

# ORTHODOXY IN AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE<sup>1</sup>

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PROVIDING INTENSIVE TALMUDIC STUDY

**T**HIS ESSAY is an effort to describe the communal aspects and institutional forms of Orthodox Judaism in the United States. For the most part, it ignores the doctrines, faith, and practices of Orthodox Jews, and barely touches upon synagogue life, which is the most meaningful expression of American Orthodoxy.

It is hoped that the reader will find here some appreciation of the vitality of American Orthodoxy. Earlier predictions of the demise of

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to many people who assisted me in making this essay possible. More than 40, active in a variety of Orthodox organizations, gave freely of their time for extended discussions and interviews and many lay leaders and rabbis throughout the United States responded to a mail questionnaire. A number of people read a draft of this paper. I would be remiss if I did not mention a few by name, at the same time exonerating them of any responsibility for errors of fact or for my own judgments and interpretations. The section on modern Orthodoxy was read by Rabbi Emanuel Rackman. The sections beginning with the sectarian Orthodox to the conclusion of the paper were read by Rabbi Nathan Bulman. Criticism and comments on the entire paper were forthcoming from Rabbi Aaron Lichtenstein, Dr. Marshall Sklare, and Victor Geller, without whose assistance the section on the number of Orthodox Jews could not have been written. To all of these, and to Mrs. Ruth Gould for her editorial assistance, I am deeply grateful.

In general, Hebrew has been transliterated according to the Israeli pronunciation, but Hebrew names of institutions are usually given as the institutions themselves give them. See p. 507 for abbreviations.

Orthodox Judaism in the United States have been premature, to say the least. Orthodoxy is on the upsurge. Its inner core is growing in numbers and financial strength. It is experiencing a greater sense of confidence and purpose, but its ultimate direction and form are still undetermined. An attempt is here made to pose the alternatives, at least for Orthodoxy's public posture.

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ORTHODOXY

### *Number of Orthodox Jews*

We propose to discuss Orthodoxy, as a differentiated movement among American Jews, in institutional terms. Hence we define Orthodox Jews as all Jews who are affiliated with nominally Orthodox synagogues. Alternate definitions would include Jews who view the *halakhah* or Jewish law as an obligatory standard for all Jews; or who behave as Orthodox Jews in ritual or halakhic terms, or who define themselves as Orthodox without regard to their behavior. There are definitional problems in the first two alternatives, although an estimate is given at a later point of the number of such observant Orthodox Jews. With respect to the number of Jews who consider themselves as Orthodox, no reliable estimates can be made because we have no quantitative study of Orthodoxy in New York City. Studies made in various communities outside New York indicate that as many as a third of the Jews who consider themselves as Orthodox are not affiliated with any congregation.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, these and other studies<sup>3</sup> show that at least a third of Jews affiliated with Orthodox synagogues outside New York City consider themselves as something other than Orthodox (usually Conservative), whereas a far smaller proportion of members of Conservative synagogues consider themselves as Orthodox.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *The Jewish Population of Rochester, New York, 1961* (Rochester: Jewish Community Council, 1961); Stanley K. Bigman, *The Jewish Population of Greater Washington in 1956* (Washington, D.C.: Jewish Community Council, 1957), and Albert J. Mayer, *Branches of Judaism, Synagogue and Temple Membership, and Attendance at Religious Services of the Jewish Population in the Detroit Metropolitan Area, 1956* (Detroit: Jewish Welfare Federation, 1961).

<sup>3</sup> For example, Leonard Reissman, *Profile of a Community; A Sociological Study of the New Orleans Jewish Community* (New Orleans: Jewish Federation, 1958); Sidney Goldstein, *The Greater Providence Jewish Community; A Population Survey* (Providence: General Jewish Community, 1964); or the series of studies by Manheim Shapiro, under the sponsorship of the American Jewish Committee, of attitudes of Jews in Miami, Memphis, Baltimore, Kansas City, and White Plains.

When the present study was undertaken in 1964, there were no reliable estimates of the number of Jews affiliated with Orthodox synagogues in the United States. With the assistance of Victor Geller and other staff members of the Community Service Division of Yeshiva University, lists of all known Orthodox synagogues were compiled for the 40 communities outside Greater New York (New York City, Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk counties) which have 10,000 or more Jews or three or more known Orthodox synagogues. A questionnaire was sent to an Orthodox community leader, generally a practicing rabbi, in each of these communities. It listed the known Orthodox synagogues and asked the respondent to estimate the number of adult male members in each. Respondents were asked to correct the lists by removing congregations that were not at least nominally Orthodox and adding any that had been omitted, including private *minyanim* (conventicles) unaffiliated with organized synagogues. Thirty-three replies were received. Figures for the other seven communities were taken from local community studies (Detroit) or estimated by a staff member of the Community Service Division on the basis of his synagogue contacts. Estimates for all other known Orthodox synagogues in the United States outside New York City and the 40 major Jewish communities were made by Victor Geller. This included estimates for New York suburbs.

Estimates for New York City were arrived at somewhat differently because of the large number of Orthodox synagogues (approximately 800),<sup>4</sup> about many of which little is known.<sup>5</sup> Large-congregation memberships were estimated by CSD staff members most familiar with each borough. Memberships of smaller congregations in New York City were estimated by applying an arbitrary multiplier, which varied from borough to borough and neighborhood to neighborhood. In the Bronx and Queens the multiplier was 30; on the Lower East Side of Manhattan it was 100; in Brooklyn, with most of the synagogues, and particularly the small ones, it was 80.

Thus there is an estimated total of 205,640 men affiliated with the 1,603 known Orthodox synagogues in the United States.

It should be clear then that the figures given in the table are only estimates and that the margin of error is surely quite high. The method employed to make the estimates would account for formal membership only;

<sup>4</sup> The actual number of synagogues in New York City was derived from New York City's *List of Tax-exempt Properties* for 1962.

<sup>5</sup> The figure of 1,103 Orthodox synagogues, presented in the 1964 *Statistical Guide for New York City*, is based on estimates by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations and is not current.

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF KNOWN ORTHODOX SYNAGOGUES AND AFFILIATED MALE WORSHIPPERS IN THE UNITED STATES, BY STATE, 1964<sup>a</sup>

<i>State</i>	<i>Synagogues</i>	<i>Male Worshippers</i>
Alabama	3	650
Arizona	2	450
Arkansas	1	300
California	57	5,415
Colorado	7	1,375
Connecticut	29	5,335
Delaware	1	700
District of Columbia	9	1,820
Florida	12	1,220 <sup>b</sup>
Georgia	5	1,225
Illinois	64	10,132
Indiana	7	1,395
Iowa	4	565
Kansas	2	370
Kentucky	2	650
Louisiana	6	1,270
Maine	9	1,020
Maryland	43	6,440
Massachusetts	60	8,750
Michigan	28	4,212 <sup>c</sup>
Minnesota	16	1,960
Mississippi	2	90
Missouri	15	3,725
Nebraska	3	575
New Hampshire	1	40
New Jersey	113	15,310
New York	906	100,720
New York City	809 <sup>d</sup>	86,115
Bronx	129	12,485
Brooklyn	467	45,895
Manhattan	123	13,435
Queens	86	13,800
Richmond	4	500
Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk, and Rockland counties	42	7,530
Upstate New York	55	7,075
North Carolina	2	175
Ohio	33	8,336
Oregon	3	430
Pennsylvania	103	11,175
Rhode Island	14	1,380
South Carolina	1	375
Tennessee	6	1,875
Texas	10	1,795
Utah	1	275
Vermont	1	120
Virginia	8	1,225
Washington	5	925

TABLE 1. (Continued)

<i>State</i>	<i>Synagogues</i>	<i>Male Worshippers</i>
West Virginia	2	320
Wisconsin	10	1,370
Wyoming	1	75
TOTAL	1,607	204,815

<sup>a</sup> Excluding approximately 15 synagogues in downtown business districts which are used exclusively for saying *kaddish* and have no regular membership or Sabbath services, or the approximately 50 synagogues which respondents judged to lie between Orthodox and Conservative; but including *yeshivot* known to be places of worship.

<sup>b</sup> The number of regular worshippers far exceeds the number of members, but many of the worshippers are tourists in the Miami area who are presumably affiliated with synagogues in their home towns. However, the transient character of many residents probably means that membership figures for Florida are not a good criterion for estimating the strength of the local synagogues.

<sup>c</sup> Figures for Detroit were not available. The Michigan estimate of 4,212 includes 3,977 men belonging to Orthodox synagogues in Detroit, estimated on the basis of a 1956 sample survey in Albert J. Mayer, *op. cit.*, and 235 in the rest of the state, estimated by CSD staff members. As the AJYB went to press, data became available for 1963: Albert J. Mayer, *Social and Economic Characteristics of the Detroit Jewish Community: 1963* (Detroit: Jewish Welfare Federation, December 1964). They suggest that our estimate is probably too high.

<sup>d</sup> Based on estimates derived from the 1962 *List of Tax-exempt Properties*.

it does not include family members or others served by the synagogue, or people who worship there only on special occasions. If it did, the figure would be much higher.

The men referred to in the table may belong to more than one Orthodox synagogue, as indicated by two studies of dual memberships. Howard Polsky found that 91 per cent of Milwaukee Jews affiliated with Orthodox congregations belonged to only one such congregation and over eight per cent to two.<sup>6</sup> This means that the actual number of affiliated Orthodox Jews was only about 95 per cent of what the membership rolls would seem to indicate. In Providence, R.I.<sup>7</sup> the figure was 96 per cent. It can therefore be assumed that there is some duplication of members in the figures presented, but it does not appear to be substantial.

No effort was made to estimate the number of all Orthodox Jews by applying a multiplier to the total of men. Any multiplier would have to

<sup>6</sup> Howard Polsky, *The Great Defense: A Study of Jewish Orthodoxy in Milwaukee* (University of Wisconsin, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1956), p. 275. Part of this study is summarized in Marshall Sklare, ed., *The Jews* (Glencoe, 1957), pp. 325-35.

<sup>7</sup> Sidney Goldstein, *op. cit.*

take into account factors beyond the scope of this paper, including these:

1. The average size of Orthodox families compared with the average size of all Jewish families in the United States, currently estimated at 3.3 by the research department of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

2. The age distribution of Orthodox Jews, compared with the total Jewish population.

3. The effect on fertility of the concentration of Orthodox Jews in central cities rather than suburbs.

4. The total effect of the halakhic proscription against most types of birth control, which has contributed to an average birth rate of six to seven children per Orthodox family in Williamsburg.<sup>8</sup>

5. The greater propensity of people with children to affiliate with synagogues than single people or young married couples.

The (Reform) Union of American Hebrew Congregations uses a multiplier of 3.5 individuals per family as the first stage in arriving at their estimate of the number of Reform Jews; the (Conservative) United Synagogue of America uses 4.5. For institutional purposes, most organizations and movements no doubt need membership estimates, but since Orthodox data are insufficient for the purpose, the effort will not be made here.

### *Social Characteristics*

To determine the social characteristics of the nominally Orthodox Jews, we must rely almost exclusively on data originating outside New York City. Studies of various Jewish communities have included questions on synagogue affiliation or self-identification of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and unaffiliated or unidentifying Jews.<sup>9</sup> Respondents have often been further classified by one or more such variables as age, income, education, and occupation.

All such studies have found the nominally Orthodox to be older, of more recent immigrant origin, of lower income and occupational status, and with more limited secular education than Conservative, Reform, or unaffiliated Jews. However, no published study traces the relationship of

<sup>8</sup> Solomon Poll, *Hasidic Community of Williamsburg* (New York, 1962).

<sup>9</sup> E.g., Jewish Community Council of Rochester, *op. cit.*; Stanley K. Bigman, *op. cit.*; Leonard Reissman, *op. cit.*; Jack Porter, *Differentiating Features of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jewish Groups in Metropolitan Philadelphia* (Temple University, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1958); Sidney Goldstein, *op. cit.*; Albert J. Mayer, *op. cit.*, and Marshall Sklare, Marc Vosk, and Mark Zborowski, "Forms and Expressions of Jewish Identification," *Jewish Social Studies*, July 1955, pp. 205-18.

social characteristics to denomination over time.<sup>10</sup> Details from a study in progress are not yet available, but it appears that the income and the educational and occupational levels of the American Orthodox Jew are rising relatively to other Jews, and that Reform is reaching into lower-middle-income levels for the first time.

### EARLY ORTHODOX COMMUNITY

The demographic data on the social characteristics of the nominally Orthodox support the popular notion of the development of Orthodox and Conservative Judaism in the United States. According to this notion, the masses of East and Central European Jews who came to the United States between 1870 and 1924 were overwhelmingly Orthodox. Under the impact of economic necessity and cultural challenge, they changed. Some abandoned religion completely, a few became Reform. Some, however, and many more of their descendants, adjusted their religious tradition to the mores of contemporary America and evolved a form of worship and ritual that eventually became known as Conservative Judaism. Of course, many remained Orthodox. But these were the aged, the poor, and the poorly-educated, who established their early synagogues in the downtown areas of most large American cities. As the Jewish population gained in social status and new generations migrated outward and abandoned Orthodox practices, they left behind a residue of socially static Orthodox.<sup>11</sup>

There is reason to challenge this notion.<sup>12</sup> Unquestionably, a large group of immigrants, who conformed superficially to many Orthodox norms, were viewed as Orthodox by their "uptown" coreligionists. But a second look affords some contrary impressions. That the new immigrants founded countless small synagogues almost immediately upon arrival was not in itself evidence of religiosity. If the function of the synagogue was primarily for worship there was no need for such multiplication whereas if the primary purpose of the synagogue was to meet the social and cultural needs of small groups originating in the same European community, the multiplication is more understandable. In fact, the activity within

<sup>10</sup> A comparison of the social characteristics of Greater New York areas where new Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform synagogues were established, or existing facilities were expanded, is being prepared by the author for future publication in AJYB.

<sup>11</sup> The popular literature is replete with such assertions. For a scholarly study that makes this point see Howard Polsky, *op. cit.* Polsky's material is drawn from Milwaukee.

<sup>12</sup> I am indebted to my wife, Carol Liebman, for suggesting this line of inquiry.

these new synagogues raises serious questions about their religion. The synagogues were social forums and benevolent societies<sup>13</sup> adapted to the requirements of poor, unacculturated people. The oft-cited absence of decorum during the services strongly suggests that even the act of worship was perhaps a social more than a religious function, although this may have been true in Eastern Europe as well.

If the immigrants were indeed religiously motivated, the practical exigencies of strict ritual requirements would demand a *mikveh*, the lustration bath, before a synagogue. (For a discussion of *mikveh* see p. 90.) There is at least anecdotal evidence that *mikvaot* were scarce and inaccessible outside New York City, and sometimes even within it.

*Talmud Torah*—the study of the Jewish tradition and particularly its holy texts—and the maintenance of educational facilities certainly take halakhic precedence over the establishment of synagogues. But the new immigrants conspicuously neglected Jewish education. A survey in New York in 1908 indicated that only 28 per cent of the Jewish children between the ages of six and sixteen received even the scantiest Jewish education.<sup>14</sup> Until 1915 there were only two Jewish day schools in the whole country. The immigrants flocked instead to the public schools, to night classes, and to adult-education courses,<sup>15</sup> not only for vocational purposes but for general cultural advancement. The dangers to Orthodoxy of secular education must have been evident from the outset, but only since World War II have strong voices within the Orthodox camp been raised against college education, the institutionalization of secular knowledge.

The Young Israel movement in its infancy was frequently castigated as being “too modern” and hence non-Orthodox. But attempted mergers between Young Israel and neighboring Orthodox synagogues often failed not because of Young Israel’s modernity and questionable Orthodoxy, but rather because its requirement that all congregational officers be Sabbath observers could not be met by the older, more “traditional” synagogue.

The early East European immigrants came to the United States at a

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<sup>13</sup> There is a vast literature on this point as well. For one of the most pertinent and interesting series of essays in English see Charles S. Bernheimer, ed., *The Russian Jew in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1905).

<sup>14</sup> Cited among other places in Moses Rischin, *The Promised City* (Cambridge, 1962), p. 108. See also Lloyd P. Gartner, “The Jews of New York’s East Side, 1890–1893,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, March 1964, pp. 264–78.

<sup>15</sup> Moses Rischin, *op. cit.*, and every other study of the East European Jews in the United States.

time when traditional Judaism, even in Eastern Europe, had been thoroughly shaken by Enlightenment and secularism.<sup>16</sup> Even for those Orthodox who idealized religious life in Eastern Europe, the revival of traditional Judaism did not begin until the 1920s, at the end of the great wave of immigration to the United States. In fact, Agudath Israel, which represented the most traditional element in Jewish life and whose membership rose to an estimated half million in Eastern Europe, sought and failed to establish an organization in the United States in 1922 although almost all the great rabbinical leaders of Eastern Europe supported it. (Significantly, the organization did succeed in establishing a youth organization.)

There was a paucity of distinguished rabbis and scholars among the immigrants. Although an estimated 50,000 Jews immigrated from 1881 to 1885, the leading East European congregation of the time in New York had only a part-time rabbi of meager scholarship. When 26 Orthodox congregations met to choose a joint leader for New York Jewry, no American rabbi was even considered, and in 1887 the secretary to Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Spektor, the outstanding rabbinic authority of Russia, referred to American rabbinical leaders as "improper men."<sup>17</sup>

Those who emigrated first can be expected to have been the least traditional, whose piety was at most what Leo Baeck called *Milieu-Frömmigkeit*.<sup>18</sup> Willing as they were to take extended leave of family and home, they were no doubt less committed to tradition than their relatives and neighbors who came much later. When the Rabbi of Slutsk visited America and appeared at a public meeting of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations during the first wave of immigration, "he chastised the assemblage for having emigrated to this *trefa* [impure] land."<sup>19</sup> Similarly,

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Herbert Parzen, "When Secularism Came to Russian Jewry," *Commentary*, April 1952, pp. 355-62.

<sup>17</sup> Abraham J. Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, March 1955, pp. 129-98.

<sup>18</sup> A Yiddish story relates how a small Jewish town in East Europe raised money to send a young man to America for fear that he would otherwise have married a gentile: Isaac Metzker, "To the New World," in Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, eds., *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories* (New York, 1958), pp. 504-15. Another writer has noted: "After all, who went to America? Overwhelmingly, it was not the elite of learning, piety, or money but the *shnayders*, the *shusters*, and the *ferd-ganovim*": Milton Himmelfarb, "The Intellectual and the Rabbi," in Rabbinical Assembly of America, *Proceedings*, 1963, p. 124. See also Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is with People* (New York, 1952), pp. 260-61, and Arthur Hertzberg, "Seventy Years of Jewish Education," *Judaism*, October 1952, p. 361.

<sup>19</sup> Moshe Davis, "Jewish Religious Life and Institutions in America," in Louis Finkelstein, ed., *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion* (2nd ed.; New

would-be emigrants were warned to stay home and not endanger their Judaism by such renowned rabbinic authorities as the *Hafetz Hayyim*, Rabbi Israel Meir Hacohen.<sup>20</sup> Immigrants, often unable to separate the essential from the unessential in Judaism, would surrender an element of custom such as a beard, and then feel free to compromise everything else. Parents, brought to America by children who prepared the way, first wept for their children's violations of ritual, then adjusted. And of the older men who did go to work, most succumbed to violations of the Sabbath.<sup>21</sup>

The evidence suggests an absence of religious as distinct from ethnic commitment on the part of most nominally Orthodox immigrants to the United States. Thus, the rise of Conservative Judaism and secularism in American Jewish life did not entail a decision to opt out of traditional religion. It was, rather, a decision to substitute new social and cultural mores for the older ones, which had been intermingled with certain ritual manifestations.

Of course, this discussion does an injustice to those truly religious Jews who worked to build the early *mikvaot* and day schools and who sought the continuation of their authentic religious tradition in the United States. The significant fact, however, is that people of this sort represented a much smaller minority than has heretofore been imagined; and even of them or their descendants, many were attracted by the nascent Conservative movement, which they felt held greater promise for modern-day religiosity.

#### UNCOMMITTED ORTHODOX

Two groups of Orthodox Jews will be defined and considered in this section—the residual Orthodox and the non-observant Orthodox. The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada (*Agudat Ha-rabbanim*) is treated together with the residual Orthodox only for clarity of presentation. The rabbis themselves obviously do not fall into this category.

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York, 1955), I, p. 405. See also Bernard D. Weinryb, "Jewish Immigration and Accommodation to America: Research, Trends, Problems," in Moshe Davis and Isidore Meyer, eds., *The Writing of American Jewish History* (New York), p. 319, for a similar point.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870–1914* (Detroit, 1960), p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Bernheimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 158–61.

*Residual Orthodox*

We shall designate as residually Orthodox those remnants of the East European immigrants who remained nominally Orthodox more out of cultural and social inertia than out of religious choice. In all likelihood they still constitute the bulk of nominally Orthodox Jews in the United States; they probably determine the social image of Orthodoxy and are doubtless responsible for the statistical picture which shows a skewed distribution on the high end of the age continuum and on the low end of the income and educational continuum. The residual Orthodox represent a dying generation. Until the Second World War their children, with few exceptions, abandoned Orthodoxy. Since 1940, however, an increasing number of these, having been afforded the opportunity for a day-school education or a certain measure of social status in modern Orthodox synagogues, have become committed and practising Orthodox Jews, or have retained at least nominal affiliation with Orthodoxy.

It would be misleading to conceptualize a communal structure for the residual Jew, whose major identification came through the local synagogue. To the extent that such a structure existed, however, it was headed by the *shtot rov* or chief rabbi of each community. This was particularly true outside New York City and Chicago. Cities like Newark, N.J., Boston, Mass., Philadelphia, Pa., Baltimore, Md., Cleveland and Cincinnati, O., Milwaukee, Wis., Springfield, Mass., Rock Island, Ill., and Detroit, Mich. each had one rabbi who towered over the Orthodox community; he supervised kosher slaughtering, baking, and the processing of other foods, and presided over the local Jewish court. These were Orthodox leaders par excellence. New York and Chicago never produced a *shtot rov*, although one effort in that direction was made when Rabbi Jacob Joseph was brought from Vilna in 1888 to serve as chief rabbi of New York. The failure to organize either of the two major Jewish cities around a single rabbinic personality could be attributed to their size, Jewish diversity, and the fact that the residual Jew was not communally oriented. Nevertheless, even in New York and Chicago there were a handful of rabbis whose names were known to Orthodox Jews and who together could make some claim to leadership in the Orthodox community. These, and the lesser rabbinic personalities who revolved about them, were organized in the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, which gradually lost its ascendancy as the position of communal rabbi declined. This decline mirrored the decline of the communal rabbi's constituency, the residual Orthodox, who at one time probably constituted the majority of all Jews in the United States.

*Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States  
and Canada (Agudat Ha-rabbanim)*

Agudat Ha-rabbanim is the oldest organization of Orthodox rabbis in the United States. Founded in 1902, it was led for many years by Rabbi Israel Rosenberg, a leading New York rabbi and a founder of Yeshiva University. Its prestige rested on the affiliation of the leading rabbis of most Jewish communities. Its members were instrumental in founding most early day schools in the United States. At the beginning of World War I they established the Central Relief Committee, which was eventually absorbed by JDC, and during the 1920s they sponsored the visit to the United States of leading European rabbinic authorities. Today, however, little remains of Agudat Ha-rabbanim's influence and prestige. Three factors contributed to its decline.

First, the role of the communal rabbi declined drastically as the Jew increasingly became congregationally rather than communally oriented. With Americanization and the growth of the YMHA, community centers, and Conservative, Reform, and finally even Orthodox synagogue centers (not to speak of country clubs and fraternal lodges), fewer and fewer Jews looked for an authoritative rabbinic figure to speak for the community. Most Jews looked for communal services that were essentially philanthropic rather than religious. An authoritative figure who could answer questions of religious law was no longer required, since such questions were now rarely asked.

The second factor accounting for the decline of the Agudat Ha-rabbanim stemmed from the nature of the Orthodox immigrants who began arriving in the late 1930s. If the communal rabbi received little support from the acculturated Jew, his position was not bolstered by the more aggressively Orthodox Jews who immigrated in the Nazi and postwar era from Poland, Hungary, and Germany. The new Orthodox immigrants did not relate to the existing network of American Jewish institutions and had little need and much distrust for Orthodox rabbis who served the function of Orthodoxy's representatives in the larger Jewish community.

Agudat Ha-rabbanim members were caught, in the midst of changing Jewish identification, between the less religious left and the more religious right, and they were unable to respond. The Yiddish-speaking, often bearded rabbi—a severe and inflexible figure—was a symbol of a past generation with which the secularized, Americanized Jew had little in common. To the new immigrant and the younger, more militant Orthodox Jew, on the other hand, that rabbi was too compromising. The *rashe yeshivot*, the Talmud scholars who headed the *yeshivot*, rose to promi-

nence in this period, when the younger, more committed, observant Jew noted that the communal rabbi's talmudical scholarship could not equal that of his *rosh yeshivah*.

The issue which most severely damaged the image of the Agudat Ha-rabbanim type of rabbi was *kashrut* supervision. Rightly or wrongly, an image persisted of the communal rabbi who, pressured by butchers, food processors, and slaughterers to ease *kashrut* requirements, and plagued by the indifference of Jewish consumers, lowered his standards of supervision. The Agudat Ha-rabbanim, unlike the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, took no organizational responsibility for the supervision of its members and affiliates. Nevertheless, there was a feeling of distrust within the new Orthodox community toward many of the organization's members and hence toward the organization itself.

A third factor contributing to the organization's decline was its policy regarding new members. Members were required to have the qualification of *yadin yadin*, or at least be on the road to it, and this qualification demanded study beyond that offered by most American *yeshivot*. The reason for this policy—whether it was to maintain high standards or to serve some other purpose—is of no interest here; its result was to close the organization's ranks to most American-trained rabbis. (One large category of exceptions were the graduates of the Yeshivah Rabbi Israel Meyer Hacoen in Queens, N.Y., whose ordination includes *yadin yadin*.) But it was the American-trained rabbis to whom the larger, more prosperous, modern Orthodox congregations were attracted. These rabbis joined the Rabbinical Council of America, raising the status and prestige of that organization at the expense of Agudat Ha-rabbanim.

Nevertheless, Agudat Ha-rabbanim was not without resources or energy in 1964. With over 600 members and an annual budget of \$25,000, it led other Orthodox groups in such activities as the successful lobbying for enactment of the New York State Sabbath Closing Law in 1963 (AJYB, 1964 [Vol. 65], p. 65). It also sponsored 'Ezrat Torah, an organization under the leadership of one of the great scholars and saintly souls of his time, Rabbi Elijah Henkin, which was concerned with welfare assistance to needy yeshivah students and Talmud scholars, particularly in Israel.

In 1960, in an obvious reaction to the changing power distribution within American Orthodoxy, Agudat Ha-rabbanim enlarged its three-member presidium to include the two most prestigious leaders of the yeshivah world, Rabbi Aaron Kotler, *rosh yeshivah* of the Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, and Rabbi Moses Feinstein, *rosh yeshivah* of

Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem and probably the leading active *posek* (halakhic authority) in Jewish life. After Rabbi Kotler's death in 1962 his position was filled by Rabbi Jacob Kamenetzky, *rosh yeshivah* of Torah Vodaath. Significantly, then, Agudat Ha-rabbanim has responded to only one challenge—the one from the right rather than the one from the left.

### *Nonobservant Orthodox*

Having considered the residual Orthodox, we are ready to look at the second group of uncommitted Orthodox, the nonobservant.

Their number is difficult to estimate, but they surely represent a significant proportion of all nominally Orthodox Jews. They are the Jews who are affiliated with Orthodox synagogues but have no commitment to the *halakhah* or even to the rituals which the residual Orthodox practice. (Studies of Washington, D.C.,<sup>22</sup> Philadelphia, Pa.,<sup>23</sup> and Providence, R.I.,<sup>24</sup> to cite a few examples, indicate that anywhere from 25 to 60 per cent of Orthodox Jews do not even purchase kosher meat regularly.) Their social characteristics, too, are distinctly different from those of the residual Orthodox. They are not necessarily the aged, poor, or newest immigrant groups, whose adherence to ritual is often only a result of their inability or unwillingness to acculturate. On the contrary, they represent perhaps the most affluent element of Orthodoxy. Of course, in social characteristics some of the nonobservant may also be residual.

There are a variety of reasons why the nonobservant Orthodox affiliate with Orthodox institutions. Sometimes they affiliate because Orthodoxy exercises a monopoly in a city or a section of it. A survey of Kansas City, Mo., by the American Jewish Committee in 1961 provided an illustration of this.<sup>25</sup> In that city the Orthodox group was heavily weighted by members of a new synagogue in a suburb which had not yet acquired either a Conservative or Reform temple. As might be expected, a very high proportion of this synagogue's members did not consider themselves as Orthodox, and regularity of attendance was quite low. Only 40 per cent regarded themselves as Orthodox, 38 per cent as Conservative, 16 per cent as Reform, and 6 per cent as none of these. The social charac-

<sup>22</sup> Stanley K. Bigman, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–22.

<sup>23</sup> Jack Porter, "Differentiating Features of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jewish Groups in Metropolitan Philadelphia," *Jewish Social Studies*, July 1963, p. 194.

<sup>24</sup> Sidney Goldstein, *op. cit.*, 212–13.

<sup>25</sup> Manheim Shapiro, *The Kansas City Survey of Jewish Attitudes* (New York: American Jewish Committee, mimeo, 1962).

teristics of the sample surveyed, as indicated by place of residence and age, corresponded to those of the nonobservant Orthodox; that is, young age and high income. Only 53 per cent of the sample stated that they purchased kosher meat and only 47 per cent that they kept two sets of dishes. The Kansas City finding led Shapiro to conclude that

the choice of a particular branch of synagogue affiliation among American Jews today is rarely the product of a choice made on the basis of conscious analysis of theological or ideological philosophies. The decision is likely to be more closely related to such factors as geography, socio-economic positions and aspirations, distance from the immigrant generations, general impressions of the relative demands made by a particular branch of Judaism, relationships to parents and childhood experience, their own estimates of their own degree of commitment to what they assume Judaism to be, and many others.<sup>26</sup>

Another instance of Orthodox monopoly or near monopoly developed in New Orleans, where until 1960 there was no Conservative synagogue and the social status as well as the religious pattern of the existing Reform temples made them forbidding to many Jews.

Sometimes nonobservers are attracted to Orthodoxy by its outstanding rabbis. Some are attracted to the several Orthodox synagogues, such as Shearith Israel in New York, with distinguished historical traditions and high social status. Some join because membership fees are often lower than those of competing synagogues. Finally, there is the completely marginal Jew, who is almost indifferent about synagogue affiliation but, having been raised in an Orthodox environment, finds nostalgic satisfaction in attendance at familiar Rosh Ha-shanah and Yom Kippur services. To him, as to his coreligionist at the other end of the spectrum, Orthodoxy is "more religious" than Conservatism or Reform.

Elsewhere<sup>27</sup> I have indicated that there are three other forces operating today in favor of the Orthodox synagogue to counteract the more obvious anti-Orthodox trends. In fact, one can almost posit that as Conservative and Reform synagogues gain new members at the expense of Orthodoxy, countervailing forces are set in motion to restore the balance partially. These forces are religious status, small size, and community of interest.

Religious status favors Orthodoxy in an era in which religion has gained not only respectability but even intellectual recognition and some scientific assent. In a period in which affirmation of supernaturalism is no

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Charles S. Liebman, "A Sociological Analysis of Contemporary Orthodoxy," *Judaism*, Spring 1964, p. 298.

longer a cause for embarrassment, and where one prevailing mood among the intellectual *avant-garde* is to stress individual and personal religious experience of a non-rational nature, Orthodoxy finds a receptive ear. It is a time when a Reform rabbi, writing with a tinge of envy and much sympathy about ultra-religious hasidic groups, barely conceals his disdain for his own congregants. In this atmosphere a Jew, particularly if he is middle-class, gains a certain status among Jewishly alert groups through affiliation with an Orthodox congregation. This status is inversely related to the degree to which the Orthodox congregation modernizes its service, grows in membership, and emulates the Conservative and Reform synagogues in the variety of non-sacred activities offered to the membership.

The large size of the Conservative and Reform synagogues propels some Jews to seek alternatives. The physical plant itself, no matter how artfully constructed, which is intended to seat a thousand or more worshippers, to educate hundreds of children, and to provide social and recreational activities for an entire neighborhood, may be inspiring and attractive to most people, but it will be forbidding to at least a few.

Finally, the lack of warmth and the anonymity of the large Reform and Conservative congregations suffer by contrast with the intimate feeling of community promoted by small Orthodox synagogues, independently of belief or disbelief in credal Orthodoxy.

There is one crucial difference between the residual Orthodox and nonobservant Orthodox which gives a clue to the future. The children of today's nonobservant Orthodox are far more likely to be drawn into the network of intensive and superior Talmud Torahs and all-day schools than were the children of the older residual Orthodox, who were raised when there was little opportunity for intensive Jewish education. In the older generation, the residual Orthodox were Jewishly better-educated than the nonobservant, but the reverse is true of their children.

#### COMMITTED ORTHODOX

It is not possible accurately to determine the number of committed Orthodox—that is Jews who strive to conduct their lives within the framework of the *halakhah*. Traditional Sabbath observance is a crude measure of committed Orthodoxy, and an educated guess puts the figure of Sabbath observers at 200,000, or approximately four per cent of American Jewry.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> These estimates were made by staff members of CSD, based on figures supplied by Torah Umesorah.

Since the rest of this essay will deal with the committed Orthodox, and since even the residual and nonobservant Orthodox increasingly take their cues from that group and affiliate with their synagogues and other institutions, the word Orthodox will hereafter refer to the committed Orthodox, unless otherwise stated.

Most of the committed Orthodox are in the Greater New York area. Either by affinity or necessity they tend to be geographically clustered. The Orthodox Jew requires a variety of institutions, in addition to a synagogue, which a handful of individuals alone cannot support. He needs a *mikveh*, a reliable kosher butcher, and preferably a Sabbath-observing baker. A day school for his children, certainly at an elementary-school level and increasingly at a high-school level, is highly desirable if not essential.

Centers of Orthodoxy in New York are Washington Heights and the lower East Side in Manhattan; Boro Park, Crown Heights, Bensonhurst, and portions of Flatbush in Brooklyn; Far Rockaway and Kew Gardens-Forest Hills in Queens, and Spring Valley-Monsey in Rockland County. However, in none of these areas do all the Orthodox Jews constitute one community in a structural or even social sense.

The Monsey area might serve as an example. Monsey is approximately 35 miles from the heart of New York City. Most of its Orthodox residents—all of them committed—have moved there since 1956. On the whole, they are of similar income and almost all of them have had an intensive Jewish education. Within Monsey proper there are nine Orthodox synagogues serving roughly 850 regular adult male Sabbath-attending worshippers and their families.

There are two large elementary day schools, with about 300 students each, which serve the neighboring community of Spring Valley as well. One day school conducts its Jewish studies in Hebrew, the other in Yiddish. A third day school, under a hasidic rabbi, provides an old-world type of education for about 50 boys. In addition there are a few hasidic rabbis who train a handful of pupils on a private basis in their homes, providing a minimum of secular education. To complete the elementary educational picture there are a number of Talmud Torahs attached to Orthodox synagogues which serve primarily the non-Orthodox community, since the synagogue members themselves send their children to the day schools. A Yiddish-speaking high school for boys in Monsey proper was joined by a second, which moved to the vicinity in 1964; there is also a tradition-oriented Beth Jacob high school for girls. None of these educational facilities is used by the 60 to 70 families of hasidic followers of

the Skverer Rebbe, who live in the neighboring community of New Square and sponsor an educational, social, and religious network of their own. Finally, there is the Beth Medrosh Elyon, a *kolel* (school for very advanced talmudic study, usually beyond what is required for ordination) with about 160 men, which serves a national constituency but receives strong local financial support.

The only local facilities in which almost all Orthodox Jews of Monsey are involved is a *hevra kaddisha* (burial society), the local *mikveh*, and the two local Sabbath-observing bakeries. Few communal activities involve all synagogue members or even leaders. Most of the members of one group of synagogues, predominantly American-born, college-educated, prosperous businessmen and professionals (prices of homes from \$18,000 to \$50,000), enroll their children in the Hebrew-speaking elementary school and then in New York City high schools, especially Yeshiva University high school. Members of a second group of synagogues, composed of a much higher percentage of foreign-born, with less secular education and of somewhat lower economic status, support the Yiddish-speaking elementary day schools and the local religious high schools. Some of these same people, however, also support the local hasidic day school, which deemphasizes secular education. Finally there is a German synagogue, many of whose members are oriented toward (the German) Adath Jeshurun of Washington Heights in New York City, and who transport their children to the day schools of that synagogue. Except for the relative absence of residual and nonobservant Orthodox and the high concentration of committed Orthodox (estimated at 30 to 35 per cent of the total Jewish community), the constellation of institutions in Monsey is similar to what it is in other Orthodox communities. The non-Orthodox of Monsey are either unaffiliated or are associated with the Conservative or Reform congregations in Spring Valley.

### *Orthodoxy in the Jewish Religious Spectrum*

Before discussing the divisions within the Orthodox camp, it will be well to understand the nature of Orthodoxy within the totality of Jewish life.

Orthodoxy perceives itself as the only legitimate bearer of the Jewish tradition; to Orthodoxy this tradition is expressed almost exclusively in religious form (which is not to say that all elements of the tradition are necessarily religious in their essence). While Conservative and Reform see themselves as legitimate heirs to the Jewish tradition, neither claims to be its exclusive bearer. This distinction between Orthodoxy and the

other denominations has analytically separable consequences which only seem to operate at cross-purposes. Since neither the Reform nor the Conservative lays claim to exclusive doctrinal "truth," they are free to cooperate with one another, with Orthodoxy, and even with secular Jewish groups; they risk only institutional losses. The doctrines of Orthodoxy, on the other hand, are more precise and are by definition beyond compromise or even the appearance of compromise. Hence Orthodoxy must be constantly on guard against appearing to surrender or water down its doctrine.

But there is a second consequence that flows from Orthodoxy's exclusive claim to the truth and its major tenet that it is the obligation of every Jew to observe the *mitzwot* (religious commandments). While Conservatives and Reformists are under no obligation to do anything about the matter, the Orthodox are doctrinally obligated to encourage the observance of Jewish law here and now. In addition, the doctrine of *ahavat Yisrael* (love of Israel), particularly as elaborated by the late Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, chief rabbi of Palestine until his death in 1935, impels Orthodoxy to extend itself to the non-Orthodox. If non-Orthodox Jews were unorganized, the consequences of Orthodoxy's doctrinal position would not be contradictory. It could simply undertake missions to the non-Orthodox. But when, in fact, about half of the non-Orthodox are organized in the Conservative and Reform movements, and the remainder are almost beyond reach of any religious group in Jewish life, then Orthodoxy is confronted with two mutually exclusive mandates—to promote faith and observance among non-Orthodox Jews, while giving no recognition and comfort to the only existing institutions which can reach those Jews. In practice, different groups within Orthodoxy have emphasized one mandate or the other, and most of the divisions within Orthodoxy, in practice, reflect this division. But the point to be stressed is that, with the possible exception of the Satmar *hasidim* (pp. 83–85), all Orthodox groups consider both mandates as binding. (The Satmar probably do, too, but feel that the obligation to promote observance is simply impractical in this day among all but a handful of Jews and that their own piety is not so secure as to justify undertaking "missions" to other Jews.) Hence, no matter how zealous the right wing may be in its stress on religious continuity, maximal observance, and condemnation of the non-Orthodox, it hesitates to characterize the non-Orthodox as beyond hope of redemption. And no matter how outgoing and conciliatory the left wing may be toward the nonobservant and the institutions of the non-

Orthodox, it is always restrained by its acceptance of the basic doctrinal principles as being beyond compromise.

### *Orthodoxy and the Demands of Society*

The differences within Orthodoxy are best understood in the broad framework of the sociology of religion. While the concepts here developed are not directly applicable to Judaism, they are suggestive of differences among Jewish groups and serve heuristic purposes.

Students of religion, drawing their data primarily from the development of Christianity, have developed a typology of religions based on distinctions between church and sect. Following Yinger's refinement of Troeltsch,<sup>28a</sup> church and sect are defined as ideal types, that is, end points on a continuum along which religious groups can be placed and compared with one another as they approach one end or the other.

The central problems to which the church-sect dichotomy is addressed are how a religious body confronts the secular world and how it provides a religious response to the personal needs of its adherents. The *church* "recognizes the strength of the secular world and rather than either deserting the attempt to influence it or losing its position by contradicting the secular powers directly, accepts the main elements in the social structure as proximate goods." The major function of the church is its effort to insure social cohesion and order and to do so it must extend its ministry to everyone. As a result it must be willing to "compromise with the wide ranges of behavior that may be found in a society."<sup>29</sup>

The *sect* is a smaller group, arising from the inability of the church to meet some members' needs by virtue of its very flexibility and adaptability. The sect "repudiates the compromises of the church, preferring isolation to compromise."<sup>30</sup> Hence, unlike the church, it is hostile or indifferent to the secular order. It seeks primarily to satisfy individual religious needs rather than societal ones.

It is apparent that the church-sect dichotomy is not applicable in this form to Judaism today. The typology assumes a closed society in which the religious order is confronted only by the secular order and the individual needs of its members. When Judaism represented a basically closed society, before Emancipation, the dichotomy appears to have been more applicable. Where the definition of church or sect says "society," we can

<sup>28a</sup> John Milton Yinger, *Religion, Society and the Individual* (New York, 1957).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

read "Judaism" or "Jews." Thus, the early development of hasidism appears to fit the definition of sectarian growth and development.

But religious groups within Judaism today are confronted with problems of the larger Jewish society—what we may call the secular (or non-religious) institutionalized Jewish order—as well as of the non-Jewish society, and the problems of the religious denomination are not only to adapt to Jewish society and insure social cohesion and order within Judaism, but also to adapt to general society and insure cohesion and order within *it*. Furthermore, Judaism must meet not only the individual needs of members as they arise by virtue of Jewishness, but also those that arise by virtue of membership in the general society. An effort to solve one kind of problem frequently exacerbates another. To sum up—the Christian denomination plays a double role: vis-à-vis the social order or general society, and vis-à-vis the individual needs of its membership. To the extent that the Christian denomination stresses the solution to one order of problems it raises questions for the other. Judaism faces not two but four problems. It must meet the needs or demands of the broader society and of the narrower, Jewish society. It must meet the needs that arise from an individual's problems in the general society and those that arise from his problems in the Jewish society.

Let us be specific about the nature of these problems as they have emerged in the United States.

1. To meet the needs of the general society, it is necessary to affirm the democratic political structure and to develop a symbolism (transcendental or not) for its transmission; to affirm the unity of all Americans and the primacy of American national interests and needs.

2. To meet the needs of the Jewish society, it is necessary to achieve unity among Jews and to maintain Jewish identification in a permissive gentile society; to maintain defenses against prejudice and discrimination.

3. To meet the individual's needs in the general society, it is necessary to confront the problems of good and evil, of reward and punishment, and of alienation and anomie in an urban, heterogeneous society.

4. To meet the individual's needs in Jewish society, it is necessary to interpret traditional Jewish beliefs and practices in the light of the individual's present needs and problems.

Bearing in mind these four types of demands or needs, we can classify all Jewish organizations by the problem or combination of problems to which they have addressed themselves. Each of these classifications can, in turn, be refined according to the *manner* in which the problem is approached. Within any given organization there is bound to be some con-

flict or tension over which problem should assume priority. A general theory of Jewish organizational life would have to take account of the manner in which social status, education, accommodation to the American milieu, and other such factors cut across the leadership and constituent groups of each organization, determining the perspective in which problems are viewed and solutions chosen.

Our concern here is with Orthodoxy, but first we must look briefly into the Conservative and Reform groups, which today come closer than Orthodoxy to assuming the characteristics of church rather than sect. By and large, Conservatism and Reform address themselves to problems arising from societal demands. The application is made at an individual level and to individual problems, but the context out of which the problem emerges is generally societal—social cohesion and moral order—rather than individual. Until recently, Reform was more oriented towards general societal problems and Conservatism toward those of Jewish society. This is changing somewhat as Conservatism becomes more self-conscious about its role as a church and Reform, with a longer church experience, becomes more aware of the limitations of a church in reaching its membership directly.

For an illustration of the growing emphasis on a societal-church role for Conservative Judaism, the 1962 proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly are useful. Its convention that year was devoted to the day-school movement, and the speakers stressed the reasons for developing Conservative as distinct from Orthodox day schools. One rabbi complained about the Orthodox day schools:

In many, if not most instances, school holidays in the Yeshivot are set without any consideration for the dates of public school holidays so that Yeshiva students cannot possibly meet with or join in activities with friends who attend other schools.<sup>31</sup>

A Conservative educator called for mobilizing the Jewish community in behalf of day schools by stressing 11 points, most of which emphasized the compatibility of day schools with America, democracy, and even the public-school system.<sup>32</sup> Another rabbi, asking, "What should be distinctive about our Conservative day schools?," answered:

First, I would say, is the principle of motivation. Our motivation is not isolationism, but preparation for Jewish living in the context of general life, in America, or anywhere else in the world. . . . Not only the civic

<sup>31</sup> Rabbinical Assembly of America, *Proceedings*, 1962, p. 44.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54–56.

and political positions of Jews, but our understanding of the true nature of Judaism demands that we regard isolation from the general community and world culture as a goal devoutly to be shunned.<sup>33</sup>

A third rabbi commented:

The road to further progress in this area of our educational work is still strewn with obstacles, both major and minor. Many of the laymen have yet to be convinced that a Conservative Day School is not parochial, and does not deprive its pupils of a full experience in the American milieu. Some of our own colleagues are afraid lest an expanded Day School movement weaken our opposition to federal aid to education, and tempt us into the Orthodox camp altogether.<sup>34</sup>

And finally this proud boast of a fourth rabbi:

To be specific, from the very start of our Hillel Day School in Detroit, we paid more attention to American sancta than they do in any public school. That may be too categorical a statement, but we know that Thanksgiving day is roundly ignored in the public school. We glorify it, because it is one of the sancta of American life which can be glorified very naturally. . . . We find that it is possible to instill the best of our American holidays and integrating them with Jewish values, and conversely taking Jewish holidays like *Pesah* and integrating them with American overtones. . . . There is a slight diminution of daily contact with non-Jewish children, but it can be made up for by a deliberately designed integrated program.<sup>35</sup>

Papers delivered at the 1963 meeting of CCAR offered a striking contrast to those presented at this convention of Conservative rabbis. According to one observer, himself a Reform rabbi, it had been rumored that the 1963 convention would precipitate a theological revolution.<sup>36</sup> The papers were described as follows:

They focus on God where the old liberals concentrated on man. They are concerned with the authoritative claim traditional texts and traditional observance have on them. They take the concept of Halachah seriously and seek to determine what is law for them today. They do not hesitate to use religious terms which the liberals ignored or reinterpreted away, like revelation, sin, the fear of God. They, too, try to define them in a modern way but one which will not do violence to

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>36</sup> Ben Hamon, "The Reform Rabbis Debate Theology: A Report on the 1963 meeting of the CCAR," *Judaism*, Fall 1963, p. 479.

their traditional Jewish intent. One might simply describe their position as seeking to take the Jewish religion with full personal seriousness but not literally.<sup>37</sup>

Most pertinent to our argument is this comment by the pseudonymous author: "Reform rabbis are interested in theology today because they know that they have little else to offer the cultured, ethical man, and only a living relationship between God and Israel can justify the continued effort to remain Jewish."<sup>38</sup> The point is that an intellectually significant element within Reform Judaism seeks a withdrawal from Reform's church-like, societally-oriented posture. No comparable development in Conservative Judaism is noticeable.

In contrast to Conservative and Reform Judaism, much of Orthodoxy's energy has been addressed to finding solutions within a halakhic framework for individual problems arising in contemporary life. Orthodoxy has been the least church-like of all Jewish religious groups. In part this stems from the absence (until recently) of any self-consciousness. Only recently has Orthodoxy begun to define itself as a particular movement in the United States and been brought into contact with the broader society by the accelerated acculturation of its adherents and its own institutional growth. This new confrontation has raised problems that formerly did not exist for Orthodoxy or were overlooked. Thus, Orthodox leaders have been much slower than other Jewish leaders to define their attitude toward problems of civil rights or labor.

Since 1960 much of this has changed. In 1964, speaking to a Young Israel meeting in New York, Rabbi Aaron Soloveichik, one of the leading talmudic authorities in Jewish life, delivered a major address on civil rights from a halakhic perspective. In that same year a joint conference of the Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO, and the Social Action Committee of RCA heard a series of papers by young Orthodox rabbis on religion and labor. Such developments were a portent of serious stirrings within Orthodoxy.

Reform and Conservatism, however, still are more church-like than Orthodoxy, not only in their role in the general society but also in Jewish society. The ideologists of Conservatism resemble those of Orthodoxy in the nature of their formal commitment to *halakhah* and tradition. But the practical difficulties of reconciling a corpus of law having no effective sanctions with the proclivities of modern man has resulted in varying solutions. Conservatism has increasingly, albeit slowly and often grudging-

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 480.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 485.

ingly, found its solution in the doctrine that the *halakhah* must be molded to suit modern man's material and intellectual needs. But its left wing has long argued that the potential for change is too severely limited by the necessity to fit all changes to Jewish law. The left wing has theretofore pressed its leadership to change the law by reliance on non-legal criteria (psychology, *aggadah*, etc.). Their success on this score has been limited, but they have accepted a procedure, introduced in 1948 upon the organization of the present Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, whereby unless the law committee of RA resolves a given division by issuing a unanimous opinion, Conservative rabbis are free to uphold any contending opinion. In fact, the Conservative rabbi is bound only by his own concept of Jewish propriety in advising his membership what they can or cannot do under Jewish law. The discretion thus allowed is more abstract than real, however, since Conservative rabbis are, in fact, rarely consulted on halakhic matters. Thus, Conservative Judaism has been able to meet the Jewish societal demands of its congregants without challenging individual conduct or behavior. As one JTS professor noted in private conversation, the RA deliberates and the laity decides. The rabbis debate whether it is permitted to ride to the synagogue on the Sabbath and the laymen ride. The outcome of the Rabbinical Assembly deliberations is either a foregone conclusion or irrelevant. Thus, the Conservative movement moves closer toward our definition of a church, as indeed it must if it is to achieve universality and bring the masses of Jews under its umbrella.

Orthodoxy faces a similar problem, and some of the divisions within its camp are best understood by analyzing the different positions of Orthodox leaders and institutions as they approach the church or sect ends of the continuum. The line between the left (or church) wing of Orthodoxy and the right wing of the Conservative movement is a very thin one. In fact, it is institutional loyalty far more than ideology which separates the two groups practically, though there are other, subtle distinctions, as well.

There are two alternative explanations for the differences among the Orthodox. The first argues that the two major categories of Orthodox—modern or church Orthodox and sectarian Orthodox—differ from one another in their degree of acculturation. It is true, as we shall show, that the sectarian Orthodox tend to be of lower income, poorer secular education, and more recent immigration than the modern Orthodox. (Sociologists of religion have noted that these tend to correlate with affinity to sect rather than church among Christians as well.) But the sectarians

can boast their share of outwardly acculturated adherents; the leaders of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists, to be discussed below, are far more sectarian than modern in terms of their concerns and orientations. And, most significantly, acculturation must be viewed as a dependent rather than an independent variable. The large number of American-born advanced yeshivah students who attend college at night to minimize interference with their talmudic studies and value their secular education only for its vocational benefits have in a sense deliberately rejected acculturation because of their sectarian tendencies, rather than being sectarian because unacculturated.

A second explanation for the differences among the Orthodox distinguishes among them along a fundamentalism-liberalism scale. It argues that the sectarian Orthodox differ from the modern or church Orthodox by virtue of their beliefs concerning the Mosaic authorship of the Torah or the Sinaitic origin of the Oral Law. Although some modern Orthodox thinkers would consider Franz Rosenzweig's position,<sup>39</sup> for example, as within the framework of Orthodox belief, questions of actual dogma have not yet been broached among Orthodox leaders. When they are, as seems likely, there will be explosive consequences. Unquestionably there are Orthodox intellectuals who would like to raise the question, but with few exceptions neither they nor the fundamentalists have yet articulated exactly what they mean by Mosaic authorship or Sinaitic origin of the Oral Law.<sup>40</sup> It is fair to say that the entire belief structure of American

<sup>39</sup> Rosenzweig accepted the notion of a biblical Redactor, but saw the task of compiling the Bible as the human presentation of divine revelation. Rosenzweig's oft-quoted statement is that for him the symbol "R" does not stand for *Redactor* but for *Rabbenu* (our rabbi, our master).

<sup>40</sup> In one respect the argument that the written law (the Torah) and the oral law, which constitute the basis of *halakhah*, were given by God to Moses at Sinai requires no elaboration. It has always been an article of faith for the Orthodox Jew, and the meaning of the words and their historical referent seems simple enough. Biblical criticism has not challenged this belief; on the contrary, biblical criticism becomes meaningful only when this article of faith is denied. But it is this very article of faith in its plain meaning which has become "preposterous" to the modern mind. (This, of course, says nothing about the truth or falsity of the doctrine. A round world once also seemed preposterous.) That segment of American Orthodoxy which lives in the orbit of the *rashe yeshivot* does not find such a faith preposterous. It has no severe problem in reconciling its conception of God and human experience to its faith in the divine origin of Torah. That is not so for the more acculturated Orthodox Jew. The observer is perhaps forbidden to challenge a man's belief, but he is entitled to ask whether the secularly acculturated Jew truly believes in *Torah min ha-shamayim* (Torah from heaven) when the entire structure of behavior and belief of that Jew seems inconsistent with this one article of faith. Inevitably efforts will be made to reinterpret the meaning of *Torah min ha-shamayim* in an effort to resolve the inconsistency. A variety of strategies are pos-

Orthodoxy still finds verbal expression within the bounds of a rather narrow fundamentalism. Privately, the modern Orthodox admit that they simply interpret the same words to mean different things from what they mean to the sectarian Orthodox.<sup>41</sup> They have sought to keep the subject outside the area of controversy, making no serious effort, for example, to engage in biblical criticism, and thereby ruling out the development of any outstanding Orthodox biblical scholars in the United States. Modern Orthodoxy pays lip service to the notion that something ought to be done in this area and that aspects of biblical criticism can be incorporated into the Orthodox tradition, but no one is prepared to undertake or even encourage the work. It is sometimes acknowledged that some abandon Orthodoxy because their intellectual predispositions cannot be reconciled with traditional patterns of belief. But such losses, qualitatively important, are quantitatively insignificant. The main body of Orthodoxy in the United States appears at present to be doctrinally untroubled.

### *Institutions and Currents*

Using the church-sect dichotomy, then, let us turn to a discussion of specific institutions and currents within Orthodoxy. As we noted in the introduction, little attention is given to synagogue practice, although it is really in the synagogue that the full variety of Orthodox types become evident in their pure form.<sup>42</sup> At one extreme are the *shtibl*-type synagogues. They meet in small rooms, where bearded men cover their heads with *tallitim* (prayer shawls) to pray, generally unheeding of the leader of the service, their bodies swaying. Women are separated from the men by a full-length wall in the rear, punctured by several peepholes through which a few can peer. At the other extreme are the modern edifices with spacious auditoriums. Here services are conducted by a cantor whose trained voice is carried to the ends of the hall by a microphone. Men and women are seated together, and the heart of the service is the rabbi's

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sible. One can begin by acknowledging this as a preposterous belief and proceed to a kind of Orthodox Jewish existentialism, with the events at Sinai being the object of some "leap of faith." One can maintain that the doctrine of *Torah min ha-shamayim* has metaphysical rather than physical referents and that we are dealing with two discrete levels of meaning. One can seek to reinterpret *Torah min ha-shamayim* as meaning something less than the entire written and oral law. These and other strategies of reinterpretation will undoubtedly be undertaken.

<sup>41</sup> The same is true of Conservative and Reform leaders among themselves with regard to the concept of revelation.

<sup>42</sup> For an illustration of the variety of Orthodox synagogues in one suburban county see Jacob Sodden, *The Impact of Suburbanization on the Synagogue* (New York University, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1962).

sermon. Although mixed seating and the use of a microphone on the Sabbath violate *halakhah*, the modern congregation considers itself as Orthodox and is in fact more likely to support many of the supracongregational institutions to be discussed below than the *shtibl*.

### MODERN ORTHODOX

By modern Orthodox we mean those individuals and institutions among the committed Orthodox who tend toward the church end of the church-sect continuum. On the one hand, they seek to demonstrate the viability of the *halakhah* for contemporary life; on the other, they emphasize what they have in common with all other Jews rather than what separates them. Until recently they composed almost the entire upper-income, well-educated strata of the committed Orthodox. Many of the best-known Orthodox congregations in the United States, and most of the wealthy ones, are led by modern Orthodox rabbis.

Like the other groups within American Orthodoxy, the modern Orthodox have not produced any systematic statement of their ideology; in part, perhaps, because they shun the practical consequences of their philosophical or theological position, and in part because none has been sanctioned by eminent talmudic scholars, still acknowledged as the arbiters of ideology. To the extent, however, that the modern Orthodox have produced an ideologist, it is probably Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, although his position is not representative of all modern Orthodox Jews. He is certainly the favorite target of the Orthodox right wing, notwithstanding the private concession of at least some of its members that he has brought more people into the Orthodox fold than any other person. Rackman has published widely on *halakhah*, Jewish values, and contemporary life.<sup>43</sup> His concern is with understanding the meaning of the halakhic injunctions in order to find contemporary applications. In the course of his efforts he has suggested what many feel to be a radical re-interpretation of the *halakhah*:

The Halakhah is more than texts. It is life and experience. What made the Babylonian and not the Palestinian Talmud the great guide of Jewish life in the Diaspora was not a decree or a decision but *vox populi*.

<sup>43</sup> Essays from a variety of journals were reprinted in Emanuel Rackman, *Jewish Values for Modern Man* (New York: Jewish Education Committee, 1962). See also "Israel and God: Reflections on their Encounter," *Judaism*, Summer 1962, pp. 233-41; "Halachic Progress: Rabbi Moshe Feinstein's *Igrot Moshe* on *Even Ha-Ezer*," *ibid.*, Summer 1964, pp. 366-73, and *Sabbaths and Festivals in the Modern Age*, in the "Studies in Torah Judaism" series (New York, 1961).

From Maimonides it would appear that it was the acceptance of the people who by custom and popular will constituted the authority. Can a Halakhic scholar lose himself in texts exclusively when the texts themselves bid him to see what practice "has become widespread among Jews," what is required socially "because of the precepts of peace," what will "keep the world aright," and many other social criteria? These standards are as much a part of the Torah as the texts themselves.<sup>44</sup>

Rackman is also prominently associated with the idea that Orthodox Jews, both individually and institutionally, must cooperate with the non-Orthodox. He is outspoken in his conviction that Orthodox rabbis should be free to associate with such groups as the New York Board of Rabbis (composed of Reform and Conservative as well as Orthodox rabbis) and that Orthodox groups should remain affiliated with the umbrella organization for all religious groups, the Synagogue Council of America.

Before considering the groups within which modern Orthodoxy is dominant, some comment on the sources of authority and unity within the Jewish community will be made. We will seek to demonstrate why the drive for unity, even within the organizations controlled by modern Orthodoxy, has been blunted in recent years, and what the Orthodox basis for unity has become.

#### *Authority in the Jewish Community*

There are four possible bases of authority within the Jewish community today: numbers, money, tradition, and person or charisma.

Authority of numbers is rarely exercised directly. Although organizations and institutions make some claim to authority on the basis of their numerical superiority, issues have rarely been resolved on this basis. There have been a few exceptions, the most noteworthy being the American Jewish Conference and particularly its 1943 meeting in which the sympathy of the masses of American Jews for the Zionist program was reflected in the division of votes (AJYB, 1944-45 [Vol. 46], pp. 169-70). Today almost no Jewish organization lays claim to authority within the community by virtue of its size. In part this is because no organization has a generally accepted, trustworthy membership list. More significantly, it is because no mass organization in Jewish life can even pretend to be able to mobilize its membership behind one position or another.

The most potent claim for authority in Jewish life today is exercised by money. Perhaps this was always so, but until recently the claim was exer-

<sup>44</sup> Rackman, *Sabbaths and Festivals* . . . , p. 8.

cised in alliance with religious tradition. Tradition's loss of status has resulted in the dissolution of this alliance and today those who control the purse strings, alone, usually speak for the Jewish community and decide questions within it. Although the professionals and staff members of the various organizations generally initiate policy, their authority is often determined by their access to financial resources and particularly to the few big contributors. Orthodoxy cannot accept the authority of money because it contains neither a class of large contributors nor a group of professionals with access to large contributors. In this regard, the Conservative and Reform rabbinate are in a far better, though by no means ideal, position, as they confront the "secular" Jewish institutions. The potency of money in the rest of the community, therefore, has the effect of pressuring Orthodoxy to withdraw from the community. In other words, the rule of the game in the Jewish community is that "money talks the loudest." Because Orthodoxy only loses by these rules, there is a constant pressure from within for it to leave the game unless the rules are changed. Of course, the concessions and compromises made by the Orthodox in order to play the game become unnecessary when they withdraw from it and they then move to a more intransigent right-wing position.

Orthodoxy claims the right to preserve the unity of the Jewish community by invoking the authority of tradition and charisma. With regard to the first, it claims communal support for its essentially parochial schools on the ground that these are traditional schools which simply teach Judaism as it has always been taught (in terms of content, of course, not method). This claim to legitimacy has been challenged recently, most particularly by the Conservatives. The foregoing is not meant to imply that numbers or money have only recently become sources of authority, or that tradition has lost all its force. It does mean that the weight of the different bases of authority has changed, and that Orthodoxy's claim to its exclusive access to this authority has been challenged.

The fourth possible source of authority in the Jewish community is that of person, or charisma. Jews in the United States have never produced a charismatic leader for the entire community, although Louis Marshall, Judah Magnes, Stephen Wise, and Abba Hillel Silver came close to being such leaders.

The only group within Jewish life which lays claim to charismatic leaders today is the Orthodox. Preeminent among these for the modern Orthodox is Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. RCA's claim to leadership in the general Jewish community and its belief that it ought really to exercise this leadership rest almost entirely on the fact that Rabbi Soloveitchik is

its leader. RCA members consider it enormously significant that the non-Orthodox Jewish community has accorded his opinions an increasing respect. Rabbi Soloveitchik, acknowledged by most Orthodox Jews as one of the world's leading talmudic authorities, has become increasingly active in social and political life and is quite conscious of his role as a communal leader. As the descendant of the longest extant line of *gedolim*, rabbis who combined talmudic and communal authority, this could hardly be otherwise.<sup>45</sup>

On the other hand, the more right-wing yeshivah world (to be discussed below) rests its claim to authority on the leadership of the outstanding *rashe yeshivot* who claim the mantle of traditional as well as charismatic authority.

We turn now to those organizations in which modern Orthodoxy holds a dominant position, stressing that in none of these groups is that position exclusive.

### *Rabbinical Council of America (RCA)*

The Rabbinical Council of America is the largest and most influential Orthodox rabbinical body in the United States. It has 830 members, all ordained by recognized rabbinic authorities. About 600 are in the active rabbinate, and most of the rest are teachers and school administrators. About half of the active rabbis were ordained at Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), and another 15 per cent at the Hebrew Theological College in Illinois. As noted below, both of these institutions represent a point of view different from that of other *yeshivot* in the United States which confer ordination. Another 20 to 25 per cent of the RCA membership come from these other American *yeshivot*, and the remaining few are from Europe.

A major controversy within RCA has centered on the question of its relationship with non-Orthodox rabbinical groups, particularly the affiliation of its members with the New York Board of Rabbis. In 1955, 11 *rashe yeshivot*, the most influential leaders of all the large academies for

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<sup>45</sup> His father, Rabbi Moses Soloveitchik, was one of the great talmudic scholars in the United States in the last generation. His uncle, Reb Velvel Soloveitchik, was the *gedol ha-dor* ("the great man of his generation") of the last generation in Palestine. His grandfather, Reb Hayyim of Brisk, the famous Brisker Rav, was the leading talmudic scholar of his time, and his great-grandfather, Rabbi Joseph Beer Soloveitchik, after whom he is named, was the *rosh yeshivah* of Volozhin, the greatest talmudic academy of his time. For a biographical sketch of Rabbi Soloveitchik and a popularization of some elements of his thought see his son-in-law's article: Aaron Lichtenstein, "Joseph Soloveitchik," in Simon Noveck, ed., *Great Jewish Thinkers of the Twentieth Century*. (Washington, 1963), pp. 281-97.

advanced talmudic study in the United States (except Yeshiva University and the Hebrew Theological College), issued an *issur* or prohibition against Orthodox rabbis joining organizations in which non-Orthodox rabbis were officially represented. Their position was phrased in halakhic terms as a *pesak din*, a juridical decision, but has been buttressed with the practical political argument that by officially recognizing the non-Orthodox rabbi as a rabbi, Orthodoxy accorded him a status to which he was not entitled under Jewish law and which cut the ground from under its own claim as the only legitimate bearer of the Torah tradition.

RCA referred the question to its own *halakhah* committee under the chairmanship of Rabbi Soloveitchik. At the end of 1964 the committee had not yet reported, and showed no disposition to do so as long as the *status quo* was maintained within the Jewish community.

Nevertheless, the political aspects of the question were raised on numerous occasions; in all instances the forces for separation in RCA, led by Rabbi David Hollander, were defeated, although there is a growing sympathy for the values which Hollander espouses. The opponents of separation have argued that by cooperating with the non-Orthodox they are able to restrain them from public violation of *halakhah* and are in a better position to help shape policy for the whole Jewish community. They pointed to Judaism's response to the Second Ecumenical Council (p. 128) as an example of how Orthodoxy, under the leadership of Rabbi Soloveitchik, was influential in maintaining a semblance of order among most Jewish leaders and groups on behalf of a policy which all Orthodox groups favored. Besides, they suspect that the vast majority of nominally Orthodox Jews do not see any sharp distinctions between Orthodoxy and other denominations, that a policy of separation would fail of general support, and that it would jeopardize the considerable support for Orthodox institutions that comes from non-Orthodox Jews.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they feel that RCA members do not view themselves as living in a community apart from the rest of American Jews. The Orthodox rabbi, particularly outside New York City, lives among and serves a non-observant constituency. In addition, he himself is likely to be American-born, a product of the American culture, which places a premium on compromise, sanctifies majority rule, and decries dogmatism.

With an annual budget of \$80,000 for expenditures in the United States in 1964 and a separate budget of \$15,000 for its newly established *Beth Din*, RCA maintains a manifold program.<sup>46</sup> It conducts welfare

<sup>46</sup> All budget figures were given to the author or to CJFWF.

activities on behalf of its members, supports a variety of projects in Israel, and publishes the distinguished quarterly, *Tradition*, and a halakhic journal in Hebrew, *Hadorom*. Its house organ, the *RCA Record*, is probably the most candid organizational bulletin circulated among any American Jewish group. The *Beth Din* is concerned with family problems, offers counseling, and is engaged in developing extensive records on Jewish marriage and divorce. Its purpose is to render authoritative decisions in areas which are either halakhically or emotionally too complex for any one rabbi to handle.

RCA looks for spiritual and, more recently, political leadership to Rabbi Soloveitchik, known affectionately to his followers as the Rov (Sephardi: Rav). One can almost distinguish a Jew's religious position by the manner in which he refers to Soloveitchik. The non-Orthodox are likely to call him Rabbi Soloveitchik; the RCA modern Orthodox call him the Rov; his own students, Rebbe; and the right wing, J.B., for the first two initials of his name.

RCA has moved to the right in recent years, though not as far to the right as its separatists would like. It has continued to concern itself with communal problems but has become increasingly outspoken and antagonistic toward other groups, both religious and secular, within Jewish life. This is a result of a number of factors. The younger rabbis, particularly those from Yeshiva University, are more right-wing today in both their practice and their communal outlook than their predecessors of a decade or more ago. Secondly, as the Orthodox community has grown in numbers and risen in income and status, the rabbi has attained greater personal security and confidence in the future of Orthodoxy and has become less compromising. Thirdly, the right wing within Orthodoxy has become more acculturated. This means that it is better able to communicate with the left wing and make an impact on it. Finally, RCA has reacted to the Conservative movement's new aggressiveness.

The Conservatives have issued challenges in domains which the Orthodox believed were by tacit consent, at least, exclusively theirs. One such domain is the supervision of *kashrut*. A second is that of day schools. Conservative development of rival day schools, which the Orthodox may deplore but can hardly consider inherently objectionable, has been accompanied by increased expectation on the part of Conservative rabbis, often supported by local Jewish federations and welfare funds, of a stronger voice in the policy making of traditional Orthodox day schools. The Conservative movement, furthermore, exercises a powerful lever in the form of finances. Most Orthodox day schools outside Metropolitan

New York are dependent on federation support or contributions from large donors, many of whom are members of Conservative synagogues. Recently, the Orthodox have found that the price they must pay for the support of Conservative rabbis has gone up, at the same time that Conservatism's own increasingly militant posture has diminished its willingness to make concessions as readily as in the past.

RCA's move to the right has had the further effect of healing somewhat the breach between its modern Orthodox and sectarian elements on such questions as the development of *halakhah*, which is only indirectly related to the controversy over communal involvement. Rackman, as we have noted, is the leading advocate of radical halakhic development, but his viewpoint is almost totally isolated. Rackman elicits a sympathetic response from his colleagues when he demands that the rabbinic leaders grapple with contemporary problems and when he criticizes them for their "ivory tower" posture. But there is less sympathy with him on what the content of the response should be. As one observer put it, "The RCA rabbi doesn't want *hetterim* [lenient rulings], he only wants a good explanation for a *pesak* [a ruling]."

#### *Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (UOJC)*

Officially RCA is the rabbinical arm of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (UOJC), the major national congregational organization of Orthodox synagogues. UOJC is best known for its *kashrut* supervision, conducted in cooperation with RCA. Almost half of its nearly \$750,000 budget is for this purpose. UOJC also provides administrative and program assistance to Orthodox congregations whether or not they are affiliated with it; provides assistance to Orthodox servicemen; publishes a popular bimonthly, *Jewish Life*; sponsors a women's division and the National Conference of Synagogue Youth, which publishes some outstanding material for young people; provides office space and at least nominal sponsorship for two other organizations, Yavneh and the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists (to be discussed below), and represents congregational Orthodoxy on the National Community Relations Advisory Council, the Synagogue Council of America, the National Jewish Welfare Board, and similar groups.

The forum for the controversy over Orthodox participation in non-Orthodox roof organizations has shifted in the last two years from RCA, where the separatists have been defeated, to UOJC. At its 1964 convention a resolution by the separatists was defeated, but on the ground that withdrawal would be unwarranted unless a roof organization for

all Orthodox groups was first established. Toward this end, Orthodox organizations like RCA, the Religious Zionists of America, the Rabbinical Alliance of America, and Agudath Israel were invited to submit position papers on their conditions for entering a unified Orthodox organization. Agudath Israel, whose position probably best reflects that of the sectarian Orthodox, stipulated two conditions for its participation: that all members of the proposed organization withdraw from anything more than *ad hoc* participation in non-Orthodox roof organizations, and that a council of Torah authorities, composed essentially of Agudath Israel leaders, be the arbiters of the new organization. It was unlikely that the modern Orthodox would meet either of these conditions.

For many years UOJC was led by a young, Americanized, modern Orthodox element without any real constituent base among the mass of Yiddish-speaking, immigrant synagogue members. In the past decade a closer relationship has developed between Orthodox synagogues and the parent synagogue body, and UOJC has grown considerably. This is because the synagogue leadership has become more acculturated; the UOJC leadership has moved to the right, away from modernism, and the success of Conservative and Reform parent congregational bodies, as well as of Young Israel, has shown the importance of a united Orthodox synagogue body. None the less, UOJC is still not as representative of Orthodox congregations as the United Synagogue is of Conservative, or UAHC of Reform, congregations.

UOJC refuses to reveal the number of its member congregations because, they say, their definition of membership is somewhat ambiguous. Congregations whose dues are in arrears are still considered as members. UOJC has at various times claimed to serve, without regard to affiliation, 3,100 Orthodox congregations, but according to our own estimates (p. 24) there are probably no more than 1,700 synagogues in the United States which even consider themselves as Orthodox. It also claims that as the spokesman for all Orthodoxy it speaks for the 3 million Jews who, they estimate, are affiliated with the 3,100 Orthodox congregations which, they say, exist in the United States and Canada. (According to one UOJC official, there are actually 4.2 million Orthodox Jews in the United States, since by his definition all Jews who are not Conservative, Reform, or atheist are Orthodox.)

UOJC congregations range from those with mixed seating to those which go beyond the letter of the law in observing halakhic standards. Individual members include Jews from all walks of life and with a variety of opinions. Conscious of its hybrid membership and anxious not to

offend any group within it, UOJC has avoided policy formulation in areas of controversy affecting internal Orthodox Jewish life and has turned much of its attention toward the broader Jewish society and the general society. Thus its resolution of 1962, repudiating its long-standing opposition to Federal aid to education, can be taken to mean that the consensus that once existed in opposition to Federal aid is no longer present.

The changing temper within the Orthodox community—the increased emphasis on halakhic observance—is reflected within UOJC. Thus, whereas status once accrued to the leaders and rabbis of congregations without *mehitzot* (barriers separating the men's and women's sections of synagogues), and a certain contempt was evident toward those "old-fashioned" congregations which still had *mehitzot* or even separate seating for men and women, the situation today is reversed. Since 1955, according to a spokesman for UOJC, some 30 synagogues which formerly had mixed seating have installed *mehitzot*, the first break in a trend which had been moving in the opposite direction since the 19th century.

#### *Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists (AOJS)*

Although affiliated with UOJC, the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists (AOJS), sponsors of the quarterly *Intercom*, does not belong under the rubric of modern Orthodox. It is far less oriented toward problems of Jewish society and hardly at all to problems of the general society. It is rather concerned with problems arising out of the individual Orthodox Jew's role in the secular and scientific world. In 1964 it claimed approximately 500 members and 12 local chapters in the United States and Canada. The overwhelming majority of its members, according to its 1962 directory, are natural scientists with universities or large corporations, rather than social scientists, whom the organization has also been anxious to attract.

AOJS is preoccupied with the problem of secular education. It has never thought it appropriate to adopt a position on some of the moral issues confronting American society or American scientists as a result of the new technology and its uses, but hardly a national meeting passes in which some discussion, and usually a major address, is not devoted to the subject of the study of science or secular education in the light of the *halakhah*. It is as if the membership had to keep reassuring itself or others that their vocation is a proper one for Orthodox Jews.

Members of AOJS include some distinguished intellectuals, but the organization has exhibited little critical concern with the nature of Amer-

ican or Jewish life. In general, the natural sciences have attracted more Orthodox Jewish graduate students than the social sciences or humanities. This may be because they offer preparation for more lucrative and prestigious professions today, or because they raise fewer critical problems for Orthodox Jews. It is not difficult to dichotomize religious belief and scientific work, whereas the very assumptions of the social sciences are often thought to run counter to traditional Orthodox views. Whatever the reason, AOJS reflects the special concerns of the natural scientist and has failed to attract to its ranks the growing number of Orthodox Jews in the social sciences and the humanities who might be expected to adopt a broader and more critical approach to Jewish and general affairs.

### *Yavneh, National Religious Jewish Students' Association*

In contrast to AOJS, Yavneh, one of the two national Orthodox collegiate bodies, exhibits great intellectual ferment and general communal concern. Founded in 1960, Yavneh had close to a thousand paid members in over 40 chapters in American colleges and universities by 1964. The founders of Yavneh were largely Yeshiva High School graduates who were dissatisfied with the complacency and lack of intellectual excitement in the Jewish community generally, and Orthodoxy particularly. A generation earlier most of them would no doubt have abandoned Orthodoxy completely. In the 1960s they chose instead to create a subcommunity within the Orthodox world that affirms the Jewish tradition but is concerned with its application to contemporary social and political problems.

Yavneh's founders were soon joined by a more conservative group of students who sought to move the organization along more traditional lines, both programmatically and organizationally; they favored, for example, abolishing mixed-swimming weekends. Yavneh chapters are usually dominated by one group or the other. All chapters, however, have attracted students from non-Orthodox homes who find in the high level of Yavneh's programs an alternative to accepting the deficiencies of the Jewish and general communities. On many campuses Yavneh has come into conflict with local Hillel groups because of its unwillingness to accept the latitudinarian *status quo*.

Although Yavneh has a higher proportion of non-Orthodox members than AOJS—as high as 25 per cent, according to some members—it is by no means non-observant. Notwithstanding their eagerness to explore the ramifications of the *halakhah*, Yavneh members share a commitment to it. Of the many seminars and classes sponsored by the organization on campuses, at national meetings, and at its special study program in Israel,

Talmud study sessions are the most popular. Yavneh's attitude is that regardless of private individual practices, *halakhah* must continue to be the public standard at least. This halakhic commitment is interesting because it may portend a future direction for American Orthodoxy. Unlike left-wing Orthodoxy, it does not call for radical reinterpretation of *halakhah*. Unlike the right, it does not demand that every Jew live his life in accordance with the halakhic prescriptions of the rabbinical authorities. Rather, it calls for an understanding of what the *halakhah* is and then a decision by the individual. In many respects this is a revolutionary outlook for an Orthodox organization, Rosenzweigian in its implication that the ultimate criterion for an individual's observance is his own judgment.

Besides its halakhic commitment, there is almost an obsession with pure intellectual activity in Yavneh. Thus, when one chapter found that many of the youth attracted to its Saturday-night discussion group came primarily for social purposes, it abolished the activity. At its 1964 national convention in New York a guest speaker, a prominent professor of philosophy and an Orthodox Jew, chose to lecture in untechnical language in the hope of making himself widely understood. An observer commented later that the speaker would have been better received had he spoken above the heads of most of the students present—they would have appreciated the compliment.

### *National Council of Young Israel*

The Young Israel movement, with 95 synagogues and approximately 23,000 affiliated families, may be the largest single organization in American Orthodoxy. There are probably more families affiliated with the member synagogues of UOJC, but the relationship between UOJC's leadership and the members of its congregations is still so tenuous that it would be unreasonable to compare it with Young Israel, a large proportion of whose members identify closely with the movement and a few of whom are more intensely committed to the national movement than they are to their own synagogues. This is not to suggest that all or even most member families in the Young Israel are Orthodox in their personal behavior. But there is no question as to where the direction of the organization lies. In fact, only Sabbath observers are permitted to hold office in a Young Israel congregation, and synagogues remove their *mehitzot* only at the price of their charters.

Young Israel was formed in 1912 by a handful of Orthodox Americanized youth who felt themselves a part of American society, rejected

many of the folkways and practices of their parents, but wished to remain Orthodox. At first the movement was nurtured intellectually by some Jewish Theological Seminary faculty members, who saw in it a hope for American Orthodoxy. As Young Israel grew, however, it dissociated itself from the nascent Conservative movement, while the Seminary became more involved with it. By the 1920s Young Israel and the Seminary had drifted apart.

Until World War II, Young Israel was a lay movement, dominated by a lay leadership. It was led by native-born, middle-class, college-educated Orthodox Jews, who in their own rather disorganized fashion stood as a bridge between Orthodoxy and the rest of the Jewish community. With modern facilities, stress on decorum in worship, and an attractive social program, Young Israel brought thousands of Jewish young people into the synagogue, many of whom were encouraged to enroll in intensive study courses or to enter *yeshivot*. (Ironically, some of them emerged from the *yeshivot* only to condemn Young Israel for not being sufficiently Orthodox.)

As late as World War II, Young Israel was looked upon as the least observant Orthodox group. This misconception was partly due to ignorance. In part, however, it reflected an awareness of Young Israel's deviations from Orthodoxy. In developing an attractive social program, for example, Young Israel had closed its eyes to such activities as mixed dancing, which few rabbinic authorities would sanction. Its lay leadership, which was not *yeshivah*-trained, refused to defer to an Orthodox rabbinate who, they felt, lacked secular training, sophistication, and community status comparable to theirs. Being church-oriented, it tended to lay less stress on matters of individual observance and more on Orthodoxy's role in the Jewish community.

Young Israel was among the first Orthodox organizations to seek to raise the level and dignity of *kashrut* supervision, to work with the American chaplaincy, and to lend support to Zionism, youth, and collegiate work. Its semimonthly *Young Israel Viewpoint* was, until it ran into financial difficulty and some conflicts of personalities in 1964, one of the best English-language Jewish newspapers in the United States.

Since World War II the nature of the Young Israel movement has changed. In the first place, the lay leadership has been challenged by the Council of Young Israel Rabbis, the rabbinical organization of Young Israel congregational rabbis. Native-born and acculturated, with increased sophistication and, most importantly, time and information, the postwar rabbi was able to compete with the lay leader. The very growth of the

movement had created a need for greater professionalism. In addition, the expansion of membership brought a larger number of marginal affiliates, who recognized the rabbi, rather than the lay leader, as a legitimate spokesman for Jewish religious values. With increasing power at the congregational level, the rabbis were in a position to determine the effectiveness of the national program, and their cooperation became essential. As the locus of money shifted to the congregation, the layman, who viewed himself as part of a national movement seeking a national impact, was replaced by the rabbi, whose interests were more local, and status accrued to the rabbi of the largest, wealthiest, and most observant synagogue.

Another factor accounting for the changes in Young Israel has been the general move to the right within Orthodoxy—the intensification of demands for halakhic observance, which means, almost by definition, the ascendancy of the Orthodox rabbi as the halakhic authority of the congregation. This has particular significance in the case of the Young Israel rabbi, who is not typical of most Orthodox American rabbis, either European-trained or the products of Yeshiva University. The European rabbi is often disadvantaged by his lack of acculturation, and even when he fancies himself as a communal or chief rabbi, he is conscious of his utter dependence on lay approval. Yeshiva University graduates are not all of the same mold; but at least until recently they tended to be church-oriented, communally involved, and very much aware of the necessity for compromise. Rabbis ordained by other American *yeshivot*, like Torah Vodaath, Rabbi Chaim Berlin, and Rabbi Jacob Joseph, on the other hand, reject the Yeshiva University model. These Americanized, non-Yeshiva University graduates tend to be more aggressive and less compromising. About half of Young Israel's congregational rabbis are just such men; only 43 per cent are from Yeshiva University. In the borough of Queens, in New York, for example, there are 56 nominally Orthodox synagogues with 75 or more members. Fifty-five per cent of these synagogues are served by Yeshiva University rabbis. By contrast, of the nine Young Israel synagogues in Queens, only three, or 33 per cent, have Yeshiva University rabbis.

The general move to the right was perhaps more pronounced in Young Israel than elsewhere because of the influence of Dr. Samson Weiss, who served as national director of that organization from 1945 to 1956, when he moved to UOJC. It is best illustrated by the changing emphasis in Young Israel programs. The current topic of debate is whether the movement should halt its expansion efforts and concentrate instead on raising

its level of education and observance. The movement has increasingly looked toward the *rashe yeshivot* of the right-wing *yeshivot* for leadership. Its national director, Rabbi Ephraim Sturm, addressing the 1963 convention, urged a united Orthodox front which would look to the *gedole Torah*, the heads of the various *yeshivot*, for direction, and be bound by their decisions not only on purely halakhic matters, but also on nonlegal matters. In recent years one synagogue has gone so far as to abolish the practice of calling to the Torah on Saturday mornings in its main sanctuary, those who do not observe the Sabbath.

Nevertheless, Young Israel has not lost its old character entirely. It still elicits a loyalty from its membership which transcends congregational attachment. Nor has the Council of Young Israel Rabbis been entirely successful in transforming many quasi-official practices. Contrary to the Council's official policy, for example, many congregations sponsor, at least unofficially, mixed dancing. Finally, changes within the adult group appear to have had little impact on the youth. The Intercollegiate Council of Young Adults, with about 1,000 members, has, in contrast to Yavneh, continued to be an essentially social organization, notwithstanding its joint efforts with Yavneh to sponsor kosher facilities on a few college campuses.

### *Religious Zionists of America (RZA)*

The Religious Zionists of America came into being as the result of a merger in 1957 of the two Orthodox Zionist adult male groups in the United States—Mizrachi and Hapoel Hamizrachi. The women's organization of each group, as well as their respective youth groups, Mizrachi Hatzair and Bnei Akiva, have remained separate.

There are no reliable RZA membership figures. Figures of 30,000 and higher are quoted by official representatives, but other observers estimate the number at under 20,000. The organization's budget is in the neighborhood of \$250,000, of which about \$25,000 goes to the National Council for Torah Education (Wa'ad Ha-hinnukh Ha-torani).

RZA attracts an Orthodox Jew similar to the Young Israel members, and there is a large overlapping membership. Its most active officers and members are themselves rabbis but they play little role in the organization as rabbis. Spiritually, RZA looks to Rabbi Soloveitchik for leadership, and, as in the RCA, his influence has increased in recent years as he has become more outspoken on contemporary issues. A measure of his influence in RZA is that although many of its leaders were embar-

rassed by his criticisms in 1963 of the State of Israel on the missionary question, none publicly expressed his misgivings.

RZA gives political, social, and philanthropic support to Israel and to the Israeli National Religious party, with which it is affiliated. It also engages in Zionist activities in the United States and publishes a monthly magazine *Jewish Horizon* on contemporary topics, a Yiddish monthly *Mizrachi Weg*, and a Hebrew-language journal *Or Hamizrach*.

The National Council for Torah Education, which publishes two semi-annual journals, *Biton Chemed* in Hebrew and *Yeshiva Education* in English, is one of the two major national organizations involved in Orthodox education. The council organizes and serves day schools and Talmud Torahs. It provides a variety of educational services, assistance in teacher placement, and sponsorship of the National Association for Orthodox Education. Its stress is on Israel, Zionism, and the study of Hebrew, and it is identified with a positive approach toward secular education.

It is not clear how many day schools are actually affiliated with the National Council. It claims to have been instrumental in organizing 85, but credit is often difficult to establish. Certainly, not all of those 85 day schools are affiliated with the National Council, but the parent body does not confine its services to affiliated schools. Whatever the number of affiliates, they are fewer than those of Torah Umesorah, the other national educational agency to be discussed below.

### *Yeshiva University*

The one institution most prominently identified with modern Orthodoxy is Yeshiva University. Indeed, the very growth of the university bespeaks the increasing concern of Orthodoxy with problems of the non-Orthodox community, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Beginning as the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), Yeshiva University has developed or acquired 17 schools and divisions, including a new West Coast center in Los Angeles. This tremendous growth has occurred since 1940 under the leadership of its president, Samuel Belkin, who has remained singularly exempt from the public criticism directed against Yeshiva University by many in the Orthodox world. The university engages in a host of activities, including sponsorship of three Jewish periodicals and a semi-scholarly series of monographs in Judaica, "Studies in Torah Judaism." Among its other divisions are a Hebrew Teachers Institute for men and another for women, a liberal-arts college for men and one for women, graduate schools of education, social work, and science,

and a medical school. The relation of some of its divisions to Orthodoxy has, at best, become tenuous. Interestingly, however, the brunt of the right-wing Orthodox attack against the institution has not been against the secular divisions but rather against the college and the Jewish divisions associated with it.

Students at the all-male college (we are not discussing Stern College for Women) are required, in addition to their regular college program, to enrol in one of three Jewish study programs; RIETS, with almost exclusive stress on Talmud and preparation for entering the three-year *semikhah* (ordination) program upon completion of undergraduate studies; the Teachers Institute for Men, with heavy stress on Talmud but a varied curriculum of Bible, history, literature, etc., all taught in Hebrew, and a Jewish-studies program for students with little or no background in Jewish studies.

The last program has been the most dramatically successful. In 1964, in its ninth year, it admitted 100 freshmen (the men's college has a total of about 750 students). The program is adapted to the needs of the students, most of whom are from non-Orthodox homes. It is led by a group of sympathetic and dedicated teachers, who produce, at the end of four years, reasonably well-educated (certainly by American Jewish standards), observant, committed Jews. Some graduates continue their studies in Hebrew and Talmud, transferring to RIETS or going on for further study in Israel. Even the severest critics of Yeshiva University have acclaimed the remarkable success of this program and are inclined to concede that no other institution within Orthodoxy is equipped to do a comparable job. The program's impact on American communities is only beginning to be felt, but inevitably its graduates will assume positions of responsibility. (In contrast to the Jewish-studies program is the Lubavitcher movement, which has also achieved a measure of success in winning youth to Orthodoxy but finds that these converts are often unable to reintegrate themselves effectively in the community from which they came.)

Contrary to popular opinion in the Orthodox world, neither the college nor RIETS espouses any particular philosophy or point of view within the Orthodox spectrum of opinion. RIETS, in particular, is almost a microcosm of the committed Orthodox world and includes among its instructors some who are out of sympathy with secular education. Both the strength and weakness of the institution, no doubt, derive from this eclectic philosophic attitude. Within its walls the whole constellation of Orthodox ideologies contend. It is probably true, however, that were

Yeshiva University to impose a definite direction, it would have the most profound repercussions within the Orthodox world. There are close to 1,000 Yeshiva University rabbinic alumni; 33 rabbis were graduated in 1963, and 28 in 1964. In 1964, 373 graduates held pulpits in nominally Orthodox congregations, 95 were in Jewish education, 65 in Jewish communal work, and 69 on the university's faculty and administrative staff. In addition, a large number of graduates of the Hebrew Teachers Institutes (for both men and women) served the Jewish community in educational and administrative positions.

As in RCA and RZA, the preeminent personality at Yeshiva University is Rabbi Soloveitchik, who teaches Talmud. At the university, however, his leadership in communal matters is not necessarily accepted by the other Talmud instructors, many of whom have also achieved eminence in the world of Talmud learning. Besides, President Belkin, a scholar in his own right, stands forth as an independent personality. Belkin, however, has been elevated above controversy in recent years and the students' image of him is somewhat hazy.

In addition to its purely educational functions, the university plays a major role in the Jewish community through its Community Service Division. The division is responsible for rabbinic and teacher placement, conducts adult-education and extension courses, provides educational services to many Talmud Torahs and youth groups, sponsors seminars for teenagers throughout the United States, and has had a hand, together with the Rabbinic Alumni Association, in sponsoring Camp Morasha, a summer camp which opened in 1964, patterned on the Conservative Ramah camps but with an Orthodox orientation.

Powered by a large staff of experienced professionals, CSD has become increasingly important as a source of information and assistance for other Orthodox bodies. Its placement activities, in particular, have so strengthened the Rabbinic Alumni that rabbis from other Orthodox *yeshivot* have sought (and been granted) associate membership in that association.

Although CSD places rabbis in non-Orthodox congregations, it draws the line at those affiliated with either the Conservative or Reform movement. It also has a relatively new policy of not placing rabbis in congregations which have *lowered* their standards of Orthodoxy. This is subject to differing interpretations. Although CSD's prominence made it the target of attack for alleged lack of Orthodox standards, few people contend that other *yeshivot* have higher standards for placing graduates. The point is made, however, that Yeshiva University, unlike other Or-

thodox institutions, operates from a position of prestige and financial strength, and therefore has no need to compromise. Of course, these are relative terms. With an annual operating budget of almost \$30 million, a capital-fund budget of \$65 million, and a deficit of \$10 million, Yeshiva administrators are not always certain they can negotiate from a position of strength. CSD justifies placing rabbis in synagogues which do not conform to Orthodox standards not only as expedient but also as the only real means of bringing Jews back to Orthodoxy. It can also point to the fact that in the last few years its standards have become far more explicit and tighter than they ever were in the past, although they are still not satisfactory to a significant group of Orthodox leaders.

There are a number of people on the faculty and in the administration who are critical of Yeshiva University for other reasons. They complain about a certain intellectual complacency, an absence of thought and purpose. They feel that Yeshiva has failed not so much in providing religious standards as in providing intellectual standards. They contend that Yeshiva at times lacks a degree of Jewish and Orthodox self-respect—that there is evidence that Jewish studies and Jewish scholars are not accorded the support and distinction they deserve. The college, in particular, is criticized for not introducing courses with more specifically Jewish content; of having excessive pride in the number of its graduates who win awards, prizes, and fellowships to other graduate schools (the proportion is indeed phenomenally high), and of not taking sufficient interest in those who wish to specialize in Jewish scholarship. Nevertheless, this group of generally young and aggressive personnel remain loyal to the university as the single greatest hope for a resurgence of tradition and, indeed, the survival of American Judaism.

### *Hebrew Theological College (Jewish University of America)*

The Hebrew Theological College, in Skokie, near Chicago, Ill., resembles Yeshiva University in many respects, although it is much smaller and its impact more regional. Established in 1921, it has ordained a total of 335 rabbis, of whom an estimated 185 are in the practicing rabbinate. However, its rabbinical program has declined in the last decade, and in 1963 only 8 rabbis were ordained and 11 teachers certified. The college has a secular division attached to it and is currently in the midst of a \$5-million capital-expansion effort. Its 1964 budget was slightly over \$500,000.

### *Sephardi Community*

There are an estimated 25,000 Sephardim and 63 known Sephardi congregations—congregations which do not follow the Ashkenazi form of worship or are not of Ashkenazi descent—in the United States. They are largely of Spanish and Portuguese, Syrian, Greek, Egyptian, North African, and Yugoslav origin.

The Spanish and Portuguese, whose origin in the United States pre-dates that of all other American Jews, are the most prestigious, and the leading Sephardi congregation is the famous Spanish and Portuguese Shearith Israel of New York. In 1963 the chief rabbi or *Hakham* of the Sephardi community of the British Commonwealth, Rabbi Solomon Gaon, was also made a rabbi of Shearith Israel, and given the responsibility for the school and authority in all matters of religious law.

Unlike the members of the large Spanish and Portuguese congregations, like Shearith Israel and Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia, Pa., those of most other Sephardi congregations are predominantly first-generation Americans. All Sephardi congregations appear to share a strong sub-ethnic commitment to their form of worship (which differs from one group of congregations to the other), and a relative neglect of private ritual observance. (Thus, even the lay leadership of the Sephardi congregations tend to be quite lax in their religious practice. However, this has in no way affected the intensity of their desire to retain the traditional Sephardi public ritual.) The Syrians, with eight congregations in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, constitute one such self-sufficient community under the leadership of their chief rabbi, Jacob Kassin. Under the initiative of Shearith Israel and its present rabbi emeritus, David de Sola Pool, a Union of Sephardic Congregations was created in 1927, but with Rabbi Pool's retirement in 1956 the organization declined. The possibility of its revitalization rests on the development of more widespread acceptance of Rabbi Gaon as spiritual leader for all Sephardi congregations in the United States.

As a minority within the American Jewish community, the Sephardi congregations face the problems of cultural dilution. Without facilities to train their own rabbis, and more importantly their own *hazzanim* (leaders of the religious service), they face danger of extinction. In 1962 they turned to Yeshiva University, which initiated a program (financed by the Sephardi community) to train religious leaders for them. (Ner Israel in Baltimore and the Mirrer Yeshiva in Brooklyn have also attracted some Sephardi students.) The Yeshiva University program is under the official

direction of Rabbi Gaon. Its success depends to a large extent on its ability to recruit college-age students from within the Sephardi community.

### SECTARIANS

Jewish sectarianism, unlike that of many Protestant groups, results not from the beliefs of the membership but mostly from a differing strategy as to the best way of maintaining the tradition. Thus, an organization such as Agudath Israel, which is essentially a sectarian group in the United States, was deeply involved in problems and activities of a Jewish and even a general political nature in Eastern Europe. In the United States, on the other hand, they have felt that communal participation with other Jewish groups would perforce involve a recognition of the legitimacy of non-Orthodox religious groups and institutions.

With few exceptions, the sectarian camp is of lower income, poorer education, and more recent immigration than the modern Orthodox.<sup>47</sup> The world of sectarian Orthodoxy is preeminently a yeshivah world, and its leaders are the *rashe yeshivot* and a few prominent hasidic rebbes. It is a mistake to think, as many even within Orthodoxy do, that the Orthodox world which has been created in this country is a replica of the European or even East European one. In fact, the *rashe yeshivot* have achieved a degree of authority in this country unparalleled in Eastern Europe, in good part because there is no counterweight to this authority here in the *shtetl rov* or communal rabbi, as there was in Europe.

The years before and immediately after the Second World War brought to the United States an influx of Orthodox immigrants far more militant than those who had come earlier. They found in this country an Orthodox community largely composed of residual Orthodox and under the ostensible leadership of communal rabbis who seemed to be in despair about

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<sup>47</sup> There is a vast literature on the relationship between religious sectarianism and social class indicating that among religious groups low social class correlates with sectarianism. The classic study is H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York, 1929; reprinted Hamden, Conn., 1954). See also: Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers* (New Haven, 1942); Russell R. Dynes, "Church-Sect Typology and Socio-Economic Status," *American Sociological Review*, 1955, pp. 555-60; Donald O. Cowgill, "The Ecology of Religious Preference in Wichita," *Sociological Quarterly*, 1960, pp. 87-96; Nicholas J. Demerath, "Social Stratification and Church Involvement: The Church-Sect Distinction Applied to Individual Participation," *Review of Religious Research*, 1961, pp. 146-54, and Liston Pope, "Religion and Class Structure," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 1948, pp. 84-91. Not all sects, however, are lower-class. Both Christian Science and the Oxford Movement were middle- and upper-class groups. See Yinger, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

the future of Orthodoxy and convinced of the necessity for compromise. They found institutions such as *kashrut* in the hands of people whom they considered as unreliable or careless. They found a bare handful of day schools and a Yeshiva University or RCA ready to accommodate themselves to secular culture. They found almost no institutions with total commitment to the Torah life which had been their world.

They began by creating their own institutions or taking over the few existing ones which they found acceptable. The first step was the creation and expansion of *yeshivot*.

In 1941 Rabbi Aaron Kotler, *rosh yeshivah* of Kletzk in Polish Lithuania, famous as a Talmud scholar and Orthodox leader, arrived in the United States intending to spend a short time here and then move on to Palestine.<sup>48</sup> A handful of Orthodox Jews persuaded him to stay in the United States to build Torah institutions. Reb Aharon, as he was known in the Orthodox world, assembled 20 students, mostly graduates of American *yeshivot*, many already ordained as rabbis, and established the Beth Medrash Govoha of America, in Lakewood, N.J., now also known as the Rabbi Aaron Kotler Institute for Advanced Learning (the first *kolel* in the United States). His choice of site was a deliberate attempt to isolate his students from American life and facilitate total concentration on the study of Talmud. Within a few years he was joined by some former students from Europe; by 1946 registration had risen to 100, and by 1964 to over 200.

Reb Aharon's conviction was that Torah could grow and be "experienced" in America only through *lernen* ("learning"—in the parlance of the Orthodox world, studying Talmud). According to one of Reb Aharon's former students, only "sharing the experience of the halakhic process could enable the Jew to understand the heartbeat of Judaism." The student at Lakewood lived on a small subvention from the yeshivah and whatever other financial help he got from his family or wife. Students sat and learned for as long as they wished. When they felt ready to leave the yeshivah, they left. By 1964, 90 of its former students were teachers of Talmud, 21 were school administrators, and 42 were practicing rabbis.

Reb Aharon, himself, did not confine his activity to Lakewood. He engaged in a multitude of activities where his point of view gained recognition. He served as a *rosh yeshivah* in Israel, became the head of Chinuch Atzmai (Hinnukh 'Atzmai the independent, religious, Agudath Israel-oriented school system in Israel) upon its founding in 1952, leader of

<sup>48</sup> For a biographical sketch see Alex J. Goldman, *Giants of Faith; Great American Rabbis* (New York, 1964), pp. 257-73.

Agudath Israel in 1952, and chairman of the rabbinical administrative board of Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools in the United States, in 1945. Though (interestingly enough) a poor fund raiser in contrast to some other *rashe yeshivot*, Reb Aharon elicited tremendous passion and dedication from those who came in contact with him. He brooked no compromise, nor did he ever question or seem to doubt his own path. He was a preeminently charismatic leader.

The influence of Reb Aharon and like thinkers extended to the higher *yeshivot* in the United States, except for Yeshiva University and the Hebrew Theological College. Thus, older institutions like Yeshivah Torah Vodaath, with its own famous *menahel* (principal) Shragai Mendlowitz,<sup>49</sup> or Yeshivah Rabbi Chaim Berlin under Rabbi Isaac Hutner, were caught up in the emphasis on *lernen* and separatism. In 1944 Rabbi Mendlowitz founded the Beth Medrosh Elyon in Monsey, N.Y., at first called *Esh Dat* ("Fire of Religion"), as a pilot institute for training Jewish educators to found and staff the day-school movement. Within a short period the original idea was abandoned and the institution was reorganized to make it similar to the one in Lakewood.

### *Advanced Yeshivot*

At the heart of the sectarian Orthodox world are all the post-high-school *yeshivot* except Yeshiva University and the Hebrew Theological College. There are today approximately 4,000 men studying Talmud intensively at *yeshivot* on a post-high-school level.<sup>50</sup> Of these, about 825 or 20 per cent were at Yeshiva University or the Hebrew Theological College. According to the latest available figures from the 31 higher *yeshivot* in the United States, more than 250 graduates were ordained annually (not all 31 *yeshivot* give ordination); about 15 per cent of ordinations were from Yeshiva University and the Hebrew Theological College. About 600 of all post-high-school students were older than 24; and many of them were married. Many were organized in *kolelim*, which permitted them to spend the entire day studying Talmud while receiving a subvention of about \$50 a week from the yeshivah. Most of the students in the *kolelim* have already been ordained or have no intention of obtaining a rabbinical degree which, in fact, has a practical value only for purposes of becoming a practicing rabbi. (Many European *rashe*

<sup>49</sup> Now known as Rabbi Mendlowitz, the former principal of Torah Vodaath used to refuse to use the title of Rav. His stress on the importance of Hebrew grammar and of pedagogy made him a unique figure in the yeshivah world.

<sup>50</sup> Figures are either from interviews or as submitted to CJFWF. All figures were for 1963-64 or later. See the Appendix.

*yeshivot* never had *semikhah*, which is simply a certificate attesting one's competence to decide questions of Jewish law. A scholar of renown needed no such certificate.) The very process of learning Talmud is a *raison d'être* and way of life to these men, who eventually will become *rashe yeshivot* and teachers of Talmud.

Graduates of the sectarian *yeshivot* provide the major source of staff for the day-school movement. Many of these graduates, including those with ordination, avoid the rabbinate because they neither wish nor are able to serve predominantly non-observant Orthodox memberships. By choice and absence of alternative they enter the less prestigious and more poorly paid field of Jewish education. Students from Lakewood itself have established five institutions of intensive Jewish learning at the high-school level in different parts of the United States.

Yeshivah graduates who enter Jewish education frequently supplement their talmudic training at college evening sessions, and some even take graduate courses in education. But contrary to their hopes and expectations, many of them are unprepared for the world they enter. Outside the walls of the yeshivah they meet new problems of both a secular and Jewish nature. Furthermore, there is no organization that speaks in their idiom, capable of providing help and direction for them. They continue to regard *lernen* as the highest end, but have no direction in living life short of that end. Of course this is a problem for all yeshivah graduates, not only those who choose Jewish education as their vocation. As true sectarians, they reject the communal Orthodox institutions surrounding them; their only source of leadership and guidance remains their *rosh yeshivah*.

Some yeshivah graduates do, of course, enter the rabbinate. This is a most dangerous course for a sectarian, and each has to make his own compromise with the world. A small proportion serve Reform congregations; more serve Conservative congregations, usually the smaller, less successful ones, which pay the smaller salaries. Of the majority who serve Orthodox congregations some make their peace with modern Orthodoxy, join RCA, associate themselves with the Yeshiva University Rabbinic Alumni, and are indistinguishable from Yeshiva University graduates. A few have chosen to remain isolated from the larger camp of Orthodox rabbis and are organized in the *Iggud Ha-rabbanim* (Rabbinical Alliance of America), to be discussed below.

We can consider now the institutions of the yeshivah or sectarian world, bearing in mind that the most sectarian (exclusive of the *hasidim*) are the least organized and simply continue to revolve in the orbit of their

*rashe yeshivot*. We should also note that even the sectarian organizations' involvement in communal activity is not at all a reflection of the rank and file's interests or wishes.

### *K'hal Adath Jeshurun (Breuer Community)*

Much of the preceding discussion does not apply to K'hal Adath Jeshurun. The Breuer community, in Washington Heights, named for its rabbinic leader, represents the continuation in the United States of the separatist Orthodox community in Frankfurt established in 1849 and led by Samson Raphael Hirsch after 1851. The establishment of Hirsch's separatist community is a fascinating story but not of direct concern here.<sup>51</sup> The New York community, established in 1940, now has over 700 affiliated families and 1,300 adult members, mostly of German origin, and provides a day school, high school, and advanced classes in Talmud for its graduates, who, in the German tradition, are encouraged to attend college. The community sponsors a *mikveh* and provides rabbinical supervision for a host of butchers, bakers, and other food processors in the area. The leadership has maintained the strong anti-Zionism of the German period and is publicly identified with Agudath Israel.

Unlike the East Europeans, the German Orthodox separatists had already made a successful accommodation to western culture before emigrating to the new world; secular education was, indeed, a positive good in the Hirschian philosophy of Judaism. The leaders of the Breuer community might well have expected that, as the most acculturated and economically comfortable but also strictly observant and rigidly disciplined Orthodox institution in the United States, their point of view would sweep American Orthodoxy. Instead, although the community has been quite successful in establishing its own institutions, it has won few converts to its particular ideological position of both communal separatism and a positive acceptance of secular culture. On the contrary, it is on the defensive against the more parochial elements of Orthodoxy.

In part, of course, this is a result of its own decision. As a tiny minority in this country it was faced with the choice of identifying itself communally with Yeshiva University, its neighbor in Washington Heights, and the world of modern Orthodoxy, or with the European yeshivah world with which it had been aligned in Europe. It chose the latter. But in Europe, boundaries and distances separated the followers of Hirsch from the world of the *Mirrer* or *Telshe yeshivot*, where secular education was dis-

<sup>51</sup> The best English-language account is Herman Schwab, *History of Orthodox Jewry in Germany*, trans. Irene R. Birnbaum (London, 1950).

couraged. Even so, there were signs just before the Nazi period that some of the best talent was attracted away from Germany by these and other Lithuanian-type *yeshivot*. In the United States this continues to be the problem. The Breuer community is forced to look outside its own ranks for educational staff, and some of its teachers and administrators have a negative attitude toward secular education. Its institutions are the envy of the Orthodox world, but its future as a doctrinal community is problematical. According to some observers, the Hirschian philosophy is repeated more by rote than understanding. Having lost the Hirschian faculty for Orthodox self-criticism, the Breuer community finds itself increasingly overwhelmed by the fervor of the yeshivah world, despite some inroads by modern Orthodoxy.

#### *National Society for Hebrew Day Schools (Torah Umesorah)*

Torah Umesorah is the largest national body serving Orthodox day schools. With an active affiliated membership of some 100 schools, the organization claims to serve all Orthodox day schools without regard to affiliation. Approximately 150 principals are associated with its National Conference of Yeshiva Principals and almost 100 local PTA's are affiliated with its National Association of Hebrew Day School Parent-Teachers Associations. Torah Umesorah's annual budget is over \$150,000. It publishes *Olomeinu*, a children's magazine; *The Jewish Parent*; *Hamenahel*, a journal for principals, and various bulletins and newsletters.

Although Torah Umesorah is staffed by one of the most competent groups of professionals in the Orthodox world, it is, nevertheless, a small body, which must operate within a framework created by *rashe yeshivot* who are somewhat disengaged from contemporary problems, a lay group of officials who tend to be rather uncritical, and a corps of teachers many of whom are untrained. A rabbinical administrative board, composed almost entirely of *rashe yeshivot*, officially dictates Torah Umesorah policy. The board was formerly led by Rabbi Aaron Kotler; since 1962 Rabbi Jacob Kamenetzky of Torah Vodaath has been chairman.

An insight into the composition of the lay leadership of Torah Umesorah is made possible by an analysis of its annual awards. Of the 19 awards given to lay leaders in 1963, 18 went to Americans. Of these, nine lived in New York City, and nine outside the city. Of those from New York, seven were contributors to the Lakewood Yeshiva, and/or Chinuch Atzmai, and/or the Beth Jacob schools (a network of girls' schools with an Agudath Israel orientation). Only one award winner was a contributor to or participant in communally-oriented activities. Of the

nine award recipients outside New York, only one was a contributor to the Orthodox institutions indicated above, and eight were contributors to or participants in such communally-oriented activities as Zionist, Israeli, and UJA causes, local communal groups, and UOJC. Notwithstanding the distribution of awards between New York City and "out of town," control of the New York-centered organization is naturally in the hands of a New York or New York-oriented leadership.

In an attempt to raise the technical and ideological level of Hebrew educators, Torah Umesorah instituted teacher-training programs at Ner Israel in Baltimore in 1961 and at Torah Vodaath and Mesifita Tifereth Jerusalem in New York City in 1962 and 1964, respectively, and has cooperated with a training program of the Telshe yeshivah in Cleveland since 1964.

According to Torah Umesorah, there were in 1964 about 300 Orthodox day schools with 56,000 pupils in the United States and Canada. Some day schools had only a few grades, and a few only a kindergarten. According to data compiled by Alvin Schiff of the Jewish Education Committee of New York, there were 257 Orthodox day schools in the United States in 1963, of which 132 were in Greater New York (97 elementary schools and 35 high schools) and 125 outside (94 elementary schools and 31 high schools).<sup>52</sup> Figures given in this article are based upon Dr. Schiff's study, but in any case the number of day schools continues to grow. In 1935 there had been 16 day schools in New York and one in Baltimore; in 1944, 33 and 12, and in 1948 there were 56 and 55.

A number of New York City schools are in neighborhoods of declining Jewish population. This has constricted enrolment and created severe financial problems. In many day schools outside New York, too, the financial problem is critical. Often this is the consequence of inadequate community support. Sometimes the Orthodox financial base is too narrow to support the schools independently, and the wider Jewish community, as represented by federations and non-Orthodox rabbis, often demands too great a voice in school policy to make its support acceptable. The situation differs from one community to another. In many areas, as long as the secular department of the day school functions well, community support is forthcoming.<sup>53</sup> But where the Orthodox base of a com-

<sup>52</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Schiff for permission to see a draft of his forthcoming book, *The Jewish Day School in the United States*, to be published by the Jewish Education Committee of New York.

<sup>53</sup> This situation may change with the growing antagonism of Conservative leaders toward the ideology of the Orthodox day schools, but to date the Conservatives themselves have been handicapped by their own rabbis' unwillingness to

munity is quite small, day schools find difficulty in pursuing a policy of intensive Orthodoxy within the institutions' walls while projecting the image of a broad Jewish communal institution deserving of non-Orthodox support from without. In addition, while the non-Orthodox parent may be indifferent to the ideological content of the day-school program, he is not indifferent to the general personality, characteristics, and attitudes of the day-school Hebrew teacher, who is himself often the product of an "other-worldly" environment and a yeshivah where secular education was downgraded.

Of course, not all Orthodox day schools are within the orbit of Torah Umesorah, nor are they all of the same type. There are 28 hasidic day schools

. . . found mostly in the well populated areas of New York City— notably Williamsburg and Crown Heights and Boro Park to a lesser extent—now predominantly inhabited by followers of the leading Hasidic "Rebbeyim". . . . The major emphasis in these schools is upon preserving the distinct philosophy and way of living of the Hassidic group to which the pupils belong. Personal piety, with the particular and unique manner of observance of the Hassidic sect, is stressed. . . . Attention to general studies is secondary. Generally, these are studied only until the end of the compulsory school age.<sup>54</sup>

Within New York City, the language of instruction carries definite ideological overtones. Schools which stress Yiddish are primarily designed to prepare boys for advanced Talmud study, because Yiddish is generally the language of instruction in the advanced *yeshivot*. In addition, Rabbi Kotler is reported to have had particularly strong feelings for Yiddish and to have urged principals to abandon the use of Hebrew and substitute Yiddish instead. There are 31 elementary, non-hasidic, Yiddish-speaking schools in New York City and 19 such high schools, or a total of 50 Orthodox Yiddish day schools. The schools whose Jewish studies are in Hebrew are more likely to be of the modern Orthodox type, placing greater emphasis on Israel and some modern Hebrew literature. The current tendency is toward the use of the Sephardi (or rather, Israeli) pronunciation, although those traditional *yeshivot* which use He-

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undertake the arduous task of building day schools that are potential competitors to their own synagogues and Hebrew schools for money and pupils. Even Orthodox rabbis have often been lax in the actual support of day schools. The difference, however, is that Orthodoxy contains a more dedicated and Jewishly impassioned laity, who bear much of the day-school burden without rabbinical assistance.

<sup>54</sup> Joseph Kaminetsky, "Evaluating the Program and Effectiveness of the All-Day Jewish School," *Jewish Education*, Winter 1956-1957, p. 41. Part of the material in this section is drawn from the same article by Torah Umesorah's national director.

brew as a language of instruction, such as the Beth Jacob schools for girls, teach the Ashkenazi pronunciation. There are 41 Hebrew-speaking Orthodox elementary schools in New York and 11 such high schools, for a total of 52 Orthodox Hebrew day schools. (Two elementary schools and one high school teach Jewish studies in English.) Of the 50 Yiddish-speaking schools in New York City, only two are coeducational, in keeping with the policy of such groups as Torah Umesorah's rabbinical administrative board and the *rashe yeshivot* to segregate boys and girls after the fourth grade. (None of the 28 hasidic schools is coeducational.) Of the 52 Hebrew-speaking schools, 33 are coeducational, reflecting their more liberal outlook. It is fair to say that not quite half the New York City day schools are outside the orbit of the *rashe yeshivot* or the Hasidim.

Outside New York City, the division between Yiddish and Hebrew or coeducational and segregated schools is less meaningful, since there is no base of Yiddish-speaking parents, and segregating the sexes means, besides, to increase the financial burden of these generally smaller schools (average pupil enrolment 146, against 346 in New York). Thus, there are only 18 Yiddish-speaking schools outside New York City, and only 30 schools that are not coeducational.

Day-school enrolment as a percentage of total Jewish-school enrolment has grown steadily from two per cent in 1935 to nine per cent in 1964, and in Greater New York from seven per cent to 29 per cent. There is evidence, however, that day-school growth, measured as a percentage of total Jewish-school enrolment, is leveling off. There have been recent indications of a rise in high-school enrolment as a percentage of total day-school enrolment, at least in areas of large Jewish concentration. In other words, there has been no percentage increase in the number of children enrolled in day schools, but a greater percentage of elementary day-school graduates go on to Orthodox high schools. In Greater New York high-school enrolment, as a percentage of total day-school enrolment, has climbed from 14 per cent in 1956-57 to 22 per cent in 1963-64. While elementary-school enrolment barely grew in these years, even in absolute terms, high-school enrolment increased from 5,186 to 9,076, or 75 per cent. In no year was the increase less than 10 per cent.

#### *Rabbinical Alliance of America (RAA; Iggud Ha-rabbanim)*

The Rabbinical Alliance of America, founded in 1944, is composed of graduates of sectarian American *yeshivot* who were unwilling to affiliate with the Yeshiva University-dominated RCA and either were excluded from membership in the Agudat Ha-rabbanim by its *semikhah* require-

ments, or themselves rejected the Agudat Ha-rabbanim image. The first members of RAA were primarily from Torah Vodaath (with a few from Rabbi Jacob Joseph) and to this day placement for RAA rabbis is handled through Torah Vodaath under an arrangement reached in 1957-58, when RAA cut its formal ties with the yeshivah. Currently the membership numbers around 250, of whom about 100 are in the practicing rabbinate and most of the rest in Jewish education. Many of the practicing rabbis also teach part-time.

Structurally the organization is weak. It exists more because of dissatisfaction with the two other Orthodox rabbinic organizations than through any positive program of its own. It issues an occasional periodical, *Perspective*. Without a purposeful ideology and unable to compete with RCA in benefits or prestige, RAA is experiencing some difficulty. Its position has been further shaken by RCA's move to the right, but RAA still differentiates itself from that organization by its adherence to the separatist *issur* of the *rashe yeshivot* and its refusal to cooperate in mixed bodies of Conservative and Reform rabbis. Nevertheless, almost half the practicing rabbis in RAA are also affiliated with RCA. Spiritually the RAA is in the camp of the *rashe yeshivot*.

### *Agudath Israel*

Agudath Israel was organized in the United States in 1939 as part of a worldwide movement, founded in Europe in 1912, which represented the largest organized force in the European Orthodox world before the Nazi period.

The widespread neglect of Agudah's growth in Europe by Jewish scholars has resulted, according to Agudah spokesmen, in a distortion of both the Agudah's position and of modern Jewish history. Historians and observers, particularly in the United States, have written from a viewpoint which regards modern Jewish history as an almost unbroken process of declining Orthodoxy and rising secularism, socialism, and Zionism. Such a perspective ruled out Orthodoxy as a subject of serious consideration, holding it to be bankrupt. Agudath Israel, on the other hand, without denying the tremendous inroads made by the non-Orthodox, contends that in the 1920s a counterrevolution began to take place in European Jewish life which was ended by the Nazi holocaust. That contemporary scholars have not even considered this claim may well be a reflection of their own biases and prejudices.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Although there is undoubtedly a paucity of data regarding the Orthodox by comparison with such groups as the Bundists, the YIVO archives in New York City

In the light of its history, one might well ask why the organization has not become a more potent force among the Orthodox in the United States. The number of members is difficult to estimate, but undoubtedly falls below 20,000, many of whom are indifferent to Agudist ideology but become members automatically by virtue of their affiliation with Agudath Israel synagogues.

All observers are of the opinion that Agudah sympathizers and potential members outnumber those presently enrolled in the organization. There are a number of reasons why the organization has not been able to reach them. First of all, Agudah arrived relatively late in the United States. An effort to establish the organization in 1922 had failed. However, the Zeirei Agudath Israel (Agudah youth) predated the parent body. It was established in 1921, and by 1940 had seven flourishing chapters in New York City,<sup>56</sup> one in Philadelphia, and one in Baltimore. Much of the potential leadership talent did not join the parent organization until 1949, when the adult group forced a resolution requiring that no one above the age of 28 or married could remain affiliated with the youth organization. The adult body, however, was never able to develop the *élan* and social program that were so attractive to the youth.

A second and more important reason for Agudah's weakness stems from the depoliticalization and sectarianism of the *yeshivot*. Reb Aharon and the other *rashe yeshivot* who were leaders in Agudah trained a younger generation to value only one activity, *lernen*. The result was a devaluation of and contempt for political and societal activity in the Jewish community. Thus, the yeshivah students who might have formed the nucleus for a revitalized Agudah never joined the organization; nor has the organization ever become an active communal force. Its youth organization, now firmly under the control of the parent organization, avoids controversial topics of communal concern within the Orthodox community and confines its local activities to *lernen*. This, however, is hardly

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have an abundance of source material on the subject, much of which is simply ignored. In 1937 there were 192,000 students in Jewish schools in Poland, including vocational, Hebrew-Polish, Zionist, Yiddishist, Labor Zionist, Mizrahi, and Agudath Israel schools. (See Miriam Eisenstein, *Jewish Schools in Poland, 1919-1939* [New York 1950], p. 96.) Of these, 85,000 were in Agudah schools and 15,000 more were in *yeshivot*. Furthermore, Agudah schools were the most rapidly growing of all Jewish schools. Nevertheless, Eisenstein devotes some 70 per cent of her study to the Yiddish and Zionist schools and only about ten per cent in a chapter titled "The Ultraorthodox and Orthodox Schools," to Agudath Israel schools.

<sup>56</sup> For a discussion of the history of the Zeirei Agudath Israel chapter in Williamsburg and the growth of the national organization, see George Kranzler, *Williamsburg: A Jewish Community in Transition* (New York, 1961), pp. 248-86.

an attractive program to young people who spend most of their time in a yeshivah where the level of *lernen* is likely to be as high if not higher.

In an effort to reach the new generation of yeshivah graduates and educate them politically, Agudah undertook in 1963 the publication of an English-language monthly, *Jewish Observer*. It is significant that Yiddish was no longer felt to be an adequate medium of communication for this world. (Agudah has published a Yiddish monthly, *Dos Yiddishe Vort*, since 1952). *Jewish Observer* has had limited success. It has either failed or refused to enlist writers who might have aired controversial issues from which a positive Agudist position could emerge. The journal has with one exception avoided any discussion that might be offensive to any group within Agudah, and it even failed to report the sharp differences which emerged at the *Kenesiyah gedolah*, the international convention of Agudath Israel held in Jerusalem in 1964.

At the head of Agudath Israel stands the *Mo'etset gedole ha-Torah* (the Council of Torah Authorities) formerly led by Rabbi Kotler and, since 1962, by Rabbi Moses Feinstein. The extent to which the *Mo'etsah* actually makes policy for Agudah, at least in the United States, is problematical. Officially, all controversial questions on issues of a public character, whether of a halakhic or non-halakhic nature, are decided by that body. Groups both to the left and the right of Agudah charge that the *Mo'etsah* is simply a front for the professional and lay leadership—that the rabbinic sages are so removed from practical affairs that they permit themselves to be led by others. This is probably an injustice to the rabbinical leadership. It is inconceivable that men who individually spend hours deciding matters of halakhic minutiae would be indifferent to questions which they feel are of national and even international concern. What is more likely, however, is the opposite, at least in the United States. The *Mo'etsah* is handicapped by the absence of controversy. It can respond only to problems that are raised. It can act effectively only in the context of a dialogue in which its wisdom is confronted with practical exigencies and demands of the hour—in which its decisions must be weighed by practical consequences. Agudah, in the United States, has been a sectarian organization which has not challenged its own leadership and consequently has not obtained a measure of response.

#### *Po'ale Agudath Israel (Workers of Agudath Israel)*

The American section of Po'ale Agudath Israel, which exists as an independent political party in Israel, has never been an effective competitor to Agudath Israel in the United States. Its pro-Israel sympathies and

positive social program might have captured the more energetic and youthful Agudists, but the organization has lacked the sanction of the *rashe yeshivot*. It has remained a small group in the United States, oriented primarily to its parent body in Israel.

### *Hasidim*

As noted above, the original Hasidim represented a sectarian element in Jewish life. A variety of factors contributed to the rise of hasidism in the 18th century, but a discussion of its early period and its doctrines and religious expressions lies beyond the scope of this paper. We note only that the enmity between the Hasidim and the Lithuanian *mitnaggedim* was quite bitter. The Hasidim, with their particular doctrinal stresses and their original deemphasis on talmudic learning, were considered by many to lie perilously close to the outer limits of normative Judaism.

The rise of the Enlightenment, Jewish socialism, and secular Zionism occasioned a reinterpretation by the *mitnaggedim* of hasidic behavior as an aspect of piety rather than rebellion. By the 20th century there were strong ties between the Hasidim and *mitnaggedim* which resulted, finally, in the joint participation of many of their leaders in Agudath Israel.

In the United States a further blurring of ideological differences between Hasidim and *mitnaggedim* has occurred because most Hasidim retain little that makes them doctrinally unique among ultra-pious Jews. Although they cling tenaciously to some of their special customs and generally retain their traditional European dress, with few exceptions they cannot be distinguished ideologically from the *rashe yeshivot*. The one constant that remains is the notion of the *rebbe* or hasidic leader, to whom the followers attribute extraordinary qualities and around whom they cluster.

### *Habad, the Lubavitcher Movement*

The best-known Hasidim are, of course, the followers of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.<sup>57</sup> It is impossible to estimate their number because, unlike

<sup>57</sup> A sympathetic portrayal of the Lubavitcher movement and a description of their rebbe and his followers is presented by a Reform rabbi in two articles: Herbert Weiner, "The Lubavitcher Movement," *Commentary*, March and April 1957. Descriptions of other hasidic groups in the United States and Israel, which attempt to capture the essence of their religious meaning and attraction, are found in other articles by Weiner. See, for example, his "Dead Hasidim," *ibid.*, March and May 1961 and "Braslav in Brooklyn," *Judaism*, Summer 1964. There is a vast literature on Hasidism and the Lubavitcher movement in particular by both observers and followers. See for example publications of their former Rebbe, Joseph I. Schneerson, *Some Aspects of Chabad Chassidism* (New York, 1944) and *Outlines of the Social and Communal Work of Chassidism* (New York, 1953).

other hasidic groups, they are not concentrated in any one area, organized formally, or affiliated with any one institution. The Lubavitcher movement is in many respects the least sectarian of Orthodox groups although doctrinally it is among the most faithful of all hasidic groups, to the tenets of its founders. (It is also the most doctrinally sophisticated and intellectually organized of all hasidic groups.) Its unique texts are taught in its advanced *yeshivot* or in private groups, together with the standard sacred religious texts shared by all Orthodox Jews.

The relationship of its followers to the Lubavitcher movement may best be described as one of concentric circles around the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, with the inner circle located predominantly, but not exclusively, in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, where the Rebbe lives and the headquarters of the movement is located.

Unlike other hasidic groups, the Lubavitcher have friends and sympathizers, estimated by some members of the movement to be as many as 150,000, who far outnumber the immediate coterie of followers. The overwhelming majority are said to be non-Orthodox. Many Jews seek the Rebbe's advice on personal matters and accept him as a religious guide, and he sees an estimated 3,000 people a year for personal interviews averaging 10 to 15 minutes in length.

There are 14 Lubavitcher day schools throughout the United States, besides the Central Lubavitcher Yeshiva and the Beth Rivka school for girls in New York. The total number of students in all Lubavitcher schools is about 4,000.

Outside New York City students are often from families who have little interest or concern for Orthodoxy, much less hasidic doctrine, but are attracted by the negligible tuition rates and the custodial function performed by the school. On the other hand, many followers of Habad, within and outside the city, whose homes are not close to the schools, make no particular effort to enrol their children.

The phenomenon of non-Orthodox Hasidim (President Zalman Shazar of Israel is the outstanding example) is troublesome to many in the Orthodox camp. They wonder how a presumably ultra-Orthodox leader can find such affinity with and arouse such sympathy among unobservant Jews, and whether he has not in fact compromised some essential demands of Orthodoxy in order to attract this great following. The Lubavitcher movement, however, can only be understood on its own terms, and it does in fact stand outside the Orthodox camp in many respects.

The movement does not recognize political or religious distinctions within Judaism. It has refused to cooperate formally with any identifiable organization or institution. It recognizes only two types of Jew, the fully observant and devout Lubavitcher Jew and the potentially devout and observant Lubavitcher Jew. This statement is often cited as a charming aphorism. In fact, it has tremendous social and political consequences. In every Jew, it is claimed, a spark of the holy can be found. The function of the Lubavitcher emissaries who are sent all over the world is to find that spark in each Jew and kindle it. From the performance of even a minor *mitzvah*, they argue, greater observance may follow. Thus, every Jew is recognized as sacred, but no Jew and certainly no institution outside the Lubavitcher movement is totally pure. Consequently the Lubavitcher movement can make use of allies for particular purposes without compromising its position. It can follow a policy of expediency because it never confers legitimacy on those with whom it cooperates.

One result is that sympathy for the Lubavitcher movement generally declines the further along the continuum of Orthodoxy one moves. The militantly Orthodox are continually disappointed by the independent policy which the movement pursues. This is partly due to the fact that the *rashé yeshivot* are from the tradition of the *mitnaggedim* who once bitterly opposed Hasidism and viewed its doctrines as heretical. Since the Lubavitcher are the most doctrinally faithful Hasidim, they would naturally encounter the greatest opposition. But in larger part, the antagonism is a result of the fact that Lubavitcher sectarianism is very different from other Orthodox sectarianism.

Judgment as to the success of the Lubavitcher movement depends on one's vantage point. It is indisputable that many Jews, previously untouched by Judaism, received their first appreciation of their religious faith through the missionary activity of Lubavitcher emissaries. Almost every week students from colleges all over the United States, totally removed from Judaism, visit the Central Lubavitcher Yeshiva in New York City under the prompting of a Lubavitcher representative who visited their campus. But some Orthodox observers question how many of these students who thus visit the yeshivah or pray with an *etrog* and *lulav* at the urging of a Lubavitcher representative, whom they encounter by chance on the street, in school, or in a hospital, are genuinely affected by their experience. Despite pride in its intellectual foundation, the Lubavitcher appeal today is almost exclusively emotional. More than any group in Orthodox and Jewish life, the movement offers solutions to

individual problems arising not only from the Jewish condition but from man's societal condition.

The strength of the Lubavitcher movement outside the United States is also impossible to ascertain. It is believed to have the only effective Jewish organization in the Soviet Union. Before Young Israel undertook a public campaign on behalf of Soviet Jewry, its leaders consulted the Lubavitcher Rebbe because of his acknowledged expertness on Soviet Jewry. When the question arose in 1964 whether the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry should undertake public demonstrations, many yeshivah youth, following the lead of Agudath Israel, argued that such activity would only provoke retaliation in the Soviet Union against the Jews. The student leaders consulted experts from Columbia University's Russian Institute on the point, but a decisive factor leading many students, at least at Yeshiva University, to join the demonstration was that the Rebbe did not express his disapproval.

The Rebbe continues to be accorded a certain universal deference within Orthodoxy that no other leader enjoys. When his mother died in 1964, both the Satmar Rebbe and Rabbi Soloveitchik were among those who came to "comfort the mourner." Few Orthodox Jews would expect the Lubavitcher Rebbe to do likewise in similar circumstances.

Despite the tremendous authority of the Rebbe, the Lubavitcher organization is administratively decentralized. The present Rebbe is the son-in-law of his predecessor Rabbi Joseph Schneersohn. Rabbi Schneersohn's other son-in-law, Rabbi Shemariah Gourary, exercises almost independent control of the school system. Other Lubavitcher activities, such as its publications department and youth program, are also relatively independent of one another. It is not clear to the writer whether this is by chance or design.

### *Klausenberger, Wischnitzer, and Other Hasidim*

In addition to the Lubavitcher movement and the rebbes in the Satmar's orbit, to be discussed in the following section, there are two prominent hasidic groups which retain a strong measure of independence. The Klausenberger Hasidim, from Rumania, who still number between 200 and 300 families in the United States, have been leaving this country in growing numbers to follow their Rebbe to Israel, where he has established his own village. The Wischnitzer Rebbe, from Rumania, who has also established a center in Israel, participates in activities of Agudath Israel, with which his approximately 250 families in the United States are generally aligned. Other hasidic rebbes with followings that are

ideologically associated with Agudath Israel include the Bostoner, who went from Poland to Palestine and finally to New York, the Navominsker from Poland, and the Boyoner, Kapitshinitzer, and Bluzhever from Galicia.

### *Satmar Hasidim and Their Allies*

The Satmar community is of Hungarian origin and is the most sectarian of all Orthodox groups in the United States. By the 19th century Hungarian Orthodox Jews had gained a reputation as the most zealous opponents of the non-Orthodox and as sponsors of a school system which introduced more intensive study of Talmud, and at an earlier age, than even the traditional Lithuanian-*mitnagged yeshivot*. The community is governed by the Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, head of the Central Rabbinical Congress and leader of religious and political communities which are not identical.

As rof of the religious *kehillah* (community), Rabbi Teitelbaum is final arbiter in all matters of religious law. The *kehillah* numbers about 1,200 families, located primarily in Williamsburg, with smaller branches in Boro Park and Crown Heights (all in Brooklyn).<sup>58</sup> Many of these families lost their rebbes to the Nazis and turned to the Satmar Rebbe when they came to the United States. The *kehillah* provides a full complement of religious and social services to its members, including welfare institutions, schools, *mikvaot*, bakeries, supervision over a variety of processed foods, and, informally, insurance and even pensions. It requires a high degree of religious conformity from its adherents, extending even to matters of dress.

The Satmar schools provide the most intensive Talmud training of all Orthodox day schools. Students begin their Jewish schooling at the age of three or four, and emphasis is on the amount of material covered. There are presently 3,500 boys and girls in the Satmar schools. Of these, some 2,200 are in the Williamsburg center.

As rebbe, political or societal arbiter, the Satmar's influence extends to a number of smaller hasidic groups of Hungarian origin, each with its own rof. These include such groups as the Tzehlemer, Szegeder, and Puper. The total, together with the Satmar's own *kehillah*, is conserva-

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<sup>58</sup> There is no study on Satmar Hasidim *per se*. For general studies of Hasidim in Williamsburg, much of which is applicable to the Satmar Hasidim, see George Kranzler, *op. cit.*; Solomon Poll, *op. cit.*, and Michael Cohn, ed., *The Hasidic Community of Williamsburg, Brooklyn*, (New York: Brooklyn Childrens Museum, Occasional Papers in Cultural History, No. 4 [1963]).

tively estimated at 5,000 families.<sup>59</sup> The Satmar Rebbe is also recognized as religious leader of the ultrasectarian Netore Karta of Jerusalem (AJYB, 1958 [Vol. 59], pp. 387-88) who number under 200 families.

The Satmar Rebbe is the leading advocate of isolation of the Orthodox and intensification of religious observance within the community of the faithful. Unlike other hasidic groups, the Satmar do not seek converts from among other Jews. The Rebbe is a strong opponent of the State of Israel and cooperation of any kind with the authorities in Israel. The pages of *Der Yid*, the Yiddish weekly of the community, reserves some of its bitterest attacks for Agudath Israel, which, they feel, has compromised its religious principles by acknowledging the State of Israel, joining the government at one point, and developing a network of schools which, though independent of the Israeli authorities, is under their partial supervision and receives some 85 per cent of its funds from them. The Satmar community is well-disciplined, and the word of the Rebbe is almost always authoritative, although he has refused to render opinions on some matters and has thereby opened the way to various interpretations.

On rare occasions he has even been frustrated by his community. He has, for example, long been seeking a tract of land outside of Williamsburg sufficiently large to accommodate his community. According to some observers, he has been prevented from doing so not only by technical difficulties but also by the unwillingness of the entire community to leave Williamsburg. A few years ago a mirror in his home was broken by some zealots who felt it unbecoming for a rebbe's wife to use a mirror. Granted that the act had little support, it nevertheless indicated that even among the most ultra-Orthodox there were varying opinions about religious propriety.

The long-range impact of the Satmar community should not be minimized. Standing outside the mainstream of the communications network of even the Orthodox Jewish community, isolated from almost all Orthodox groups, it is easily ignored except when it erupts in some demonstration, such as picketing the Israeli consulate, which brings it to the public's attention. With 5,000 families averaging perhaps seven or eight, the Satmar community today numbers between 35,000 and 40,000 individuals.

Although its attitude toward secular education is negative, some degree

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<sup>59</sup> The lowest figure was provided by a Satmar representative. Among those interviewed for this report the Satmar group was the only one whose own membership and school-enrolment estimates were lower than those hazarded by rival observers.

of acculturation is inevitable. The community has recently opened lines of communication with some personalities in Agudat Ha-rabbanim and invited Rabbi Moses Feinstein to a conference of its rabbinic body. The Satmar Rebbe was one of the half-dozen prominent sectarian leaders who delivered a eulogy at the funeral of Rabbi Kotler, while Rabbi Soloveitchik, who also attended, was not asked to speak. *Der Yid* is now distributed more widely than ever before in the yeshivah world, in an obvious effort to win the sympathy of that community. If the *kehillah* is successful in retaining the enthusiasm of its youth, it will inevitably play a more prominent role in Jewish life, and increasing numbers of Jewish leaders will have to reckon with the Satmar Rebbe.

### LEADERSHIP

Orthodox institutions, as essentially religious organizations, "must rely predominantly on normative powers [as distinct from coercive or remunerative powers] to attain both acceptance of their directives and the means required for their operation."<sup>60</sup> Religious authority has been traditionally exercised charismatically. That is, the religious leader has been one able to "exercise diffuse and intense influence over the normative orientations of the actors."<sup>61</sup> But according to the value system and traditional expectations of Orthodox Jews, charisma can inhere only in a Talmud scholar. Talmud scholarship is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the exercise of maximum religious leadership or for becoming a *gadol* (plural, *gedolim*). The nature of the *gedolim* has been defined as follows:

In Jewish life we rely completely on the collective conscience of the people that it will intuitively recognize its leaders and accept their teachings. There surely was no formal vote that thrust the Chofetz Chaim or Reb Chaim Ozer into world leadership. They emerged naturally. . . .

There may be many [who] are recognized Torah scholars and yet they don't attain this wide acclaim. There is some ingredient, that transcends scholarship alone or piety alone—that makes one a *Godol*. Obviously, these qualities of knowledge, erudition, and piety are basic. But, over and above these there is another that is crucial and that is what we generally describe as "Daas Torah." . . . It assumes a special endowment or capacity to penetrate objective reality, recognize the

<sup>60</sup> Amitai Etzioni, *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations* (New York, 1961), p. 41.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

facts as they "really" are, and apply the pertinent Halachic principles. It is a form of "Ruach Hakodesh," as it were, which borders if only remotely on the periphery of prophecy. . . . More often than not, the astute and knowledgeable community workers will see things differently and stand aghast with bewilderment at the action proposed by the "Godol." It is at this point that one is confronted with demonstrating faith in "Gedolim" and subduing his own alleged acumen in behalf of the Godol's judgment of the facts.<sup>62</sup>

The notion of *gedolim* is, however, becoming increasingly institutionalized, at least for the sectarian Orthodox camp. Its first formal manifestation was in the establishment by Agudath Israel of its worldwide Mo'etset Gedole Ha-torah (Council of Torah Authorities). Rabbi Aaron Kotler, until he died in 1962, was the preeminent *gedol ha-dor* (*gadol* of the generation) for the yeshivah world. The fact that he also led the *Mo'etsah* did not add to his luster. Many, even in the Mizrahi camp or in the ultra-sectarian hasidic camp to the right of Agudath Israel, recognized his eminence. Besides serving as chairman of the *Mo'etsah*, he was chairman of Torah Umesorah's rabbinical administrative board and head of Chinuch Atzmai.

With Reb Aharon's death, the vacant posts had to be filled, putting the unity of the right-wing Orthodox world to the test. In the absence of a personality comparable to Reb Aharon's, would the successors to his offices inherit authority equal to or approximating his? Would, in other words, Reb Aharon's charisma of person pass to charisma of office? Could there be "routinized charisma," so essential to organizational equilibrium, at least among religious groups?

There are three potential successors to Reb Aharon's authority among the American *rashe yeshivot*. (Only *rashe yeshivot* would be eligible since only they possess the necessary qualification of Talmud scholarship.) The most prominent candidate is Rabbi Moses Feinstein, *rosh yeshivah* of Mesifita Tifereth Jerusalem, who was elected chairman of the *Mo'etsah* and head of Chinuch Atzmai in 1962, but only vice-chairman of Torah's Umesorah's rabbinical administrative board. He is also one of five members of the Agudat Ha-rabbanim's presidium. Reb Mosheh is, as we noted, the leading *posek* (halakhic authority) of his generation. Within the world of authoritative *posekim* he is also the most lenient. His decisions, in fact, have bordered on the radical in departure from halakhic precedents to meet contemporary needs. However, greatness as

<sup>62</sup> Bernard Weinberger, "The Role of the Gedolim," *Jewish Observer*, October 1963, p. 11.

a *posek* has never by itself entitled a scholar to the highest reverence in the traditional world. Reb Mosheh is a retiring, modest, unassuming person, who, while acknowledging his role as a leader of Orthodox Judaism, none the less, unlike Reb Aharon, seeks a strong consensus on political and social questions (in contrast to religious-ritual-ethical questions) before acting.

The second outstanding *rosh yeshivah* is Rabbi Jacob Kamenetzky of Torah Vodaath, chairman of Torah Umesorah's rabbinical administrative board and a member of the *Mo'etsah*. He is also a member of the Agudat Ha-rabbanim's presidium and rose to prominence in recent years after the death of Rabbi Mendlowitz, the *menahel* of Torah Vodaath, in 1948. In a sense Rabbi Kamenetzky was pushed forward to fill the leadership post which Rabbi Mendlowitz had already endowed with a degree of charismatic authority. There are few people today, outside Torah Vodaath, who feel that he could indeed unite the other *rashe yeshivot* and the Orthodox world around his personality or office.

Finally there is the iconoclast of the yeshivah world, Rabbi Isaac Hutner, *rosh yeshivah* of Chaim Berlin. Rav Hutner's authority over his own students is unique even for a *rosh yeshivah*. He remained in the shadow of Orthodox leadership until after Reb Aharon's death, when he emerged as a forceful spokesman on a number of issues. The hierarchical relationship between himself and the other *rashe yeshivot* has not yet been clarified, but Rabbi Hutner has adopted positions on some issues contrary to theirs. He disagreed with them, for example, on the handling of the missionary situation in Israel, the controversy between the Israeli and American Youth *Pe'ilim* (activists), and the question of secular education.

There is a younger, predominantly American-born group of *rashe yeshivot* who will be assuming positions of greater authority in a few years. Torah Umesorah has given them some expression in a newly formed group called *mishnim* (deputies), which takes a somewhat active role in areas of less than crucial policy importance. Its members are becoming increasingly well known in the Orthodox world, but whether they develop sufficient independence of thought or personality to capture the admiration of the modern Orthodox as well as the sectarians remains to be seen.

The characteristics of leadership in the modern Orthodox camp are similar to those of the sectarian Orthodox. The modern Orthodox counterpart to Reb Aharon is Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik (the Rov), and as long as the Rov remains active he will maintain his dominant

positions in such organizations as RCA, RZA, Yeshiva University Rabbinic Alumni, and to a lesser extent UOJC. The future leader of the modern Orthodox world is likely to be Rabbi Soloveitchik's successor to the chairmanship of RCA's *halakhah* commission, an office which the rabbi is endowing with charismatic authority. At one time Rabbi Soloveitchik might have achieved a comparable role as spiritual mentor in Young Israel, but he rejected their overtures. (Significantly, his brother, Rabbi Aaron Soloveichik, also a renowned Talmudic scholar, has come closer to the Young Israel recently and may possibly emerge as their religious authority. On the other hand, there is great reverence for Rabbi Hutner in the Young Israel movement and particularly in the Council of Young Israel rabbis.)

Unlike Reb Aharon, the Rov assumed his leadership position only gradually. Indeed, the sectarians often charge that he never really became a leader, but is simply a front for the modern Orthodox. If that was true at one time, it certainly is no longer so, although he has been thought to change his mind on enough issues to introduce a measure of uncertainty among his own followers as to where he stands on a number of matters.

To call the Rov the leader of modern Orthodoxy is not to imply that he is always comfortable in that camp or happy with that designation. Nevertheless, his position is sharply differentiated from the sectarian *rashe yeshivot* by his positive affirmation of many elements in Western civilization (he holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Berlin) and his willingness to operate in a modern Orthodox framework. But the Rov is also part of the traditional yeshivah world. Indeed, in recent years he has moved to the right and has become more outspoken in his criticism of certain aspects of life in Israel, in his own halakhic interpretations, and in his attitude toward rabbis serving synagogues with mixed seating. The Rov may be the leader of modern Orthodoxy, but he is not really modern Orthodox. Modern Orthodoxy has yet to produce a leader from its own ranks because it still continues to acknowledge mastery of the Talmud as a qualification for leadership and yet has refused to endorse, even at Yeshiva University, a restructuring of talmudic education that would encourage bright, inquisitive minds which lack the fundamentalist positions of the *rashe yeshivot* to undertake the many years of dedicated and arduous learning required to become a talmudic authority.

Day-to-day leadership of Orthodox organizations has been assumed by professionals, almost all of whom are rabbis. The role of the professional

is growing in importance, but the tremendous charismatic authority invested in the spiritual leader has contained the professional's image and often constrained his initiative.

The lay leader is left in a rather unfortunate position. He commands neither the prestige of the talmudic scholar nor the time and information of the professional. No one within the Orthodox camp really regards him very highly or takes him very seriously. Even among laymen (that is, nonprofessionals), possession of rabbinic ordination, or at least extensive Jewish education, is increasingly becoming a ticket of admission to the councils of decision making.

The only other premium is that placed on the money the layman contributes or raises, but any effort to dictate how the money should be used is resisted. However, as long as the Orthodox community contains only few men of really substantial wealth, it is inevitable that these will occupy positions of status and prestige.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand the growth of *yeshivot* means that Orthodoxy is producing a growing number of Jewishly educated laymen, many of whom acquire a good secular education and economically comfortable positions. This group is only beginning to make an impact on both the Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jewish community. It seems inevitable that they will play a more prominent role in all aspects of Jewish life.

#### DIRECTIONS AND TENDENCIES

In essence, contemporary American Orthodoxy or at least committed Orthodoxy, whence springs the leadership and direction of the community, is characterized by the growth of institutions whose origins and spirit are sectarian and who are reacting against the church-like direction of Orthodoxy in its pre-World War II period. Orthodoxy, in truth, might have been characterized in that earlier period as simply lower-class Conservative Judaism. That this is no longer the case is due to changes in both Conservatism and Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy today is defining its role in particular and differentiated terms and more than ever before sees itself as isolated from other Jews. The result has been an increased sympathy for its own sectarian wing. But the sectarians themselves have not withstood all change. As one sociologist has written, if a sect is to influ-

<sup>63</sup> One of the few Orthodox leaders who would augment the role of the laymen and argues that non-halakhic policy decisions should be made by the practicing rabbinate and lay leadership, together with the "masters of *halakhah*," is Yeshiva University's president: Samuel Belkin, *Essays in Traditional Jewish Thought* (New York, 1956), pp. 150-51.

ence the world to change, "it must itself acquire or accept the characteristics of this world to a degree sufficient to accomplish this goal."<sup>64</sup> It must become "of this world" and in the process it changes its definitions of what is or is not acceptable. Thus, the sectarian institutions themselves are beginning to move in a church-like direction. Strident opposition to Israel among all but the Satmar Hasidim is a thing of the past. Coeducational day schools outside New York are formally disapproved of and tacitly accepted even by the *rashe yeshivot*. Yiddish, which Reb Aharon stressed as a vehicle for maintaining tradition, has been deemphasized ever since his death.

On the other hand, the entire community is more rigid in its halakhic observance. Mixed dancing, once practiced even among Agudath Israel youth, is a thing of the past in most committed Orthodox groups. The formalistic requirements of "feminine modesty," such as covering the hair, are stressed far more than ever before. Observance of the laws of "family purity" and *mikveh*, which once seemed to be on the verge of total desuetude, are rising.<sup>65</sup> There are 177 public *mikvaot* in the United States—36 in the Greater New York area alone—and a number of private ones. There is even a Spero Foundation, which assists communities planning to build *mikvaot* with architectural plans, specifications, and suggestions. But, if ritually the community is more observant, even the most sectarian groups are becoming church-like or communally oriented in the problems they take cognizance of and their means of solution.<sup>66</sup>

Both camps, the modern Orthodox and sectarians, are growing, but the basic sources of their new-found strength are different. For the sectarians it is the young yeshivah graduates now at home in at least the superficial aspects of American culture and committed to tradition and the *rashe yeshivot*. They need not adjust completely to America because they are sufficiently well acquainted with it to be able to reject many of

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<sup>64</sup> Glenn M. Vernon, *Sociology of Religion* (New York, 1962), p. 167.

<sup>65</sup> The observance of *mikveh*, which requires that a married woman go to a lustral bath a week (generally) after menstruation, before which she is prohibited from having marital relations, is the best single measure for determining who is a committed Orthodox Jew. To the uncommitted, it is inconceivable that so personal a matter should be subject to ritual regulation. To the committed, it is inconceivable that an aspect of life so important as marital relations should not be subject to halakhic regulation.

<sup>66</sup> One example can be found in the pages of the *Jewish Press*, an Orthodox weekly whose editorial position is akin to the sectarian yeshivah world but whose pages devote an increasing proportion of space to news and features of general Jewish interest.

its manifestations. For the modern Orthodox it is the *ba'ale-teshuvah*, the penitents who were raised in nonobservant homes but find in Orthodoxy an emotional or intellectual fulfillment. The first group lacks the intellectual-philosophical perspective to broaden its appeal, but while it may not expand, it will survive. The second lacks halakhic leadership and sanction for much that it reads into Orthodoxy; it lives in a half-pagan, half-halakhic world, and the personal problems of its members are more serious.

A characteristic difference between religious life today and a few years ago, particularly among the modern Orthodox, is that problems have become far more personal. In other words, the personal significance of religion has assumed increased importance over its communal significance. This has fostered increased interest in sectarianism among the ostensibly modern Orthodox, as has the right wing's courage, conviction, and sincerity. Modern Orthodoxy's appeal is dulled by the lingering suspicion of its adherents that they themselves have suffered a loss for living in a half-pagan world.

Many Orthodox Jews have been personally as well as intellectually and emotionally alienated from the non-Orthodox world through employment discrimination. Instances of observant Jews who have been denied employment in Jewish federation-supported institutions or national Jewish organizations because they are Sabbath and holiday observers are legion. And even on a more personal level, Orthodox Jews have often suffered the effects of discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping by some non-Orthodox Jews who are prominent in Jewish educational, cultural, and communal life. Many of these Jewish leaders, themselves reared in Orthodox homes, abandoned their Orthodoxy because they believed it held no future for Judaism. The upsurge of Orthodoxy among young people bewilders them and makes them resentful. But the Orthodox who suffer at their hands are not inclined to be tolerant. Since it is the modern Orthodox who are most likely to encounter this type of discrimination, a reaction is inevitable.

Relative prosperity, a sense of alienation from other Jews, and increased concern for halakhic observance serve to unite the different groups within the Orthodox camp. But that very unity has dulled Orthodoxy's critical sense, and there is a dearth of systematic criticism to be found, even at Yeshiva University, the most likely arena. A few young faculty discussion groups meet for "lofty" intellectual purposes, but as yet their point of view has found no forceful expression. Observers note that the student body itself tends to be more right-wing than ever in the past. Jewish scholarship *per se*, which might have served as a critical

tool, is only beginning to grow within Orthodoxy and still encounters fierce opposition even at Yeshiva University. Talmud study, which is as much a religious as an intellectual experience, is no substitute; it serves to awaken an awareness of tradition and a passion for religion, but not a critical faculty for the social and religious condition of Judaism in the modern world. The pages of *Tradition* have served as vehicles of criticism of the non-Orthodox Jewish world, particularly of Jewish scholarship, but even it has so far failed to develop a characteristic Orthodox response to contemporary problems, and it has ignored self-criticism. A new journal by a few students at Yeshiva University, *Gesher*, was intended to fill the gap, but its first two annual issues, in 1963 and 1964, fell short of the mark.

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The only remaining vestige of Jewish passion in America resides in the Orthodox community, and it is passion and dedication, not psychoanalytic studies of divorce, which will stem the tide of intermarriage. It is significant that the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, the only spontaneous movement concerned with Soviet Jews, is directed and led primarily by Orthodox youth, as is the only other college group recently to show signs of dynamic movement and growth, Yavneh. Whether the Orthodox community as such, however, can generate sufficient force to meet the intellectual stirrings and emotional quests in the American Jewish world remains to be seen. The non-Orthodox intellectual is not ready yet to embrace Torah and *halakhah* in their entirety.

But two things have changed. First, the old antagonisms to the world of Orthodoxy are gone from many intellectuals furthest removed from Orthodox life. Secondly, there is a recognition and admiration for Orthodoxy as the only group which today contains within it a strength and will to live that may yet nourish all the Jewish world.

## APPENDIX

### KNOWN YESHIVOT PROVIDING INTENSIVE, POST-HIGH-SCHOOL <sup>a</sup> TALMUDIC STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Year founded</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>Enrollment</i> <sup>c</sup>	<i>Founder</i>	<i>Present Rosh Yeshivah</i>	<i>Antecedent Yeshivah</i>
Yeshiva University	New York City	1896	694 <sup>d</sup>	R. Judah David Bernstein	R. Samuel Belkin <sup>e</sup> R. Joseph B. Solo-veitchik	None
Jewish University of America-Hebrew Theological College	Skokie, Ill.	1921	132 <sup>f</sup>	R. Saul Silber	R. Simon Kramer & R. Mordecai Rogow R. Selig Starr	None
Mesifita Tifereth Jerusalem	New York City	about 1925	111	R. Joseph Adler	R. Moses Feinstein	None
Yavne Hebrew Theological Seminary	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1925	37	R. Nahum Shapiro	R. Bezalel Kaden	None
Yeshivah Torah Vodaath	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1926	240	R. Shragai Mendlowitz	R. Jacob Kamenetzky	None
Yeshivah Ner Israel	Baltimore, Md.	1933	200 <sup>h</sup>	R. Jacob Ruderman	R. Jacob Ruderman	None

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Rabbinical Seminary of America (Yeshivah Rabbi Israel Meyer Hacohen)	Queens, N.Y.	1933	85 <sup>1</sup>	R. David Leibowitz	R. Enoch Leibowitz	None
Yeshivah Arugath Habosem	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1938	50 <sup>1</sup>	R. Levi Isaac Grunwald	R. Levi Isaac Grunwald	Arugath Habosem (Deutschkreuz, Austria)
Rabbi Chaim Berlin Yeshivah	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1939	200 <sup>1</sup>	R. Isaac Hutner	R. Isaac Hutner	None
Central Yeshivah Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1940	170	R. Joseph Schneerson	R. Isaac Pekarsky R. Mordecai Mentlik	Lubavitcher Yeshivah (Otwock, Poland)
Central Yeshivah Beth Joseph Rabbinical Seminary	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1941	32	R. Abraham Joffen	R. Abraham Joffen	Beth Joseph Yeshivah (Bialystok, Poland)
Rabbinical College of Telshe	Wickliffe, Ohio	1941	199	R. Hayyim Katz R. Elijah M. Bloch	R. Mordecai Gifter R. Baruch Sorotskin	Yeshivah Etz Chaim of Telshe (Telšiai, Lithuania)
Theological Seminary Yeshivath Chachmey Lublin	Detroit, Mich.	1942	39	R. Moshé Rothenberg	R. Moshé Rothenberg	Lublin Yeshivah (Lublin, Poland)

Beth Medrash Govoha of America	Lakewood N.J.	1943	220 <sup>1</sup>	R. Aaron Kotler	R. Shneur Kotler	Yeshivah of Kletzk (Kletsk, U.S.S.R.)
Yeshivah Chofetz Chaim of Radun	New York City	1944	73 <sup>h</sup>	R. Mendel Zaks	R. Mendel Zaks	Yeshivah of Radun (Radun, Poland)
Beth Medrosh Elyon (Associated with Yeshivah Torah Vodaath)	Monsey, N.Y.	1944	160	R. Shragai Mendlowitz	R. Gedaliah Schorr	Yeshivah Torah Vodaath (N.Y.)
Yeshivah Ch'san Sofer	New York City	1944	150 <sup>h</sup>	R. Samuel Ehrenfeld	R. Gedaliah Schorr R. Samuel Ehrenfeld	Yeshivah Ch'san Sofer (Mattersdorf, Austria)
Mirror Yeshivah	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1946	230	R. Abraham Kalmanowitz	R. Samuel Birnbaum	Mirror Yeshivah (Mir, Poland)
Yeshivah Farm Settlement	Mount Kisco, N.Y.	1947	45 <sup>h</sup>	R. Michael Dov Weissmandel	R. Solomon Ungar	Nitra Yeshivah (Nitra, Czecho- slovakia)
United Talmudical Academy Torah V'Yirah	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1948	300 <sup>h</sup>	R. Joel Teitelbaum	R. Joseph Meisels R. Simeon Posen	Satmar Yeshivah (Szatmár, Hungary)
Yeshivah Bet Ha-talmid	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1949	125 <sup>h</sup>	R. Arieh Leb Malin	R. Hayyim Wysokier	Mirror Yeshivah (Mir, Poland)

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Rabbi Jacob Joseph School and Mesifita	New York City	1950	106 <sup>h</sup>	R. Mendel Kravitz	R. Mendel Kravitz	None
Yeshivah Karlen-Stolin	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1950	50 <sup>h</sup>	R. Jochanan Perlow	R. Abraham Trup	Karlen-Stolin Yeshivah (Stolin, Poland)
Yeshivah Be'er Shmuel	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1950	100 <sup>h</sup>	R. Joseph Horowitz	R. Moses Horowitz	Yeshivah of Hunsdorf (Huncovce, Czechoslovakia)
Talmudical Academy of Philadelphia	Philadelphia, Pa.	1953	50 <sup>h</sup>	R. Samuel Kamenetsky R. Dov Schwartzman	R. Samuel Kamenetsky R. Elya Svei	Beth Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, N.J.
Boston Rabbinical Seminary	Boston, Mass.	1954	25 <sup>h</sup>	R. Leib Heyman	R. Leib Heyman	Beth Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, N.J.
Yeshiva Eretz Yisrael	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1955	40 <sup>h</sup>	R. Judah Gershuni	R. Judah Gershuni	None

Kamminetzer Yeshivah	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1960	70 <sup>h</sup>	R. Levi Krupenia	R. Levi Krupenia	Kamminetzer Yeshivah (Kamieniec, Poland)
Yeshivah Bet Torah	New Haven, Conn.	1960	15 <sup>h</sup>	R. Mordecai Yoffe	R. Mordecai Yoffe	Beth Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, N.J.
Saint Louis Rabbinical College	St. Louis, Mo.	1961	26 <sup>h</sup>	R. Samuel Faivelson	R. Samuel Faivelson	Beth Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, N.J.
Yeshivah Zichron Tzvi	Woodridge, N.Y.	1964	40 <sup>l</sup>	R. Levi Krupenia	R. Levi Krupenia	Kamminetzer Yeshivah (Brooklyn, N.Y.)

<sup>a</sup> The *yeshivot* listed here may have an elementary and/or high-school division as well. Data in the Appendix are only for the post-high-school division, where students may spend anywhere from two or three hours to a full day. This appendix is not exhaustive. There are undoubtedly other *yeshivot* which were inadvertently omitted. In addition, there are post-high-school students studying Talmud privately or in small groups.

<sup>b</sup> This refers to the year in which the post-high-school division was established. Sources are either CJFWF reports or information obtained directly from each yeshivah.

<sup>c</sup> Unless otherwise noted, these are the latest enrollment figures as submitted by each yeshivah to CJFWF and published in its 1964 reports.

<sup>d</sup> Includes the post-high-school enrollment in the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and 229 students in the Teachers Institute for Men.

<sup>e</sup> Every instructor in Talmud in the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary is called a *rosh yeshivah*. Officially Dr. Belkin, a former instructor in Talmud and now president of the University, gives the *semik'kah* (ordination) and is the *THE rosh yeshivah*. Most people outside of Yeshiva University think of Rabbi Soloveitchik as *THE rosh yeshivah*.

<sup>f</sup> Includes 11 students in the Teachers Institute.

<sup>g</sup> There is no *rosh yeshivah*. Dr. Kramer is the president, Rabbi Rogow lectures to the senior class, and Rabbi Starr has the class beneath him.

<sup>h</sup> Figure supplied by a representative of the yeshivah.

<sup>i</sup> Figure by observers.