind of employment should be discouraged rather than fought for.

In the matter of models of child rearing, Professor Blau pointed out that so-called "Jewish mothering" is particularly suited to a free, urban society. It is anti-authoritarian and ego-supporting. The WASPS who have in the past opted for the English mode which tends to be cold and sex-repressive are moving toward a warmer, more Jewish approach. Blacks tend to be authoritarian and coercive particularly to males. Girls are treated more gently and are usually better achievers. Warm, permissive mothering has a positive relation to achievement.

There was some doubt expressed as to whether we can even talk about the Jewish family in view of the many variants which exist. It is difficult to determine how far we have moved from the traditional ideal unless we are aware of the nature of the variants. It was recommended that we try to find out more about the contradictions with which we live and how they are viewed by the younger generation. The much praised loving warmth of the Jewish mother is regarded by some sons as smothering and they flee from it. Certainly there is need for more research to ascertain the facts. Dr. Cahnman recommended the preparation of a questionnaire on issues of Jewish identity, parental and extended family relationships. This would be widely distributed through college teachers and would help delineate the varieties of Jewish family life. Dr. Blau reiterated that variants notwithstanding there are fewer class differences among Jews than with other ethnic groups. However, there is need to differentiate among various levels within the middle class.

Several participants felt that a searching by both historians and sociologists into the history of the Jewish family, particularly as seen in medieval sources might yield helpful models for our time. Dr. Verbit pointed out that despite class differences during other periods of history, models did emerge and with communal effort the same may happen today. It would also be helpful to examine the structure which influenced the Jewish family in the past and to clarify the ways in which the Jewish family has changed and deteriorated as a socializing force. There was general agreement that current research must be linked to past developments before recommendations for the future could be made.

Dr. Blau's use of the word "coercive" with its negative connotations was challenged by one participant who viewed increased discipline by Jewish parents as a positive move. Dr. Blau explained that the coercive component which she decried referred to physical punishment and threats which had a negative relationship to achievement. She did not advocate absence of norms but rather a humanistic approach which teaches morals and sets achievement standards. Much may be asked of a child if the demands are accompanied by sufficient warmth and love. It is this combination which is traditionally regarded as the strength of the Jewish family.

Dr. Slawson asked what in Dr. Blau's research might be directly related to the Jewish family and Jewish identity under circumstances of urbanization and technological development. He was particularly anxious to determine what positive aspects of the family, regarded as essential for identification, should be bolstered and supported.

Dr. Blau mentioned the following:

1. Positive Jewish identification of the parents.
2. There is a need to develop positive ways to counteract the lack of knowledge on the part of third and fourth generation parents. Being Jewish and involvement in Jewish institutions must be an important aspect of life. Parents must be educated through new mechanisms.
3. As more women work and the divorce rate rises, day care centers must be developed to be supportive of the nuclear family Jewishly as well as physically.

It was pointed out that one study by Robert Winch indicated that the role of the extended family was considered so important by some fathers that they made economic sacrifices in order to stay near relatives. The wisdom of their decision was borne out by the Midtown Manhattan Study which clearly indicated that those Jews who married out had little experience with the extended family.

The importance of the family as a transmitter of values was reiterated as was the concept of education as a lifetime process. Mr. Morris warned that we must be aware of social pressures and the new concerns of youth. They reject values which are part of the American dream but like their parents they complain of a sense of loneliness and not belonging, an absence of community. We must concern ourselves with current disorganization of the Jewish family and bear in mind that the past values are those of the extended family.

Dr. Linzer felt that the current resurgence of ethnicity among college youth might influence families and Jewish academicians to return to Jewish values, a case of the children leading their elders.

It was further recommended that it is vital to take advantage of the potential role of youth through the development of special communal structures and new family structures.

SESSION II

Yehuda Rosenman opened the morning session and announced that he would chair the morning session so that Dr. Marshall Sklare, who was so listed in the program, might speak more freely and easily as a participant.

Mr. Rosenman pointed out that the first session had been devoted to a discussion of the background papers and that the second session would stress the special implications of the Jewish family for Jewish identity. Questions along these lines have already been raised, particularly by practitioners. Mr. Dan Morris is especially concerned with the effects of youthful alienation and new mores and Mr. Sherman sees a challenge to the Jewish future in current family pathology.

Mr. Rosenman stressed the interest of this Consultation in changing roles within the family situation and the impact of current directions and trends on the issue of Jewish identity in the immediate future. The questions included in the kit issued to participants were intended to serve as an outline of concerns and problems facing the Jewish family, as for example:

1. The impact of the counter-culture in all its manifestations -- Women's Lib, deviant family forms, the sex revolution, Zero Population Growth, Gay Liberation, the drug culture, etc.
2. The relation of these developments to socializing Jewish children into Jewish identity and to the Jewish future.
3. The family as a major instrument and institution for Jewish survival.

To begin the morning's discussion, Marshall Sklare was called upon to give an analysis of trends in today's Jewish family and their relation to Jewish identity.

DR. MARSHALL SKLARE

In order to understand the strength of the Jewish family, we must take a historical look. The reason we are here at all has much to do with the fact that the Jewish family was able to weather the crisis of the first and second generation. That transmission process from immigrant to immigrant child proved to be a stressful confrontation, and yet the family held together despite it.



Another source of strength of the Jewish family is its motivation for initiative, responsibility and the giving of confidence to progeny, as has been pointed out by Zena Blau in her article In Defense of the Jewish Mother. Sigmund Freud once said about his mother that she had endowed him with such self-confidence that he was able to conquer: "I was always her little Siggy, and Siggy could always accomplish anything that Siggy wanted to accomplish." We sometimes berate the Jewish family and tend to see this in a dubious light, but there is a very positive aspect to it.

Then there is the question of relationship with kin. Even though Jews are now moving more and more toward the nuclear family structure, they tend to preserve a sense of extended family. The figures by Robert Winch which appeared in an article in The American Sociological Review in April, 1967, may be outdated, but the fact remains that there is a fantastic disproportion in the upper middle class between the relationship of Jews with their extended family and the relationship of others. For example, in the Chicago Metropolitan area which was studied, 78 percent of the Jews in contrast with 35 percent of Catholics and 14 percent of Protestants had at least twelve households of kin in the vicinity. Furthermore, Jews interacted regularly with their kind. While 71 percent of the Jews reported regular interaction with at least five households of kind, 43 percent of the Catholics reported regular interaction and only 16 percent of the Protestants.

It is therefore correct to say that the Jewish family has weathered the crisis of the first and second generation and while doing so it has also motivated occupational and scholastic achievement and continued with kinship ties. The Jewish family is a small one -- an advantage in our present society where the idea of zero population growth has won adherents.

Now, as the old Russian saying goes, if everything is so good why is everything so bad? Each of these positives can be turned on its head; the problems they give rise to become revealed. Family planning obviously imperils the size of the Jewish group. It produces a stabilized Jewish population, making Jews a smaller and smaller group in the general population. Similarly, upward social mobility, the very rise to upper middle class status produces a new kind of non-achievement syndrome, a non-achievement of the upper middle class offspring of achievers. Liberal sensitive achievers seem to produce non-achievement in their children. This non-achievement may be a problem to the child and to the group as well. Though it may only be a temporary phenomenon, there does seem to be a rise of non-achievement in the Jewish community.

Further, there is alienation from achievement coupled with the growth of new lifestyles. The third-generation Jewish radical

for example, coming from a middle class or upper middle class home and from those who are critical of society, has produced a new type of alienation and radicalism. This radicalism in turn is a threat to traditional Jewish values, but it is more than that: it is a threat to Jewish family continuity. In my view, it is different from second generation radicalism in which family unity was preserved. The Communism of the 1920's, 30's and 40's did not interfere with family units: the Rosenberg atomic-spy case after World War II was the most perfect example of family unity and family cohesiveness in a radical environment. As a matter of fact, the radicalism of the Rosenbergs was a kind of family business into which one brought one's relatives. Rather than leave this thing for Gentiles, whom one did not know very well anyway, one brought into one's spy ring all of one's Jewish relatives and friends.

Those who have studied the new radicalism, which can be viewed as a paradigm of alienation from family, find that to be a radical it is helpful to have weak identification with historic religious tradition and to be the offspring of parents who are second-generation Americans and members of a minority group. Also important is an appropriate value system, which includes the cultivation of emotional sensitivity and concern with inner experience rather than with the rational technological and instrumental side of life; a concern with ideals and intellectuality; a concern and desire to help others in society and little attention to the importance of strictly controlling personal impulses and submitting to conventional authority. In addition, to have an appropriate value system there are the needs to be affluent and to have a family constellation that is supportive of radicalism and permissive in child rearing.

Now we are in a position to understand why Jews are over-represented in militant movements: they have weak religious identification, they are second-generation offspring. Of the four qualities of the value system -- emotional sensitivity, intellectuality, concern with the underdog, and gratification of impulses -- the second and third, intellectually and concern with the underdog, have a certain important continuity with Jewish tradition, while emotional sensitivity and gratification of impulses, the first and fourth, have become part of American Jewish culture. In terms of affluence, the Jews qualify as well in terms of a family constellation and a supportive and permissive Jewish home. Militancy is not a rebellion from the father's political perspective. The great majority of radicals are attempting to fulfill and renew the political traditions of their family.

Mark Rudd, the leader of SDS during the Columbia University disturbances in May 1968, typifies the portrait: namely, the liberal Jewish family which gives rise to a radical Jewish son and in which family continuity is lost despite the fact that both the child and the family want to keep that continuity alive.

The Rudd family did not cut their radical son off. On the contrary: when Mark Rudd could not go home to Maplewood, N.J. to observe Mother's Day, that holiday which has become like Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur in the Jewish calendar, because he was leading the sit-ins on the campus, his family brought Maplewood to Morningside Heights -- that is, they brought a veal parmigian dinner to the campus. But the story ends tragically. There have been no more Mother's Day celebrations with Rudd since he went underground. Once he became a Weatherman, he lost continuity with his family and the Weathermen became his surrogate family, to whom to look for protection and support. And here we have a dramatic example of how the Jewish family is actually replaced in the third generation. Of course, most of the breaks in family continuity are much less thoroughgoing than occurred in the Rudd family.

Another issue relating to the Jewish family is the problem of intermarriage, a problem produced, in a way, by Jewish liberalization in combination with Jewish separatism. The older Jewish generation is integrationist and believes in the importance and advisability of Jewish-Gentile interaction. Although they themselves are not integrated, they send their children out into integrated environments with a resultant increase in intermarriage in the third and fourth generations. From the vantage point of the Jewish family this means there are now Gentiles in the extended Jewish kinship network. Almost every Jewish family today has a child or a relative who intermarried, certainly a neighbor or a business associate who is intermarried, and so forth. There is barely an extended kinship network that does not have its quota of intermarried people.

Although this situation was not unknown in German-Jewish history, it is unique in the history of East European Jews, who are the overwhelming majority in American Jewish life. To be sure there were examples of disaffection in Eastern Europe. Sholom Aleichem has one of Tevye's daughters marry a Gentile. But the daughter was then outside the kinship network. The trauma of this separation is certainly not part of the American-Jewish pattern. Parents today have a quite different pattern of reaction; they do not go beseeching the church to give the child back, but they do go begging a rabbi to perform a mixed marriage ceremony. We find a desire to incorporate the intermarried person in the family.

In respect to helping the child achieve a meaningful Jewish identity, there is thrust on the nuclear Jewish family the entire task of creating Jewish identity -- a task which had previously been shared by the extended family and the Jewish neighborhood. But while the family is able to help the child reach occupational and educational goals in terms of achievement, so does it fail him Jewishly. This failure results from weakened Jewishness on the part of parents in confrontation with the non-Jewish environment to which the child is exposed. Mike Nichols' brilliant summary of the plot of the film The Graduate is appropriate here. "The Graduate is a picture about a Jewish boy with Gentile parents."

We are left with the Jewish family trying to cope with the problem of conveying identity to the Jewish child and Jewish children who do not receive reinforcement from the home. These children who are weak Jewishly resemble the Black children in the public schools; they lack the preparation necessary for Jewish identity just as the others lack the preparation necessary for scholastic achievement. Of course, substitutes have been developed: the Jewish school, the Jewish campus, the Jewish club. Perhaps the latest substitute for the family is Israel and the trip to Israel. Thus, the congregation, the school, the camp, the club and Israel function as kind of surrogate families to replace what families no longer do. The remarkable thing is the openness of parents to such influences, an indication that they recognize their own weakness.

The emerging crisis for the Jewish family in identity formation is in part due to the newer limitations on the family as a socialization agent, limitations that the family has in common with other American families as well. But it is also traceable to the specific factors already analyzed -- the higher acculturation of many Jewish parents, the diminished interaction with Jewish relatives, the presence of Gentiles in the Jewish kinship network.

Yet there are nevertheless continuing positives in the Jewish family. It has weathered the first and second generation crises. It motivates occupational and scholastic achievement. It constitutes a model of family planning and retains extended family links in a society where these links are diminishing.

But all these achievements have their dark side. Family planning produces population stability; occupational achievement in combination with the psychological atmosphere in the Jewish family produces some non-achievement: class, social position and Jewish cultural practices in child rearing produce Jewish radicalism and lifestyles which result in an alienation that can be destructive of family loyalty and integration into the Jewish community. The liberalism of the Jews produces intermarriage which is a threat both to survival and to family unity. And last but not least, the weak Jewishness of the family means that the family cannot easily motivate the achievement of Jewish identity.

If the Jewish family cannot continue to maintain its primacy, in identity transmission, it is not yet clear how it is to be supplemented. Although the myriad complaints of the Alexander Portnoys about the syndrome of the dominating Jewish mother, the powerless father and the consequently neurotic offspring are frequently assumed to be the problem of the contemporary Jewish family, it is rather the shrinking contribution of the family to Jewish identity transmission that constitutes its essential weakness:

DISCUSSION

Dr. Sklare had made it clear that today's Jewish family is no longer able to act as a transmission channel for Jewish identity. There was a general sense that this role cannot be adequately performed by any of the surrogates, synagogue, school, Jewish camp, Jewish club, Israel trips, on which the family has become accustomed to depend. As Mr. Lerner pointed out, the surrogates cannot substitute in the area of intimate relations. Often the problems of individuals could be solved if there were a way to re-evoked family relationships, to restore the family on a broader basis. There was general agreement that commitment was essential for strong Jewish identity and a viable Jewish family unit.

Dr. Verbit contended that the strength of the Jewish family will have to depend upon classical Jewish commitment. He regarded religious commitment as a sine qua non for the achieving of continuity. Ethnic commitment was to his mind a short-term relationship. Rabbi Gordis felt that Jewish identity must find concrete basis for Jewish commitment and should differentiate between general and ritual commitment. Religion, like ethnic identity is part of the total picture. Professor Janowsky agreed that religious commitment of some kind is essential to group survival but questioned how such commitment might be defined and posited the possibility that Israel might be a new form of such commitment.

Dr. Goldstein mentioned the diminution of communal involvement in an increasingly secular society whose members tend to become more privatized.

The need for paradigms and models for Jewish commitment was accepted as essential to the Jewish communal agenda. However, the source and forms of such models were the subject of considerable discussion. Several participants recommended as a first step the examination of educational and social paradigms of classic Jewish tradition although there was general agreement that history and experience indicated that religious commitment was an essential factor in Jewish continuity. Patterns of religious commitment should be explored with an eye to helping those for whom there is hope for survival and accepting the falling off of others. In this vein, Rabbi Pollack felt that those students who are seeking commitment through search and analysis should be helped. Less emphasis should be placed on numbers and outreach programs and more on dedicated students who may be able to develop a model for how to live Jewishly. Dr. Leventman was concerned about the meaning of Jewish identity in the context of our society and what we can do about the unaffiliated Jews. He wondered how to recreate classical commitment in our day. Mr. Morris accepted the concept of creating Jewish commitment but felt we must address ourselves to the creation of new forms. Mr. Lerner felt that religious commitment was not the solution and that other factors

were involved in strengthening the family. Rabbi Rackman, who often deals with problems within observant families, remarked that education and commitment are not enough to strengthen the family; we must deal with what general culture is doing to Jewish values, for example in the context of the sexual revolution as it affects Orthodox homes.

Dr. Blau did not regard the current trends in sexual behavior as a revolution but rather as simply greater freedom between boys and girls. She felt that youthful aberrations in this and other areas are temporary and youth is indeed seeking community and models for which Jewish tradition is most relevant. It is vital, in her opinion, to effectively involve youth of the third and fourth generation actively in Jewish life. Since knowledge is essential, we should try to reach children early, through day care centers which have a Jewish educational program. We must use our young in Jewish projects by overcoming the paternalism which is rife in the Jewish establishment.

Mrs. Wolfe felt it would be fruitful to isolate and examine the factors which helped the Jewish family survive during periods of crisis. It is clear that treatment of pathology and social services alone will not enable the family to perform its traditional functions. It must be supported as it once was by the extended family and the Jewish neighborhood. Under the impact of current trends, our youth does not like the Jewish community as it appears to them, its materialism, its organizations, etc. This, Mrs. Wolfe stated, was part of a problem larger than the Jewish community.

As a prerequisite for developing models and paradigms for the Jewish family today, several participants recommended an examination of changing roles within the Jewish community.

Dr. Berman felt it was important to strengthen the father's role and to give dignity to his position in view of the singularly woman-dominated status of the Jewish family. Mr. Lerner supported the basic importance of examining the roles of father and mother and the relationship between concepts of discipline and over-permissiveness. Mr. Sherman recommended an examination of positive models as well as pathological cases. Dr. Verbit urged consideration of all elements of Jewish life in any effort to help the family. He also warned that in creating new models caution must be exercised in the area of innovation lest it create discontinuity. We must always retain an element of the old. There was general agreement with the need for substantive content in Jewish life. Structural separateness without the supportive Jewish cultural content will not guarantee continuity.

A troublesome factor in Jewish continuity is intermarriage which as Dr. Sklare noted has, among other things, drawn non-Jews into the Jewish kinship network. Dr. Cahnman stated that in view of the growing rate of intermarriage, with attendant conversions to Judaism, it is the job of the Jewish community to draw converts

into the Jewish orbit. Dr. Rosenthal pointed out that statistically converts are considered Jewish and that this results in skewed statistics. He recommended differentiating statistically between status rate and formation rate of intermarriage. He also said that there is no statistical evidence that intermarriage results in higher divorce rates although it has been shown that previous divorce makes for subsequent intermarriage. Mrs. Selig remarked that, in many cases, intermarriage is not a rebellion but rather a carrying out of the family's attitude and an indication of the weakness of the family Jewishly.

The growing pathology of the Jewish family indicates the need for developing supportive and educative techniques. Dr. Gordis, defining the Jews as a religio-cultural-ethnic group, stated that in dealing with the infinite variety of human nature and the variations within the Jewish community we need to develop a variety of paradigms, secular and humanistic as well as religious. The problem is complex and there is no one simple solution. In his opinion, however, some sense of commitment to the religious tradition was a necessary but not sufficient condition to solving the problems of the Jewish family and Jewish survival. Whatever family paradigms we develop must take into consideration psychological and environmental factors as well. As heirs to a tradition in which religious, ethical, social and ethnic factors have been interrelated, we cannot ignore any of them in seeking solutions to the problems of the Jewish family.



SESSION III

The Chairman of Session III, Dr. David Sidorsky, opened the afternoon's proceedings which dealt with the implications of current trends in the Jewish family for religious life, Jewish education and Jewish social agencies.

The discussion was begun by a panel of three specialists who made brief presentations based upon their own experience and the previous sessions.

Dr. Robert Gordis opened with a discussion of the implications of today's trends in the Jewish family for religious life.

DR. ROBERT GORDIS

No society can long endure unless in some sense there is a common universe of discourse, a generally accepted view of life, a set of fundamental religious-philosophic and ethical values undergirding its structure. In the case of the Jewish community, which rightly or wrongly has given a much greater play to religion than other societies of our time, this is even more evident.

In a sense, the decline of religious vitality among American Jews has accelerated the trends contributing to the breakdown of the Jewish family, and conversely these disintegrating trends have contributed to the decline of religion as embodied both in the home and in the synagogue.

Though the synagogue has not been a causative factor, it has all too often acquiesced in the decline of the family. It has done so tacitly by accepting with complacency the idea that one could eliminate religious practice in the home in favor of attendance at the synagogue. The question that religious leaders have been asking is how good is the attendance at services rather than how much Jewish observance takes place in the home. Thus the Seder has been moved out of the home into the synagogue, instead of recognizing that this is an unfortunate necessity and attempting to counter this trend. The synagogue has yielded further by making Hanukkah a community celebration, and limiting Purim entirely to the synagogue reading of the Megillah, while the Shabbat has all but completely disappeared from the home.

Thus the synagogue must accept part of the blame not for its failure to prevent these disintegrating tendencies in the family, which it might have been unable to do, but for not slowing down the process or reversing it, which might have been within its capacity.



The weakening trend is further accentuated by the changing character of synagogue membership. Synagogue members are now simply persons who hire the synagogue and its staff for a specific purpose for a limited period of time. If they have a Bar Mitzvah coming up and have to send a child to school for three years, they hire the school, the rabbi, the cantor and the caterer for that particular period, and very often, the family drops out immediately afterward. When another child approaches that period again, they rejoin. As a result, the synagogue today is like any other service institution. Affiliation no longer means membership in a synagogue, whether with dues or without, and utilizing whatever services it has to offer. Today we hire it for a specific purpose, and the rabbi comes along as part of "the package deal."

These developments are obviously fraught with great danger. The synagogue is by all odds the central institution of Jewish life, with the largest membership by far of any agency in Jewish life. It is estimated that between two and three million out of the five to six million Jews in the United States have some kind of synagogue affiliation. In addition, they are willing to pay for it -- which in itself is significant. If we permit this institution to decline, it is bound to have a disastrous effect on the Jewish community of tomorrow. In spite of the vigorous attacks on the religious Establishment, many of which are well justified, there is no substitute for the synagogue remotely to be seen on the horizon.

Moreover, the synagogue, at least ideally, does represent the totality of Jewish life in the sense that the ethnic, cultural and religious aspects of Judaism by their very nature are subsumed in its program. However narrowly or inadequately its program may be conceived or executed, the synagogue has within it the possibility of representing the organic unity of Judaism. To the extent that religious and cultural pluralism is regarded as a permanent feature of the American scene, (far more so, be it added, than cultural pluralism or "ethnicity") it is obvious that the Jewish community, both in the eyes of the non-Jewish majority among whom we live, as well as in their own eyes is exemplified and symbolized by the synagogue.

Unfortunately, however, the nature of American life has created "the curse of bigness" with regard to the synagogue as everywhere else. Its impersonalization and the mechanization of its activities have "turned off" precisely the most sensitive elements in the Jewish community. The high cost of Jewish institutional membership, particularly in the synagogue, has had a very negative effect upon many young people, especially the very young couples that rabbis are most eager to serve.

What can be done? A great deal of soul-searching by the leadership of our synagogues, lay and rabbinic, and ultimately a restructuring of religious life is required. A few years ago I

had occasion to dedicate a synagogue, the construction of which ran into several millions. There were two thousand people at the dedication service; I think I shook them up when I suggested that I would have been more impressed had there been twenty services going on simultaneously of a hundred people each instead of two thousand at one mass function. Small services mean that more people can participate -- their special interests, their peculiar biases, their particular talents -- all can come into play. The emphasis should be not on breaking up large institutions, because they perform irreplaceable services, but on making provision in the existing institutions for smaller groups of participants in worship and in study on a more personal and active basis.

Above all, there ought to be a far greater emphasis on what is really most viable in the Jewish heritage -- not so much Jewish institutions but rather Jewish ideals. It would be the height of folly to try to scrap the Establishment; the sensible course is to help to revitalize it. Our emphasis therefore must be upon that which is most vital in Judaism, its religious and ethical content. This is essentially what the traditional term "Torah" means, for which the more modern word "education," construed in the broadest sense of the term, is a pallid substitute.

In the field of education, there is a need for much more intensive and more personalized forms, its scope to include the whole area of family life, sexual morality and underlying ethical principles. We are dealing here with the transmission of values, not simply with information or facts. What is needed today is approaching family problems with sympathy and sechel (wisdom). The combination of the two must infuse the educational activities of the synagogue and the personal role of the rabbi at every level of his work. Since we are living in an age of tremendous crisis, the rabbis have to realize that there are new problems that did not exist in the past and also new opportunities. Human nature certainly has not deteriorated; it may even be better, if we recognize as virtues the hatred of sham and the refusal to acquiesce in evil. Therefore, it is not so much the content but the mode and the spirit in which it is transmitted which has to be changed. The insights of the traditionalist cannot be applied mechanically today; the purely routine application of norms from the past in an altogether different environmental setup creates inner tensions that often become pathological. What we need therefore is an in-depth interpretation of traditional Jewish ethical insights, so that they will be applied with sympathy and understanding to the Jewish and human condition today.

A major point that has to be brought home, and which always comes as a revelation to otherwise intelligent people young and old, is that "the Judeo-Christian tradition," whatever the validity of the concept, is a phrase which applies least of all in the area of sex and the family. Classical Christianity and classical

Judaism part company most directly there, and it is a liberating influence for Jewish young people to be educated to realize that the standards of St. Paul, the New Testament and Augustine are not identical with those of traditional Judaism. Classical Christianity, as Paul expounded it, made a distinction between Eros, physical erotic love, and Agape, spiritual love. Paul regarded Agape as the ideal and Eros as an unfortunate weakness of the flesh. It is a simplification, but not a distortion, to say that in classical Christianity love is regarded as pure to the degree that it is not involved in sex. In other words, sex should be as irrelevant as possible to love, and the highest forms of love are those in which sex plays the least part. The whole concept of romantic love is actually nothing but a secularized version of the same doctrine; romantic love is love which has not been fulfilled. Tristan and Isolde, Eloise and Abelard, Romeo and Juliet, Dante and Beatrice -- these are outstanding examples of romantic love, precisely because they were not fulfilled in marriage and the regularities of daily existence. For classical Christianity, sex was to be reduced as much as possible; the more one succeeded in minimizing sex, the purer and the higher the love.

What the modern sexual revolution has done is to turn the Christian view upside down. Where Christianity said that sex should be irrelevant to love, the modern outlook in many of its formulations insists that love should be or is irrelevant to sex, and that the sexual experience need have no necessary connection with love.

Judaism parts company with both the classical Christian and the contemporary points of view. It insists that love and sex are organically related in the case of human beings and cannot be separated. Marriage is that institution which attempts to endow this unique combination of love and sex with responsibility, and responsibility means at least the prospect of permanence. The sex and love relationships is one which has long-range effects, as the presence or possibility of children make abundantly clear. Love and sex cannot therefore be expressed purely in terms of immediate or short-term gratification.

Hemingway once defined morality as "that which you feel good after." This, I think, is a perfect definition. But what do we mean by "after," five minutes after, ten minutes after, nine months after or ten years after? Morality is that which one feels good after, if by that we mean not immediately, tomorrow, but in terms of the long-range consequences. Since the love-sex relationship includes the relations of man and woman and children over a long time, Judaism has something viable and valuable to teach. If presented to young people with sympathy and insight, the teachings of the Jewish heritage may not necessarily change their mode of living but it might give them a new respect for their tradition and ultimately create a new climate within which they would live.

Nor does this affect only children. Many of the sweet young girls today who at present are so enamoured of what they regard as the "freer relationships" outside of marriage may not feel the same way ten or fifteen years later. They will then, hopefully, be equally sweet but they will not be equally young, and that will make a difference.

Marriage is that institution which through trial and error and the experience of centuries has proved for most men and women to be the most successful mode of structuring the relations between husband and wife and between parents and children, most of the time. That leaves, to be sure, a tremendous number of cases where it does not work, and it is here that sympathy and insight have to come into play.

There are many other issues -- premarital sex, homosexuality, abortion -- on all of which the Jewish tradition has something significant to say.

The teaching of those issues must take place on two levels. Part of it is counselling. It may be necessary to be calling on other available human resources besides the rabbi for this.

One of the weaknesses of synagogues is that they are so isolated from one another and competitive. To meet this desperate need for counselling, a few years ago I convinced the New York Board of Rabbis to set up an "Information Center on Judaism." This was a cooperative consultation agency to be open every week-day, with rabbis of all groups in attendance to give personal counsel and information on Judaism to all who came. The public response within the few months of its existence was tremendous, but the project broke down because of the inner tensions among the "denominations." But the idea is still valid. No matter how it is to be managed, whether it be objective information or guidance on a personal level, or simply offering a sounding board, knowledgeable and sympathetic Jewish counselling must become a basic function of the synagogue, as it was the role of the individual rabbi in traditional Jewish circles in the past.

There must also be a greater emphasis on the teaching of Jewish traditional ideas in the areas of personal and social ethics, and its world-view, in life, death and the goals of human existence. These values and insights must be transmitted -- and can be to all ages -- children and adolescents as well as adults. If this were to happen we could be contributing to the difficult task of humanizing the Jews, of helping to transform them into menschen. At the same time we will be helping to revive the quality of Jewish community life.

Nobody in his senses thinks that Jewish life is ideal. And there is no reason why it should be, since men and women are not ideal. But those of us who have a sense of commitment are able to look beyond the limitations of the real to the ideal. If we can make

the values of Judaism meaningful in the lives of men and women and young people today, it will be possible to revive, for a large section of the Jewish community, the strength and beauty of the Jewish family in a new context of freedom and equality.

The second panelist, Dr. Joseph Lukinsky, examined the implications of trends in the Jewish family for directions in Jewish education.

DR. JOSEPH LUKINSKY\*

The first of many reasons for confusion in most discourse on Jewish education is the fact that people regard it as synonymous with formal schooling. I agree that if everything is Jewish education then nothing is, and therein lies the difficulty in the broader notion that I have in mind (and a broad concept is necessary), yet it is not fruitful to limit Jewish education to "school." Secondly, it must be insisted that Jewish education is not only for children. Thirdly, Jewish education is not only consciously planned; Jewish education relates to every aspect of life, and many institutions of every sort in the Jewish community are in effect doing Jewish education whether they know it or not. When a person participates in a Jewish organization in some manner, he is learning something. He is being Jewishly educated if only to some notion as to what the Jewish community is all about and what the participation in it of the individual means. When we come to a conference like this we, for example, as academic people and professionals in the field, may learn something about what a professional really does when he is called for consultation, perhaps other than what is intended by the institutions requesting his services. One of the main tasks of Jewish education in the broader sense is to become increasingly sensitive to what people actually learn from their participation in every aspect of the community and to relate to this purposefully to the extent possible.

The family has been the classic institution through which children were initiated into the life of the community. The family for the child is the community writ small. The school is another example. The school is often thought of as the preparation of the child for his later adult life in the community. But to the child the experience in the school, or in the youth group, or summer camp is his initiation into the real experience of the community. He derives from that experience his notion about what his participation in the community is all about. If that

---

\* Spontaneous comments in response to earlier sessions of the conference developing implications for Jewish education.

experience is an authoritarian one where everything is decided for him from above, if it is an experience where he is not allowed to take any initiative, where he never thinks for himself, if he is just a passive receptacle, then he has been taught a great deal. If it is a place where he is only manipulated and indoctrinated with someone else's values, he may never be given a chance to grow. This of course is the paradox of all education; to a certain extent it involves some measure of legitimate indoctrination at particular states. Hopefully, it will, at the same time, give students the opportunity and the resources to grow and gradually develop and become, to a large extent, autonomous as well as committed.

As has been pointed out, the family's problem is that it does not currently provide a model for the child of meaningful participation in the community. The nuclear family is itself often divorced from the community and has to bear the burden of doing everything for the child which was formerly done by the extended family or other institutions. We have to develop surrogate activities and new institutions that strengthen the family to do better what it has done in the past. Now one of the institutions that I think is necessary to accomplish this is some kind of educational institution which deals with the family qua family. When children go to school or camp they are with other children, and usually they are with children their own age. Even at that level we are very compartmentalized by age. But the whole notion that children and adults can do things together is something that educational thinkers and practitioners have not even begun to explore in the Jewish area. Outside the Jewish framework there is a lot of concern for this notion of participation of parents and adults in the educational enterprise. The child sees for example in most cases that the teacher teaches, but the child never sees the teacher learn anything and here, I think, if we went to our own tradition we might find some interesting models. I am not rejecting current ideas wholesale but much of the talk, for example, about "open education," is very faddish and the application to the Jewish field is likely to be a failure. An unexplored model of open education in a Jewish sense (with some qualifications) is the East European yeshiva where each student learned on his own and was also in contact with adults who were learning seriously for themselves. Such prototypes as this cannot and should not be adapted wholesale but they do reflect our concern for developing institutions which involve people of different ages and for drawing on our own authentic sources. This is a broader concept than strengthening the family itself but might take up some of the slack caused by the inability of the family to initiate the child into the community by recognizing the need for activities that meaningfully relate people of different ages as the family formerly did.

The move to suburbia exhibits an interesting phenomenon--the absence of old people. We talk of initiating the child into the community but if he does not see old people he lacks a model of

what it means to be old, what it means to live a worthy adult life in community. Speaking of the generation gap a few years ago at Teachers College, Margaret Mead commented that there used to be a feeling when youth looked at the older generation that although they might not like the way their elders deal with their problems they at least saw that their way was meaningful to them. From this young people learned that though they themselves might do it differently, it is possible to deal with middle age and old age. But now since they no longer see their elders dealing with their problems successfully, they get the feeling of depression that if the elders cannot do it, then maybe they can't either. This offers an important insight regarding the need for an institution that will cut across ages. In more practical terms it highlights the need for community programs that involve families as such. Now, each family makes Sabbath "far sich." Sabbath observance, for example, whether in urban or suburban settings often introduces an area of conflict with one's children because often nobody else is doing it. Even for people who go to the synagogue on Sabbath morning, Sabbath afternoon is empty. There is a need for an institution which will enable the family to make Sabbath together with other families in a total sense. It does not matter whether the synagogue does this job or not. It might be a good idea if the synagogue would enable small groups to meet under its auspices or if families were to get together and merely draw upon the rabbi as a resource for helping them to understand what they can do on their own. I think it would be an exciting move.

This is exactly what I think the young people on college level have begun to do. And here I have become much more open in recent years. I don't think there is necessarily one best way. I come from Boston and it has become in recent years a marvelous center for college student life. True, many people in college have no Jewish connection and don't care. However, there is a trend among college students today to affirm their Jewish identity very strongly, whether in terms of ethnicity or observance or study in Israel or even because of the example of the Blacks. It doesn't even really matter any more. I agree that ethnicity isn't sufficient, but I think it is a marvelous starting point. Whether this resurgence is ultimately important or just a fad, it is a promising development in our history and we dare not let it pass. Indeed, much more stress should be placed upon it, especially in view of the large number of Jewish kids apparently involved in such movements as the Jesus Freaks and the Hare Krishna movement. I would also suspect that the proportion of Jews is very high in the growing commune movement. I cannot agree that somehow it will all pass, leaving a residue of valuable learning. There is indeed a search for identity in these trends, much of which will pass and out of which good things may come. However, the problem is that should, for example, a young person who goes into Hare Krishna get married or take some important step during that experience, he would go off in an entirely different direction and be lost as a Jew. Reaching college students is a great challenge today.

In this respect I think we can learn something from the drug culture. Although I am totally against drugs and all of the horrors they bring, the drug culture has opened us to a new view of the possibilities of experience for young people. They are much more open to the symbolic and the emotional than we were in an earlier rationalistic time. I recently attended a week-end retreat organized by Rabbi Joseph Pollack of Boston University, Hillel. I was impressed; he has amazingly somehow touched this openness to religious experience in a Hillel setting and he has reached a tremendous number of kids without background in the experience of Shabbos, of learning, of fellowship. It was one of the profoundest experiences of the Jewish Shabbos that I have ever had in years of working in camps and with college kids. So I believe that these experiences, wherever they may spring from, and need to be developed, are very promising.

Several years ago there was a great controversy between the people in the Center movement and the people in the synagogue movements. At that time it seemed to be a fundamental faith point to affirm the centrality of the synagogue in American life. I am not really that sure any more. I think that now might be a great time to be a director of a Center. I think it would be a great time for starting with some Jewish core, whatever it might be and then moving beyond it. Forget institutional ideologies and dogmas. A Center could easily become the kind of institution that was originally intended when the concept of the synagogue was developed and as it grew in different ages. I'm beginning to think there may be more potential in this track than there is in the synagogue itself.

Of course, the Israel experience is a very powerful one for an American Jewish family as a whole and in terms of the impact it will have on the family through the experiences of individuals who go there. Not that identity problems do not exist in Israel. I spent last year in Israel. At that time our colleague, Walter Ackerman, an American Jewish educator, was asked by Israeli parents if he would start an afternoon Jewish school for their kids in Beersheba to strengthen their Jewish identity. This is utterly amazing; these afternoon schools which we often speak of as a failure seemed to be the model those Israeli parents were seeking for the strengthening of Jewish identity. Even so, for the American Jewish family the ready availability of the Israel experience is something that will have to be taken into account.

In summary, it seems clear that the family can be strengthened through new institutions which give it the encouragement and the opportunity to express itself as a family in the community. Families cannot do it alone anymore. Much of the tension in the family results from a situation in which too much is expected of it and the community isn't supportive enough.

One final note. Some regard the use of a camp situation as a utopian solution which isn't realistic because participants have to come back to their normal every day life and cope with it. However, it is possible that since normal every day life is so



dysfunctional, the utopian experience ought to become the norm, at least by giving a different kind of perspective on the possibilities. In this respect, I think that Jewish education has been too imitative of general educational approaches and that one of the chief needs in the field of Jewish education is to develop distinctively Jewish concepts and experiences, to provide a kind of alternative to what is generally available. This would be valuable both for families and for individuals.

The third speaker was Mrs. Martha Selig, whose presentation emphasized the supportive roles which social agencies should play in strengthening the Jewish family.

MRS. MARTHA SELIG

If I am a strong proponent of family, it is because I speak from the vantage point of the multiple roles of great-granddaughter, granddaughter, daughter, wife, mother and grandmother and I know both experientially and theoretically about the value and positive influence of the extended family. Indeed, I believe that the basic instrumentality for the development of a positive Jewish identity is the family. It behooves us to study Jewish family life in order to learn what forces influence it positively and what forces cause disruption and breakdown so that we can mobilize the total community resources to enhance the former and reduce the latter.

The previous speakers reviewed the demographic and sociological characteristics of the family today, pointing up the changes. But it is equally important to be clear as to our direction lest the norm become the standard.

My purpose in these few moments is to indicate how I believe the communal agencies can be helpful in fostering sound Jewish family life. I will say straightaway that the points I will make reflect my basic commitment to Judaism as a distinct way of life within a culturally pluralistic society. Any factors that threaten the preservation of this way of life have to be recognized and actively dealt with by whatever institutions and instrumentalities exist or need to be created. I do not believe that we can rely on the fact that Judaism, because it has existed so long, will always exist.

The previously mentioned conditions which threaten the very foundation of Jewish life cannot be ignored. However, I do not want to appear as a Cassandra despite the problems and deviant behavior to which reference has been made. I am afraid all these deviant patterns are not new. As a child I was absolutely aghast when I was in the synagogue and heard the recitation of the many sins one could commit! Apparently deviant behavior was really not unheard of in the Jewish community in the past. I am not at

all sure that divorce as we know it is always negative, even though it may show up as a negative statistic. Judaism permits divorce. An early poor marriage may be corrected with a divorce and a remarriage may be the base for sound Jewish family life. I am not at all sure that intermarriage, often referred to as a negative statistic, should be synonymous with alienation. Those of us who are interested in preserving the Jewish community certainly do not welcome intermarriage but if we are to avoid the increasing number of such marriages, the emphasis should be on strengthening the identity of the Jewish family. Too many intermarriages are in families where there was no identification.

On the other hand I do not sit here as a Pollyanna saying that because things are not that terribly bad they cannot grow worse. I believe they can -- unless they are in some way controlled. Figures are indications of that which exists now; they are clues, they are trends. But trends reflect past and present experience and do not necessarily predict the future. What we do about them depends upon our own philosophy. The rising intermarriage rate delights some because it confirms their concept of assimilation. For others intermarriage figures are distressing because it means diminishing the strength of the Jewish community.

One other general observation. I firmly believe that Jewish identity is created in and fostered by the family. All other institutional agencies and services are ancillary and support the expression of this identification in a wider social context. Identification itself is born and nourished in the family. The family, from the secular point of view, may differ radically in its form and function from the family that existed in prior centuries. We have to think of the family within the concepts of the total American scene today, we cannot live in the past. We cannot recreate the family life of the past by keeping the mothers in the home and giving the father the role of tutor. I am not even sure the past was always so ideal! I have serious question about the idea projected here today of the kibbutz in America unless the family were an integral part of it. I believe too many efforts are directed, unwittingly, to weaken the role of the family rather than making the family the center of all activities. Indeed, the fact that we have a new emerging family pattern does not necessarily mean a loss of Jewish family life or Jewish identity.

As to how our Jewish communal agencies can strengthen family life and Jewish identity, I suggest five points for consideration:

1. If we are to rely on our agencies, we must first be sure that we have adequately prepared leaders, both lay and professional. Any movement, any group needs leaders and I believe the weakness of Jewish life and Jewish identity in this country in the past years has been the dearth of leaders who are Jewishly concerned and Jewishly oriented. We must make a concerted effort to recruit people for Jewish communal

service and at the same time teach them in accordance with a sound doctrine. For the large group now engaged in Jewish communal service, we must provide adequate in-service training which will enable them to move toward the objective with which we are concerned today. It is not possible to be sensitive to specific Jewish components in the treatment process or in the development of a rich Jewish program in all agencies unless the top leadership both lay and professional, is aware of the value of such efforts and is dedicated to their purpose. Ten or fifteen years ago, while reading records of children being screened for admission into an institution, I was disheartened to find that although full psycho-social components for the children were included, there was no reference to whether the home was kosher, what the parents would expect of the child vis-a-vis Jewish education, what positive influences if any the family life had on the child as a member of the Jewish community. I am reminded of an experience of some 25 years ago. We were arranging for the adoptive placement of some children who had been in institutions for many years. I thought that I had found an absolutely ideal home for a rather dull child. I saw the prospective adoptive mother on a Wednesday. We agreed that she would come on the following Friday, since children were released only on Tuesdays and Fridays. On Thursday she called and hesitatingly tried to postpone the placement until the following Tuesday. In typical social work fashion, I interpreted this as ambivalence and doubt until I kept hearing her say "What difference does it make; I would rather come on Tuesday." Then I remembered my grandmother saying that "Tuesday is a lucky day." (You remember God looked at that day and said "it is good - but said it twice!") The understanding of this cultural belief -- superstition if you will -- was significant in dealing constructively with this family. Out of this and other experiences developed our Jewish Orientation and Training Program for workers.

I am pleased to say that although there are still some blind spots in this area, there have been many changes since the years to which I refer. All agencies are now far more sensitive to this significant component and recognize the importance of the religious ethnic and cultural component as part of sound therapy. Nevertheless, there is still much more to be done; there is a need for a more intensive indoctrination of the top leadership if our agencies are to play a constructive role in strengthening Jewish family life.

This is not easy to implement because of the several religious ideologies which determine the way Jewish life is to be lived. What is needed is an appreciation and validation of the varieties of the Jewish way of life.

2. In the past our social agencies have been concerned with pathology; indeed they still are. They have responded to individuals and

families in trouble -- and responded well. Most of our efforts are still geared in this direction, because of the limited sources and the tremendous demand for help in crisis situations. I am pleased to say that we can look at our agencies today and take greater pride than we did in the early 30's or even 40's but there is still a vast gap between the role I believe the agencies should play in the Jewish community and the role they do play. Greater effort should be expended in dealing with total family life and strengthening family life. We see the beginning in the move toward family interviewing rather than concern with the individual and his special program. Now we must add another component -- Jewish community. I should like to see the agencies move more actively in teaching the Jewish family how to live Jewishly as a preventive rather than a therapeutic measure. Jewish family life education is still an undiscovered field.

I miss desperately a kind of "Jewish Dr. Spock." It is unbelievable that hundreds of thousands of parents turn to Spock for guidance as to how to behave, what to expect and how they can contribute to the child's development. What guide do we have for Jewish family life to serve the needs of young people about to be married or just married and looking forward to a constructive life in the Jewish community? Perhaps we need a new Moses Maimonides to write a modern guide for the modern perplexed.

What I have said refers to all social agencies, the family service agencies, the community centers, the camps, the community relations agencies and their emphasis and concern and indeed the synagogue.

3. Our agencies have to take a look at their programs and directions to see whether they are really strengthening the family or fragmenting it, whether they are assisting the family and supplementing its resources or substituting for it. I am afraid all too frequently the programs of our agencies unwittingly tend to fragment families rather than strengthen them. Government funds are available to place a child away from home but resources to keep them in their own homes are limited. Government funds are available for the placement of an old person; little is available to help the family keep the old person at home. How many centers have "grandparents day" in which the grandchildren and grandparents mingle? How many centers use members of the Golden Age Clubs to assist in the nursery school programs, in the cooking class, in the woodwork shops? What a new image such programs would create for the young child who sees the contribution that older people can make and reaches out in a positive way to his or her grandparent! Understandably our agencies have followed a pattern created by government funding without full recognition of the implications for Jewish family life. This is not the time to elaborate on this important trend but it is surely the

time to take a hard look at how our programs can be modified and how our funds can be deployed to meet this objective.

4. We must come to recognize that no single communal institution has or can have full responsibility for strengthening Jewish family life and Jewish identity. We cannot rely on any single structure whether it be the social agency or the synagogue or the community relations organizations. Each has its role to play and here too the directions must be clear. Synagogues, while of course concentrating on prayer and religious activity, must play a greater role in family life education to bridge the gap between ancient traditions and modern ways of life. Some few are moving in this direction but I am afraid they are not always sensitive to the translation of these concepts into the home. Communal seders are fine; perhaps even a source of income. But should not the stress be to teach the family to have the seders in their own homes rather than in an auditorium of the synagogue? A group from one of the denominations that shall remain nameless talked with me a few weeks ago about setting up a residential center for drugs. When I expressed surprise that the synagogue should assume this function which truly belongs to a social agency despite the role that rabbis may play in the treatment process. I was told that they saw this as a dramatic way to involve and interest the membership of the synagogue. How sad! I suggested that perhaps the synagogue could play a preventive role in dealing with the drug problem by developing family activities within the synagogue and joint classes for parents and children as well as Jewish family life courses.

These were not considered sufficiently dramatic to be effective!

To derive maximal benefit from our communal agencies and institutions we must break down the jurisdictional barriers that have too long kept them apart and militated against effective inter-relationships. We must utilize the special skills and purposes of each of the institutions individually and as it relates to the others. The rabbi can surely play a far more active role in the family agencies and in the centers than he has in the past. Family agencies are moving closer to community centers but are still fearful of losing their identity. Community Centers are not welcome in the synagogue because they may compete for membership and may threaten the role of the rabbi. The rabbi, the social worker, the community relations worker, all must be integrally related and directed to strengthening Jewish life and identity.

5. Basic to the problem of a sound Jewish family life and strong Jewish identity is, of course, good Jewish education. One can identify only when one knows what it is one is identifying with. Therefore, I believe Jewish education is a sine qua non of any effort to strengthen Jewish family life, to preserve ethnic,

cultural and religious identity. Jewish education, restricted to the curriculum in the schools will not, in my judgment, do the job. Jewish education has to be brought into the home and must color all of our communal endeavors. Every institution, if you will, must become an educational institution. In a sense, this is what all these institutions were when they were created. The growing awareness of communal responsibility for Jewish education, as indicated in the rise of the Federations' role in this area augurs well for a real advance in Jewish education and a breakthrough in the problems that have been confronting us for generations.

In summary:

If our communal institutions are to play a significant role in strengthening Jewish family life and Jewish identity, they must seek and develop leaders, both lay and professional, who are committed to the preservation of Jewish life. Programs should be reoriented and enriched with emphasis on "The Jewish Component," and a recognition of the importance of an individual as part of a total community. Institutional barriers and unhealthy competition among the social agencies, community relations groups and synagogues have to be eliminated. More cooperative programs have to be developed to involve the extended family, to strengthen the family as a nuclear unit and to minimize those activities which fragment the family. All agencies and institutions must see themselves as supplementary to the family rather than as family substitutes. And, of course, the fundamental requirement is a broadening and deepening of Jewish education so as to provide an intellectual basis for proud and knowledgeable identification.

DISCUSSION

Dr. Sidorsky opened the discussion by indicating that comments in the afternoon's discussion should, according to the program, be directed toward recommendations for implementation of programs for strengthening the family. He called first on two speakers whose comments had been held over from the morning: Dr. Mortimer Ostow and Dr. John Slawson.

Dr. Ostow's remarks were based upon his experience as a psychiatrist in the Metropolitan area. First he pointed to those characteristics which he felt differentiated Jewish families from non-Jewish families.

1. Greater family cohesiveness,
2. greater likelihood that members of the family will tell others what they think of them, and a

3. penchant for worrying about the future of the Jewish community.

He also felt that, in talking about intermarriage, we must consider the quality of the act. In the 30's and 40's marrying out was usually a step up on the social or economic ladder. More recently there has been a tendency among Jewish youth to marry down either out of lack of self-respect or fear of failure within the peer group. Such individuals Dr. Ostow regarded as not worth pursuing. However, there are also cases in which intermarriage is in a sense "marrying across" on the same level and out of convenience. Such cases need not be a loss to the Jewish community.

We should take care in comparing yesterday to today not to idealize the past. People had personal and family problems in the shtetl too, but they tended to be silent and to live with them.

In the area of education, it is essential to remember that children are ready for different things at different ages. Study must be coordinated with child development by enriching learning at the right time and taking advantage of the child's maturation level. Jews have no real initiation ordeal for bringing a child into the adult community. Experience indicates that in our society youth creates such ordeals as sky-diving, racing and successful completion offers a sense of relief. The Jewish community cannot afford fragmentation and Jewish social service institutions cannot continue to pretend that the special problems of Jewish clients do not exist. They must treat them as special Jewish problems and recognize the advantages as well as the hazards. The Jewish community must take every opportunity to teach Yiddishkeit even if there is no immediate response. It will thus create a readiness to return to the community when the child gets older and the community chooses to reorganize.

Dr. Slawson emphasized youth's interest in identity today and the opportunity for the Jewish community to build on it. He stressed the need for efforts to reinforce the Jewish family, not to substitute for it. He felt that large religious edifices are not supportive and that the synagogue should offer small, intimate settings for study and worship. Jewish education is another reinforcement factor but the focal element is the parent. The most fruitful concept in this area is the reinforcement of the Jewish family through programs which will involve both parent and child. The Brandeis Camp offers a model of intergenerational weekend institutes with familial aspects. Communal agencies should direct their efforts to an action project which would introduce religio-cultural elements in non-pathological situations to determine what may happen in an "action" rather than a "research" situation.

Mrs. Lily Edelman stated that the B'nai B'rith Family Conference which had just ended indicated a desire for small learning groups.

Other suggestions were the desirability of meeting in homes and the development of tri-generational experiences through the use of grandparents as youth club advisers, family circle meetings, a Yiddish Ulpan and emphasizing the Sabbath experience as a family observance.

Dr. Janowsky felt that the current lack of success in the area of formal Jewish education made it especially important to devise ways of supporting the family which has in the past played a strong role in the transmission of values. The problems of formal Jewish education derive from time limitations, minimal achievement as a result of the limited number who go beyond the elementary level, teacher shortage, a curriculum which has changed little since World War I and a dearth of real dedication. Dr. Janowsky recommended more emphasis on contemporary Jewish life, the introduction of Jewish materials into the public school and expansion of Jewish studies in colleges. He also felt that Centers could correct the general neglect of the Jewish arts by recognizing the fact that they are sectarian agencies and cooperating programmatically with synagogues and Jewish schools.

Dr. Verbit pointed out that community agencies will move in directions set by leaders and that the basic need of the Jewish community is for knowledgeable adults. He therefore suggested establishing a "Lehrhaus" so as to produce an adult education institution that would build on individual motivations and would provide the leadership so necessary for the Jewish future. Dr. Cahnman agreed with the "Lehrhaus" concept and further urged the use of informed non-professional Jewish adults to teach in Sunday schools.

Dr. Zenner recommended the possibility of involving various age groups in Jewish cultural centers so as to make Jewish living experiences natural and easily adaptable.

The need to retain traditional Jewish values and ideas was mentioned by several participants. Rabbi Pollack urged: "Let us recapture what we lost." He recommended the revival of group study of texts and sources as a positive route to Jewish identification. He also decried the lack of models in this area for students to emulate. Rabbi Feldman stated the importance of examining Jewish perspectives on contemporary issues. He urged that the values inherent in Jewish family structures be extrapolated and analyzed so that they might be translated into today's terms. Jewish values are humanizing and should be introduced into courses in which they are relevant. For example, medical schools might introduce Jewish moral and ethical concepts into an Institute of Family and Life Sciences. Dr. Lukinsky also warned against abandoning old traditions and criticized the differentiation between formal and informal education. Not every learning experience can be so defined. He pointed out that family life does not exist in a vacuum and that values extend to



every aspect of life including sports. Indeed questions of morality in sports should be part of the curriculum. He also mentioned a Jewish Whole Earth Catalogue being planned at Brandeis which would offer new resources and guidance for Jewish living.

Mr. Windmueller was surprised that in our search for supportive family programs, no thought had been given to the possibility that the conventional family might no longer be the ideal unit of social organization.

Some consideration was also given to developing more materials on the Jewish family and to their utilization. Dr. Rosenthal felt that there were unlimited research opportunities in the files of the social service agencies. Proper analysis of such material, if seed money were provided, could give a valuable indication of trends in the Jewish family.

Dr. Berman recommended that on the state university campuses, many departments could make use of Jewish materials. He suggested providing syllabus materials for courses in family living in the psychology and sociology departments. To enrich the social science bibliography on the subject, articles on the Jewish family should be systematically solicited.

Rabbi Gordis summarized the feelings of the participants when he reiterated the need to involve parents in the educational programs of their children and urged the imposition of student standards which would include the obligation to continue after the Bar Mitzvah year. He also urged the utilization of the amateur in Jewish life and the awarding of a special degree to the educated layman. To stem the tide of rabbinic defection from the pulpit to higher education, he recommended that every rabbi should be permitted to teach and study as part of his rabbinic function. With a more and more highly educated laity, an intellectual rabbi is essential. Although we cannot de-professionalize Jewish life, we must encourage the amateur to participate in order to develop meaningful Jewish living.

Mr. Yehuda Rosenman thanked the participants and urged them to send along any additional suggestions for follow-up or research plans dealing with the Jewish family which might occur to them as an outcome of these deliberations.

PARTICIPANTS

Louis A. Berman  
Professor of Psychology  
University of Illinois

Zena Smith Blau  
Associate Professor of Sociology  
Northwestern University and  
Senior Research Scientist  
Institute for Juvenile Research  
Illinois Department of  
Mental Health

Werner J. Cahnman  
Professor Emeritus of Sociology  
Rutgers University and  
Member of Faculty  
New School for Social Research

Lily Edelman  
Director of B'nai B'rith  
Commission on Adult Jewish  
Education  
Washington, D. C.

Rabbi David M. Feldman  
Chairman, Committee on Marriage  
and Divorce of Synagogue  
Commission of Federations  
of Jewish Philanthropies and  
Rabbi, Bayridge Jewish Center,  
Brooklyn

Bertram Gold  
Executive Vice President  
The American Jewish Committee

Sidney Goldstein  
Professor of Sociology and  
Director, Population Studies  
and Training Center  
Brown University

Robert Gordis  
Professor of Religion,  
Temple University and  
Professor of Bible, Jewish  
Theological Seminary of America

Oscar Janowsky  
Professor Emeritus of History  
The City College, CUNY

Samuel Lerner  
Executive Director  
Jewish Family and Childrens  
Service and Resettlement Service  
Detroit

Seymour Leventman  
Professor of Sociology  
Boston College

Norman Linzer  
Assistant Professor of Social Work  
Wurzweiler School of Social Work  
Yeshiva University

Joseph Lukinsky  
Assistant Professor of Education  
Lown Center for Contemporary  
Jewish Studies  
Brandeis University

Dan Morris  
Director, Program Development  
and Resources, National Jewish  
Welfare Board, New York

Jacob Neusner  
Professor of Religious Studies  
Brown University

Mortimor Ostow, M.D.  
Professor of Pastoral Psychiatry  
Jewish Theological Seminary  
of America

Rabbi Herman Pollack  
Adviser, B'nai B'rith  
Hillel Society  
Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology

Dorothy Rabinowitz  
Writer and Social Critic  
New York City

Mervin F. Verbit  
Assistant Professor of Sociology  
Brooklyn College, CUNY

Rabbi Emanuel Rackman  
Professor of Judaic Studies  
City University, CUNY and  
Rabbi, Fifth Avenue Synagogue

Steven Windmueller  
Program Specialist, Jewish  
Communal Affairs Department  
The American Jewish Committee

Gladys Rosen  
Program Specialist  
Jewish Communal Affairs  
Department  
The American Jewish Committee

Ann Wolfe  
Social Welfare Consultant  
The American Jewish Committee

Yehuda Rosenman  
Director, Jewish Communal  
Affairs Department  
The American Jewish Committee

Walter P. Zenner  
Associate Professor of  
Anthropology  
State University of New York  
at Albany

Erich Rosenthal  
Professor of Sociology  
Queens College, CUNY

Martha K. Selig  
Executive Director for  
Community Services,  
Federations of Jewish  
Philanthropies of New York

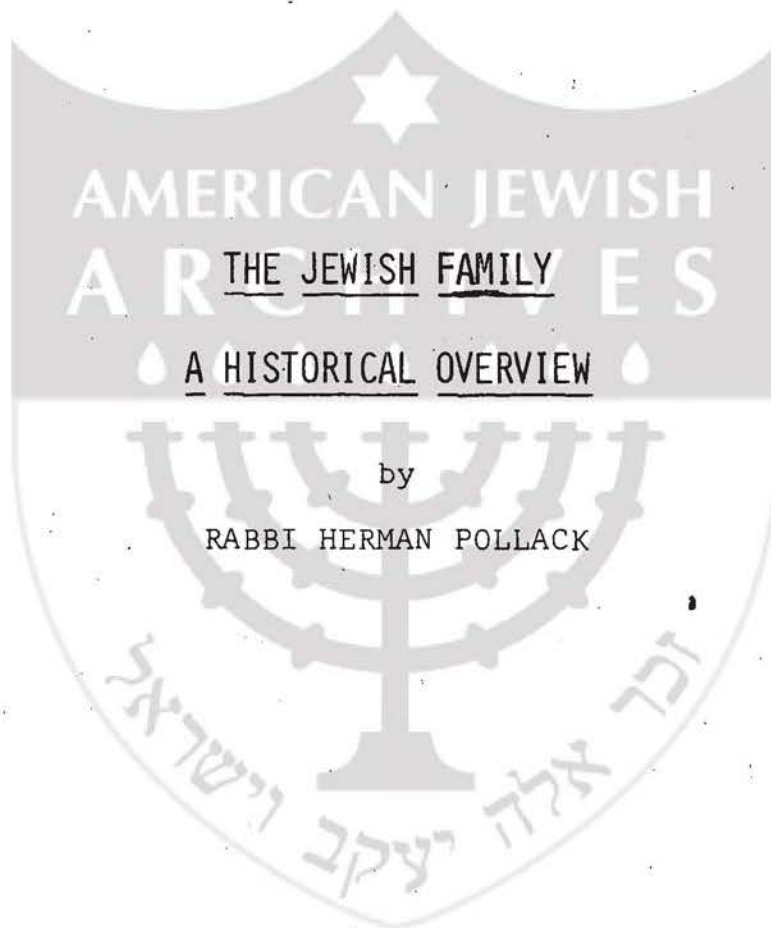
Sanford Sherman  
Associate Executive Director  
Jewish Family Service of New York  
Faculty, Family Institute of  
New York

David Sidorsky  
Professor of Philosophy  
Columbia University

Marshall Sklare  
Professor of American  
Jewish Studies  
Brandeis University

John Slawson  
Executive Vice President Emeritus  
The American Jewish Committee

72-750-123  
AJC/JCAD:ls  
August 1972



Prepared for

The American Jewish Committee

Consultation on the Jewish Family and Jewish Identity

APRIL 23-24, 1972

## The Historical Background of the Jewish Family

In tracing the historical development of the Jewish family, our concern is to present the more salient characteristics of the family in ancient and medieval times prior to the Emancipation period. In general historical study the family is considered the basic unit to examine the nature of society. As Fustel de Coulanges relates, "The family (gens) was at first the only form of society."<sup>1</sup> As families combined, the tribe emerged, and with the coalescence of various tribes, the city came into being. This view of the family as a smaller unit within a larger, more complex system provides the basis to search for the traits of a general society by examining the ways in which the family function. The inter-relationship of the family to the process of social evolution was also the concern of Lewis Morgan, who, in his Ancient Society, explored economic and political forms of development of society through the study of the family unit.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, we can discern several stages in the course of Jewish life; first, as in the Bible, there was the mishpachah, the family group; from the mishpachah came the shebet, the tribe; the coalescence of shebatim produced the medinah, the nation. With the fall of the ancient Jewish nation, the kehillah, the community, became the central form of organization to which the family related itself.

### I. The Jewish Family in the Biblical Period

The mishpachah in Biblical times was "a clan," namely, an enlarged kinship group that included parents, offspring, relatives, and also individuals who

---

1. Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome (Doubleday Anchor Book), p. 112, sec. 4. See also pp. 116-17.

2. Lewis Morgan, Ancient Society (Kerr: Chicago, [n.d., ca. 1877]), Pt. 3, chaps. 1, 5, 6.

were adopted and became part of the family unit. That the family had the characteristics of a clan as the basic social unit to which the individual related himself is evidenced by the Biblical statement, "But you shall go to my father's house, and to my kindred. . . ." <sup>3</sup> The word for "my kindred" is mishpachti, which in the more literal sense means "my family." For another instance of the mishpachah, family or household, being equated with the clan in the Bible, is that of Abimelech going to Shechem "to his mother's brethren," and "he spoke with . . . all the family of the house of his mother's father. . . ." <sup>4</sup> The "house of his mother's father" is also translated as "the clan of his mother's father." <sup>5</sup>

The interrelationship of the mishpachah to the shebet, the tribe, is pointed out in the statement of Saul to Samuel when they first met: "And Saul answered and said: "Am not I a Benjaminite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?" <sup>6</sup> Thus, the mishpachah comprised a unit or subdivision of the tribe as we have already intimated.

---

3. Gen. XXIV, 38.

4. Judges XXI, 24: "... bet 'abi immo . . . ."

5. F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Houghton Mifflin: Boston-New York, 1907), p. 1046, under mishpachah.

6. I Sam. X, 21.

The mishpachah in the main was patriarchal in character, namely,<sup>7</sup> "the woman left her own family to enter the house of her husband." In the marriage relationship the husband exercised complete authority since he was regarded as the ba'al, "the owner," "the sovereign" who had acquired property.<sup>8</sup> Hence the Bible speaks of the mohar, or the price, that the man would pay when he marries a woman.<sup>9</sup> We shall note, however, as we follow the course of development of the Jewish family, how the original authoritarian position of the husband was restrained or limited by law or ethical teachings.

From the outset the purpose of marriage was twofold, that is, to bring children into the world and derive companionship from one's mate.<sup>10</sup> In an agricultural society, where the labor supply was scarce, children would be regarded as "a blessing."<sup>11</sup> The concubine (pilegsh) was an integral part of the family structure from the time of Abraham so as to assure the birth of large numbers of children.<sup>12</sup> When women did not bear children, as in the

7. Isaac Mendelsohn, "The Family in the Ancient Near East," Biblical Archaeologist, XI (No. 2, May 1948), 25.

8. For the definition of ba'al, see Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Lexicon, p. 127. Cf. ba'al marriage in Louis Epstein, Marriage Laws in the Bible and the Talmud (Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 7. See also I. Mendelsohn in op.cit., p. 40; Menachem Brayer, "The Role of Jewish Law Pertaining to the Jewish Family," in Judaism and Divorce, ed., Jacob Freid (Ktav Publishing: New York, 1968), p. 5.

9. Instances of the mohar are in Gen. XXXIV, 12; Ex. XXII, 15-16; I Sam. XVIII, 25; cf. I. Mendelsohn in Biblical Archaeologist, XI, 27, cits.

10. Gen. I, 22, "Be fruitful, and multiply," became "a positive commandment" as enunciated in Jewish tradition. See Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, "Hil. 'Ishut," XV, 1; "Ba'er He'eb," to 'Eben ha-'Ezer, "Hil. Piryah ve-Ribyah," I, 1. Gen. II, 18, "a help meet for him." See comment of Rashi, ad locum.

11. I. Mendelsohn in Biblical Archaeologist, XI, 38.

12. L. M. Epstein, Marriage Laws, p. 35. Cf. relation of pilegsh to pellex (Lat.): Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Lexicon, p. 811; also, Epstein, p. 68; Salo W. Baron, Social and Religious History of the Jews (2d edit.), II, 224.

case of Rachel and Leah, they offered their maid servants, Bilah and Zilpah, as wives to Jacob so as to be assured that he would beget sons. The offspring of Bilah, Dan and Naphtali, and of Zilpah, Gad and Asher, were welcomed as sons of Jacob and were therefore listed in the family genealogy along with the sons of Leah and Rachel.<sup>13</sup>

Thus concubinage is not to be equated with promiscuity if we bear in mind the tender relationships that could have existed between the husband and his favored wife.<sup>14</sup> In a family which had one wife and a concubine, or plural wives and concubines, the husband may have shown special affection for a wife, as in the instances of Abraham and Sarah or Jacob and Rachel. Within the cultural framework of the ancient world, where large families were encouraged and expected, the concubine was not considered a prostitute but as part of the family as we have suggested. Upon the encouragement and full approval of the wife, the concubine bore her husband's children. In such a setting, we may discern the anguish of Rachel when she bore Jacob no children and "envied her sister," and exclaimed to Jacob, "Give me children, if not I am a dead woman."<sup>15</sup> A comment on her statement says, "From this,

---

13. Gen. XXX, 1-13; XXXV, 25-26.

14. Cf. L. Epstein, Marriage Laws, pp. 51-52, for his "evidence . . . that there is no adultery in the case of a concubine." Reuben and Absalom, as Epstein points out, "cohabited with their fathers concubines without a death penalty." See these instances in Gen. XXV, 22; II Sam. XVI, 22.

15. Gen. XXX, 1.



one may conclude that whoever is childless is considered as dead,<sup>16</sup> not only in one's own eyes but in the community or society as a whole. Whereupon, when Jacob refused to assume responsibility for Rachel's childlessness, she offered to him her maid servant Bilah, so that as Rachel said, "I may also have children by her."<sup>17</sup> The concubine thus enjoyed the status of being a member of the family because it was through her that the "blessing of many children" became possible.<sup>18</sup>

The emphasis placed on perpetuating each potential family is borne out by the practice of the Levirate marriage (yibbum). If a husband passed away, and had no children the brother was obligated to marry his sister-in-law, the widow, so as to assure the perpetuity of his brother's name, that it "not be blotted out (yimshch) in Israel."<sup>19</sup> It is not our intent at this juncture to deal with the shaligah ceremony, whereby the brother is relieved of the responsibility of marrying his childless sister-in-law, but turn our attention to some of the trends in Biblical times that adumbrated developments of the Jewish family during Talmudic and later times.

16. Rashi on ibid.

17. Gen. XXX, 3.

18. As to the role and position of the concubine, see in addition Schulim Ochser, "Pilegash," Jewish Encyclopedia, X (1905), 35; "Pilegash," Ozar Yisrael, ed. J. D. Eisenstein, VIII (1912), 229-30.

19. Deut. XXV, 5-6.

Maimonides, wishing to show a distinction in family life before and after the period of the Torah, refers to the fundamental change in the relationship of a man and woman: "Before the Torah was given if a man met a woman in the market-place [i.e., on the street], if he desired her and she him, he would pay her, cohabit with her, and she would go on her way. She was called a kedeshah, a prostitute."<sup>20</sup> We cite this statement of Maimonides not to make the claim that in the ancient world, such as in Babylonia, Assyria, and Nuzi, prior to the time of the Bible, there were no legal systems to regularize family life, but rather to consider the significance of Biblical law in making the relations between a man and a woman stable rather than casual, and in establishing restraints and controls whereby a man would not abuse a woman.

The Biblical law states that if a man seduces a young woman, who is not betrothed, he pays to her father fifty shekels as a dowry, and then she becomes his wife.<sup>21</sup> In other words, as Professor Jacob Z. Lauterbach once stated: In the Jewish tradition what can be made legal is not regarded as illegal. On the other hand, if the man had sexual relations with a betrothed young woman by coercing her, he is to be regarded as an adulterer.<sup>22</sup> And if the woman consented, and offered no resistance, then she, too, is dealt with as having committed adultery.<sup>23</sup> Both the man and the woman are thereby held

---

20. Mishneh Torah, "Hil. 'Ishut," I, 4. Cf. Deut. XXIII, 18.

21. Deut. XXII, 29; cf. Ex. XXII, 15.

22. Deut. XXII, 18.

23. Deut. XXII, 24. See also Levit. XX, 11.

accountable for their actions.

If a man after marrying, brings false accusations against his wife because of his contempt for her, and it is found that his claim had no basis whatever, "the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him."<sup>24</sup> Not to anticipate a later course of history, we wish to point out that according to the Talmud, the man was not to receive a mere verbal reprimand, but was to be "flogged."<sup>25</sup>

These examples are selected in order to illustrate that in the Biblical period the individual could not justify his conduct on the grounds of self-satisfaction or fulfilling personal needs. Whenever his behavior would be detrimental to any individual or to society as a whole, he was held accountable for the consequences that resulted from his act.

As early as Biblical times, the family had its obligations toward educating and training the child. Not only was the family responsible to bring the child into the world but also to rear and prepare him for participation in the adult community. In the Talmudic and medieval periods, as we shall later note, the family had a crucial role in the child's development.

---

24. Deut. XXII, 13-18.

25. Ketubot 46a: ". . . the husband is flogged. . . ." Cf. comment of Rashi on ". . . they shall chastise him" in Deut. XXII, 18. See "public flogging" to "penalize transgressors" of marriage laws: Baron, Soc. and Relig. Hist. (2d edit.), II, 218.

Parents are instructed in the Bible to be attentive to their children when, out of curiosity, they ask, "What does the Passover service mean to you?"<sup>26</sup> Thus the parents are called upon to share with their young what they know of the past, and thereby identify them with significant moments in history. The parent as teacher of the child in the home became a model that was to guide and influence subsequent generations. Confidence in the effectiveness of the parent as a teacher was voiced in the body of Wisdom Literature: "Train a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old, he will not depart from it."<sup>28</sup> As yet the school was not established as an institution in the ancient Jewish community, so the family had the dual function of nurturing and educating their children.<sup>29</sup>

## II Family Life in Talmudic Times

We did not undertake to show the effect that the transition from nomadic to agricultural life in ancient Canaan might have had on the family. These changes were accepted or implied by viewing the family as an institution that had already gone through the shifts or changes from a nomadic to

---

26. Ex. XII, 26-27; XIII, 8, 14-15. Cf. Carl F. Keil, Handbuch der biblischen Archäologie (Frankfurt a. M.: Heyder-Zimmer), p. 548, cits.; Wilhelm Nowack, Lehrbuch der hebräischen Archäologie (Mohr: Freiburg i. B.-Leipzig, 1894) I, 172, cits.; Abraham Cronbach, "Family Life Ideals," in idem, Religion and Its Social Setting, p. 176, n. 132, cits.

27. Gen. XVIII, 19; Deut. IV, 9-10; VI, 7; XI, 19; XXXII, 46. See my Jewish Folkways in Germanic Lands (M.I.T. Press, 1971), pp. 52-54. I acknowledge with appreciation the permission granted to me by the M.I.T. Press to cite and reprint portions from my book: Copyright © 1971 by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

28. Prov. XXII, 6. Cf. Prov. XXIII, 13; XXIX, 17. See J. Benzinger, Hebräische Archäologie (Mohr: Freiburg i. B.-Leipzig, 1894), I, 158, cits.

29. Wilhelm Nowack, Hebräische Archäologie, I, 172; Benzinger, op.cit.

a settled society. We are endeavoring to concentrate more on the historical function of the family rather than on its origin; however, from the very outset, due recognition has been given to the evolutionary process that the family had undergone.

We shall now consider four areas pertaining to the Talmudic period so as to explore further the course of development of the Jewish family, having in mind its goal as an institution and the role of its individual members. The areas are: (1) views about marriage, (2) monogamous tendencies, (3) attitudes toward the woman, and (4) the parent and the child.

The views about marriage on the part of the ancient rabbis were influenced by their attitudes toward sex. They regarded sex as a fact of life, not to be ignored or repressed, but to be channeled, so that the biological nature of man may be the raw material with which to serve socially constructive ends. Their rationale for the useful ways in which the yeger ha-ra' has been and can be put to use was described by means of a question and an answer: "Can then the evil inclination be very good? That would be extraordinary. But were it not for the evil inclination, man would not build a house, nor take a wife, nor beget a child, nor engage in business." The

---

30. See above, p. 1. For some of the evolutionary changes in the history of the family, see B. Stade, Geschichte des Volkes Israel, I, 390-91. That a matriarchal family preceded the patriarchal, cf. Louis M. Epstein, Marriage Laws, p. 222, n. 3; Julian Morgenstern, "Beena Marriage in Ancient Israel and its Historical Implications," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, VI (1929), 91-110. Cf. L. H. Morgan, Ancient Society, Pt. 2, chap. 14, "Change of Descent from the Female to the Male Line."

31. Genesis Rabbah, IX, 9. Trans. based on Soncino edit. of the Midrash: Genesis, I, 68. Cf. S. W. Baron, Soc. and Relig. Hist. (rev. edit.), II, 217, cit. Cited as Genesis Rabbah, IX, 7, in C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, Rabbinic Anthology (Macmillan: London, 1938), p. 305, no. 788.

suggestion has been made that the rabbis in their appeal to "exercise self-control" were aided by "social factors, such as the increasing concentration of the Jewish masses within the lower middle class."<sup>32</sup> There is evidence that the upper classes did permit themselves greater laxity in their personal conduct.<sup>33</sup>

Marriage would therefore be the means of enabling an individual to satisfy his personal needs, on the one hand, and strengthen the community, on the other. The social goals of marriage in Talmudic times, expanded from the Bible, would therefore discourage asceticism and would make it incumbent on each person to marry at an early age and rear a family.<sup>34</sup> The favored age for marriage was eighteen,<sup>35</sup> but if he does not marry by twenty, he will be committing one transgression after another or else he will become preoccupied with lewd thoughts.<sup>36</sup> When an individual is not married before he is twenty, "God sits and waits [wondering] as to when he will marry." Should he not be married by twenty, "God says [declares], "Let

32. Baron, op.cit.

33. See H. Pollack, Jewish Folkways, p. 86; p. 257 n. 11; pp. 80-81; pp. 254-55, n. 191. The examples are of the late Middle Ages.

34. See George Foot Moore, Judaism: In the First Centuries of the Christian Era (Harvard University Press, 1966, 10th edit.), II: The Age of the Tannaim, 119.

35. Pirke 'Abot, V, 24.

36. Kiddushin 29b.

his bones swell up.' "<sup>37</sup>

While the practice (halakhah) indicates that one "should first marry and then study," a contrary opinion was expressed by Rabbi Yochanan. Marriage, he said, would be an encumbrance, like "a millstone around the neck," and under such circumstances, the person should first study and then marry, so that he will not be hampered by the economic responsibilities of maintaining a household. However, the explanation was given that these two views are not in conflict, since they refer to two different circumstances. In one case, the sages are speaking "of ourselves" (lan), and in the instance of Rabbi Yochanan, he was referring "to them" (lehu). Rashi states that "of ourselves" had bearing on the Babylonian students or scholars, and "of them" were the inhabitants of Palestine (bene Yisra'el). Before the Babylonian students went to study in Palestine, the center of Mishnaic study during the time of Tanna'im, they would first marry to relieve themselves of their sexual desires (lit., hirhurim, "thoughts"), and they would then proceed to devote themselves to their studies. They were unencumbered by economic responsibilities of supporting a household. On the other hand, when the Palestinian student married, he would be inclined to remain at home to pursue his studies. Unlike the Babylonian student, "He had the obligation of providing for his household and would therefore have to neglect his studies."<sup>38</sup> Hence Rabbi Yochanan was thinking of the Palestinian

---

37. Kiddushin 29b. Cf. Moore, Judaism, II, 110, n. 5, cit. Soncino trans. of the Talmud suggests as the translation, "Blasted be his bones," and the variant reading: tepach nafsho, "May he be blasted"; Kiddushin (Seder Nashim, IV), p. 142; n. 3.

38. Rashi on lehu: Kiddushin 29b. Cf. n. 1 in Soncino Talmud, Kiddushin (Seder Nashim, IV), p. 142.

student when he spoke of the married person having "a millstone around his neck."

The Tosafot, the successors of Rashi, were not satisfied with Rashi's explanation regarding the Babylonian students who would leave for Palestine to study after they married. In the opinion of the Tosafot commentators, the Babylonians were neglecting their families, which could not be condoned even though it was for the sake of study. The Tosafot argued: How could the Babylonian students go to another country to study after they were married? Was it not "incumbent on each one to return home and provide for his wife and children?"<sup>39</sup> Neither Rashi's nor the Tosafot's comments, however, provide us with an explanation of the circumstances that must have influenced attitudes toward family life in Babylonia and Palestine in the time of the Tanna'im.<sup>40</sup>

The historical study of Babylonia and Palestine, during the Mishnaic period after the Bar Kocheba revolt, shows a contrast of conditions in both countries that must have had an effect on the then current views about marriage. In Babylonia economic circumstances were more favorable and therefore marriage at an earlier age was possible, while in Palestine, which was suffering from taxes and inflation, marriage had to be postponed to a

---

39. Comment of Tosafot on Kiddushin 39b, ha' lan ve-ha' lehu. The Tosafot substantiate their position by referring to Gittin 6b, in which Joel IV, 3 is cited: "And have given a boy for a harlot, And sold a girl for wine, and have drunk." The passage of Joel was to indicate the neglect of families by the Babylonian students who went to Palestine.

40. For example, see Baron, Soc. and Relig. Hist. (2d edit.), II, 409, n.6: "Rashi's explanation that rabbis studying in Palestine were less hindered by their marital status was palpably forced."



later age. Hence, when Rabbi Yochanan spoke of the economic handicaps that would result from marriage, he must have been reacting to the conditions that he observed in Palestine where he lived.<sup>41</sup>

It was also pointed out that because of urbanization, in Palestine more-so, the dowry (neduniah) replaced the mohar of Biblical times. The father now had to provide the dowry whereas previously he was the recipient of the mohar. The dowry served the twofold purpose of encouraging the young man to marry though economic conditions did not seem to warrant marriage, and to assure the woman a sum of money in the event there should be a divorce or she became a widow. If the parent was impoverished, and could not afford the dowry, it then became the responsibility of the community to provide funds for this purpose.<sup>42</sup> Thus began the communal practice of providing dowries to brides who were in need, and it continued through the Middle Ages.

The general rabbinic view that marriage is essential for the individual in order to complete or fulfill his life was thus expressed: "He who has no wife lives without good, without help, without blessing . . . ; . . . he is also without life; . . . he is also not a complete man . . . , and some say that he also [thereby] diminishes the divine image."<sup>43</sup> The parent, who/regarded therefore

---

41. Baron, op.cit., II, 22. See also ibid., 409, n. 5.

42. Ibid., 220-21.

43. Genesis Rabbah, XVII, 2. Cf. Montefiore-Loew, Rabbinic Anthology, p. 506, no. 1430, cit.

marriage as a necessity and duty, would arrange for his children to secure  
<sup>44</sup> mates. The father was responsible for the marriage of his daughter while  
 she is a na'arah, "a girl between twelve and twelve and a half years of age."<sup>45</sup>  
 When a daughter reached her majority, and became twelve and a half years,  
 she was called a bogeret.<sup>46</sup> As a bogeret she "became of age" and was free to  
 choose her own mate.

As soon as the girl was married, although a minor, she gained her own  
 autonomy or authority by means of the ketubah, which was hers and not her  
 fathers.<sup>47</sup> The ketubah, "the marriage contract," as we have already sug-  
<sup>48</sup> gested, served to protect the wife by stipulating "the settlement of a  
 certain amount due her on her husband's death or on being divorced."<sup>49</sup>  
 Through the ketubah the possibilities of the man divorcing his wife were

44. See Moore, Judaism, II, 121.

45. Jastrow, Talmudic Dictionary, II, 922: na'arah. See Ketubot, III, 1, 8; cf. n. 3 in Kethuboth (Seder Nashim, III), ed. Blackman, p. 136, n. 1.

46. For bogeret, see Ketubot, III, 8; Kiddushin 51b. See Rashi on bogeret de-'elma, "bogeret in general" in Kiddushin 51b: "Any father who has a daughter who has become a bogeret, that is, she has attained her majority, is not obliged to accept a marriage that her father has arranged for her." Cf. Soncino Talmud, Kiddushin (Seder Nashim, IV), 259, n. 5: That "a father has no marriage rights over his adult daughters."

47. See, for example, Ketubot 43b. Cf. n. 56 to Mishneh Torah, "Hil. 'Ishut," III, 11 (Mosad Harav Kook edit.).

48. See p. 13.

49. Based on ketubah in Jastrow, Tal. Dict., I, 680. See Ketubot, I, 7, the ketubah provided 200 guz to a virgin and 100 guz to a widow.

restricted; in the event of a divorce the husband would be economically penalized because he would have to relinquish the dowry which was made part of a contractual agreement, written into the ketubah at the time of marriage.<sup>50</sup> In fact, by the decree of Simeon ben Shetach (ca. 70 B.C.E.), a leading teacher of the Pharisees, the mortgaged property of the husband was included in the ketubah, so that by enhancing its value the ketubah<sup>51</sup> would be taken more seriously by the husband.

These examples are cited to show that arbitrariness or authoritarianism, exercised either by the father or the husband to the detriment of the woman, was restrained or controlled by religio-legal procedures and religio-ethical teachings. The ~~woman~~<sup>husband</sup> for instance, was instructed "never to terrorize (lit., cast great fear on) his household." At the same time he was reminded of "the concubine of Gibeon" who "was terrorized by her husband," and as a result, "she was the cause of many thousands being slaughtered (lit., she caused to fall) in Israel."<sup>52</sup> The egalitarian principle as to the worth and dignity of the individual, that "the small and the great are equal before the Holy One, blessed be He,"<sup>53</sup> was unquestionably applied to the woman by Talmudic teachers. Our approach is not an apologetic

50. For the ketubah as "a deterrent to divorce," see Epstein, Marriage Laws, p. 120. See also Krayer in Jews and Divorce, ed., Jacob Freid, p. 20.

51. Ketubot 82b. Cf. n. 67 in Mishneh Torah, "Hil. 'Ishut," XVI, 10 (Mosad Harab Kook edit.).

52. Gittin 6b. Trans. based on Soncino Talmud, Gittin (Seder Nashim, IV), 21.

53. Exodus Rabbah, XVII, 2.

one in that we have recognized from the outset that the Jewish woman was not regarded as the equal to man, and it is therefore our concern to show what were some of the decisive steps taken to protect her from abuse; it is likewise of interest to us to consider the ways in which she participated in the daily life of the Jewish community; for in the course of history, ". . . the law was directed toward greater equality between man and woman."<sup>54</sup>

Monogamy was prevailing in family life during the Talmudic period. Our opinion is drawn from the evidence found among the intellectual class who were not inclined to engage in polygamous relationships.<sup>55</sup> Several factors could have contributed to the monogamous tendencies: the affectionate esteem with which the husband held his wife;<sup>56</sup> economic difficulties prevailed in supporting more than one wife;<sup>57</sup> and the ketubah, marriage contract,<sup>58</sup> not only discouraged divorce but polygamy as well. This monogamous trend anticipated the Takkanah of Rabbenn Gershom of Mainz (d. 1040) in outlawing polygamy, or plural marriages, in Central Europe.<sup>59</sup> Two terms, in particular,

---

54. Brayer in Jews and Divorce, ed., Jacob Freid, p. 20.

55. Moore, Judaism, II, 122, n. 3.

56. See above, p. 4. Cf. Louis Finkelstein, Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages (Jewish Theological Seminary, 1924), p. 23: "Plural marriages had not been common in Israel for centuries." Also, Cronbach, "Family Life Ideals," in idem, Religion and Its Social Setting, pp. 158-59.

57. Baron, Soc. and Relig. Hist. (2d edit.), II, 223: "Most Jews, belonging to the proletarian or lower middle class, could not afford the luxury of maintaining more than one wife."

58. Moore, op. cit.

59. Finkelstein, Jewish Self-Government, pp. 23-25; pp. 138-47 for texts and trans.

should help convey how the Jewish family was regarded during Talmudic times: first, 'ichud,<sup>60</sup> man and woman through their marriage can achieve an at-oneness; second, kiddushin, the man and woman sanctify their relationship through their own conduct without the aid of an intermediary. Marriage had the status of a spiritual contract, which, if necessary, could be dissolved but would be consistently discouraged.

During the days of the Second Temple, around the year 63, Joshua ben Gamala established a compulsory system of education so that there should be no illiteracy anywhere.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, the family was still responsible for the education of the child, even as it was before the schools were established in Talmudic times.<sup>62</sup> That the parents and the school jointly shared concerns for the young was, as we shall point out, one of the distinguishing features of Jewish life in the Middle Ages.

We shall now present in summary some of the characteristics of the medieval Jewish family. Our source material is selected from the accounts and statements of individuals, as in the diary, the ethical guide (musar-book) and responsa, and also from communal records, pinkasia and taqqanot. These sources portray what occurred to individuals or in the community.

---

60. See n. 5 in Mishneh Torah, "Hil. 'Ishut," I,2 (Mosad Harav Kook edit.). For the "affinity between husband and wife," see Epstein, Marriage Laws, p. 107.

61. Baba Batra 21a.

62. See cits. in Pollack, Jewish Folkways, p. 235, n. 3. Cf. Kiddushin 29a: "The father is responsible to his son to circumcise him, redeem him [if he is a first born], to teach him Torah, to take a wife for him, and teach him a craft. Some say, also to teach him to swim. . . . He who does not teach his son a craft trains him for robbery (lisfus)." Trans. based on Soncino Talmud, Kiddushin (Seder Nashim, IV), 137, also n. 9. Cf. also Kiddushin 29b, with regard to the parent teaching a child.

### III. The Family in the Middle Ages

Jewish family life of the Middle Ages was an extension of Biblical and Talmudic law and teachings, with its pattern remaining basically the same from around the eleventh through the eighteenth centuries, prior to the era of Jewish Emancipation. Except for minor localized or regional minhagin (customs), the mode of Jewish family life during this time, more specifically in Central and Eastern Europe, was in the main the same, since a common religious and cultural pattern was shared. Each Jewish family of the Middle Ages was part of a self-governing, autonomous community that maintained its own institutions, entailing various facets of religious, legal, educational, cultural, and social life. Every phase of the individual's life "from his birth to his death was connected with some religious act," and participating with him in the various observances were "his family, his circle of friends, as well as the entire community."<sup>63</sup> Hence the examples of the Jewish family that we are using, selected from the period toward the end of the Middle Ages, may help us discern what constituted the fabric of Jewish family life before the modern era began.

We are told of parents planning matches for their children; neither the bride nor the groom had a voice in deciding upon their marriage. An agreement would be made, specifying that if either party violated the betrothal contract, a fine (kenas) would be paid. The imposition of a fine no doubt helped make the betrothal a stable rather than a casual relationship. A kenas-meal, in the home of the groom, was then held to celebrate the agreement and to reaffirm that both parties would abide by the betrothal contract.<sup>64</sup>

---

63. Moritz Güdemann, Geschichte des Erziehungswesens . . . während des Mittelalters . . . (Holder: Vienna, 1882), III, 103.

64. David Kaufmann (ed.), Zikhronos . . . Glikl Hamil [fun Hamil] . . . (Frankfort, 1896), p.182. (Memoirs, 1647-1719.)

Law - - even through the threat of excommunication (the cherem) - - and custom were not so binding that individuals did not attempt to cancel engagement contracts. Human situations might arise that could precipitate the dissolution of betrothal agreements. Thus it was that a young man sought to break his engagement without incurring a fine because he found out that the woman was not a virgin.<sup>65</sup> After having a disagreement, one engaged couple asked for the termination of their betrothal.<sup>66</sup> On other occasions, the man wanted to break the engagement when he discovered that the woman had a long nose, a protruding lower lip, or other physical defects.<sup>67</sup> These incidents did not imply instability in marriage or family life, but indicate some of the kind of incidents that could arise independent of traditional practice and communal structure.

Marriages were also arranged by the shadkhan, the matchmaker or marriage-broker, regarded as a professional with his own specialized skills. The place of the shadkhan in the life of the community can be inferred from the kind of local legislation that was enacted specifying the remuneration that he should receive. The matchmaker would receive a fee for his special services,<sup>68</sup> as did the rabbi or cantor of the community.

---

65. Ya'ir Chayyim Bachrach (d. 1702, Worms), Chavvot Ya'ir (Responsa: Frankfort, 1699), no. 211, fol. 210b.

66. Jacob Reischer (d. 1733, Prague), Shebut Ya'akov (Responsa: Lemberg, 1897), I, no. 105, fol. 27a.

67. Chavvot Ya'ir, no. 220, fol. 207a; Shebut Ya'akov, I, no. 104, fol. 27a.

68. Israel Halpern, Takkanot Medinat Mähren: Communal Legislation of Moravia, 1650-1748 (Merkhas: Jerusalem, 1952), p. 56, #173; Gerson Wolf, ed., Statuten . . . in Mähren (Holder: Vienna, 1880), Pref., vi.

Communal legislation specified that needy young women should be given<sup>69</sup> assistance to obtain a marriage dowry by scheduling public collections.

Rendering financial aid to a prospective bride was thus placed in the same category as "the commandment of redeeming captives" which receives precedence over all forms of benevolence.<sup>70</sup> Communities also adopted a legislative regulation to enable an indigent father to secure a dowry for his daughter. If his relatives should refuse to assist him after he appealed to them, then two of the wealthiest were to be summoned to a meeting with the rabbi and parnasim, local communal leaders, whose majority decision will determine how much help is to be forthcoming from the relatives. Ordinarily, the rabbi was instrumental in calling the meeting, but in those areas where there was no rabbi the meeting would be arranged by the leading communal figure and attended by two local leaders and two relatives of the poverty-stricken parent.<sup>71</sup> The judgment of the group was considered as binding as a rabbinical decision.

A celebration preceded the wedding; no individual could arbitrarily set a date for the festivity, but he was expected to abide by the time-schedule assigned to him. Yuspa Shammash (Shammash) tells how the entire Jewish community of Worms would be called by the sexton to participate in the celebration.<sup>72</sup>

69. Max Grunwald, "Statuten der 'Hamburg-Altonaer Gemeinde' (1726)," XI (1903), 31. Cf. in MS Minhagin de-K.K. Worms (Customs of the community of Worms, by Yuspa Shammash (d. 1678): Microfilm MS OPP. 751, Oxford, Bodleian, fol. 6 (one side), the practice of aiding the bride to obtain a dowry:

. 755 א"י 171 א"י 705

(Courtesy, Department of Oriental Books, Bodleian Library, Oxford.)

70. Salo W. Baron, Jewish Community (Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia, 1945), II, 333-34. Cf. Yoreh De'ah 252:1; Mishneh Torah, "Hil. Matnot 'Aniyim," VIII, 10; Cronbach, "Jewish Philanthropic Institutions in the Middle Ages," in idem, Religion and Its Social Setting, pp. 138-39, n. 66.

71. Adolf Eekstein, Geschichte der Juden . . . Bamberg (Handels: Hamburg, 1898), p. 70, #10.

72. MS Minhagin de-K.K. Worms, fol. 58a.



The merriment at a wedding, provided by the klegmer (musicians) and the badchan (badchen, marshelik: entertainer), was enlivened by the song and dance of the group.<sup>73</sup>

The birth of a child was also accompanied by special celebrations. Festivities were held during the week preceding the circumcision, and on Shabbat Zakhor, the Sabbath before the circumcision ritual, a se'udah migvah, "a meal fulfilling a religious duty" was scheduled." In the Shabbat Zakhor we have another instance of a custom that started around the beginning of the early Middle Ages and continued afterwards as a component of Jewish religious and cultural life.<sup>74</sup>

We have already mentioned that the parents and the school were both regarded as being responsible for the education and development of the child; however, in accordance with Talmudic teaching, the child's first teacher and guide was his parent.<sup>75</sup> Sabbatai (Shabbetai, Sheftel) Horowitz (d. 1660, Vienna), for instance, expressed his own gratitude for the parental influence of his mother who, at personal sacrifice, consistently encouraged her household to be devoted to study.<sup>76</sup>

---

73. See Pollack, Jewish Folkways, pp. 32, 33-34, 37.

74. Ibid., p. 20. See ibid., n. 43. Israel Isserlein (d. 1460, Neustadt) cites the ri'shonim, rabbinic authorities of the earlier Middle Ages, as having innovated the se'udah "on the Sabbath eve that follows the birth of a male child." This particular time was chosen, he explains, because on "the Sabbath eve everyone is found at home": Terumat ha-Deshen (Responsa: Sudilkov, 1835), no. 269, fol. 36a.

75. Pollack, op. cit., p. 50, n. 3.

76. Vave ha-'Amudim (An Ethical Discourse), Intro., fol. 2b; also, chap. 5, fol. 9b. Vave ha-'Amudim is appended to Isaiah Horowitz, Shelah II, facsimile of Amsterdam edit., 1698; Goldwurm: New York, 1946. Note: Sabbatai Horowitz's father was the author of Shelah; his grandfather was Abraham Sheftel Horowitz, author of Yesh Nechalin, an Ethical Will.

Considerable detail is offered in the communal minhag-book, such as Yosif 'Omez, on rearing a child. With perceptive insight an appeal is made by Joseph Yuspa Hahn (d. 1637, Frankfort), the author of Yosif 'Omez, to parents to understand the temperament and ability of their children and to refrain from making unreasonable demands on them. Parents are warned not to dominate the child by the use of fear or physical punishment.<sup>77</sup>

As part of his education, the child would also be involved in various communal functions, since he could learn by doing as he joined his father when he attended a wedding ceremony, visited the sick, or accompanied the dead to the grave.<sup>78</sup> Children would also accompany their parents to the synagogue on the Sabbath, festivals, and participate in observances; for Simchat Torah, Chanukkah, and Purim, the children would have their own forms of group activity. A boy and girl were trained to fast when they became, respectively, twelve and eleven years of age. The boy commenced by observing the fast on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, while the girl first fasted on Ta'anit 'Ester, the Fast of Esther, the day preceding Purim.<sup>79</sup>

According to Jonah Landsefer (d. 1712, Prague), young people were requiring a longer period of time to reach maturity; originally, sages married at eight years of age, later at 15, then at 18, as their physical strength declined.<sup>80</sup> Jacob Emden (d. 1776, Altona) expressed the view that the age of a girl's marriage should be determined by her physical development, not chronological age.<sup>81</sup>

---

77. Yosif 'Omez (Hermon: Frankfort, 1928), p. 279.

78. Ibid., p. 281.

79. Ibid., p. 283.

80. Derekh Tobim (Frankfort, 1717), fol. 11b, #23.

81. She'elat Ya'abez (Responsa: Altona, 1739), I, no. 14, fol. 33b.

Folk-medicine handbooks do not devote special attention to the physical problems of adolescent youth. The emphasis on early marriage reduced the period of adolescence. When, at thirteen, the boy had his Bar Migvah and reached his religious majority, he had already begun to assume the role of an adult. By the age of eighteen, he usually shouldered the social and economic responsibilities of a fully matured man.

The family as the enlarged kinship group continued through the Middle Ages. The record shows that as many as sixteen or more persons would reside in one house. For this period, we have found no mention of the institution of the aged, the Old Folks' Home, moshab zekenim; the older person was an intrinsic part of the larger family unit then existing.

Close ties not only existed between the family and the school, but the synagogue and other communal institutions. That the home was a religious and educational unit, not merely a place of residence, is evident, first, from the accounts we have of family observances and celebrations, and second, from the inventory taken of household possessions which included books.

---

82. Pollack, Jewish Folkways, p. 137

83. Ibid., p. 3.

84. Ibid., p. 308, n. 176.

85. For observances in the home, see Yosif 'Omer, #588, #590; Abraham Sheftel Horowitz, Yesh Nochalim (Ethical Will), chap. 1, cit. in Israel Abrahams, Hebrew Ethical Wills, (Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia, 1926), II, 253. See also Israel Abrahams, Jewish Life in the Middle Ages (Goldston: London, 1932), revised by Cecil Roth, how during the winter, on Friday evenings, the family spent "hours round the table singing . . . hymns"; Pollack, op. cit., pp. 155, 159.

For libraries in the homes see, Gottlieb Schnapper-Arndt, "Jüdische Interieurs," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, II (O.S., 1888), 190, 191.

While the education of the male child was of primary concern, there is evidence that girls were students in elementary schools and that they had educational opportunities. Communal legislation refers to girls attending cheder; and in her recollections of her childhood, Glikl of Hameln relates that her "father gave his children, girls and boys, a secular as well as a religious education." Her account confirms that she attended cheder when she was a child. Through the "ethical chapbook," muser-bikhel, in Yiddish, women acquainted themselves with a wide range of sources covering law, liturgy, ritual, and exempla. From all indication, scholars and teachers were concerned that Jewish women should receive an adequate education so as to enable them to carry out their personal and communal responsibilities.

---

86. See Pollack, Jewish Folkways, p. 63.

87. Moritz Gudemann, Quellenschriften zur Geschichte . . . der Erziehung . . . (Hofmann: Berlin, 1891), p. 269, #19 (Takkanot of Nikolsburg); Bernard Wachstein, "Pinkas Runkel," Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, IV (1932), 136, #17.

88. Kaufmann (ed.), Glikl, p. 24.

89. Sabbatai Bass (d. 1718, Prague), Sifte Yeshenim . . . (Amsterdam, 1680), I, Intro., fol. 6a, #9. In explaining why he included Yiddish books in his "Bibliographical Manual," Sabbatai Bass states that Yiddish serves as a common language. Translations into Yiddish made literature available to the public, especially to women and children.

90. Pollack, op.cit., p. 64.

We recognize that we have not mentioned "the Takkanah against compulsory divorce" pronounced by Rabbenu Gershom. The importance of Rabbenu Gershom's position "forbidding any husband to divorce his wife against her will" is not minimized. However, as Louis Finkelstein infers, whether a Bet Din, a rabbinical court, would "declare null a divorce executed according to the law of the Talmud" to protect the woman would depend upon the stature and courage of the judicial body to take an independent stand. See Finkelstein, Jewish Self-Government, p. 30.

With the incipient development of the capitalist economy during the 17th and 18th centuries, fewer Jews were in money-lending, and more were becoming peddlers, tradesmen, merchants, and artisans. In the accounts of the period, sufficient mention has been made of the peddler to enable us to piece together a picture of him traveling from town to town, always in danger of being attacked by thieves and brigands lying in ambush. It was not unusual for a person away from home to be robbed and killed and the Jewish community had to send its official representatives to identify and claim the body.<sup>91</sup>

Friday evening became the occasion for the family's reunion, especially when the father had to be away at work during the week and returned before the Sabbath to rejoin his household. In his absence, the mother provided the family with physical and moral support, so that its cohesiveness and its spiritual and educational objectives would not be impaired. Such a decisive role did not leave her questioning in her own mind as to her worth and validity, and from all indications she required no rationalizations to justify her place in the Jewish society.

#### IV. Jewish Family Life in the Early Modern Era

In Central Europe, after 1648, Jewish communal life was marked by stability and growth, with the rebirth of old and the establishment of new communities.<sup>92</sup> The Jews of Eastern Europe organized the Va'ad 'Arba 'Arazot

---

91. Pollack, Jewish Folkways, pp. 10, 12.

92. For such examples, see Ibid., → Intro., xv, p. 47, p. 200 n. 9.

(The Council of Four Lands) in Poland in 1580 and the Va'ad (the Council) in Lithuania in 1623.<sup>93</sup> During the period of emancipation, which was first experienced in Central Europe, in 1791 in France, and in Germany in 1815, emphasis was placed on the freedom of the individual, on the one hand, and on the dissolution of the autonomous communal self-government, on the other.<sup>94</sup> The general economic decline in Poland in the 18th century caused the Council to suffer its own reverses, and in 1764 the Polish government abolished the Council, with the intent of securing larger revenue from the Jews by "direct taxation."<sup>95</sup> In 1791, during the reign of Catherine II, while Russia was "one of the first countries . . . allowing [Jews] to participate in municipal elections," at the same time her "regime . . . laid the foundations for the Pale of Settlement which bottled up the ever growing Jewish masses in a few western provinces."<sup>96</sup> In Eastern Europe, Jewish stirrings for political

---

93. See the description of the areas of communal life regulated by the Council of Four Lands in Nathan Hanover, Yeven Metzulah (Lemberg, 1851), fol. 14b-17a (fol. not marked); ibid. (Hakibutz Hameuchad: Ain-Harod, Israel, 1945), pp. 82-92; Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah), by Nathan Hanover, trans. by Abraham J. Mesch (Blech: New York, 1950), chap. xvi, "The Inner Life of the Jew in the Kingdom of Poland"; Jacob R. Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval World (Meridian Books - Jewish Publication Society), chap. 43.

<sup>93</sup> See Minutes of the Council of Four Lands in Poland in Israel Halpern, ed., Pinkas Va'ad 'Arba 'Aragot, 1580-1764: Mosad Bialik: Jerusalem 1945; also, the collection of Communal Minutes of Lithuania, 1623-1761 in Simon Dubnow, ed., Pinkas ha-Medinah: "Ajanoth": Berlin, 1925.

94. Baron, "The Modern Age" in Leo W. Schwarz, ed., Great Ages and Ideas, pp. 316-17, 326-27.

95. Marcus, Jew in the Med. World, p. 205.

96. Baron, op.cit., p. 331.

emancipation were expressed later than in Central Europe, in 1861 when Alexander II emancipated the serfs.

We shall now consider changes occurring in Jewish family life as a result of the social, economic, and political trends during the period of emancipation. The lay communal leader (kotsn, Yid.; kagin, Heb.), who contributed to the maintenance of institutions, now had an honored position, wielding influence and enjoying prestige and status like his counterpart in the larger community. Economic cleavages were now more pronounced; wealthy families could provide more easily for their children to continue to study after marriage. Both in Central and Eastern Europe, following his marriage, the groom, as well as his family, would be supported by his father-in-law. Marriages were now being postponed for economic and cultural reasons, in order to attend school and study a profession. With the rise of individualism, a by-product of the emancipation period, matchmaking was on the decline, as

---

97. Cf. Y. Sosis, "Counter-Social Legislation of the 16th and 17th Centuries, based on Respona" (Yiddish), Zeitschrift, I (Minsk, 1926), 222 ff., concerning the role of the influential lay-leader. See the eulogy for a parnas, communal leader by Jonathan Eibeschtz (d. 1799, Altona), Ya'arot Debash (Sulzbach, 1799), II, fol. 14a.

98. Jacob Katz, "Marriage and Sexual Life among the Jews at the Close of the Middle Ages" (Hebrew), Zion, X (N.S., 1946), 25, n. 28.

99. Samuel ben David Moses ha-Levi of Meseritz (d. 1681, Kleinsteinach, Bavaria), Nachalat Shib'ah (Respona: Amsterdam, 1667), I, no. 8, fol. 17a; no. 9, fol. 31b, #8-9; Dubnow, Pinkas ha-Medinah, p. 40, #190; p. 75, #379; Kaufmann (ed.), Glikl, p. 68. See kest: Beth-Zion Abrahams, The Life of Glückel of Hameln, p. 38, n. 1. See also Sale W. Baron, Jewish Community (Jewish Publication Society, 1945), II, 175; Katz in Zion, X, 25, nn. 27-28.

each person wished to select his own mate.

The musar-book of the emancipation period criticizes children for not showing their parents proper respect when they pass away: ". . . No sooner do their parents die, they make new black garments of costly material, and engage in celebrating." <sup>101</sup> This behavior may be attributed to the changing pattern of Jewish family life influenced by the general cultural environment, which Jews were now emulating to a greater degree out of their desire to lose their distinctive identity. <sup>102</sup> The changes in Jewish family life during the 18th century, resulting from emancipation influences, were more pronounced in Central Europe. Emancipation tendencies did not have an impact on East European Jewish life until the 19th century, when the Haskalah, enlightenment, developed.

That Jewish family stability was on the decline as a result of the general cultural influences of Europe at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern era is evidenced by the instances of venereal disease, adultery, illegitimacy, prostitution, and sex laxity. <sup>103</sup> Increasing

100. Katz in Zion, I, 24-25, 47-48, 51-52; Israel Halpern, "The 'Rush' into Early Marriages" (Hebrew), Zion, XVII (N.S., 1962), 56-57.

101. Zebi Hirsh Kaidanover (d. 1712, Frankfort), Kab ha-Yashar (Vilna, 1925), XXX, 9.

102. Cf. Azriel Schochat (Shohet), "The German Jews Integration within their Non-Jewish Environment in the First Half of the 18th Century" (Hebrew), Zion, XXI (N.S., 1956), 213, n. 37; idem (Shohet), Im Chilufe Tekufot, p. 53, n. 34.

103. See Hirsch J. Zimmels, Magicians, Theologians and Doctors, pp. 96-97. Cf. Chavvet Ya'ir, no. 31, fol. 36b; Ezekiel Landau (d. 1793, Prague), Noda' bi-Yehudah (Responsa: Berdiczew, 1812), I, no. 92, fol. 98b (sec. "'Eben ha-'Ezer"); Shebat Ya'akov (Responsa: Lemberg, 1897), III, no. 108, fol. 18a; no. 109, fol. 20b; Zebi Hirsh Ashkenazi (d. 1718, Altona), Chacham Zebi (Responsa: Amsterdam, 1712), I, no. 44, fol. 45b. See also Baron, Community, II, 205, n. 27; 312-15; III, 205-6, n. 28; Jacob R. Marcus, Communal Sick-Care in the German Ghetto (Hebrew Union College Press, 1947), pp. 46, 133; Shohet, Im Chillufe Tekufot, p. 166.

See also in Isaac Rivkind, "Codex of Prague" (Hebrew), Reshumot, IV (1925), 351, the order issued, in 1613, that prostitutes must be removed from the community and homes. Cf. the case of a woman of Eastern Europe who had engaged in adultery: Joshua Hoesehel ben Joseph (d. 1648, Cracow), Pene Yehoshua (Responsa: Amsterdam, 1715), I, no. 1, fol. 30b (sec. "'Eben ha-'Ezer").



erotic attitudes and sex license emerged as a result of the primacy given to the satisfaction of individual needs in contrast to the mutuality or partnership existing between the individual and his group (chevrah) in the autonomous Jewish community. <sup>104</sup> Thus a distinction did exist between individualism - - being ego-centered or self-centered as in the period of emancipation - - and individuality, wherein there<sup>was</sup>/xx the striving to fulfill oneself aided by the social and cultural resources of the community (kehillah), a product of Jewish historical experience going back to ancient times. The individual without his moorings reminds one of the marginal person who lives <sup>105</sup> between two worlds, "the one that is dying and the other about to be born." He is lonely, overcome by his angst, because of the lack of goals or of meaning in his life.

We thus complete our survey of the history of the Jewish family from the earliest times to the beginnings of the modern period during Jewish Emancipation. We have attempted to show how the family began; how, in the face of new conditions, it underwent change; how its function varied in different regions; how individual members of the family fulfilled their respective roles; how the family was related to the community and its institutions; and how, with the dissolution of the autonomous Jewish community at the end of the Middle Ages and in early modern times, the individual now found himself alienated, searching for the purpose of his life. It is our opinion that any attempt to solve the problem of identity must be undertaken within the context of communal life; for no individual can be considered an entity to himself, a dabar be-<sup>4</sup>azmo, or a ding an sich.

---

104. J. Katz, Zion, X, 46 ff.; 351. Cf. the case of a woman who had engaged in adultery: Joshua Hoeschel b. Joseph (d. 1648, Cracow), Pene Yehoshua<sup>4</sup> (Responsa: Amsterdam, 1715), I, no. 1, fol. 30b (sec. "'Eben ha-<sup>4</sup>Ezer").

105. Suggested by Milton Steinberg, The Making of the Modern Jew (Behrman: New York, 1944), p. 207, "Dusk Children."

THE DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF THE JEWISH FAMILY IN AMERICA

ARCHIVES

by

DR. SYDNEY GOLDSTEIN



Prepared for

The American Jewish Committee

Consultation on the Jewish Family and Jewish Identity

APRIL 23-24, 1972

## DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF THE JEWISH FAMILY IN AMERICA

Sidney Goldstein  
Brown University

### Introduction

Jewish tradition has always placed great value on the institutions of marriage and the family. Among Jews, as in the world at large, the family has constituted one of the primary human institutions. It functions to reproduce and maintain the species and also serves as the instrumental foundation of the larger social structure. All other institutions of society depend on it to act as one of the major agents of socialization in the transmission of values, attitudes, goals, and aspirations.<sup>1</sup> Yet, important changes in American society since the mid-nineteenth century have led to modifications in the demographic composition, structure, and nature of the American family. These include a tendency toward increases in divorce and remarriage, larger proportions of the population who marry at some time in the life cycle, a reduction in the ages at which people first marry, and smaller family size.<sup>2</sup>

Inasmuch as the structure of the family is sensitive to alterations in other institutions of society, changes in Jewish family patterns are to be expected. Moreover, to the degree that the family is an instrument of cultural continuity, changes in the Jewish family structure may serve as an indicator of the strength of cultural continuity and, in turn, as a measure of cultural assimilation.

Numbering about 6 million in 1970, the Jewish population of the United States, even while growing slightly, has come to constitute an increasingly

smaller proportion of the total American population, having already declined from the peak of 3.7 percent to less than 3 percent by 1970.

While declining as a percent of the total population, Jews have also become more dispersed throughout the United States. As a result of continuously higher education and changing occupations, lower levels of self-employment, weakening family ties, and reduced discrimination, Jews have begun to migrate in increasing numbers away from the major centers of Jewish population concentration. This operates on several levels. Regionally, it is leading to fewer Jews in the Northeast. Jews continue to be highly concentrated in metropolitan areas; but within the metropolitan areas, ever increasing numbers have moved out of the urban center and former ghettos into the suburbs. In doing so, the Jewish population has become much more geographically dispersed, even while distinct areas of Jewish concentration remain.

At the same time that its overall numbers and distribution change, the Jewish population has also been undergoing significant changes in selected aspects of its socio-economic composition. As a result of the significant reduction in Jewish immigration to the United States since the 1920's and the subsequent aging and death of the immigrants, the most striking compositional change characterizing American Jewry is the reduction in the percent of foreign-born. Indeed, even the proportion of second-generation American Jews has begun to diminish as third- and fourth-generation persons become an ever larger proportion of the Jewish population, with all this implies for questions of Jewish identification and assimilation. Reflecting their lower fertility, the Jewish population, already six years older on the average than the general population, is likely to undergo still further aging. This will mean a considerable increase in the proportion of older persons as well as of the widowed, especially women.

Jews in America are virtually unique in their high concentration among the more educated, high white-collar, and high income groups. College education is almost a universal phenomenon among them, and an increasing proportion are pursuing graduate studies. The high proportions of Jews who obtain specialized university training, their tendency to move out of small family businesses and into salaried employment, and their increasing willingness to seek and take positions away from their community of current residence are beginning to bring an increase in the number of Jews in technical and executive occupations within the top professional and managerial occupational categories, where they already are heavily concentrated.<sup>3</sup>

These demographic changes point to a number of challenges which the American Jewish community must face. In the last three decades of the twentieth century, increasing Americanization will continue, as judged by greater geographic dispersion, higher percent of third- and fourth-generation Americans, and narrowing of such key socio-economic differentials as education, occupation, and income. To what extent will the diminution in the distinctive population characteristics of Jews and their greater residential integration lead to behavioral convergence? The risks and the opportunities for this to occur, depending on how one views the situation, are increasingly present. In large part, it will be the strength and character of the Jewish family which will influence the future course of the American Jewish community. For this reason, an assessment of the demographic, sociological, and cultural aspects of the Jewish family and of the changes it is undergoing is an essential prerequisite to any evaluation of the future of the American Jewish community. The analysis which follows focusses on the demographic aspects of the Jewish family and marriage.

The Jewish family has generally been characterized as having strong ties,

tightly knit kinship relations, and great stability. Yet, despite the importance Jews have traditionally attached to the family, few surveys of the American Jewish population have given much consideration to it. Attention has generally been restricted to the percentage of individuals in the Jewish population who are married, widowed, or divorced. Only recently have surveys also focussed on the type and size of the family unit, age of marriage, and frequency of remarriage. Two sets of data are available for examination of demographic aspects of the Jewish family in America: First, the 1957 census survey contains a limited amount of information on marital and fertility patterns by religion. Second, insights into family and marriage patterns can be gained from selected community surveys, and a few national surveys on the general population.<sup>4</sup>

In the analysis which follows these data will be exploited first to examine the marital status, marital stability, and changing age at marriage of the Jewish population. Next, the available evidence will be explored to ascertain whether the size and composition of the Jewish household has been undergoing change. Trends in Jewish fertility will then be assessed with a view to determining the extent to which low fertility levels threaten the growth of the total population. Finally, demographic aspects of intermarriage will be explored to ascertain the level of intermarriage, the stability of such marriages, and the degree to which the homogeneity of the family unit is maintained through conversion of the non-Jewish partner.

### Marriage Patterns

Among Jews, to marry and to establish a family is a mitzvah, a religious obligation; it is prescribed for everyone.<sup>5</sup> Reflecting this injunction, Jews, compared to the general population, are more apt to marry at some point in their life, although tending to do so at a somewhat later age. Moreover, they also

have more stable marriages (Table 1). The 1957 census survey data show that 70 percent of the men 14 years and over in the total population were married, compared to 73 percent of the Jewish males. Concomitantly, lower proportions of Jewish men were widowed and divorced. The gross data, however, reflect the differential age structure of the Jewish and total male populations. Examination by specific age groups is more revealing.

Among males aged 25 to 34, for example, only 17.9 percent of those in the total population were still single, but this was true of 29.8 percent of the Jewish males, attesting to the later marriage age of Jewish men. By age 35 to 44, however, this differential disappeared and, in fact, was to some degree reversed. Among men aged 65 and over, 7 percent in the total population were still single, compared to only 4.8 percent of the Jewish men. Although these data are cross-sectional, they do indicate that by the end of the life cycle a somewhat higher proportion of Jewish men than of males in the general population were married, although in both cases the proportions reached over 90 percent.

Regretfully, the census statistics by age do not distinguish between the widowed and divorced. Because the two were grouped together, the percentage increased consistently with rising age, from 0.5 percent of the total male population aged 20 to 24, to just under one in four males of those aged 65 and over. For all age groups, however, the percentage in this particular marital category was considerably lower for the Jewish male population than for all males. The census statistics do not permit us to determine categorically whether this reflects differences in divorce or in survival. But because these differences hold for all age groups including the younger, which are not likely to be affected by mortality to a very great extent, they may reflect differences in divorce rates as well as a greater tendency for Jewish males to remarry after divorce or widowhood. For

Table 1

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY MARITAL STATUS, JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATION,  
BY SEX AND AGE, UNITED STATES, 1957

| Age and Sex                   | Total Population |         |                            |       | Jewish Population |         |                            |       |
|-------------------------------|------------------|---------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------|---------|----------------------------|-------|
|                               | Single           | Married | Widowed<br>and<br>Divorced | Total | Single            | Married | Widowed<br>and<br>Divorced | Total |
| <b>Males</b>                  |                  |         |                            |       |                   |         |                            |       |
| 14 - 19 Years                 | 97.5             | 2.5     | -                          | 100.0 | 99.4              | 0.6     | -                          | 100.0 |
| 20 - 24 Years                 | 51.8             | 47.7    | 0.5                        | 100.0 | **                | **      | **                         | **    |
| 25 - 34 Years                 | 17.9             | 80.3    | 1.8                        | 100.0 | 29.8              | 69.3    | 1.0                        | 100.0 |
| 35 - 44 Years                 | 8.6              | 88.5    | 3.0                        | 100.0 | 5.3               | 92.6    | 2.1                        | 100.0 |
| 45 - 64 Years                 | 7.7              | 86.2    | 6.1                        | 100.0 | 7.2               | 90.0    | 2.9                        | 100.0 |
| 65 Years and Over             | 7.3              | 68.4    | 24.2                       | 100.0 | 4.8               | 80.0    | 15.2                       | 100.0 |
| Total Unstandardized          | 23.9             | 70.5    | 5.6*                       | 100.0 | 23.5              | 73.0    | 3.5*                       | 100.0 |
| Total Standardized<br>for Age | 23.9             | 70.5    | 5.6                        | 100.0 | 27.9              | 68.9    | 3.2                        | 100.0 |
| <b>Females</b>                |                  |         |                            |       |                   |         |                            |       |
| 14 - 19 Years                 | 87.0             | 12.8    | 0.2                        | 100.0 | 96.8              | 3.2     | -                          | 100.0 |
| 20 - 24 Years                 | 29.0             | 69.1    | 1.9                        | 100.0 | **                | **      | **                         | **    |
| 25 - 34 Years                 | 9.1              | 87.6    | 3.2                        | 100.0 | 9.1               | 88.6    | 2.3                        | 100.0 |
| 35 - 44 Years                 | 6.4              | 86.7    | 6.9                        | 100.0 | 7.7               | 87.5    | 4.8                        | 100.0 |
| 45 - 64 Years                 | 7.1              | 73.2    | 19.7                       | 100.0 | 8.6               | 75.0    | 16.4                       | 100.0 |
| 65 Years and Over             | 8.0              | 36.5    | 55.5                       | 100.0 | 1.1               | 42.5    | 56.4                       | 100.0 |
| Total Unstandardized          | 18.6             | 66.7    | 14.9*                      | 100.0 | 17.7              | 67.4    | 14.8*                      | 100.0 |
| Total Standardized<br>for Age | 18.6             | 66.7    | 14.9                       | 100.0 | 20.8              | 65.8    | 13.4                       | 100.0 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Tabulation of Data on the Social and Economic Characteristics of Major Religious Groups, March 1957." (Unpublished)

|                |         |       |          |      |
|----------------|---------|-------|----------|------|
| *Jewish Males  | Widowed | 2.5%  | Divorced | 1.0% |
| Total Males    | "       | 3.8%  | "        | 1.8% |
| Jewish Females | "       | 13.4% | "        | 1.4% |
| Total Females  | "       | 12.5% | "        | 2.3% |

\*\*Percent not shown where base is less than 150,000.



all age groups combined, a category for which the census data distinguishes between widowed and divorced, Jewish men had proportionately fewer of both, but the relative difference was greater for the divorced than for the widowed.

The census does present standardized statistics on marital status, which show what the marital status of the Jewish population would be if its age composition were that of the total male population, while retaining its own age-specific marital characteristics. Reflecting later age at marriage, the percentage for single Jews is greater than was actually the case, but the percentage of widowed and divorced remains well below the corresponding percentages for the total male population. Comparable analyses can be made for the female population. Overall, differences between Jewish women and women in the total population seem to be less marked than those characterizing the men; and the similarities extend to the age specific characteristics.

The value of the census data is limited because it determines only marital status. Also important for an evaluation of the Jewish family are questions of stability of marriage, as judged by number of times ever married persons have been married, changes in age at first marriage, and changes in household types.

The one fact emerging from the various community studies which collected information on marital status is the high proportion of the Jewish population that is married, usually three-fourths or more. Also, judging by those studies which present the percent married and ever married by age group, almost all Jews (95 percent or more) marry at least once. Three other observations emerge from the data: 1) In the Jewish population, as in the general population, the proportion of widows is considerably higher than the proportion of widowers, reflecting the higher mortality rates of men. 2) The average Jewish male marries later in life than does the Jewish female. 3) The rate of remarriage is higher for widowers than for widows.<sup>6</sup>

The data collected in the Providence survey lend weight to the assumption that the high value placed by Jewish tradition on marriage and the family leads to both a high marriage rate for Jews and a greater stability of Jewish marriages. In Greater Providence, among both males and females, a higher percentage of the Jewish population was married (Table 2). On the other hand, the percentages of separated and divorced persons were below those in the general population. The differential pattern generally persists even when age is controlled. The differences in the proportion divorced in the total and Jewish populations are affected by the extent of remarriage, as well as by the different age structures of the two populations. Attesting to the higher stability of Jewish marriages is the fact that the proportion of persons married more than once in the Jewish population was one-third lower than in the general population.

Nonetheless, examination of the Providence data by generation status suggests some breakdown of traditional Jewish family cohesion.<sup>8</sup> Slight increases, from first to later generations, are evident in the proportion divorced and separated and in the proportion marrying more than once among third-generation Jews. The foreign born have the lowest proportion of divorced persons and those born in the United States of mixed parentage have the highest proportion. Although the increase in divorce is slight, it appears when age is controlled. However, what is most striking is the lack of clear-cut generation changes and the general stability of Jewish families in each generation.

Similar patterns of overall stability and slight generation changes are reflected in the rate of remarriages. It was not possible to separate remarriages that followed divorce from those that were the result of widowhood; thus, these data are limited. As with increases in divorce and separation, there is a tendency among third-generation Jews toward higher rates of remarriage. Obviously,

Table 2

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY MARITAL STATUS, AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE, AND PERCENT REMARRIED,  
JEWISH PERSONS 14 YEARS OLD AND OVER, BY AGE AND SEX, GREATER PROVIDENCE, 1963

| Age and Sex       | Marital Status |             |            |             | Total        | Median Age<br>at First<br>Marriage | Percent<br>Married More<br>Than Once |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                   | Single         | Married     | Divorced   | Widowed     |              |                                    |                                      |
| <b>Males</b>      |                |             |            |             |              |                                    |                                      |
| 14 - 19 Years     | 100.0          | -           | -          | -           | 100.0        | -                                  | -                                    |
| 20 - 29 Years     | 57.8           | 42.2        | -          | -           | 100.0        | 22.4                               | -                                    |
| 30 - 39 Years     | 6.8            | 90.6        | 2.6        | -           | 100.0        | 24.8                               | 0.8                                  |
| 40 - 49 Years     | 4.1            | 94.8        | 0.3        | 0.6         | 100.0        | 26.4                               | 5.4                                  |
| 50 - 59 Years     | 2.8            | 94.4        | 0.3        | 2.5         | 100.0        | 27.9                               | 7.2                                  |
| 60 - 69 Years     | 4.6            | 92.6        | -          | 2.8         | 100.0        | 27.2                               | 9.7                                  |
| 70 Years and Over | 1.6            | 81.2        | 0.8        | 16.4        | 100.0        | 25.0                               | 15.7                                 |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>23.2</b>    | <b>74.0</b> | <b>0.5</b> | <b>2.2</b>  | <b>100.0</b> | <b>26.1</b>                        | <b>6.3</b>                           |
| <b>Females</b>    |                |             |            |             |              |                                    |                                      |
| 14 - 19 Years     | 99.6           | 0.4         | -          | -           | 100.0        | -                                  | -                                    |
| 20 - 29 Years     | 25.7           | 71.6        | 2.8        | -           | 100.0        | 20.8                               | 4.9                                  |
| 30 - 39 Years     | 3.2            | 93.9        | 2.1        | 0.7         | 100.0        | 21.6                               | 3.3                                  |
| 40 - 49 Years     | 5.3            | 90.9        | 0.9        | 2.9         | 100.0        | 23.4                               | 4.3                                  |
| 50 - 59 Years     | 8.0            | 82.6        | 1.5        | 8.0         | 100.0        | 24.0                               | 5.1                                  |
| 60 - 69 Years     | 5.2            | 62.5        | 4.0        | 27.5        | 100.0        | 23.1                               | 8.4                                  |
| 70 Years and Over | 1.5            | 39.9        | -          | 58.6        | 100.0        | 22.6                               | 10.9                                 |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>19.5</b>    | <b>68.7</b> | <b>1.7</b> | <b>10.1</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>22.6</b>                        | <b>5.6</b>                           |

Source: Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile," American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 72 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971), p. 23.

Table 3

## MARITAL STATUS, BY GENERATION AND AGE, GREATER PROVIDENCE, 1963

| Generation and Age           | Marital Status |         |         |                              |        | Total<br>Percent | Married<br>More<br>Than Once |
|------------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|------------------------------|--------|------------------|------------------------------|
|                              | Single         | Married | Widowed | Separated<br>and<br>Divorced |        |                  |                              |
| <b>All Ages</b>              |                |         |         |                              |        |                  |                              |
| First Generation             | 1.2            | 79.6    | 18.2    | 0.8                          | 100.0* | 9.9              |                              |
| Second Generation            | 7.0            | 86.5    | 5.3     | 1.2                          | 100.0* | 4.5              |                              |
| Mixed Parentage              | 6.7            | 89.1    | 1.0     | 3.2                          | 100.0  | 1.7              |                              |
| Third Generation             | 7.7            | 89.3    | 1.7     | 1.4                          | 100.0  | 7.3              |                              |
| Total                        | 5.5            | 85.3    | 7.7     | 1.4                          | 100.0  | 6.0              |                              |
| <b>25-44 Age Group</b>       |                |         |         |                              |        |                  |                              |
| First Generation             | 2.4            | 95.2    | 1.2     | 1.2                          | 100.0  | 3.7              |                              |
| Second Generation            | 6.4            | 91.3    | 0.8     | 1.4                          | 100.0  | 2.6              |                              |
| Mixed Parentage              | 7.7            | 89.1    | 0.0     | 3.2                          | 100.0  | 1.0              |                              |
| Third Generation             | 7.8            | 89.9    | 1.0     | 1.3                          | 100.0  | 6.0              |                              |
| <b>45-64 Age Group</b>       |                |         |         |                              |        |                  |                              |
| First Generation             | 0.6            | 88.6    | 9.1     | 1.2                          | 100.0* | 6.6              |                              |
| Second Generation            | 7.4            | 86.5    | 5.0     | 1.0                          | 100.0* | 5.4              |                              |
| Mixed Parentage              | 4.7            | 88.2    | 3.5     | 3.5                          | 100.0  | 3.7              |                              |
| Third Generation             | 8.2            | 87.8    | 2.0     | 2.0                          | 100.0  | 11.6             |                              |
| <b>65 and Over Age Group</b> |                |         |         |                              |        |                  |                              |
| First Generation             | 1.5            | 66.5    | 31.7    | 0.3                          | 100.0  | 15.2             |                              |
| Second Generation            | 6.3            | 65.2    | 27.7    | 0.9                          | 100.0  | 6.7              |                              |

\*Includes less than one percent unknown marital status.

Source: Goldstein and Goldscheider, Jewish Americans (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 107.

age differences between the generations are important. However, higher rates of remarriages among native-born Jews of either mixed parentage or native parentage characterize both sexes when age is controlled. For example, more than one-and-a-half times as many third-generation males 45 to 64 years of age remarried compared to first-generation males, and more than twice as many third-generation females 25 to 44 and 45 to 64 years of age remarried when compared to first-generation females of the same ages.

In the Providence Jewish population, as in the total population, certain sex differentials in marital status are noteworthy. The percentages of single and married males were greater than comparable proportions in the female population. On the other hand, the percentages of divorced and widowed women exceeded the comparable values for the men. These sex differences are attributable to several factors. Males tend to marry several years later than females. Sex-selective mortality favors the female, which means that the married woman, on the average, outlives her husband by a number of years. With a larger proportion of older persons projected for the Jewish population, the percentage of widowers and, particularly, of widows will increase. The somewhat lower percentage of separated and divorced males may stem from the greater tendency of men to remarry.

Several national studies have found that Jews marry at later ages than do either Protestants or Catholics.<sup>9</sup> The 1957 census survey found the median age at first marriage of Jewish women to be 21.3, compared to 19.9 for Protestants and 20.8 for Catholics. The Providence data also revealed such differentials. The average age of Jewish males at first marriage was 26, compared to 23 for the total population; Jewish women, on the average, were married at age 23, compared to age 20 for the total female population. Moreover, grouping women according to the date of their first marriage suggests that later age of marriage has

characterized Jewish women since at least 1920. Age at first marriage has been declining since World War II, however, after having risen between the 1910 and the 1935-39 marriage cohorts from 19 to 23. The decline in the average marriage age of Jewish women parallels a development in the general population, but the change has been greater for Jewish women, resulting in a narrowing of the differences in the average marriage age between women in the Jewish and the total population.

A study of Maryland residents in 1969<sup>10</sup> further documents the later age of first marriage of Jews, as well as the decline in median age at marriage. Among men, the 23.7 median age of Jewish grooms was more than one year older than the median ages of Protestant and Catholic grooms. The median age at first marriage of Jewish brides (21.9 years) also exceeded that of Protestant (20.2) and Catholic (21.1) women. These data for marriages occurring in 1969 suggest that Jewish men and women continue to marry at younger ages than was true a generation ago.

The pursuit of higher education has often been cited as a reason for delayed marriage among Jews. Although this is undoubtedly a factor, it may not be the only explanation, since the decline in the average age at marriage has taken place at a time when the proportion pursuing higher education has been reaching new peaks. Changes in the general social and economic environment and the greater reliance of Jews on birth control, and its more efficient practice, may be factors in explaining the more rapid decline in the marriage age of Jews.

#### Household Composition

A related dimension of family structure is household composition, that is, whether the Jewish household contains only the immediate family of husband-wife-children or other relatives, such as grandparents. Recent community studies

suggest that the average size of Jewish households varies between 3.1 and 3.3. This reflects both the low level of fertility characterizing Jewish families and the very great tendency for Jewish households to be organized as nuclear rather than extended household units. For example, in Greater Providence 85 percent of all households consisted only of the immediate family of husband and/or wife, with or without children (Table 4). Only 8 percent included other relatives. An equal proportion were one-person units, but almost all of these were concentrated in the older age groups. That the trend is clearly in the direction of nuclear households is evidenced by the generational differences in the percentage of nuclear household units, which rose from 85 percent of households headed by a first-generation person, to 97 percent headed by a third-generation individual. Part of the differences stems from the different age composition of the generations, but even when age is held constant, the increase in nuclear households among third-generation Jews remains.

In organizing their families in nuclear units, Jews are conforming to the pattern characterizing families in the United States as a whole. Such a development is consistent with the trend toward greater geographical separation of childrens' from parents' residences.

Some evidence of this trend is already available through limited statistics from Providence. That study collected information on the residence of all children of family units surveyed, permitting comparison of place of residence of children in relation to that of their parents living in the Providence area (Table 5). Lenski noted that one of the best indicators of the importance attached to family and kin groups by modern Americans is their willingness to leave their native community and migrate elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> Since most migration is motivated by economic or vocational factors, he suggests, migration serves as

an indicator of the strength of economic motives compared to kinship ties. In modern society the continual removal of economic rewards out of the hands of kinship and extended family groups lessens the dominance of Jewish families over the placement of its young within the socio-economic world. The changing kinship relations, coupled with more fluid labor markets, contribute to higher mobility rates.

If this interpretation is correct, the Providence data suggest that kinship ties of Jews have been weakening. Among all Providence families surveyed, there were 748 sons 40 years old and over, of whom one-third were living outside Rhode Island. Compared to this, just one-half of the 1,425 sons between ages 20 and 39 were living outside the state. Moreover, a higher proportion of the younger group were living outside New England. Further accentuation of the trend is suggested by the fact that almost two-thirds of children under age 20 who were living away from their parental home were outside Rhode Island, and 42 percent of the total were outside New England. Many of these younger persons were in colleges or universities. But answers to questions on future movement suggest that only a small percentage are expected to return to their home community. Although fewer daughters lived away from their parental community, the basic age pattern was the same as for males.

The findings have significant implications for the strength of Jewish identification as it is reinforced through the extended family unit. It also has a number of immediate and practical implications for the burdens that the community may be asked to assume as nuclear families break up through death of a spouse, leaving single individuals who will not be absorbed into the household units of children or other relatives. Coupled with the trend toward an aging population, the predominance of the nuclear family and the increased physical separation of parents and children among Jews takes on added significance.



Table 4

TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD UNIT, BY GENERATION AND AGE,  
GREATER PROVIDENCE, 1963

| Generation and Age           | Nuclear | Extended | One-Person Unit | Total Percent |
|------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>All Ages</b>              |         |          |                 |               |
| First Generation             | 78.8    | 8.1      | 13.1            | 100.0         |
| Second Generation            | 85.3    | 8.5      | 6.2             | 100.0         |
| Mixed Parentage              | 77.7    | 9.0      | 13.3            | 100.0         |
| Third Generation             | 96.7    | 3.3      | 0.0             | 100.0         |
| Total                        | 84.8    | 7.6      | 7.6             | 100.0         |
| <b>25-44 Age Group</b>       |         |          |                 |               |
| First Generation             | 90.4    | 9.6      | 0.0             | 100.0         |
| Second Generation            | 95.5    | 4.5      | 0.0             | 100.0         |
| Mixed Parentage              | 86.2    | 6.9      | 6.9             | 100.0         |
| Third Generation             | 97.8    | 2.2      | 0.0             | 100.0         |
| <b>45-64 Age Group</b>       |         |          |                 |               |
| First Generation             | 81.6    | 7.6      | 10.8            | 100.0         |
| Second Generation            | 83.5    | 10.2     | 6.3             | 100.0         |
| Mixed Parentage              | 64.3    | 14.3     | 21.4            | 100.0         |
| Third Generation             | 87.5    | 12.5     | 0.0             | 100.0         |
| <b>65 and Over Age Group</b> |         |          |                 |               |
| First Generation             | 74.4    | 8.2      | 17.4            | 100.0         |
| Second Generation            | 63.6    | 9.1      | 27.3            | 100.0         |

Source: Goldstein and Goldscheider, Jewish Americans, p. 109.

Table 5

RESIDENTIAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN LIVING AWAY FROM PARENTAL HOME,  
JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS, BY AGE AND SEX OF CHILDREN, GREATER PROVIDENCE, 1963

| Age         | Residence of Children in Relation to Parental Residence |                                     |                     |                            |                     |     | Abroad | Total |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-----|--------|-------|
|             | Same City   | Different Part of Metropolitan Area | Else-where in State | Other State in New England | Other United States |     |        |       |
| Sons        |   |                                     |                     |                            |                     |     |        |       |
| Under 20    | 11.6  | 7.7                                 | 15.4                | 19.2                       | 42.3                | -   | 100.0  |       |
| 20-39       | 24.4  | 20.4                                | 2.7                 | 15.1                       | 34.4                | 2.4 | 100.0  |       |
| 40 and Over | 43.6  | 19.5                                | 1.5                 | 12.4                       | 21.9                | 1.1 | 100.0  |       |
| Total       | 30.4  | 19.8                                | 2.8                 | 14.1                       | 30.0                | 2.1 | 100.0  |       |
| Daughters   |   |                                     |                     |                            |                     |     |        |       |
| Under 20    | 18.2  | 12.8                                | 3.6                 | 25.4                       | 36.4                | 3.6 | 100.0  |       |
| 20-39       | 27.1  | 20.9                                | 2.9                 | 23.3                       | 24.9                | 0.7 | 100.0  |       |
| 40 and Over | 50.0  | 23.1                                | -                   | 14.1                       | 12.2                | 0.6 | 100.0  |       |
| Total       | 33.2  | 21.0                                | 2.2                 | 20.6                       | 21.6                | 1.1 | 100.0  |       |

Source: Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," p. 52.

Table 6

JEWISH FERTILITY RATIO: NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5  
TO NUMBER OF WOMEN AGED 20-44, SELECTED COMMUNITIES

| Community             | Year | Fertility Ratio |
|-----------------------|------|-----------------|
| New Orleans           | 1953 | 496             |
| Lynn, Mass.           | 1955 | 528             |
| Canton, Ohio          | 1955 | 469             |
| Des Moines, Iowa      | 1956 | 596             |
| Worcester, Mass.      | 1957 | 525             |
| New Orleans           | 1958 | 510             |
| Los Angeles           | 1959 | 560             |
| South Bend, Indiana   | 1961 | 494             |
| Rochester             | 1961 | 489             |
| Providence            | 1963 | 450             |
| Camden                | 1964 | 480             |
| Springfield           | 1966 | 418             |
| Columbus, Ohio        | 1969 | 444             |
| U.S. White Population | 1960 | 667             |
| U.S. White Population | 1969 | 523             |

Source: Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970," p. 18.

### Fertility

At a time when the growth rate of the total Jewish population of the United States is quite low, attention must be given to the fertility performance of the American Jewish family. Despite the biblical injunction to "be fruitful and multiply," Jews have had a lower birth rate than members of other religious groups. As early as the late nineteenth century, a study of over 10,000 Jewish families in the United States revealed that the Jewish birth rate was lower than the non-Jewish.<sup>12</sup> In the Rhode Island census of 1905, the only state census that obtained information on religion and related it to family size, the average family size of native-born Jewish women was 2.3 compared to an average of 3.2 for native-born Catholics, and 2.5 for native-born Protestants.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the birth rates of Jews in the 1930's were shown to be lower than those of economically comparable Protestant groups; Jews also were found to have a higher proportion using contraceptives, planning their pregnancies and relying on more efficient methods to achieve that goal.<sup>14</sup> The screening phase of the Indianapolis fertility study conducted in 1941 found that the fertility rates, standardized for age, were about 18 percent higher for Catholics than for Protestants and about 25 percent lower for Jews than for Protestants.<sup>15</sup>

In its 1957 sample population survey, the United States Bureau of the Census collected information on number of children ever born. With this information it is possible to calculate fertility rates expressed as the number of children ever born to women within specific age groups. Here, too, the results obtained confirmed the lower fertility of Jews. The cumulative fertility rate of Jewish women 45 years of age and over was 2.2, compared to 3.1 for Catholic women and 2.8 for Protestant women. Lower fertility also characterized Jewish women at younger ages. Moreover, controlling for area of residence, the fertility

rate for Jewish women in urban areas was 14 percent below that of urban women of all religions combined. Finally, the evidence available from over a dozen Jewish community studies points to similar lower Jewish fertility (Table 6). In Providence, for example, there were 450 Jewish children under five years of age for every 1,000 women aged 20 to 44. This was significantly lower than the fertility ratio of the total population in the metropolitan area (620) or the total white urban American population (635). A similar differential characterized Springfield where the Jewish ratio of 418 in 1966 contrasted sharply with the 659 ratio of the total population in the metropolitan area.

Beginning in the 1950's a series of important fertility surveys were undertaken to investigate the reproductive behavior and attitudes of the American population. Among these were the Growth of American Families Studies (GAF), the Princeton Fertility Studies, and investigations based on the Detroit Area Studies.<sup>16</sup> In each of these, Jews constituted only a small proportion of the total sample, thereby precluding detailed investigation of Jewish fertility. Yet the data on Jews yielded by these studies were clear-cut in pointing to lower Jewish fertility. The results of the GAF Study indicated, for example, that in 1955 the average family size of Catholic and Protestant couples was 2.1 compared to an average of only 1.7 for Jewish couples.<sup>17</sup> Also, Jews expected significantly fewer children (2.4) than either Protestants (2.9) or Catholics (3.4). Overall, the GAF Study found that Jews had the smallest families, married later, expected and desired to have the smallest families, had the most favorable attitudes toward the use of contraception, were more likely to have used contraception, were most successful in planning the number and spacing of all their children, and were most likely to use the most effective methods of birth control.<sup>18</sup> The 1960 GAF Study recorded similar patterns of differentials

as did the 1960 and 1962 Princeton Fertility Studies. The results of the 1965 GAF survey showed the average current number of children of Catholics as 2.8, that of Protestants as 2.3, and that of Jews as 2.1.<sup>19</sup> By contrast, the average expected completed family size was 3.9 for Catholics, and only 3.0 and 2.9 for Protestants and Jews, respectively. Several points are noteworthy: For all groups, the average current number of children and the total expected number were higher in 1965 than in 1955. Moreover, the relative increase was greatest for Jews. Catholic fertility far exceeded that of both Protestants and Jews; but the differences between the latter two groups had narrowed considerably. Yet Jewish fertility remained the lowest of the three religious groups. Most important, perhaps, current Jewish fertility in 1965 was just equal to replacement level (2.1), whereas it had been below replacement in 1955: and the expected completed fertility of 2.9 was comfortably above replacement.

The low Jewish fertility is significant for Jewish population growth because the average number of children born has been so close to the minimum number needed for replacement. Replacement level is generally cited as 2.1, taking into account that a small proportion of adults will never marry and that a small percentage of those who do will not produce any children. The importance of fertility is accentuated as the rate of intermarriage increases, contributing to possible losses in the population through both conversion of the Jewish partner away from Judaism and the socialization of children of mixed marriages either in non-Jewish religions or in an entirely nonreligious environment.

The data from the Providence Jewish population survey shed further light on both the downward trend in Jewish fertility and the post World War II recovery. Information on family size and birth spacing by date of first marriage indicates that Jewish family size declined steadily from the marriage cohort marrying before

1910 to those marrying between 1920 and 1924 (Table 7). Average family size among those marrying during the two decades between 1925 and 1944 stabilized at around two children. Although complete information is available for only two observation periods--1945-1949 and 1950-1954--the postwar marriage cohorts show a definite gradual increase in family size. These data clearly indicate that family size declined during the depression and pre-war years and that Jewish couples participated in the "baby boom" following World War II.

Patterns of birth spacing reveal the shorter birth intervals of the pre-depression cohorts, the longer birth intervals of the depression cohorts, and the earlier family formation patterns of the cohorts marrying after the end of World War II. These birth spacing patterns among Jewish couples conform to those observed for the general population. However, a comparison of the birth spacing data to similar data by marriage cohorts for total white women in the United States reveals that Jewish fertility was characterized by longer birth intervals.<sup>20</sup> Indirectly, these data point to the efficient use of contraception by Jewish couples for the planning of family size and the spacing of children.

Fertility information collected as part of a 1966-1967 Population Survey of the Jewish community of Springfield, Massachusetts, provides some further insights into the past and future trends in Jewish fertility.<sup>21</sup> Since the data are derived from a cross-sectional survey the analyses of trends are based on cohort comparison, utilizing information on both children ever born and expected total fertility by age of mother. The close similarity between these findings and those identified in the 1963 survey of Providence suggests that the patterns are not unique to these communities and may, indeed, be indicative of more general patterns on the American scene. This is also supported by comparisons on a gross level with the earlier cited national data collected in the Growth of American Families Study.

In Springfield the average number of children already born to Jewish women under 40 averaged 2.2 and the average number expected by the completion of fertility is 2.7. The age specific data point to the changing patterns of fertility among Jews. From a high of almost three children per married woman among the cohort born at the end of the 19th century, fertility declined to below replacement level among women born between the turn of the century and the end of World War I, most of whom were bearing their children between the late 1920's and the early 1940's. This reduction in fertility level corresponded to general declines in the United States which reflected both the long run trend toward lower fertility and the effects of the depression. The upturn in fertility actually began with that cohort of women born about World War I who bore their children in the late 1930's and early 1940's, and it was considerably accentuated in the post-war baby boom. As a result, the average number of children ever born to women who themselves were "depression babies" was 2.8, an average equalled to date in the population under analysis only by the oldest cohort, those 75 years old and over in late 1966. Judged by expected total fertility, completed Jewish fertility levels will average between 2.5 and 3.0 children for those still in their childbearing years. The overall trend toward somewhat larger families is further evidenced in the sharp declines in the proportion either having no children or only one child and the increase in the three and four child family.

Overall, these 1967 data on changing levels of fertility by age cohort suggested little immediate likelihood of sharp declines in Jewish fertility to the sub-replacement levels reached among those producing their families in the depression years. Jews continue to have among the highest proportions of any segment of the population who practice birth control and who use the most efficient methods. This permits them to maintain the lower than average rates compared to



Table 7

## FERTILITY BY DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE, GREATER PROVIDENCE, 1963

| Marriage Cohorts | Average Number of Children Ever Born | Percent Childless | First Birth Interval (Average Months) | Second Birth Interval (I)* (Average Months) | Second Birth Interval (II)* (Average Months) |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Before 1910      | 3.5                                  | 0.0               | 12.8                                  | 76.0  | 48.5   |
| 1910-1919        | 2.8                                  | 3.4               | 18.3                                  | 68.5  | 37.5   |
| 1920-1924        | 2.2                                  | 6.6               | 24.3                                  | 63.5  | 44.5   |
| 1925-1929        | 1.9                                  | 9.8               | 27.0                                  | 85.0  | 51.0   |
| 1930-1934        | 2.0                                  | 11.4              | 27.1                                  | 82.5  | 55.0   |
| 1935-1939        | 2.0                                  | 7.8               | 30.8                                  | 70.4  | 41.8   |
| 1940-1944        | 2.0                                  | 7.7               | 30.0                                  | 72.2  | 44.6   |
| 1945-1949        | 2.2                                  | 5.7               | 23.8                                  | 62.5  | 37.4   |
| 1950-1954        | 2.3                                  | 7.3               | 22.4                                  | 55.5  | 30.8   |
| 1955-1963        | **                                   | **                | 19.2                                  | 44.8  | 28.5   |
| Total            | 2.1                                  | 8.9               | 24.4                                  | 65.1  | 36.2   |

Source: Goldstein and Goldscheider, Jewish Americans, p. 122.

\*Second Birth Interval (I) refers to months between marriage and second child; Second Birth Interval (II) refers to months between first and second child.

\*\*Since this cohort is recently married, the families are in the early child-bearing stage and the data on the number of children ever born are not meaningful.

Table 8

NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN BY 1967 AND EXPECTED TOTAL BIRTHS  
BY AGE OF MOTHER, SPRINGFIELD

| Age         | Average<br>Number Born<br>by 1967 | Total<br>Number | Total<br>Percent | Percent Distribution by Number Ever Born |      |      |       |      |                     |                 | Expected<br>Total<br>Births* |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--|------|------|-------|------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
|             |                                   |                 |                  | None                                     | One  | Two  | Three | Four | Five<br>and<br>Over | Not<br>Reported |                              |
| 20 - 24     | 0.9                               | 106             | 100.0            | 28.3                                     | 52.8 | 15.1 | 3.8   | -    | -                   | -               | 3.2                          |
| 25 - 29     | 1.7                               | 140             | 100.0            | 18.6                                     | 17.1 | 44.3 | 17.1  | 2.9  | -                   | -               | 2.5                          |
| 30 - 34     | 2.2                               | 230             | 100.0            | 7.0                                      | 15.6 | 34.8 | 36.5  | 6.1  | -                   | -               | 2.4                          |
| 35 - 39     | 2.8                               | 386             | 100.0            | 2.6                                      | 4.2  | 34.7 | 40.4  | 13.0 | 5.1                 | -               | 2.8                          |
| 40 - 44     | 2.5                               | 408             | 100.0            | 2.0                                      | 7.3  | 43.1 | 31.4  | 15.2 | 1.0                 | -               | 2.5                          |
| 45 - 49     | 2.2                               | 398             | 100.0            | 5.5                                      | 9.1  | 52.3 | 25.1  | 4.0  | 3.0                 | 1.0             | 2.2                          |
| 50 - 54     | 1.9                               | 398             | 100.0            | 9.1                                      | 18.6 | 42.7 | 22.6  | 3.0  | 2.0                 | 2.0             | 1.9                          |
| 55 - 59     | 1.7                               | 308             | 100.0            | 12.3                                     | 23.4 | 39.6 | 18.2  | 2.6  | -                   | 3.9             | 1.7                          |
| 60 - 64     | 1.9                               | 304             | 100.0            | 7.9                                      | 22.4 | 47.4 | 14.5  | 3.9  | 2.6                 | 1.3             | 1.9                          |
| 65 - 69     | 2.0                               | 250             | 100.0            | 14.4                                     | 18.4 | 33.6 | 19.2  | 12.8 | 1.6                 | -               | 2.0                          |
| 70 - 74     | 2.5                               | 188             | 100.0            | 10.6                                     | 17.1 | 23.4 | 27.7  | 10.6 | 10.3                | -               | 2.5                          |
| 75 and Over | 2.8                               | 222             | 100.0            | 5.4                                      | 5.4  | 37.9 | 16.2  | 18.9 | 12.6                | 3.6             | 2.8                          |
| Total       | 2.2                               | 3,338           | 100.0            | 8.3                                      | 15.0 | 39.7 | 24.6  | 8.1  | 2.2                 | 1.1             | 2.3                          |

\*Includes data for completed fertility groups 45 years and over to facilitate comparisons.

Source: Sidney Goldstein, "Completed and Expected Fertility in an American Jewish Community,"  
Jewish Social Studies, 33 (April-July, 1971), p. 219.

other religious groups. It has not, however, prevented younger women from having more children than did older cohorts. As a result of this change, Jewish fertility among those under 45, judged by children already born and the additional number expected, may be reaching levels adequate to insure replacement, but only if the total number are not dissipated by heavy rates of loss through intermarriage and/or assimilation. Whether the declining levels of actual and expected fertility which characterized the total U.S. population in the very late 1960's and the early 1970's also involved declines for the Jewish population remains to be determined. Since the final fertility levels of the younger cohorts are still subject to change, the expected averages may be reduced as part of the changes occurring in the larger society.

#### Intermarriage

Increasing concern with the demographic growth and survival of the Jewish population in the United States is based not only on the low fertility of the Jews; low growth rates or actual decline can also result from excessive losses to the majority group through assimilation. A consistent threat not only to the maintenance of Jewish identification but also to the demographic maintenance of the Jewish population and to family stability is interfaith marriage. If marital assimilation takes place at a high rate, the Jewish group faces demographic losses both through the assimilation of the Jewish partner to the marriage and through the loss of children born to such a marriage. In recent years, concern with the "vanishing American Jew" has reached considerable proportions as a variety of evidence has suggested an increasingly high rate of intermarriage. In the face of earlier evidence that the Jewish group had been remarkably successful, compared to other groups, in maintaining religious endogamy, the excitement

caused by this new evidence is understandable.<sup>22</sup> It has generated considerable research in Jewish community surveys on the extent of intermarriage, both as an indication of the possible impact of intermarriage on Jewish demographic survival and as an index of the extent of group conformity, loyalty, and cohesiveness among Jews.

No definite assessment of the level and character of Jewish intermarriage and of changes over time can be made without the development of a considerably better body of data than is currently available. Although statistics on rates of intermarriage are available now from a number of community surveys, the quality of the data varies; their use must be preceded by careful attention to the type of community studied, to the comprehensiveness of the study's population coverage, and to the way intermarriage was measured. The rate of intermarriage tends to be considerably higher in those areas where Jews constitute a smaller percentage of the population. The rate of intermarriage is also higher if the data are based on a study in which both Jewish and non-Jewish households in the community are surveyed, since such surveys are most apt to find those families who are on the fringes of the Jewish community. Finally, care must be given to the manner in which intermarriage itself is measured. Studies relying exclusively on the current religious identification of marriage partners run the serious risk of under-counting intermarriages since those partners to a mixed marriage who changed their religion in conjunction with the marriage would not be identified as having intermarried.

There is general agreement that the rate of Jewish intermarriage has increased, but because of the lack of data by which to measure trends, as well as serious questions about the quality of available statistics, the extent of the increase has not been clearly determined. A study of intermarriage in New Haven,

Connecticut showed, for example, that Jewish intermarriages increased from zero in 1870 to 5.1 percent in 1950;<sup>23</sup> but New Haven is one of the very few communities in which statistics are available over such a long period of time. Most of the other statements concerning increased rates of intermarriage are based on general comparisons of the current levels of intermarriage in various communities and those in a different set of communities at an earlier time.

For example, in a series of communities cited by Nathan Goldberg, where surveys were taken during the 1930's, the rates of intermarriage generally ranged between 5 and 9 percent.<sup>24</sup> These included such communities as Stamford and New London in Connecticut; and Dallas and San Francisco. But during the same period, Duluth, Minnesota, showed an intermarriage rate of 17.7 percent. A number of communities surveyed in the late 1950's and 1960's also showed levels of intermarriage between 5 and 10 percent: Camden, New Jersey; Rochester; Los Angeles; Jacksonville, Florida; Long Beach, California, and San Francisco. Judging by the similarity between these levels and those noted for a number of communities in the 1930's, one could conclude that there has been no significant rise in the level of intermarriage. Also, in the March, 1957 nationwide sample survey, the United States Census found that 3.8 percent of married persons reporting themselves as Jews were married to non-Jews and that 7.2 percent of all marriages in which at least one partner was Jewish were intermarriages; but both these figures are probably somewhat low, since no information was collected on the earlier religion of the marriage partners. Couples with one converted spouse were therefore not enumerated as mixed marriages. However, for the late 1950's and the 1960's, other estimates of the rate of Jewish intermarriages based on local studies ranged as high as from 18.4 percent for New York City, 37 percent for Marin, California, and 53.6 percent for Iowa.<sup>25</sup> Judging by these latter studies,

recent intermarriage rates are higher, but the typicality of these high rates remains questionable.

Other data used to document the rising trend in intermarriage are those comparing differentials among either the various age segments or the various generation levels of the population in a given community. An analysis of this kind by Eric Rosenthal for the Jewish population of Washington, D. C., in 1956 found that the rate of intermarriage was directly related to distance from the immigrant generation.<sup>26</sup> Whereas the mixed marriage rate was 11.3 percent for the total Jewish population, it increased from 1.4 percent among foreign-born husbands to 10.2 percent among native-born husbands of foreign parentage, up to 17.9 percent of native-born husbands of native parentage. Questions have been raised, however, about the typicality of the Jewish community of Washington and whether findings based on it can be generalized to more stable communities.

Rosenthal's more recent research on Indiana, using marriage records and covering the years 1960-1963, cites an extraordinarily high rate of intermarriage, 48.8 percent of all marriages occurring in that period.<sup>27</sup> The data indicate that intermarriage increases as the size of the Jewish community decreases. In Marion County, containing Indianapolis, the intermarriage rate was 34.5 percent; in counties containing very small Jewish populations, it rose to 54 percent. Rosenthal suggests that "the larger the Jewish community, the easier it is to organize communal activities, to effect the voluntary concentration of Jewish families in specific residential neighborhoods, and to maintain an organized marriage market."<sup>28</sup> The key variable is the number of potential marital partners. Although the Indiana situation again cannot be considered typical of United States Jewry the high rates are in themselves alarming. They do confirm the much greater probability that intermarriage will occur in those regions of the country and

in those communities where the Jewish population is of inadequate size to encourage and to permit high levels of in-marriage.

In assessing our current knowledge of intermarriage, it must be recognized that several important areas of research concerning marriages between Jews and non-Jews have been largely neglected. Not all cases of intermarriage necessarily lead to the loss of the Jewish partner. Conversion of the non-Jew to Judaism may actually add to the Jewish population and also increase the likelihood that the children of such a marriage will be raised as Jews.<sup>29</sup> In order to ascertain the extent to which this happens, surveys focussing on intermarriage must obtain information on the extent of conversion as well as on the religion in which the children of mixed marriages are raised. Both the Providence and Springfield surveys collected such information. Although these surveys are limited by their reliance on master lists, a number of steps were taken to insure maximum opportunity for inclusion of all Jewish households. While no claim is made that the resulting statistics have identified all intermarriages, the findings probably do not depart excessively from the real level of intermarriage. This probability, coupled with the opportunity provided by these data for examining both extent of conversion and extent to which children of mixed marriages are raised as Jews, argues in favor of their brief examination here.

The Providence survey identified 4.5 percent of all marriages as intermarriages, that is, a marriage in which one of the spouses was not Jewish by birth. In the vast majority of these cases, the husband was Jewish and the wife had been born non-Jewish. Only 0.1 percent represented the Jewish wife whose husband was born non-Jewish. This pattern of sex differentials, in which more Jewish men than women marry non-Jewish partners, is typical of almost all communities for which data were collected. Compared to the statistics cited for Washington, San Francisco,

and Indiana, the intermarriage level in Providence is quite low. Yet, it is not atypical, being comparable to levels of intermarriage noted for Rochester, Camden, Springfield, Los Angeles, and New Haven. Since these communities do vary in both size and location, no obvious common denominator helps explain their similar levels of intermarriage.

Of all intermarried couples, 42 percent had experienced the conversion of one partner to Judaism, thereby creating religious homogeneity within the family unit. The survey could not fully ascertain the number of Jewish partners to a mixed marriage who converted away from Judaism cancelling out the gains made through conversion of the non-Jewish partner to Judaism. But the survey data do suggest that, in a considerable proportion of intermarriages, conversion to Judaism does occur, thereby enhancing the chances that the family unit will remain identified as Jewish and that the children will be raised as part of the Jewish community.

For Providence, as for Washington, insights into the trend in level of intermarriage can be gained only by cross-sectional comparison of the intermarriage patterns of different age and generation groups within the population. With the exception of the 30-39 year age group, Providence data pointed to an increase in the rate of intermarriage among the younger segments of the population; the highest percent intermarried (9 percent) characterized the youngest group. On the other hand, the proportion of persons who converted to Judaism consistently increased with decreasing age, from none of the non-Jewish spouses in the 60 and over age group, to 4 out of 10 among those aged 40-59, to 7 out of 10 among those under age 40. This clear-cut pattern is consistent with a conclusion reached by Gerhard Lenski, based on a Detroit study, that the probability of mixed marriages leading to a conversion is considerably greater among younger persons.<sup>30</sup>



Like the Washington studies, the Providence data indicate that generation status affects the rate of intermarriage; however, they also show that it affects the extent of conversion. Among the foreign-born, only 1.2 percent were reported intermarried. Among the third generation, this proportion was almost 6 percent. Moreover, the pattern of differentials by generation status operated within the respective age groups. Only one-fourth of the mixed marriages of the foreign-born resulted in a conversion of the non-Jewish spouse, compared to over half of the intermarriages involving third-generation males. This pattern of generational differences remains even when age is held constant. While confirming that the rate of intermarriage has risen among third-generation compared to first-generation Jews, the Providence levels are well below those observed for Washington, D. C. The Providence data also show a higher rate of conversion of the non-Jewish spouse to Judaism among the third, compared to the first, generation.

Comparisons of the level of intermarriage among the children of the heads of households surveyed in the Providence study support the higher rates for younger segments of the population. Whereas the intermarriage rate of Jews in the survey was 4.5 percent, that among the children of these households was 5.9 percent. Since the children enumerated here include those living outside Greater Providence, the higher rate may reflect not only their younger age but also a tendency for persons who intermarry to move away from their family's community. Although this may partially represent an attempt at anonymity, it is more likely related to the fact that the child was already living away from home and from parental control, thus enhancing the possibility of courting and marrying non-Jews. Most likely presenting a more correct image of the sex differential in levels of intermarriage, the data for these children in the survey units indicate that almost 8 percent of the male children intermarried compared to only 4 percent of the females.

The Providence data were also used in an attempt to assess the effect of intermarriage on fertility levels.<sup>31</sup> Comparison of the fertility of the intermarried with that of the non-intermarried shows that for both women 45 years old and older, who have completed their fertility, and those under 45 years of age, who may still have additional children, intermarried couples had lower fertility than the non-intermarried. Intermarried couples had a lower average number of children ever born; they had a much higher percent of childlessness; and they had a lower percentage of families with four or more children. Quite clearly, intermarriage resulted in lowered fertility; but the differences were not as great among the younger women in the population as among the older, suggesting that whatever factor served earlier to restrict the fertility of intermarried couples operates to a lesser degree for the younger couples.

Finally, the Providence survey ascertained the religious identification of all children in households of intermarried couples. Of the 280 children in this category, 136 were children of couples in which the non-Jewish spouse had converted to Judaism and were therefore being raised as Jews. Of the 144 children belonging to families in which the non-Jewish spouse had not converted, 84 children were being raised as Jews and 60 as non-Jews. The fact that only 22 percent of the 280 children of intermarriages were being raised as non-Jews is in strong contrast to the findings of the Washington survey that 70 percent of the children of mixed marriages were being raised as non-Jews. Too few studies have explored this relationship and more research is essential to obtain meaningful data on a national level.

The Springfield survey collected data comparable to that of Providence and its findings, including an overall intermarriage rate of 4.4, are so similar that presentation of the detailed results would be repetitious. Finally,

mention must be made of the Boston survey of 1965, both because of its very comprehensive coverage of the population and because it represents a Jewish community of about 200,000 persons.<sup>32</sup> This survey found that 7 percent of the marriages represented intermarriages. Although higher than the levels noted for Providence and Springfield, this percentage is still markedly below the high levels noted in some other communities. The Boston data do, however, suggest a sharp rise in the level of intermarriage among the very youngest segment of the population. Intermarriage characterized only 3 percent of the couples in which the age of the husband was 51 and over, and only 7 percent of those with husbands between ages 31 and 50; but 20 percent of the couples in which the husband was 30 years old or younger were intermarried. Regretfully, the Boston study did not report how many of the intermarried persons had converted or in what religion the children of such marriages were being raised.

Another recent investigation of intermarriage, by Fred Sherrow, based its findings on data collected from 1964 follow-up interviews of a national sample survey of 1961 college graduates.<sup>33</sup> The study thus refers to a young population. By 1964, 57 percent of the Jewish respondents had married. Of these, between 10 and 12 percent married non-Jews by birth. The data further show a conversion rate of less than 20 percent by the non-Jewish spouse to Judaism. This rate is considerably below that found in a number of Jewish community studies, but in the absence of comparable data for older cohorts of college graduates, it is not possible to determine whether conversion is increasing among the young. Sherrow suggests that the low rate of conversion he identified may reflect a weakening of the proscription against intermarriage. In addition, the data reveal that 55 percent of the Jews who intermarried retained their Jewish identification. Combining this retention rate with the gains from conversion to Judaism indicates

an estimated overall net loss of 30 percent of the population involved in intermarriages. On this basis, the conclusion seemed justified that the rates are not yet high enough to signal the imminent dissolution of the American Jewish community through intermarriage.

The significance of intermarriage is not limited to concern with demographic maintenance of the Jewish population. It also has relevance for the stability of the family, both through the diversity it introduces into the family situation and the potential it has for disrupting marriages. Providence data provide some insight on the latter.<sup>34</sup> They show sharp differentials in intermarriage rates between those married only once and those married more than once. Among Jewish males under 40, only a few reported more than one marriage and among these none were intermarried. Among those 40 to 59 almost 25 percent of all those married more than once were intermarried, in contrast to only 4 percent of those married only once. Obviously, instability of marriage is very much associated with intermarriage. Unfortunately, no information is available on whether the previous marriage(s) involved an intermarriage. That this differential is part of a general complex is further indicated by the patterns for the females, most of whom were the non-Jewish partner to the marriage. Among wives a considerable number in both the 20-39 and the 40-59 year groups were married more than once. Almost 30 percent of the remarriages of the younger wives and 20 percent of those of the older wives were intermarriages. This contrasted to intermarriage rates of only 7 percent and 4 percent among wives in these respective age groups who were married only once. Quite clearly, intermarriage and marital instability are interrelated. This may reflect the fact that interreligious marriages have a lower survival rate than religiously homogeneous marriages.<sup>35</sup> The high rate of intermarriage among the remarried may stem from a higher than average intermarriage rate in their earlier marriage.

### Summary and Conclusions

This analysis of the demographic features of Jewish family, marriage, and fertility points to several general conclusions.

Jewish families exhibit an overall pattern of stability. Comparisons of the Jewish and the total population indicate that a smaller proportion of Jews were divorced or had married more than once. Furthermore, stability characterized each of the generations. Only a small proportion of first, second, and third-generation Jews were divorced or separated, few married more than once, and the nuclear family type predominated. Yet, slight increases in the proportion of divorced or separated, in the amount of remarriages, and in the proportion living in nuclear households were observed for more recent generations.

Females were more concentrated in widowed and divorced categories than were men. This pattern may be partially interpreted as a consequence of the greater longevity of women, the slightly higher rates of remarriage among males, and the older ages at which males marry. Trends of age at marriage among Jews followed the general downward trend characterizing the American population as a whole, although Jews continued to marry at later ages than non-Jews. Among Jews, reduction in age at marriage was sharper for males than for females.

The two themes of overall stability in Jewish family structure and slight generational increases in divorce, remarriages, and nuclear households fit well with the broader changes that have characterized American Jews. The value of family stability has slowly been changing, suggesting that cultural assimilation in terms of family structure has occurred for the Jewish group, although very slowly, and with the overall retention of the value of family stability.

Low Jewish fertility in the United States is not a recent phenomenon. Evidence for it dates back to the late nineteenth century. Following general

trends, Jewish fertility declined sharply in the first third of the twentieth century. In fact, it dropped below replacement level for several decades. But Jews also shared in the rise in fertility levels after World War II, although Jewish fertility remained below that of non-Jews. The most recent available data on younger couples, based on a combination of fertility achieved to date and indications of future expected fertility, suggest that the average number of children in Jewish families will remain above replacement levels. However, one must recognize that expected numbers may exceed actual completed fertility both because of unanticipated difficulties in achieving pregnancy and because of changed social and economic conditions. Particularly at a time when a strong movement toward zero population growth seems to be sweeping American society, Jewish fertility may decline once again as part of the general trend. The averages may then be too low to insure continued population growth when losses, resulting from intermarriage and assimilation, are taken into account.

What is the overall pattern of intermarriage and conversion that emerges? No simple answer to this seems possible. Quite a heterogeneous pattern characterizes the United States depending on the size, location, age, and social cohesiveness of the particular community. Yet within these variations in level of intermarriage, the data suggest that the intermarriage rate is increasing among the young, native-born Americans. Eventually, intermarriage rates in the United States may reach a plateau around which the experience of individual communities will fluctuate. But for the immediate future the overall rate of intermarriage is likely to rise further as an increasing proportion of the population becomes third-generation Americans and moves away from older areas of dense Jewish population to newly developed, more integrated areas within both the cities and suburbs, and to more distant communities with fewer Jews and less organized Jewish life. Such rising rates may in turn lead to greater marital instability.

At the same time, the data for several communities suggest that although the rate of intermarriage may be increasing among the third generation, a higher proportion of these intermarriages results in the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse to Judaism; the rate of conversions is higher among the very groups having a higher intermarriage rate. Moreover, a significant proportion of children in such marriages are being raised as Jews. And finally, among the young, the fertility patterns of intermarried couples also resemble more closely those of the non-intermarried than in the older age groups.

These patterns of family structure, fertility, and intermarriage indicate that the Jewish family has responded to alterations in American society as a whole and that some cultural assimilation, judged by changes in family structure, in levels of fertility, and rates of intermarriage, has occurred. At the same time, these demographic indicators suggest that family cohesion remains an important value among Jews and that, compared to the general population, the Jewish family continues to exhibit a relatively high degree of stability.

Footnotes

\*This report is based largely on material contained in Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile," American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 72 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971), pp. 3-88. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, has given permission to quote from Sidney Goldstein and Calvin Goldscheider, Jewish Americans: Three Generations in an American Jewish Community, 1968.

1. William J. Goode, The Family, Foundations of Modern Sociology Series (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 1-7.

2. John Hajnal, "The Marriage Boom," in Demographic Analysis, eds. Joseph J. Spengler and Otis D. Duncan (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1956), pp. 220-43; Kingsley Davis, "Statistical Perspective on Marriage and Divorce," in Demographic Analysis, eds. Spengler and Duncan, pp. 243-55; Paul C. Glick, American Families (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1957); Paul C. Glick and Robert Parke, "New Approaches in Studying the Life Cycle of the Family," Demography, II (1965), 187-202; Hugh Carter and Alexander Plateris, "Trends in Divorce and Family Disruption," Health, Education and Welfare Indicators (Washington, D. C.: National Vital Statistics Division, Public Health Service, August, 1963). For a general discussion of the family, see Ernest Burgess, Harvey Locke, and M. Margaret Thomas, The American Family (3rd ed.), (New York: American Book Company, 1965).

3. For a fuller analysis of these patterns and trends, see Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile," American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 72 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971), pp. 3-88.

4. No single source of information on the demography of American Jews is available, so that a variety of sources must be used. Because replies to the



decennial census are mandatory, no inquiry on religion has ever been included in a U.S. census. As a result, in terms of national coverage, probably the best single source of information is the data collected by the Bureau of the Census in its March, 1957 Current Population Survey, which, unlike the decennial census, was voluntary. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Religion Reported by the Civilian Population of the United States, March, 1957," Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 79 (February 2, 1958); also "Tabulations of Data on the Social and Economic Characteristics of Major Religious Groups, March, 1957," unpublished tabulations.) Although already outdated, the limited data available from this census survey provide important base data on the demography of religious groups, including the Jews.

Other nationwide statistics on religious composition are available from various surveys undertaken by public opinion polls and other organizations. Since such national surveys include only a small number of Jews in their samples, their use for analysis of Jewish socio-demographic patterns is greatly restricted.

Finally, insights into the characteristics of Jews and the differences between the Jewish population and those of the total population are available from a number of community population surveys, usually sponsored by the local Jewish federation group. (For a selected bibliography of community surveys, see Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile," American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 72 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971), pp. 87-88.) These studies differ considerably in quality, depending, in particular, on the manner in which the sample population was selected, but also on the quality of the interviewers and the analysis. Ideally, the use of community master lists for sampling purposes should be supplemented by efforts to identify those segments of the population not included in the file. Such screening is essential since

any conclusions concerning the nature of Jewish identification, membership in Jewish organizations, intermarriage, etc. would be seriously biased if those individuals and families who are most assimilated and therefore least likely to be included in a master list are omitted from the survey. Yet community surveys frequently fail in this respect, and for this reason in particular their findings must be interpreted with great care; the patterns noted may apply only to the affiliated segments of the population.

An additional problem relates to the extent to which any particular community or group of communities adequately represents the Jewish population of the United States as a whole or even the population of a particular region. Most surveys to date have been conducted in moderate sized communities, and surveys of centers of heavy Jewish concentration, such as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, have been conspicuously missing. Yet, the statistics from the individual community surveys display impressively similar patterns with respect to the characteristics of the Jewish populations they analyze, suggesting that the demographic profile of American Jewry as a whole does not deviate significantly from that depicted by already existing sources, incomplete as they are. Results to be obtained from the National Jewish Population Survey, which is currently in process, promise to provide the first comprehensive set of data on the total American Jewish population.

5. Marshall Sklare, America's Jews (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 74-75.

6. Ronald M. Goldstein, "American Jewish Population Studies Since World War II," American Jewish Archives, 22 (April, 1970), p. 14-46.

7. Sidney Goldstein and Calvin Goldscheider, Jewish Americans: Three Generations in a Jewish Community (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 103-104.

8. Ibid., pp. 106-111.

9. Ronald Freedman, Pascal K. Whelpton, and John W. Smit, "Socio-Economic Factors in Religious Differentials in Fertility," American Sociological Review, 26 (August, 1961), p. 610; Pascal K. Whelpton, Arthur A. Campbell, and John E. Patterson, Fertility and Family Planning in the United States (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 321.

10. Ira Rosenwaike, "Factors Associated with Religious and Civil Marriages," Demography, 9 (February, 1972), pp. 137-138.

11. Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1963), p. 214.

12. John S. Billings, "Vital Statistics of the Jews in the United States," Census Bulletin, No. 19 (December 30, 1889), pp. 4-9.

13. Rhode Island Census of 1905, Tables VII and VIII, pp. 550-553.

14. R. K. Stix and Frank Notestein, Controlled Fertility (Baltimore: The William and Wilkins Co., 1940), p. 29; Raymond Pearl, The National History of Population (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1939), pp. 241-242.

15. Pascal K. Whelpton and Clyde V. Kiser, "Differential Fertility Among Native-White Couples in Indianapolis," Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility, I, Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly, 21 (July, 1943), pp. 226-271.

16. Ronald Freedman, Pascal K. Whelpton and Arthur A. Campbell, Family Planning, Sterility and Population Growth (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959); Pascal K. Whelpton, Arthur A. Campbell, and John E. Patterson, Fertility and Family Planning in the United States (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Charles F. Westoff, Robert G. Potter, Jr., Philip C. Sagi, and Eliot G. Mishler, Family Growth in Metropolitan America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961); Charles F. Westoff, Robert G. Potter, Jr., and Philip C. Sagi, The Third Child (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); David Goldberg and Harry Sharp,

- "Some Characteristics of Detroit Area Jews and Non-Jewish Adults," in Marshall Sklare, The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group (New York: The Free Press, 1958), pp. 108-110.
17. Freedman, Whelpton, and Campbell, op. cit., pp. 608-610.
  18. Whelpton, Campbell, and Patterson, op. cit., pp. 71-72 and 247-252.
  19. Norman B. Ryder and Charles F. Westoff, Reproduction in the United States, 1965 (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).
  20. See Whelpton, Campbell, and Patterson, op. cit., pp. 304 and 321, and Chapter 3; Pascal K. Whelpton, "Trends and Differentials in the Spacing of Births," Demography, I (1964), pp. 83-93; Paul C. Glick and Robert Parke, Jr., "New Approaches in Studying the Life Cycle of the Family," Demography, II (1965), p. 190. See also David Goldberg, "Fertility and Fertility Differentials: Some Observations on Recent Changes in the United States," in Public Health and Population Change, eds. Mindell Sheps and Jeanne Clare Ridley (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1965), p. 122.
  21. Sidney Goldstein, "Completed and Expected Fertility in an American Jewish Community," Jewish Social Studies, 33 (April-July, 1971), pp. 212-227.
  22. Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 181-182.
  23. Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy, "What Has Social Science to Say About Inter-marriage?" in Werner J. Cahnman, ed., Intermarriage and Jewish Life (New York: Herzl Press, 1963), p. 29.
  24. Nathan Goldberg, "The Jewish Population in the United States," in The Jewish People, Past and Present, II (New York: Central Yiddish Culture Organization, 1948), p. 29.
  25. New York data are taken from Jerold S. Heiss, "Premarital Characteristics of the Religiously Intermarried in an Urban Area," American Sociological Review, 25 (1960), pp. 47-55. Iowa data were analyzed by Erich Rosenthal, "Studies of

Jewish Inter-marriage in the United States," American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 64 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1963), pp. 34-51.

26. Rosenthal, op. cit.

27. Erich Rosenthal, "Jewish Inter-marriage in Indiana," American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 68 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), p. 263.

28. Ibid., pp. 263-264.

29. Marshall Sklare, "Inter-marriage and Jewish Survival," Commentary, 49 (March, 1970), pp. 51-58.

30. Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), pp. 54-55.

31. Goldstein and Goldscheider, op. cit., pp. 166-169.

32. Morris Axelrod, Floyd D. Fowler, and Arnold Gurin, A Community Survey for Long Range Planning. A Study of the Jewish Population of Greater Boston (Boston: Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, 1967).

33. Reported in Arnold Schwartz, "Inter-marriage in the United States," American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 71 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1970), pp. 101-121.

34. Goldstein and Goldscheider, op. cit., pp. 164-165.

35. See Lee G. Burchinal and Loren F. Chancellor, "Survival Rates Among Types of Religiously Homogamous and Interreligious Marriages, Iowa, 1953-1959," Social Forces, XLI (May, 1963), pp. 353-362; Judson T. Landis, "Marriages of Mixed and Non-Mixed Religious Faiths," American Sociological Review, XIV, No. 3 (1949), pp. 401-407.



AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH FAMILIES  
IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGING AMERICAN FAMILY LIFE

by

DR. ZENA SMITH BLAU

Prepared for

The American Jewish Committee

Consultation on the Jewish Family and Jewish Identity

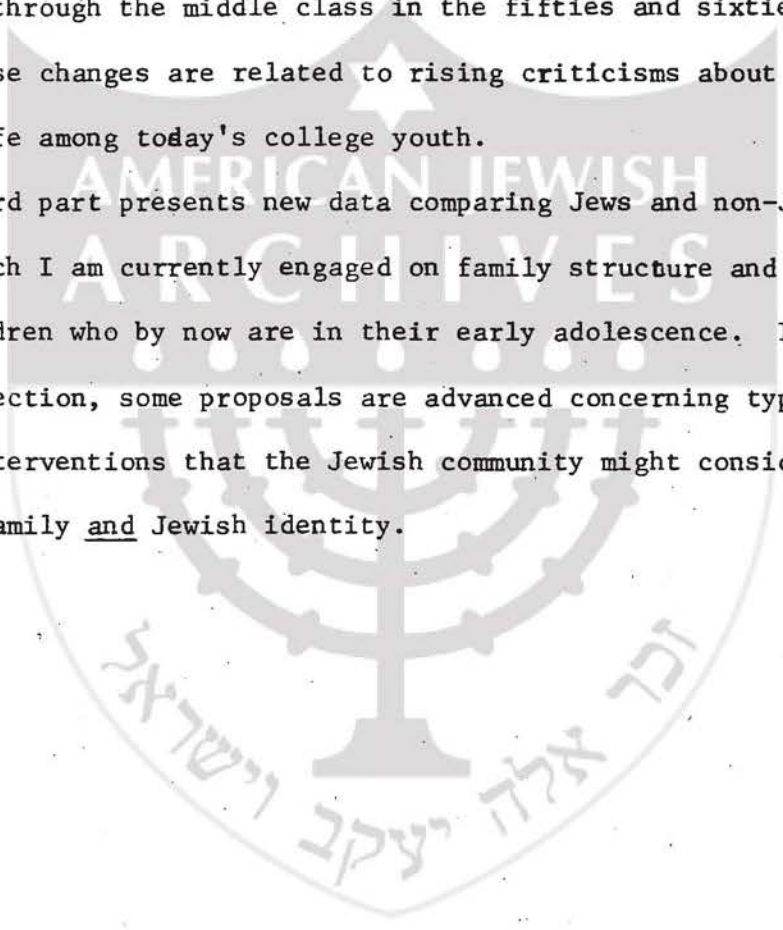
APRIL 23-24, 1972

## Introduction

I have divided my paper into four parts. Part I focuses on the problems of marriage and divorce in the context of changes that occurred in American society following World War II.

The second part deals with the changes in the socialization of children that spread through the middle class in the fifties and sixties and the way in which these changes are related to rising criticisms about the quality of family life among today's college youth.

The third part presents new data comparing Jews and non-Jews from a study in which I am currently engaged on family structure and the socialization of children who by now are in their early adolescence. In the brief concluding section, some proposals are advanced concerning types of innovations and interventions that the Jewish community might consider to fortify the Jewish family and Jewish identity.



## I. Marriage and Divorce

Following the deprivations and uncertainties induced by depression and the upheaval of World War II, young Americans (who by now are middle aged and parents of the present generation of youth) embraced family life with renewed fervor. Love, marriage, children and a comfortable home in the suburbs equipped with labor-saving devices of every variety, surrounded by grass and congenial neighbors, in communities with good shopping centers were deemed to be eminently worth while goals and attainable ones, given a rapidly expanding economy, a growing rate of employment in non-manual work and rising wages and job security afforded by large-scale unionization of blue-collar workers. The institutionalization of "easy credit" terms for the purchase of houses and consumer goods made it possible for millions of Americans to marry young and establish and furnish apartments or homes of their own at marriage, instead of deferring marriage or living in parental households until they had saved enough money to establish independent households. Younger people left the old neighborhoods in the central city for the suburbs in a quest for more living space and good schools for their children. The old ethnic neighborhoods declined and ceased to be the focus of community for second generation Americans. Ethnic languages and customs were readily surrendered and lingering vestiges of "foreignness" in the second generation disappeared by the third generation. The ideal was to be fully and completely modern and American. The waning significance of ethnicity and religion has left family and occupation as the central, and for millions of adults, virtually the only vehicles of identity.

Since the value and worth of men has increasingly come to be measured by the monetary remuneration and the prestige their job commands, it may



seem natural that men should invest themselves most heavily in this sector of their existence, and that home should come to represent mainly a haven from the drives and tensions of the "rat race."

The overarching significance of the job in the lives of married men often severely depletes the energies that they have left to invest in their roles as husbands and fathers, and this has become a serious source of impoverishment and discontent in marriage and in family life. The paradox is that men legitimate their overinvestment of time and energy in the job on the grounds that thereby they maximize the economic resources available to their wives and children for a more affluent style of life. By doing so, however, they are constrained to give less of themselves to familial roles. This has become a source of estrangement between husbands and wives, and between fathers and children. The active, aggressive male on the job all too often comes home to lapse into passivity and lethargy. He wants physical and emotional nurturance from a "mother-wife" who also is expected to "train" children not "to bother daddy because he's tired." In this sense, "absence" of husbands and fathers is not uncommon even in many so-called "intact" urban and suburban families.

I do not share Talcott Parsons' view of the functionality of the division of labor between the sexes found in many American families in which instrumental tasks are allocated to the father and expressive ones to the mother.<sup>1</sup> From a purely economic perspective, such an arrangement may be functional. The division of labor on the assembly line of automobile factories is efficient and profitable. But the by-products of such divisions of labor are alienation from work and from family life.

Since families are social systems, imbalances in the role performance of one member of the system have consequences for all other members in the

system. The joys but also the burdens of rearing children have increasingly fallen to women. Child rearing is a demanding task, particularly in a highly mobile, changing society with an isolated nuclear family system. When the task of socializing children is actively shared by man and wife, all members of the family benefit, particularly if both parents are relatively healthy and competent. Children have two positive, affectively significant others to serve as models, as sources of motivation and emotional support. The wife whose husband shares actively in childrearing responsibilities has an opportunity to cultivate abilities and interests outside of and independent from husband and children. Without independent role resources, a woman feels vulnerable and resentful. A "martyr" who serves the cause of others and never herself imposes a burden of guilt on her husband and children that is alienating and self-defeating. Thus overinvestment in family roles can be as stifling to the mind and spirit of healthy, well-educated women as overinvestment in the job is for men.

The "feminine mystique" that spread among the American middle class in the fifties was an attempt to legitimate anew the traditional division of labor between the sexes in the economy and within the home. For the economy, particularly for the large corporate structures in which an increasingly large proportion of the male labor force is employed, a revival and accentuation of traditional sex role divisions has had positive functions, because it provided a rationale for directing the full energies and loyalties of men toward the corporation while insuring that their wives would enthusiastically take on single-handedly the tasks and responsibilities of running a home and socializing children.<sup>2</sup>

For marriage and family cohesion, such accentuated role differentiation between husband and wife have had negative consequences, because it undermines love, intimacy and companionship, which constitute the chief emotional

and ideological bases for marriage in modern, secular societies. The traditional bases for marital solidarity--the economic functions, sacramental significance, the social imbeddedness in larger social networks--have greatly declined in importance as preservers of marriage. The diffuse solidarity that distinguishes true love relationships from instrumental or exploitative ones, increasingly has become the reason for marrying and for preserving a marriage. The division of labor between the sexes has traditionally been a structural source of estrangement and alienation between husband and wife, but in earlier eras other strong constraints existed to prevent the dissolution of marriages. Such constraints are very much weakened or altogether absent among increasing numbers of subgroups in contemporary society.

The rising rate of divorce in contemporary society, for the most part, is not an indication of disenchantment with marriage as an institution, but rather a reflection of the rising demands and expectations from marriage on the one hand, and the weakening of the economic and ideological constraints against divorce. The fact is that the proportion of ever-married people in America is higher today than in any former era. Furthermore, the rate of remarriage has shown a steady increase not only among younger divorced individuals but also among the middle-aged, although with increasing age the remarriage chances of women decline, owing to the shorter life expectancy of males compared to females and to the greater availability of potential mates to men of females from considerably younger age groups.

The subgroups traditionally most vulnerable to divorce continue to have a higher incidence of divorce. People who marry very young still run a higher risk of divorce than others. People in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to divorce than those in higher class positions.

Childless couples are more prone to divorce than couples with children. Divorce rates are higher among couples with different religious backgrounds than between those who share a common faith. Non-church attenders have higher rates of divorce than church attenders, etc. Since the average age of marriage has shown a decline since World War II, the size of this divorce prone group has increased. Similarly, the rising incidence of interfaith marriages, and of people without religious ties have contributed to rising divorce rates. But divorce rates are also rising among sub-groups with a traditionally greater immunity to divorce. Thus divorce is occurring more frequently among married people with minor children.<sup>3</sup> Rising rates of employment among married women and rising job opportunities at higher occupational levels for women makes divorce a more available option than in former eras to unhappily married people. Finally, the trend toward younger average age of marriage, evident since the end of World War II, combined with a considerably extended life span will, I believe, lead to an increase in divorce among middle aged people approaching or in the post-parental phase of married life. Although there has been a rise in birth rates since World War II, the evidence suggests that it was a short-term trend, a reaction to the delays in starting or completing a family caused by the great depression and the war among people of child-bearing age. The most recent statistics indicate that that trend has run its course, and that there will be a return among contemporary youth to the long-term trend toward smaller family size, a trend initially promoted by urbanization and industrialization in the twentieth century that will be abetted by easier and more effective birth control devices; by the rising awareness of the dangers of overpopulation; and by the rising advocacy of work careers for women as a mechanism for

promoting equality between the sexes. Smaller sized families, in turn, will mean the completion of child rearing responsibilities for married couples earlier in the life cycle than in former eras. The post parental phase of married life nowadays begins, on the average, in the later forties. Married people, still in the prime of life and with the prospect of nearly a quarter of a century left to live will be less content to stay in marriages ridden with boredom or conflict. If they feel they have other more satisfying alternatives, such as the possibility of re-marriage, and, added to that, the possibility of work careers, for women, middle-aged people in the future, I expect, will become more prone to divorce than has been the case in the past.

In short, I see little prospect of a decline in the proportions of people who will enter marriages and bear children. But what is looming is an increase in the incidence of serial monogamy, i.e., of people who will have two or three marriages during their life-time; an increase of divorced women relative to divorced men, particularly in middle and later life; and an increase in the incidence of divorce among married couples with minor children. What is changing is not the popularity of marriage and family but the number and duration of marriages and families of procreation that individuals will participate in during their lifetime.

## II. Socialization and Expectations of Youth

Burgeoning college enrollments in the sixties reflected the rise in birth rate of the later forties and fifties in the middle classes and also a rise in the proportion of youth from better-off working class families sending their children to college.

A sharp contrast exists between college youth of the fifties and that of the sixties. The former, the birth cohort of the thirties, was a much smaller one, reflecting the low birth rates during the depression era. A number of more mature students, veterans of the Korean War were present on college campuses. Though college youth were largely from upper middle and rising middle class homes, overall they came from less affluent homes than the youth of the sixties. The repressive political era of McCarthy inhibited political interest and activity. Youth were dedicated to vocational goals and having fun. Fraternities and sororities dominated campus culture. These youth identified with their parents' aspirations for them. A lucrative and high status career and a happy marriage, a domestic wife and healthy, well-adjusted children for them, <sup>as</sup> for their parents, encompassed the range of their ambitions. Security--economic, political and social--was the dominant theme of life in the fifties. It represented a respite from economic struggle and from the upheavals of life produced by the war.

During the fifties, a more humane and permissive mode of child rearing became widely established in the middle class. The themes of Freud gained wide currency among the better educated segments of the population. The rather spartan mode of socialization--restrictive and lacking warmth--practiced by white Protestant Anglo-saxon parents in the twenties and thirties and the authoritarian methods that prevailed in working class Protestant and Catholic homes came under heavy criticism from psychologists

and childrearing experts. Rigidity, coldness, severity and punitiveness in child rearing came gradually to be recognized as unnecessary and even harmful to personality development.

The 1951 edition of Infant Care, published by U.S. Children's Bureau, recommended more permissive methods of infant care than had been advocated in earlier editions. Dr. Spock's book, Baby and Child Care, witty, humane, and wise, provided new guidelines for raising healthy children. His book, which sold in the millions, disseminated a developmental view of the human being. He emphasized the great importance of maternal affection, nurturance, understanding and tolerance in infancy and early childhood in laying the foundation of a healthy personality. He laid stress on the individuality of each child, and discouraged parents from putting pressure on their children to adhere to foreordained time-tables and elaborate roles and restrictions, in feeding, toilet training, and the like. He advised strongly against abrupt weaning, coercive practices in toilet training and control of infantile and childhood sex play, and sensitized parents to their children's need to explore and experiment and to test their growing sense of autonomy as motor and language skills develop. He advised parents to forego punishment and instead rely on milder forms of control, such as verbal admonishment and explanation. Spock spoke out fervently against the use of fear and intimidation in socializing children and led parents to appreciate that far greater dangers lie in undue restrictiveness than in loving, nurturant and tolerant socialization methods.

The traditional sex differentiation in the socialization of the sexes declined in the upper middle class over the past few decades. Boys and girls, as they are growing up, are accorded much the same treatment by mothers.

Indeed, my research shows this to be a characteristic that distinguishes the middle class from the white working class. The gap in the educational attainment of the sexes has narrowed. Throughout the stage of youth, there is a growing equality and openness between the sexes. Less defensive masculinity and less manipulative femininity is clearly evident among college youth today. Expressive of this is the long hair and the sexless and unpretentious mode of dress among both sexes found today among upper middle class youth. There is a greater friendliness and a greater sense of equality between young men and women than in former eras.

The strategy of infant and early childhood socialization described above is a highly appropriate one for a democratic society, which puts a high premium on respect for the integrity of the individual, encourages democratic participation and control, and which requires and rewards high levels of intellectual knowledge and skill among its citizenry to man the complex and highly elaborated occupational system of our urban-industrial society.

An important element in the rising expectations of contemporary educated youth, reflected in their criticisms of marriage and family in contemporary society, has been the more enlightened mode of their socialization, compared to the way children were reared in the past. It may seem paradoxical to say that a more loving and enlightened mode of socializing children is an important basis for the critical stance of modern youth, but actually it is not. Young people who have been reared with love and understanding, who have not been coerced and disciplined to obey adult authority but instead have been encouraged to express their opinions and form their own judgments, who have never suffered material deprivation and therefore can afford to be



non-materialistic, quite understandably develop high standards and high expectations about the quality of life and the functioning of institutions in their own society. A concern for justice, a yearning for love and for community are luxuries that only the affluent and educated can afford. The brutishness of the struggle for existence takes up all the energies of the poor. For them, as Brecht wrote, "erst kommt das magen, denn kommt die morale."

What is under attack among today's educated youth is the isolation of the nuclear family, its lack of imbeddedness in communal networks and the stultifying effects on men and women produced by the division of labor between the sexes at home and at work. Male youth fear the seduction of the market place, the materialistic pursuit of success and the erosion of playfulness and openness in their lives inside and outside the family. Young women fear the end of personal freedom and self-realization when they marry and start families. Despite their fears and skepticism, they are marrying and establishing families. However, many youth today are determined to change the nature of family life. They seek to break down traditional role divisions between the sexes and to break down the isolation of the nuclear family. They are looking for new ways to link family members individually and as a collectivity into new forms of community life.

### Part III

#### A Comparative Survey of Jews and Non-Jews

My current research on Maternal child-rearing strategies that relates to scholastic ability of fifth and sixth grade children contains a wide range of data on family structure and socialization of children among various religious sub-groups, including Jews, that constitute American society.<sup>4</sup> This section of the paper will report and discuss comparative findings concerning Jews' and non-Jews' family structure, current status, origin status, intergenerational changes in status and socialization practices, current orientations and socialization patterns, IQ and scholastic achievement of children, and social participation patterns of mothers and children in the sample. In the presentation of findings I concentrate more on patterns of similarity or difference between Jews and other groups than on the magnitude of these differences.

My sample was deliberately not drawn on a probability basis for reasons that are too complicated to enumerate here. Regular and consistent patterns of differences between Jews and other sub-groups are to be trusted, I believe, even where the magnitudes of difference are not large. Some differences between Jews and the two sub-groups most similarly located in the stratification system remain significant after SES is co-varied and in some comparisons these differences disappear partly or altogether. When differences completely disappear, one concludes that those differences are explained by differences in SES among the sub-groups. When, however, some residual differences remain, and even continue to be statistically significant, it can be taken as an indication of persisting sub-cultural differences between Jews and non-Jews. Both kinds of findings are interesting and are therefore reported and discussed.

Protestants constitute the largest and most heterogeneous religious grouping in the United States. Many studies have shown marked differences in the social and economic composition of various Protestant denominations and these differences are clearly evident in my sample. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists (whom I shall hereafter refer to as "high Protestant") resemble Jews and non-religious mothers<sup>5</sup> more than they do other Protestants. However, though they exhibit more likenesses to each other, than each does to any other religious sub-group, there are small but consistent patterns of differences between high Protestants, Jews and non-believers that are interesting and meaningful. Jews, in short, have many more things in common with high Protestants and the non-religious people in the communities studied, than with other religious sub-groups. At the same time, they are also distinctive in a number of ways, owing to their history and their culture.

It is a reasonable assumption that to the extent that Jews associate with non-Jews at work, in their neighborhoods, and their social and organizational life, their contacts will be mainly with high Protestants and the non-religious members in their community, for they are the groups with whom Jews have most in common from the standpoint of current status, educational attainment, family structure, style of life, socialization practices, and the scholastic performance of their children. Whatever influence is exchanged is most likely to occur between Jews and these two sub-groups of non-Jews. Indeed, their similarities may well be, to some degree at least, a reflection of existing contacts between them.

Jews, high Protestants and non-religious women, as a rule, are located in the upper middle class, in my sample, at least. Their scores on the Duncan

SES scale (range = 0-89) are well above those of other religious sub-groups. High Protestants have the lowest mean SES score (66) among the three groups, Jews stand intermediate (72) and the non-religious are highest (74). The educational attainment of the women and their husbands in these three groups follow the same rank order. So does the amount of intra-generational socio-economic mobility experienced by couples from the time of marriage to the present in the three groups. (See Table 1.)

Table 1  
The Number of White Mothers in Each Religious Sub-Group, Their Mean SES Score, and Their and Their Husbands' Mean Educational Attainment

| Religious Affiliation                                  | Number | Mean Socio-Economic Status Score* | Mean Educational Score |         |
|--|--------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---------|
|  |        |                                   | Respondent             | Husband |
| Protestant   | 240    |                                   |                        |         |
| Low: Baptist and other Fundamentalists                 | (64)   | 46                                | 4.8                    | 5.0     |
| Middle: Methodists and Lutherans                       | (85)   | 54                                | 5.5                    | 5.9     |
| High: Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists | (91)   | 66                                | 6.2                    | 6.5     |
| Catholics  | 95     | 46                                | 5.0                    | 5.0     |
| Jews   | 109    | 72                                | 6.4                    | 6.8     |
| Unitarians, Ethical Culture, Non-Religious             | 67     | 74                                | 6.7                    | 7.0     |
| TOTAL  | 511    |                                   |                        |         |

\* Intragenerational Mobility Mean Scores are: Low Protestant 4.6, middle Protestant 7.6, High Protestant 11.0, Catholic 1.2, Jews 12.9, and non-religious 14.8.

Protestants have longer tenure in America than either Jews or Catholics, since the first settlers of this nation and the earlier waves of immigrants were from Protestant countries in Western Europe. Thus, the overwhelming majority of high Protestants in our sample are at least third generation (85 percent) compared to two thirds in this category among Jews and non-believers. About a quarter of our Jewish and non-religious respondents are second generation (24 percent in each group). Only a negligible proportion of respondents in these groups are foreign born. The virtually identical generational distribution among Jews and non-believers strengthens my belief that many of the latter are Jews by birth who have rejected their Jewish identity. If this is the case then it is of interest to compare their family origin characteristics to those of identified Jews, for it suggests some hypotheses about the correlates of defection from Jewry.

Although the generational composition of the non-religious group is the same as that among Jews, they originated in families of higher socio-economic status (SES origin score = 59) than either Jews (53) or high Protestants (55). It is interesting, in this connection, that among identified Jews, reform Jews originated in higher status families (56) compared to conservative Jews (49) and orthodox Jews (47). The movement away from traditional Judaism, in short, varies directly with socio-economic origins. One could speculate, therefore, that the non-religious women in our sample probably originated mainly in reform families, and carrying speculation one step further, I would expect that the "reform" children in our sample will furnish the largest proportion of the next generation's wave of defectors from Judaism, unless new forms of intervention develop in the Jewish Community to counteract this tendency.

Jewish respondents exhibit the highest intergenerational mobility in the sample. Their mean upward mobility score is 19 compared to 15 among the non-religious and 11 among high Protestants. In short, though movement from the lower middle to the upper middle class characterizes all three groups, the Jews' origins relative to the others was slightly lower; their degree of upward mobility has been somewhat greater; and since marriage, their mobility has been somewhat higher than high Protestants but lower than the non-religious. In terms of current status, they typically fall between the high Protestants and the non-religious.

Whatever other comparisons one makes with respect to assorted correlates of current status, Jews rank higher than high Protestants but lower than non-religious respondents in the sample. Thus they occupy an intermediate position with respect to their educational attainment and their husband's educational attainment, their three closest friends' socio-economic status and average educational attainment, and on exposure to middle class neighborhood influences. (See Table 2.)

An indication that all these differences are a direct function of their intermediate socio-economic status, is that they virtually disappear when current socio-economic status is held constant. By the same token, the higher scores of reform mothers compared to conservative and orthodox ones on the abovementioned variables are a function of their higher current socio-economic status. One exception to the pattern occurs with respect to the orthodox group. Among the Jews, orthodox women on the average have the lowest educational attainment, but their husbands' educational attainment is virtually the same as that of reform husbands. In short, the difference between the educational attainment of husband and wife is greatest among the orthodox families in our study. IQ and achievement scores of children, in

Table 2

Other Correlates of Current Status Among  
Three Religious Groups and Three Jewish Sub-Groups

|   | Jewish Sub-Groups  |      |                   |                  |                             |                         |
|---|--------------------|------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
|   | High<br>Protestant | Jews | Non-<br>Religious | Reform<br>(N=59) | Conser-<br>vative<br>(N=40) | Ortho-<br>dox<br>(N=10) |
| Respondent's<br>Education                         | 6.2                | 6.4  | 6.7               | 6.6              | 6.2                         | 6.0                     |
| Husband's<br>Education                            | 6.5                | 6.8  | 7.0               | 7.0              | 6.5                         | 6.9                     |
| Three Closest Friends'<br>Social Characteristics: |                    |      |                   |                  |                             |                         |
| Mean SES Score                                    | 64                 | 67   | 73                | 68               | 67                          | 65                      |
| Mean Education                                    | 4.5                | 4.8  | 5.0               | 4.5              | 4.2                         | 4.2                     |
| Middle Class Neigh-<br>borhood Exposure<br>Score  | 2.2                | 2.3  | 2.5               | 2.3              | 2.2                         | 2.2                     |

general, vary more with the educational attainment of their mother than with that of their father. The fact that Jewish orthodox women's average years of schooling is the lowest among Jews, as well as lower than the average of high Protestant and non-religious women, may account for their children's lower scholastic achievement scores relative to these other groups (to be discussed later).

The organizational participation of Jewish mothers relative to their non-Jewish counterparts follows a different pattern. Membership in voluntary associations is higher on the average among Jewish women in our sample (2.5) than among high Protestants (2.1) and than non-religious women (1.7). When SES is covaried, the participation of non-religious women remains significantly

lower than that of Jews and high Protestants.<sup>6</sup> Thus it appears that the traditionally high involvement of Jews in communal activities compared to non-Jews continues. The non-religious, in contrast, having cut themselves off from their religious and ethnic community, do not appear to compensate for this loss by increasing their involvement in other forms of associational membership in the general community. Secularization, the findings above suggest, destroys traditional bases for participation in sub-communities within the larger society, leading to greater individuation and privatization of adults at the cost of a loss of a sense of community. Non-believers apparently do not as a rule find new substitutes for the old community ties, and therefore must depend more heavily on marriage and occupation, the two core institutional roles, to provide anchoring points of identity. An "overload" is placed on these two circuits. It is not that marriage and occupational roles are less satisfying than in former eras, but that the expectations and demands placed on them are far greater now, owing to the decline of participation in other significant and gratifying social roles.

Empirical evidence exists that marital satisfaction is higher among people who participate in extended social networks of kin or friends. Evidence from other studies suggest that more equalitarian power relations between husbands and wives develop when the latter have meaningful social roles outside the immediate family, such as organizational participation or gainful employment.<sup>7</sup>

It is interesting from this perspective to compare Jews and their non-Jewish counterparts with respect to employment status and incidence of divorce. While Jewish mothers exhibit higher organizational participation than non-believers, they less often hold jobs than the latter, at least in the middle



class. While nearly half the non-religious middle class women are employed, not quite two fifths of their Jewish and high Protestant counterparts hold jobs.

Table 3

Percent Employed Mothers  
by SES and Religion

|               | High Protestants | Jews     | Non-Religious |
|---------------|------------------|----------|---------------|
| Middle Class  | 37 (80)          | 38 (104) | 48 (63)       |
| Working Class | 36 (11)          | 40 (5)   | 25 (4)        |
| N             | 91               | 109      | 67            |

The proportion of divorced mothers in our sample is clearly lowest among the Jews (4 percent in the middle class and none in the working class) and highest among high Protestant (15 percent in the middle class, 36 percent in the working class). Among the non-religious, the rate among the middle class is similar to high Protestants (11 percent), but like the Jews in that none of the few working class respondents are divorced. Looking only at employment status among married middle class women in the three groups, the proportion employed is lowest among high Protestants (23 percent), among Jews it is intermediate (35 percent) and among the non-religious it is highest (43 percent).

In short, marital stability is highest among the Jews and Jewish women are also most active in voluntary associations. They are employed more often than high Protestants but less often than their non-religious counterparts. These data together with data from Robert Winch 's study showing that Jews participate more in kinship networks<sup>8</sup> than non-Jews suggest a possible

explanation for the greater stability of Jewish marriages compared to non-Jews similarly located in the stratification system. It may well be that the "overload" of demand on the marital relationship is less among Jews because they have other optional social roles that constitute alternative sources of involvement and gratification for each of the marital partners. Greater imbeddedness in organizational networks and extended kinship networks affords each marital partner satisfactions outside the marriage--satisfactions of a non-sexual character that do not violate the norm of sexual fidelity, as extra-marital sexual relationships do, but at the same time provide relief and refreshment from the boredom that often affects marriages in which familial roles represent the sole sources of emotional gratification. That is not to say that Jews do not invest heavily in their family lives. Traditionally they have done so, and from all indications they continue to do so. But it is also part of the Jewish cultural tradition, that apparently continues, to give proper weight also to roles outside the core institutional roles of spouse, parent, and breadwinner. Religious orthodoxy has waned among Jews just as it has among non-Jews, but many Jews involve themselves in the cause of Israel and service networks in local Jewish communities. The big question, of course, is the continuity of these traditions among today's Jewish youth, the coming generation of adults.

At this point it is appropriate to introduce the final set of data from my study that compares the orientations and socialization practices of contemporary Jewish mothers with those of their non-Jewish counterparts.

One question that the research addresses is intergenerational continuities and changes in selected family characteristics and maternal practices in the family of origin of the mothers in the sample.

A comparison of number of siblings of respondents in family of origin with current family size reveals that Jewish women average fewer siblings than either high Protestants or the non-religious women, whose size of origin family is virtually identical to each other. All three groups exhibit a tendency toward a higher birth rate than that of their mothers. High Protestants show the greatest gain (+1.3), the Jews are intermediate (1.1), and the non-religious gained least (+0.9). However, since Jews' (both respondents and their husbands) origin family size was lowest of any group in the sample, even with the rise in their birth rate they continue to have a smaller number of children on the average (2.7) than the non-religious (3.0) and high Protestants (3.5), as well as all other sub-groups sampled. In short, with respect to family size, Jews exhibit continuity in their position relative to other sub-groups of the population. If these findings are representative of the nation at large, it would suggest that the absolute number of children born to Jews has increased since World War II as compared to the pre-World War II era, but that there has been no gain in representation of Jews in the cohorts of youth in the teens and twenties relative to other religious sub-groups in the nation. If anything there has been a decline, since a sizeable number of the non-religious sub-group were born Jews but are rearing their children as non-Jews.

The sample mothers were asked to rate their mothers with respect to strictness, amount of physical punishment, and affectionateness. Compared to all other sub-groups, Jewish women's mothers rank lowest on use of physical punishment (1.6) and lowest on the use of strictness (2.9). The respective scores of mothers of high Protestants were 2.0 and 3.3, and that of mothers of non-religious respondents was 1.8 and 3.1, respectively for physical punishment and strictness. On affectionateness, high Protestants gave their mothers the highest average rank (3.4), the mothers of Jewish women ranked second

(3.2), and the mothers of non-religious respondents ranked third (2.9). Indeed, the latter ranked lower than any other sub-group in the white sample on affectionateness. While these differences are not large they are suggestive. If close affective bonds to the mother is a cornerstone of Jewish identity, more defectors from Judaism might be expected among women who had been reared by cold mothers than among women reared by more affectionate mothers. Furthermore, since warmth and affectionateness toward children is a traditional characteristic of Jewish women, coldness might signify that estrangement from Jewish ways was already present in the homes in which non-religious respondents were born and reared.

A comparison of the scores of respondents' practices toward their own children shows less differences among the three sub-groups than existed among their mothers. Thus on affectionateness toward their children their scores are identical (1.8); on the use of coercive forms of punishment, high Protestants are slightly higher (2.3) than Jews (2.2) and non-religious (2.1) women; on restrictiveness, the same rank order as above obtains among high Protestants (4.8), Jews (4.6) and the non-religious (4.4). In short, inter-generational gains in affectionateness among the non-religious have occurred equalizing affectionateness in the three groups. In the present generation of mothers, Jews are no longer the lowest on coercive punishment and restrictiveness; non-religious mothers presently use negative reinforcement techniques least: high Protestants continue to use these techniques relatively more than Jews and the non-religious (but they have lower scores than Catholics and lower status Protestants).

Taken together, these findings suggest that an exchange of influence-- or a regression toward the mean--has taken place among high Protestants and Jews with respect to discipline. While both groups use disciplinary lightly,

relative to other religious sub-groups, Protestants intergenerationally have become relatively more enlightened. The Jews, possibly assimilating the ways of non-Jews, show an intergenerational trend relative to the trend among their non-Jewish counterparts towards slightly greater reliance on physical punishment and restrictiveness.<sup>9</sup> The non-religious have the lowest scores on restrictiveness and on use of coercive forms of discipline. Their low coerciveness may be a factor in the higher achievement of their children relative to high Protestant and Jewish children, since my research shows that coerciveness, in general, is a negative correlate to IQ and achievement.

In contrast, high positive interaction between mother and child and high cognitive stimulation of preschool children, is a positive correlate of scholastic achievement in later childhood. On these two components of maternal behavior Jews occupy an intermediate position between high Protestants and non-religious mothers. To be specific, the mean early interaction score of high Protestants is 5.9 compared to 6.0 among Jews and 6.2 among the non-religious. Similarly with respect to preschool cognitive stimulation, high Protestants' mean score is 10.4, Jews is 10.8 and that of the non-religious is 11.0.

With respect to tolerance of mothers, that is, non-punitive responses to temper outbursts and criticism from children, another positive correlate of scholastic achievement in later childhood, Jewish and non-religious mothers have identical scores (5.6) compared to the slightly lower mean tolerance scores found among high Protestant mothers (5.4).

Jews occupy the first rank on two variables that are positively associated with scholastic achievement in fifth and sixth grade children. Mean cultural enrichment scores (nursery school, summer camp, musical instrument lessons)

are highest among Jews (2.4), the non-religious rank second (2.0), (though they outrank Jews on SES and educational attainment) and high Protestants rank lowest (1.6) on this variable.

The other variable on which Jews outrank the other two groups, not surprisingly, is on their level of aspiration for children's combined educational and occupational attainment. Very high aspiration levels were already plainly apparent among Jewish immigrant mothers earlier in the century. Their daughters and granddaughters, the mothers in my sample, continue that tradition. Their mean score of 2.6 is higher than that of non-religious respondents (2.4) and high Protestants (2.2). Merely in passing let me note that although generally high aspirations is a positive correlate of scholastic achievement in later childhood, girls' achievement is affected more than that of boys by maternal aspirations. (Our study contains no data on paternal aspiration level.)

With respect to educational expectations, that is, the amount of education mothers actually expect their children to get, Jews also rank slightly higher (5.1) than the non-religious women (5.0) and considerably higher than high Protestants (4.6). These three groups outrank other Protestants and Catholics on the above variables just as they do on all variables positively associated with scholastic ability.

Despite the higher aspirational levels of Jews and their higher expectations with respect to educational attainment, their children's mean scholastic achievement scores (in later childhood) is about the same as that of high Protestant children and lower than the children of non-religious mothers by nearly one stanine. Jewish children's IQ scores are also slightly lower than the non-religious, as Table 4 shows.<sup>10</sup>

Table 4

Children's IQ and Achievement Scores by Religion

| Children's<br>Mean Scores                     | Religion        |        |               |
|---|-----------------|--------|---------------|
|   | High Protestant | Jewish | Non-Religious |
| IQ  | 109             | 110    | 112           |
| Achievement Stanine<br>Score (Math + Reading) | 6.6             | 6.6    | 7.4           |

However, children from these three groups have higher IQ and achievement scores on the average than children from any of the other religious groups in the sample. I can only speculate at this point about the lower showing of Jewish children related to the non-religious. The fact that non-religious women have more years of schooling than Jewish women may account for the difference, since in general mother's education is a strong positive correlate of IQ and achievement of children. Maternal practices are also, of course, related to a mother's education. Non-religious women engage somewhat more than Jewish women in early interaction and cognitive stimulation of their children in their preschool years. Both these variables are positively related to IQ and scholastic achievement in fifth and sixth graders. Further analysis still remains to be done in order to test the above mentioned explanatory hypotheses.

To conclude this report of findings are the ranks of Jewish children relative to non-Jews on two variables dealing with the nature of social participation of children in later childhood. Jewish children rank lowest on participation in formal groups (.98) compared to a high of (1.4) among high Protestants and an intermediate mean score (1.1) among the non-religious.

This perhaps is not surprising considering that the formal groups for children of that age, such as the Boy Scouts and Campfire groups, have a lingering WASP aura about them that would make them less appealing to Jews and incidentally also to Catholic children who resemble Jews on this variable more than the various Protestant groups in the sample. That Jewish and Catholic children are less apt to be "joiners" than Protestants may reflect a comparative dearth of formal organizations for children of later childhood age in Catholic and Jewish communities.

The low formal participation of Jewish children is not predictive, however, of adult behavior, since, as mentioned earlier, Jewish mothers have the highest formal organizational participation scores in the sample. For Catholics there is greater continuity between childhood and adult patterns of formal group membership, since both Catholic mothers and Catholic children rank the lowest in the sample on number of formal group memberships. Continuity in rank is also exhibited among children and mothers in non-religious homes. In both life stages they rank third highest. Children from high Protestant homes rank first in formal group participation, but their mothers are outranked by Jewish mothers in extent of formal group membership. This finding suggests that the Jewish community provides more avenues for formal participation for its adults than for its children. Providing formal avenues of participation in later childhood may be one means of reinforcing Jewish identification of children in this stage of childhood and in adolescence. It may also be an important means by which to reduce the paternalism of Jewish community life, which affords few organized avenues for youth to voice their views or to undertake responsible action within the Jewish community.



In terms of religious heterogeneity of playmates in later childhood, Jewish children rank lowest among all sub-groups in the sample (1.5). High Protestant and low Protestant children are intermediate in rank, with respect to religious heterogeneity of playmates (1.7 and 1.8). Children of Catholics, middle Protestants and non-religious mothers rank highest (1.9) on religious heterogeneity of playmates. The tendency of Jewish children to have playmates with the same religious background may reflect a preference pattern rather than reflect Jewish residential concentration, since the two sub-communities from which most of our Jewish respondents were drawn are characterized by more than average diversity of backgrounds in terms of race, religion, and ethnicity.



#### IV. Conclusion

In a rapidly changing society, the family and its functions are subject to continuing changes and reevaluations. This has never been more true than it is today. The family is presently the subject of searching examination, of criticism and controversy. Proposals to reform or abolish the family have been made; various alternatives to the conjugal family are being tried by tiny segments of the population; but throughout all the furor, young people are marrying and establishing new families just as in past generations. That is not to say that they are approaching these tasks in precisely the same way or with the same expectations as their parents. Some young people, although they do not by any means constitute the majority, are making a serious effort to change those forms and practices of marriage and family life that they consider destructive to their personal integrity or to that of their children. I salute these young people for their courage and for their willingness to make the effort to change what they do not like. To change always entails risk, but in a changing society, not changing may entail even greater risks.

The Jews have traditionally had a strong and stable family life because the family was an essential part of religious practice and ritual and because the Jewish community provided auxiliary mechanisms of support in times of personal or social crises, thereby inhibiting the spread of deviant or destructive effects of breakdowns in family life.

Let me also add, that the Jews are the one people in the western world who attempted and successfully institutionalized a radically different form of family life in the context of the Kibbutz. The success of the Kibbutz in Israel has given great impetus to the search for viable

alternatives to the isolated nuclear family among American youth.

I do not know to what extent the Kibbutz and its distinctive form of family is transferable to American urban society, but I suspect that with some modifications it may represent a viable experiment that could be undertaken with community support by some Jewish radical youth. In any case, it is worth consideration and study, as one possible direction of innovation within the Jewish community to strengthen Jewish identity within the context of American life. One does not have to be a sage to predict, however, that communal living and child rearing will attract only a small minority of Jewish youth. Nevertheless, radical minorities can and often do influence the direction of change in a society over the long run. Such groups have need for a link to the larger Jewish community, and they can benefit more from their continuing allegiance to Judaism than from their alienation.

The spread toward maternal employment and rising rates of divorce that I expect among secular Jews would produce a need for, and greater interest in, high quality child care facilities for pre-school age children and for children in later childhood in strategically located parts of communities where there are substantial proportions of Jews. While these should have a secular character, they ought to contain a substantial amount of Jewish content, because childhood is clearly the best time for establishing ethnic identity. From all indications, the proportions of secular Jews will rise. Many will retain their Jewish identity but will suffer from a lack of knowledge about Jewish life and Jewish culture, and from a lack of communal reinforcement. They therefore will not be effective in transmitting their identification to their children without supporting mechanisms provided by the community. Many Jewish parents who would not

undertake to send their children to after-school or week-end classes would be interested in high quality infant schools, nursery schools and after school facilities if both parents work or constitute a one-parent family. Such people have the greatest need for such facilities, but other sub-groups would be attracted to them if they exist and flourish.

There is no better qualified group in America than the Jews to design and operate such facilities. The "Jewish mother" socialization strategy--nurturant, encouraging, warm, etc.--has been adopted by public and private experimental schools with great success. Staffing of such facilities and training of personnel to operate them could involve volunteers of various kinds. I think particularly of the importance of involving older people to some degree. The old, after all, are the repositories of tradition and knowledge of the Jewish past. They need new roles where they can perform significant services for the community. The community and children, in particular, need them. Children and youth like and enjoy older people for they have time to listen and to learn of the past further distant than that of their parents. In this context, let me also mention the importance of recording the stories of childhoods in Europe, of songs, tales, etc., of the remnants of survivors of the immigrant generation while they are still alive, as materials for use with children and adults rather than merely for the use of scholars.

Too often we think of education as ending when people graduate high school or college. Education in a changing society ought to continue into the next stages of life as well. There has been a growing impoverishment of knowledge about Jewish religion, Jewish history, Jewish life. It started with the second generation and is even more pronounced in the third and later generations. Jewish parents should participate in the establishment

and running of day care centers, and becoming involved in such an enterprise might well develop an interest in learning more about Jews and Judaism. On this score, I speak from personal experience. Although I had a Jewish secular education, I had received no religious instruction. Now, although I am not religious, I would welcome an opportunity to read and study and discuss Judaism, for it would fulfill a need now that I did not have when I was growing up. There are many, many people in various stages of life past childhood experiencing the same need, who will not return to the synagogue but would utilize a secular facility.

In a few academic communities, interested parents have successfully started nursery schools or Sunday morning schools to strengthen their children's knowledge of and identification with Judaism and with Israel. Thereby, they have created new Jewish roles for their children and for themselves. Such innovations can be given further impetus to spread in other sub-communities of Jews.

Finally, Jewish youth of high school and college age must be brought into such enterprises. One of the serious problems of affluent youth is that they have no significant work to do that serves someone besides themselves. They are not much interested in money, but they are interested in service roles where they can perform work that needs to be done. Among this generation of youth I find a great interest in children and in older people. Many Jewish college youth, for example, are involved in tutorial programs for disadvantaged children, in VISTA and similar enterprises. They are good and responsible workers, because they are intelligent and idealistic. Such young people could serve and be served by involvement and participation in the creation and operation of facilities of the kind I have suggested and others as well. For them too there is a need to create new roles within the context of the Jewish community.

Jewish identity cannot be sustained by the family alone, particularly in families where there is little knowledge of the Jewish past or present. New social roles within the Jewish community are needed, for identity is fostered and maintained by participation in collectivities in which people come together for some shared practical interest or purpose. The strengthening of Jewish identity would occur as a by-product of such roles. Traditionally, religious institutions performed that function. The modern Synagogue does not and cannot perform this function for many identified Jews who want to perpetuate Judaism in their children and their children's children. The action to meet these needs can come from nowhere else except from existing or new community enterprises.

I urge you, however, not to follow a paternalistic path. Involve youth in the planning and the operation of whatever new agencies you have to create. They are searching for new forms of community and need it more than any other generation of Jews before them in America has needed it. And we need them!

Footnotes

1. Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Boles, Family, Socialization and Interaction Process, New York: The Free Press, 1955.
2. See William H. Whyte, Jr., "The Wife Problem," in Robert F. Winch and Louis Wolf Goodman, Selected Studies in Marriage and the Family, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, pp. 177-188.
3. Hugh Carter and Alexander Plateris, "Trends in Divorce and Family Disruption," in Winch and Goodman, op. cit., pp. 564-578; and Public Health Service, National Vital Statistics Division, "Health, Education and Welfare Indicators," September, 1963.
4. The total sample consists of 1104 white and black middle class and working class mothers of fifth and sixth grade children residing in metropolitan Chicago who were interviewed in 1968. Data on their children's IQ and achievement scores were obtained from the schools covered in the sample. This is not a probability sample but what is known as a quota sample to insure large enough numbers of each of the above sub-groups to allow comparisons to be made between them. In this paper I will deal only with the whites in the sample.
5. The composition of the non-religious sub-group is shown in the following table:

|                 | <u>Middle Class</u> | <u>Working Class</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Unitarian       | 34%                 | 13%                  |
| Ethical Culture | 5%                  | ---                  |
| No Religion     | 61%                 | 87%                  |
| TOTAL           | 100%                | 100%                 |
| N               | 59                  | 8                    |

The proportion of respondents falling in this category who are Jewish by birth cannot be ascertained, but I would guess that the ethical culturists and the non-religious, at least, are mainly women of Jewish birth.

6. Among Jewish mothers voluntary association participation is highest among reform women (2.6), conservatives rank second (2.5) and orthodox have the lowest scores (2.2).
7. See Elizabeth Bott, Family and Social Network, London: Tavistock Publications, 1957; and Joel Nelson, "Clique Contacts and Family Orientations," American Sociological Review, Vol. 21, 1966, pp. 663-672.
8. Robert Winch, "Some Observations on Extended Familism in the United States," in Winch and Goodman, op. cit., pp. 127-138.
9. An equally plausible explanation is that these differences are a statistical artifact. Since Jews were lowest in the last generation they had no place to go except up, whereas high Protestants being initially high and following the general trend, could only go down.
10. A breakdown of the Jewish sub-sample shows that children from reform and conservative homes score very similarly on IQ, Achievement, and IQ relative to IQ, but that children of the small number of orthodox respondents in our sample (N=10) exhibit lower scores on all three measures. On IQ, they are about three points lower than the reform and conservative group and their mean achievement score is about one and one half stanines below the other two groups. Relative to their IQ, they are underachievers. The few orthodox mothers have somewhat less educational attainment scores (6.0) than the conservative (6.2) and reform (6.6) respondents. They show a similar magnitude of difference



in their current socio-economic status and in their family of origin status. Orthodox husband's educational attainment (6.9), however, is somewhat higher than that of conservative men (6.5), although lower than the reform men (7.0). These findings are only tentative, considering the small number of orthodox women in our sample.





For additional copies, write to  
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE  
Institute of Human Relations  
165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

Single copy - \$1.50

In quantities of 20 or more - \$1.00