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Series III: The Temple Tifereth-Israel, 1946-1993, undated.

Sub-series B: Sermons, 1950-1989, undated.

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880

Rebels With and Without Cause, 1967.

REBELS WITH AND WITHOUT CAUSE
Reflections of Campus UnrestSunday, December 3, 1967
Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

Judaism rather prized youth, sheer animal energy, its exuberance, even its assertiveness. The story is told in the Talmud of a teacher who had spent the better part of an afternoon defending his ideas against the eager questioning of young minds. As the day progressed, he felt himself more and more beleaguered. Finally he sighed a cryptic riddle, "Alas for the one thing which goes and never returns." "What is it?" The students pressed about to find out. He answered them with a single word, 'Yamkuthah' - 'youth'. You will not find in Scripture or in the Rabbinic writings any of that florid romanticization of age. You know Browning's, "Grow old with me, the best is yet to be for which the first was made." The Bible has no illusions about the blessings of arthritis, or of loneliness, or of forgetfulness: "Remember then thy Creator in the days of thy youth before the evil days come and thou shalt say, 'I have no pleasure in them'."

Youth is a wonderful stage in life, physically and emotionally exuberant, sometimes excessive; but of all the stages perhaps that which is most graced. Just as our people avoided romanticizing youth, so we avoided romanticizing age; and as we avoided romanticizing age, so we avoided the romanticization of youth. You will find the young constantly reminded, "Rise before the hoary head, honor the face of the old man, for with the ancient is wisdom and, in length of years understanding." "Zaken" means in Hebrew "elder" with the connotation of reverence and respect, not simply aged with its major connotation of 'put away someplace out of sight! The ideal civilization was one in which the high spirits of the young encouraged the flagging spirits of the tired and in which maturity and long wisdom of the elderly circumscribed and directed the passions

of youth. The glory of the young man is his strength, and the beauty of the old man is his hoary head. Judaism avoided both the mystique of age, which was the ossifying disease of Chinese civilization, and the mystique of youth, which is a trivializing disease of American civilization.

In America today, if a personnel manager must choose between a thirty-year old stuffed with books and a fifty-year old stuffed with experience, he will choose the youth. Young men, young ideas, young minds, young bodies are very much in vogue and command a high price. We somehow assume that God created Man in the same way that we create our refrigerators and our cars, with built-in obsolescence. That the mind runs down in its vigor and agility in the same way that the body runs down. There is a desperate thirst in our society to know what the young are thinking, feeling, and doing; and there is the assumption that what they are thinking, feeling, and doing is somehow right and must be given sober consideration even if it be trivial and half baked. The music of the young, the dress of the young, the language of the young, the life style of the young, the sports of the young; all of these are 'in', which itself is part of the idiom of the young, and our so-called 'adult society' is busy trying to make itself over in the 'in' image. How else can we explain a mini-skirted grandmother and a rheumatic grandfather dancing to jungle music, knowing that they'll pay for it the next morning, and the next and the next. Once upon a time, not so very long ago, the young were supposed to prove themselves to their elders. Today, I am afraid, the elders have a desperate need to prove themselves to the young. I think I understand, in fact, why the first dogma of the new youth culture is to never trust anyone over thirty. How can you trust anyone who does not trust himself? How can you trust your parents and your teachers when they spend the better part of their time stammering, trying to justify and rationalize the simplest rules of discipline? How can you believe that there are standards, that the adult world stands for something when every

time you whine you win, when every time you disobey you are listened to patiently and forgiven! I think a great deal of the alienation, the drawing away, the joylessness, the rebelliousness of our youth is rooted in the simple fact that the adult world has, to use their idiom, 'copped out', and is unwilling to be adult. We are unwilling to have opinions. We are unwilling to use our minds to determine what we truly believe and to stand by it come what may. How can you prize learning when every semester begins: "Well, class, what shall we study this year?" How can you value parental authority when you live surrounded by permissiveness, where everything you want you are given, where there is no limit to the tolerance and the understanding which you are afforded; where your parents, in fact, refuse to be parents?

James Dean was, as you know, something of a cult figure to the young. Just before his death, he played in an interesting film which they relate to very well, which is called, "Rebel Without a Cause." In it, Dean plays a young man who is an acting, aggressive post-adolescent who can't find himself. He appeals to his parents time and again, "Tell me what to do;" and his father refuses to tell him. The father says simply, "Son, it's important that we understand each other." His mother's solution to all of their problems is that, whenever Dean gets into trouble, she moves the family home; and they start again in a new neighborhood. "Tell me, tell me what to do," and he is answered by silence, as are in fact, most of our young people on most occasions today. No one wants to tell them because most adults do not know what to tell them because they do not have a philosophy of life, what we would call a faith - basic ethical and moral and spiritual commitments. I am afraid that the only basic value which is generally held in our society is a vague libertarianism. We are agreeable to almost anything; we are endlessly permissive; we can justify almost every act no matter how seemingly heinous. We are marshmallow people. You can punch us, punch us again, and punch us again; and you will not find resistance. We will explain;

we will rationalize and find some psychological jargon to explain the child's action or our inaction. Rarely do we have within us a straight and fixed principle which is ours. Our young people are rebelling against this lack of principle, this lack of faith, and they have taken our libertarianism, our infinite understanding, and have raised it into a faith. They have sanctified it. They have said, "All of your institutions are hypocritical, all of your words are shallow and superficial and falsely pious. All that is truly important is love, or dissent, or genuine human relationships. We want no part of your world because your world has no shape to it; it is formless, vague." And make no mistake about this; the rebelliousness of today's youth is something very much different from that which took place in our generation or in the generations before. We walked away in order to come home as adults; they walk away determined to stay away. We walked away by ourselves; they walk away as a group, determined to rebuild out there somewhere a totally different culture, self-enclosed, encapsulated, self-consistent, and not at all related to any of the values nor any of the institutions and traditions of the culture from which they left.

Recently, I read a rather interesting personal, yet sociological, analysis of this youth culture, written by one of its members, a bright graduate of Yale University and a Rhodes Scholar. One of the most interesting facts about this youth rebellion is that it is led by the brightest of our young people. He calls his article, "How We Got This Way." He claims there are four reasons why the youth is busy building a separate culture, a youth culture, THE MOVEMENT, capital 'T' capital 'M', why they are building a counter-culture to our own. The first of these four reasons has to do with what he calls 'our peculiar parents'. He was a war baby. His father was away in the service and then he was away earning a living. He was raised by a doting mother. His mother invested much of her own emotional and personal insecurity in the children. She taught them the meaning of sensitivity, of solicitude, of love; and the young

have raised these virtues to the highest order. They talk constantly of the importance of genuine human relationships. "I" and "thou," not "I" and "it." They look, somehow, on this love which presumably must flow between all peoples as the panacea to almost all problems. The home lacked any concept of work. It lacked a father; it lacked the principle of vigor; it lacked high principle itself. And so these children, especially the young men among them, were turned into rather too tender human beings, young people who were not prepared for the obduracy of society to social change and the obstinacy of human nature. Let me read you a paragraph from this young man's report and a paragraph on the same theme by one of the headmasters of a fine New York private school, both of which help us understand this peculiar home from which these children come:

"Our mothers were the dominant figures in our lives because our fathers were so involved in making it, with the drive and the sense of time lost that was left over to them from the war. This situation deepened and exacerbated the split already evident between the educated emancipated woman and frustrated her attempts at role definition and somewhat shadowy and elusive husband whose energies were spent somewhere off in the anonymous void of the economy. Our mothers often felt insecure about their self-fulfillment in marriage and so invested an inordinant amount of emotional capital in their children. The parents set the stage; the children, especially the boys, became uprooted. The boys tended to identify more with the emotional qualities of their mothers than with the principles and practices of their fathers."

This is by the headmaster:

"The office of father requires even more confidence and conviction. The fact that women have more time than men do to read books and magazine articles on psychology, education, and the like, is unfortunate. It makes men move gingerly in a family situation. There has been, moreover, a general maternalization of fathers. The trouble with many children is that their fathers are mothers and their mothers are sisters. For a very young child, his parents are ageless. When he grows a little older, his parents seem middle-aged. It is a shock for him to reach puberty and discover his mother is sexy. The mini-skirted mother is a threat to her son and a rival to her daughter. The parents struggle against growing old; children may struggle against growing up."

The rules of parenthood are simple enough: Be an adult, enjoy being an adult; do not permit what you do not soberly approve; set limits and see that they are kept. When should a parent turn over authority to a child? When a child stops reaching for authority and reaches for responsibility, not before."

Each in his own way is reminding us that the responsibility of parents and teachers, of the adult, is to be adult. And I submit to you that in almost every way the aim of the average adult in our society is to be 'kidish' and youthful.

The second element which, according to this young man, goes into the making of the youth culture is what he calls the cocoon of sensory identification which surrounded him throughout his life. By this, he means television. By this, he means the mass media. Remember the endless debates when television began about the impact of television on our young. Some felt that the children would be given false values; many felt that they would be conditioned to violence. In fact, the damage of television is infinitely more pervasive than any of us had reason to expect; and it lies simply in this, that the young people know that war is not simply a casualty list or arrows penciled over a map to show the path of an army. They know that war is blood and gore and they see the bloodshed in the comfort of their own living room. They know that poverty is not simply an unemployment statistic of the number of people who fall below an arbitrary income. They have seen poverty, its blight, its misery, its dirt, its filth, its anger, its frustration; and they have seen it after a full meal in a comfortable room surrounded by the artifacts of abundance. Obviously, there is a sense of urgency to the solution of these problems; and they turned to their parents and said, "What are you doing about it?" And their parents offered rationalizations and excuses; but these young people discount words. They have not been conditioned to be suspicious of words; they have been taught by television that words lie and lie deliberately. They have been so surrounded by advertising, by attempts to make them buy, and attempts to

make them do, and attempts to make them change over their life pattern, that they have learned to discount everything that's told them verbally. It is only what they see that they believe to be true. And so they discount what their parents tell them; and no one really bothers to sit down with them and to tell them, "You know, human nature doesn't change overnight. You know, no man can play God to society. You know there's no virtue being Don Quixote chasing out to kill every dragon and slay every windmill." Often, when they wanted conversation, they found silence. They want explanations of why we are not dealing with the urgencies of the society; and, either we're too afraid to appear square in their eyes, to explain what we are doing, or else we are in fact square and doing nothing, or else we are simply, as many parents, delighted that they have the courage to do what we are too cowardly to do, delighted to see them ride out while we remain secure. Whatever the reasons, television has convinced these young people of the urgency of social change. Television has convinced them that this world is, if anything, not only not the best possible world, but perhaps the end of the world. They are determined that they will not simply be a partner to a social conspiracy which wallows in the security of the suburb forgetting the real world roiling with a thousand problems. The problem with this youthful rebellion is not only the indifference of the parents, our unwillingness to come to grips with social issues of the day, but that we ourselves have no very settled political convictions. We look to one man or another, a president, a mayor, a leader to solve our problems. There are few definite implications to the word citizenship. We lead our own lives, rather than communal lives; and much that passes as communal life is merely an endless and wasted luncheon-meeting hour for little purpose. The problem that we face is that none of us, through our life stance; and few of us, even in conversation with the young people, have taught them how to go about reforming society and toward what end that reform should take place. And so what do they do? They get their social philosophy out of Mad comics. I don't know how many of you

have seen it, but it solves all problems. It is Karl Marks and Emil Purheim and Max Weber all rolled up into a flat one-dimensional solution. There is always good and evil, virtue and vice; and one knows exactly what must be done. There is always a ray gun or some magical instrument which sets things right. There are always simple solutions to complex problems. As we grew up, as I grew up, we read the sociologists, we read the political reformers; and it was tough going. Theirs was closely-reasoned logic, facts and figures; but at least we learned that human nature is not infinitely malleable, that Man is obstinate, and we learned that social institutions must be politically pressured over long periods of time in order to be changed. And we learned, also, that there is no paradise here on earth, that you try to move society ahead bit by bit, step by step. But these young people expect, as one of their slogans goes, "Nirvana now, paradise on earth, now;" and they think that at the end of every social problem there is a shoot-out, a simple scene in which all is made right and wrong is cleanly punished. There is a simplicity, an unfortunate simplicity, to their social philosophy, which will not stand them in good stead and I am afraid is a sad comment as to our own lack of political maturity.

The third element in making them what they are has to do with the relative affluence and abundance of their lives. Almost every one of these young people had enough. Few of them could see why it was so important to work, why it was so important to go to school, to learn a skill, to earn a living. Their motto is, "Life, not existence." They want to be creative, not simply tools in the economy; and they have the feeling, because they have been given everything, that somehow they will muddle through, that what they do to earn a living isn't as important as how they, in fact, live. One of the interesting by-products of this feeling is their bitterness against the educational system. Far more venomous than their attack on social ill is their attack against universities, against the high schools, against the whole educational process. They wanted

to be taught how to live. Instead, mass-produced, education teaches them how to earn a living. Education is interested in competence and not in excellence, in skill and not in education. They resented being herded through halls, their grades robotyped on an IBM machine, and their enrollment card fitted with a number and not a name. No one knew them by name. They were ciphers in a class, numbers in the registrar's office, statistics herded through the schools. Now they want to take over the schools and remake the educational structure. It is not so important for them to learn, to accomplish, as it is to learn how to live. Few in the adult world have sat down with them and talked with them about values, virtues, philosophies, God, ideas, theology: all the spiritual, all the emotional graces which lead to wisdom. They have withdrawn from us because they came to us and we turned them off. They asked us about God, and we said, "We don't know." They asked us about virtue, and we said, "We can't define it." They asked us about beauty, and we said, "Whatever the critics tell us." They asked us about literature, and we said, "We don't read." They asked us about themselves, and we said, "Go out and earn a living." They asked us about love, and we talked to them about sex. They turned us off. Perhaps they were wise.

The fourth element which goes into the making of this youth culture is the Bomb. As one young man said, "I have the feeling that Boris Karloff is under my bed every night." They have what they call 'nuclear dreams'. They are comfortable; they have been secure; they have been protected; but they have this sense of impending doom, and much of their pleasure seeking, much of their hedonism, much of their living for today, their carelessness about tomorrow, is the simple statement, "Look, you grownups, you don't care about tomorrow. You've talked about the Bomb for twenty years, and what have you done about it? You've built bigger bombs. You talked about the fact that an arms race always ends up in war, and what have you done about it? You have built new, so-called deterrent shields. You have the power to destroy the world three, five, fifteen times

over. The probability diminishes every day that we are going to live out our natural lives. Why demand that we live for tomorrow? All that we have is what we have right now." Again the challenge is flung into our faces, "Have we been adult?" We've talked about the Bomb, but we have really not believed it. We have talked about the Bomb, and we used it in our arsenal; and we are part of a war-like world, and there is little in Viet Nam which bespeaks concern for peace, and we who are in control of power, this generation, the adult generation, have in no way broken through to peace. We have taken no risks and few gambles in that cause. If our young people live for today and gather the lilies, and are the Flower Children, does not a large measure of that responsibility begin because we have gathered the dividends and built the arsenals, been careless of the beauty of the sun, of their right to live until tomorrow.

I would be more appreciative of the youth culture, of the rebellion of the young, if I felt it was more affirmative. There is a great deal in it which is simply complaint, not commitment. There is a great deal of it which is simply pleasure seeking. They like to wrap themselves in all kinds of pious sentimentality; and, with many exceptions, they have 'copped out' just as much as we adults have 'copped out'.

I was delighted by a cartoon I saw some time ago in Punch Magazine. You saw two bright youngsters skipping across a London park, flowers galore; and they were saying, "Oh, we just love the world, except of course for our lousy parents." In many ways, they are as inconsistent, as hypocritical as we are. It is long since past the hour when we ought to, out of guilt or frustration, assume for their rebelliousness a virtue which, in most cases, it does not in fact have. But I must say this, also, that the better, clearer-thinking people among the young are rubbing up now, for the first time, against obduracy, against reality. They are finding that the simplicities of love, of dissent, do not solve the problems of the world. They are finding that living with drugs, or living with love, does not make them happy. Our youth is perhaps the most

joyless generation of young people that has been around in a long time, and rubbing up against reality they are finding the authority which they lacked in their homes; they are finding a reality which is turning many of them into adults. I only wish I could say that, confronted with the reality of the youth rebellion, the adult was, in fact, assuming his responsibility. I think our young people may be growing up, but I see very few indications that the adults in our society are doing anything but growing younger; and that's not what life is all about.

Amen

WRHS

~~Forrest~~
R. Binder
Reel 2255 to Taylor
Univ. 18
Mange



Kaddish

Friday DEC. 1

Sunday DEC. 3

Those who passed away this week

ROBERT S. COBLITZ	ANNA D. HOLLANDER
NORMAN COPELAND	HENRY NEWMAN
	DR. DAVID V. ROSENBERG

Gahrzeitz

RYNETTE LOIS KRAUS
MICHAEL J. MARGOLIS
CARRIE S. WISE
FLORENCE BENSON DUBOY
ABRAM B. EFROYMSON
ROSA KOHN
FANNIE H. WEBER
RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER
STELLA S. KOLLER
WILLIAM N. OSTERMAN
ANNETTE W. ABRAMS
DAVID SAFIER
ANN FRANKEL
MINA LEVIN
ARTHUR WALLACH
CHARLES A. STONE
ANNA BROWN
BELLA FRIEDMAN
HARRY C. KATZ
JEROME A. LEVY

- Pronounce Minna Le-vin

2 But I know why the youth have made the 1st mistake of
over full - never to think anyone over 30 - how can you trust
anyone unless they have tried himself? How can you give up
with any respect for the judgment of adults - unless you are
as NO - & unless you spend most of your time with your fingers
to justify the sampled rules and disciplines? How can the youth
learn that there are clashes & noisy conflict rules
everywhere he understand any except he is in the middle of it
he is always he is learned plenty to be young.

The unhappy the apology, the discovery of the truth
of our youth begins with the introduction & code of judgment of
parents & teachers. WRHS the discovery of the truth
the world introduces the idea of the world which is not the same
thing as you. How can a child learn self discipline &
the many of social responsibility - but society is the sum of
many id. efforts & sacrifices - if at home there is an
all personal tolerance, no need to be judged, no need
to resent agreements. James Pan has become someone
of a will force in the youth community, & they feel as he feels
Reich without a cause much that is there as can be
done. As the James Pan is a young married adult.
James is agreed he is ready for parental control, which
children to make whereas Pan is not troubled. Further

an implacable "The important thing is to understand", David
"Please Dad just tell me what to do" - I am not responsible
To me you're under stress - my parent here simply
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deep committed, ^{They have} ~~substance~~ refuge in no reluctance
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of not planning to them, and just say that just -
just at least will under & deserted release - what
is not impossible to find these under the same are are
fact - include more & more just the small

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WRHS AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
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relation of you will

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order to be able to come home again, that is an idea
is the same idea for us, They will see many new to
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personal - that is a new person - the young
are very important a very important - as important you
asked what will be done with the institution
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will be the same will be the same, There

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- + we would not see much again in any more about it

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disregard as it can commitment - it is more responsible

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put off more to the whole world which is by +
appears to be entirely under it apart

the young is surviving to the whole population -

recovery

[illegible]

Kaddish

Friday DEC. 1

Sunday DEC. 3

Those who passed away this week

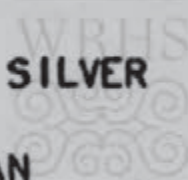
ROBERT S. COBLITZ
NORMAN COPELAND

ANNA D. HOLLANDER
HENRY NEWMAN
DR. DAVID V. ROSENBERG

Vahrzeits

RYNETTE LOIS KRAUS
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CHARLES A. STONE
ANNA BROWN
BELLA FRIEDMAN
HARRY C. KATZ
JEROME A. LEVY

— Pronounce Minna Le-vin



If we were postwar babies, we absorbed much the same impression, although for somewhat different reasons. ~~Some of the reasons~~ are those documented by Kenneth Keniston in The Uncommitted. Our mothers were the dominant figures in our lives because our fathers were so involved in "making it." with the drive, and sense of time lost, left over from the war. This situation deepened and exacerbated the split already evident between the educated, emancipated woman frustrated in her attempts at role definition and her somewhat shadowy, elusive husband whose energies were spent somewhere off in the anonymous void of the economy. Our mothers often felt insecure about their self-fulfillment in marriage and so invested an inordinate amount of emotional capital in their children. The parents set the stage, Their children, especially the boys, became uprooted. Boys tended to identify more with the "emotional" qualities of their mothers rather than the principles and practices of their fathers.

~~XX~~

The office of father requires even more confidence and conviction. The fact that women have more time than men do to read books and magazine articles on psychology, education and the like is unfortunate. It makes men move gingerly in the family situation. There has been, moreover, a general materializing of fathers. The trouble with many children is that their fathers are mothers and their mothers are sisters.

For a very young child, his parents are ageless. When he grows a little older his parents seem middle-aged. It is a shock for him to reach puberty and discover his mother is sexy. The mini-skirted mother is a threat to her son and a rival to her daughter. If parents struggle against growing old, children may struggle against growing up.

The rules of parenthood are simple enough: Be an adult and enjoy being an adult. Do not permit what you do not soberly approve. Set limits and see that they are kept.

When should a parent turn over authority to the child? When the child stops reaching for authority and reaches for responsibility, and not before.

