a community in stress

by

dr. whitney h. gordon

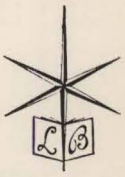


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american scene

living books, inc.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rarely in the history of learned writing has a man risked more in quest of the truth than WHITNEY H. GORDON. Many of the people he interviewed during the preparation of his doctoral, upon which A COMMUNITY IN STRESS is based, were extremely hostile and accused him of poaching on their privacies. . . .

Despite veiled threats upon his academic future, Dr. Gordon calmly persisted in collecting the most fascinating reactions to contemporary community problems ever assembled.

"Middletown, U.S.A." may not be recognized by you, but the people who live there will recognize themselves: their courage and their cowardice — their faith and their doubts—their anxieties and frivolities.

A highly skilled writer and sociologist, Dr. Gordon approached his project with the coolness of a scientist and the warmth of an empathetic human scholar.

Born in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1931, WHITNEY H. GORDON spent most of his childhood in Honolulu, Hawaii. Returning to the mainland, he later received his B.S. in psychology at Pomona College, Claremont, California. He then went on to Purdue University for his Master's Degree in Psychology and his Doctorate in Sociology. Dr. Gordon is currently Associate Professor of Social Science at Ball State Teachers College, and a lecturer at Indiana University.

SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES expose their areas of inquiry as under a huge searchlight. There is an absence of shading, but this only makes the image presented by systematic research seem more complete; compared with it, the social novel or literary essay offers merely a smudge of emotionally charged individual instances . . . Having perused a 'study,' the reader is likely to conclude that while literary works have their use in exploring individual oddities or for entertainment, if one really wants to know about his human environment . . . he had better get a hand from the social scientist . . . . [But] soon [the reader] observes that though the study has lighted up a few unnoticed corners there is much in it that he knew all along . . . . A novel written on this level of discovery would be dismissed as a bore . . . . [Therefore] instead of welcoming the researchers who have come to clean up the wild growth of social impressionism, the literary men keep firing at them as invading barbarians . . . .

HAROLD ROSENBERG
"Community, Values, Comedy"

To the memory of my father

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE SOCIOLOGIST should find it peculiarly *a propos* to be at a loss to account for the totality of his mentors and benefactors. His discipline never ceases to proclaim that man is molded, or hammered, into the "who" he is by his society. What youthful encounters or what subtle forces in the culture propelled him most singularly upon his "chosen" path remain unknown. To those most crucial, and often unrecognized people, the writer harbors profoundest appreciation.

At the opposite extreme, where concrete involvement with individuals so obviously exists, have been Dr. Lester Hewitt, Dr. Larry Perkins, Dr. Richard Burkhardt, Dr. John Hannaford, Dr. Robert Tylor, Dr. Everett Ferrill, Dr. Walter Hirsch, Dr. Robert Eichhorn, Professor Easton Asher, Dr. Sidney Greenfield, Dr. Dwight Culver, Dr. Louis Schneider, Rabbi J. Morton Krause and numerous typists, all of whom contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this work. A very special debt of gratitude goes out to Dr. Isacque Graeber and the staff of Living Books, Inc.

The Jewish families of Middletown who cooperated in this study made it possible. To them the writer owes truly profound appreciation. If some should be distressed at the not always flattering portrayal of life in the Jewish community of Middletown, the writer states again to them his appreciation for their indulgence as well as reminding them that as individuals and as families he could not have wished for more gracious or more helpful people. It was almost inevitably the case

that the researcher returned from interviews both warmed and gratified to be a member of the human community. Unfortunately, all the good feelings which the author possesses do not extricate him from the horns of a dilemma; being caught at painful moments between the "ethics of candor" and the "morality of kindness." Perhaps, as a balm to either condition, this study will generate a small measure of social utility which might serve Jewish communities across the United States.

The writer retains his deepest feelings of appreciation and his most private regard for those closest to him. To his mother who succeeded in mixing "Mormon gravy" and Talmudic wisdom he expresses not only his gratitude but also his love. The writer's wife, before all others, has been a guardian and a support. In the Great Tradition she suffered pain in silence. Her devotion has been a vast tribute to the wages of marriage and of love.

CONTENTS

PREFACE XI

PRELUDE TO STRESS 1

THE HERITAGE IN MIDDLETOWN 7

DOMESTICITY AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE 29

FUN, GAMES AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE 51

THE CHILDREN 69

JUDAISM IN MIDDLETOWN 105

THE RABBI AND THE TEMPLE DRIVE 139

MIDDLETOWN'S ADULT JEWS AND NON-JEWS 187

STRESS AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY 219

TOMORROW: PERIL OR PROMISE 251

NOTES 259

BIBLIOGRAPHY 265

PREFACE

THE PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS for this study extended over a period of one year. The writer attended more than 95 percent of the public functions and religious observances of the group during that time. Passive participation was the operating rule within group situations.

The researcher identified himself as ambivalent in his own religious thinking. It was made known that his mother's family had been "Mormon" church founders, pioneers and polygamists. It was also stated that the author's father had come from among Orthodox Jews of Vilna, Lithuania. Many informants concurred with the suggestion that such a background might lead to Unitarian sympathies. When pressed, the writer parried personal religious questions by quipping that he was not sure whether he was a sociologist disguised as a Jew or a Jew as a sociologist. The remark usually terminated further inquiries. A few members of the congregation asked whether or not the researcher contemplated joining the congregation. Some suggested that the reseaerch was actually an inner quest. These probes were parried with the remark that the issue was complex and tangled. The majority of the informants scrupulously and very generously avoided pursuing personal religious questions.[1]

Note cards and pen were employed. Initially this procedure created some negative comment but it was soon accepted. When challenged on this point, the writer re-

ferred to his pads and pen as his "U-2" equipment. This frank rebuttal seemed to be fully and not unfavorably received. In time it began to appear as if the researcher's failure to take notes created negative remarks:

"You just wouldn't be you if you weren't taking notes all the time!

"Why aren't you making notes? You're supposed to take them. You always have before; so what's different this time?

"Here, I have a pen that doesn't skip. This is interesting. You shouldn't miss any of it."

Many opportunities arose which allowed the author to *shmoose* (to "nose about" in search of information) with members of the congregation. These opportunities were exploited. Initially this behavior created considerable hostility with a segment of the Jewish community that viewed the writer's work with suspicion. Later, the behavior became acceptable as part of the researcher's role. *Shmoosing* was, generally, advantageous to the study although the danger of receiving distorted information was always present. To some extent bias or misinformation could be offset by *shmoosing* with others or were apt to hold differing views. But this technique is not without its own dangers. There was a tendency to concentrate on pliable, dependable or simply dependent informants.

A further problem inherent in *shmoosing* is that of receiving explosive information. Unless one is very cautious, he may come to be viewed as a "dangerous" person. But there was no avoiding the situation of being grabbed at the elbow, towed to the side of a room in which other men were present and being told in a too distinct whisper:

"I want to talk with you later. I have some REAL dirt for you. I have things to tell you that will shock you about these people."

The naivete of the research worker in a new social

setting adds hazards to the practice of *shmoosing*. Vidich and Bensman noted in their study of a small New York community that:

"The code of the proper conversational level is as proper as the code of formalities among the Japanese. The social learning necessary to know what conversational tone to take with other individuals is elaborately involved and constitutes the etiquette of public conversation. In his first contacts with the community the outside observer quickly learns the habit of avoiding direct discussion of reality after he meets with negative or blank responses to his own *faux pas* in this area." [2]

Among many of Middletown's Jews one did not talk lightly of anti-Semitism, religious education in the public schools or of immigrant origins.

The interviews consumed 55 minutes to 6 hours. The majority spanned two to three hours. Among the 56 heads of households 49 or 87 percent were fully interviewed. In terms of 106 individual subjects, 83 or 78 percent were interviewed. Another seven persons, or seven percent, were partially interviewed. The researcher was able to collect all the "public" data he desired concerning those whom he did not formally interview. Sometimes such data were gathered by means of casual, conversational queries. A reasonable quantity of less "public" data was gleaned concerning the uninterviewed subjects by way of persistent observation of them in group situations.

The interviewer does possess several advantageous levers in dealing with a small community which may offset the limitations inherent in field work. It has been observed that:

"The community begins to take the research project and its interviewers for granted and to assume that they know more than they actually do." [3]

If one is alert to possible inter-relationships of bits of information, he is in a position to exploit the assump-

tions concerning his knowledgeability. But there exists the danger that the interviewer will blunder in these situations in which case he may be caught "bluffing."

One might anticipate that each family attempted to present to the investigator its more positive aspects and to conceal so called, "dirty laundry." [4] But the majority of these same families were not entirely averse to elucidating other people's "dirty laundry." Whether or not such data—when they were not in error—represented a complete picture of the "under side" of persons and events was not discernable.

Interviews were particularly fruitful in which the male head of the household and his wife participated. At times the researcher sat on the sidelines while an intense exchange went on between husband and wife. It seems likely that personal views and latent feelings were opened which couples had come to lay aside under the blanket of day-to-day conversational routines.

At some critical junctures there seemed to be merit in mild but deliberate provocation. Especially informants who had come to feel confidence in the interview situation seemed to enjoy an occasional sharp exchange.

On the other hand, the confidential interview has its own peculiar merits:

"The field worker, like the therapist, frequently comes in contact with more of the intimate and private than other members of the community." [5]

The obvious hazards of such situations lie not only in the area of professional competency and ethical commitments, but also in an emotional "boomerang" effect. At a later date the informant may sense his own indiscretion and seek to offset this by attacking and derogating the researcher or his work.

The Jewish community was not uniform in its reception to the study. Careful appraisal and good fortune culminated in advantageous "lead in" contacts. Once those favorable contacts had been made, accepted and

investigated, "the word" went out through the telephone lines and over the card tables.[6]

Initial appraisal seemed to be favorable. A seemingly relaxed, gregarious and almost cavalier approach was, generally, well received. The writer's apparent confidence and the use of a "sports car" embellished the image. There was considerable curiosity as to what types of questions were to be asked. There was, as well, speculation about the writer's personal life, religious tendencies, and, frequently, even the most trivial sojourns were noted and discussed. The work became very public in the hands of this group. At the same time, opportunities arose through which the writer was in a position to do normal, small favors such as carrying a bag of groceries—"Good bless you my friend"—or giving the children a ride in the open machine—"Now just what do you think his motive was for THAT?"

Occasionally diplomatic problems arose. To be seen talking extensively with "X" was to annoy "Y" who might then carry negative appraisals to "Z" who had yet to be interviewed. But, for the greater part, such problems were very much the exception. Interviews were inevitably accompanied with fruit, coffee and cakes or drinks. In some cases the interviews terminated long after midnight over the proverbial "pot of coffee" in the center of the kitchen table.

Perhaps the question uppermost in the minds of many individuals concerned the essence of the researcher's sentiments *vis-a-vis* Jews and Judaism. This preoccupation was expressed both directly and indirectly. Frequently the entire tone of the interview relationship became markedly more intimate and relaxed as soon as the informant(s) were alerted to the researcher's Jewish forebears:

"Ah, ja, a Litvak now! My great grandfather was a Litvak. What minds! What legalists! You are one too no doubt!"

"Oh, then you're no stranger to Judaism. How nice. We weren't sure."

"Well now, I heard a rumor that one of your grandfathers was a rabbi. But now I believe it. So what would you like to know? A *mitsva* for the professor would be a pleasure. You do know, of course, what is meant by *"mitsva"* don't you?"

The writer's acquisition of Yiddish words brought obvious pleasure and satisfaction to many who seemed to take this as a validation of the researcher's stated sympathy for Judaism. This was particularly noteworthy insofar as the vast majority of the group chooses not to emphasize or to dramatize folk characteristics which are alien to the broad sweep of Midwestern custom.

As a group, the Jewish men seemed to view the research project with somewhat more caution than did the women. Several were openly threatened by it:

"Why do you have to interview everybody? Won't four or five do? What are you really up to?"

"Why do you pick on us? We are Jews, you know. Why pick on us? All down through the ages we have had trouble and wrong kind of attention. Why don't you study some other group? They're plenty around—Catholics, Unitarians, Holy Rollers. Why should we be picked on again? Haven't we had enough?"

Two men concluded that the researcher's only motive could be money. When assured that completion of the work would result in a very modest increase in salary, they were satisfied with their own analysis of motives. Thereafter both men cooperated with the work.

The writer was spared the so-called "FBI complex." He was covertly accused of being a Treasury Agent. Maneuvering and the assistance of several sympathetic and extraordinarily helpful persons were instrumental in overcoming "pockets of resistance." But, as with the women, whatever reservations they privately harbored,

most of the Jewish men were enormously generous with their time and attention.

As the work progressed many solicitous inquiries were made as to its progress and as to the findings. Some asked to see the end product. A few were more aggressive:

"Ok, what have you FOUND OUT about us?"

Some were concerned lest the research findings would be biased toward Orthodox rather than toward American Reform Judaism. A few expressed the concern that the opposite bias would dominate the study.

The thought that the research would present the community with a mirror of itself was received with ambivalence in some quarters. One person asked:

"Have you got most of your data in? I guess you know all about us now."

The remark was parried by suggesting that the group was a very sophisticated one and that most of what the writer would have to say was well known by the group:

"Yes, sure, but maybe we don't want to hear about what we know. Ever think of that?"

Relatively early in the course of the research a "trial balloon" was raised in the event that the study should ever be available to the group. A leading family in the Jewish community was loaned a copy of a chapter on religious and ethnic relations in Middletown which had been written by a colleague. The article circulated swiftly among the top echelon. One family found the article, "very fair." The new, young rabbi was annoyed with it and dismissed it as, "trivial." One family objected to it strenuously, but upon inquiry reported only one possible error or possible misinterpretation. Another family stated that they were deeply upset and offended by it. The man's wife insisted that the article was injurious to Middletown's Jews and that it contained extensive errors. Several weeks later the same woman reported to the researcher that:

"The article really hurts me. I haven't forgotten it. So much of it is too true. That's why it hurt."

As old "hurdles" and personalities were overcome, new problems began to appear in the field work. In the spring of the year several of the Jewish women chose to audit a course the writer was giving at the local college. They concluded that behind the outgoing facade lay a rather sober person. The news spread and those who had suspected the researcher of duplicity were now confirmed in their beliefs. Some in-coming data began to reflect the new group perspective insofar as there were those who began to apologize for the group.

A much perturbing situation sprang out of auspicious circumstances. During the spring term, the writer was approached by the Temple Sisterhood. They wondered if his wife, who also lectured at the college, would be willing to speak to the group on some topic in her area of Psychology.

Mrs. Gordon discussed recent research on cultural values as they impinge upon academic performance. The burden of her argument was that Jewish children are not only able people as a group, but that they are also more highly motivated in academic work than able children from many other sub-cultures. She noted that this performance was exceedingly laudable, that in the present age it was absolutely necessary for the society and that this was one of the towering characteristics and values of the Jewish heritage. She then suggested that the dominant American culture does not share this extreme emphasis upon scholarly work. Further, as Jewish children become absorbed in the larger American culture, the parents would have to realize that the traditional emphasis on intellectual work was likely to be replaced by a stress on sports and non-academic activities. She argued that they, as parents, would have to make a value choice and that they should best hesitate and consider the price that they, their children and the

society might have to pay for sacrificing an ancient and renowned system of values.

The body of the talk seemed to be well enough received. One woman remarked that had a Jewess presented the group with the same materials they would not have listened. Young Rabbi Kreutzer was frankly pleased and commented that he had been attempting to convey a similar point of view. Not so well received was Mrs. Gordon's statement that she was reared a Lutheran (most of the group knew that her father's family was Jewish) and that her present orientation was Unitarian as was that of her husband's.

Within two days the writer was informed by several members of the Jewish community that his wife's talk was not well received and that the researcher had lost a great deal of favor within the community because of it. The reasons given for the ill feeling were varied. One person suggested that:

"They had to find something wrong with her talk—and they did. They always do."

Another individual suggested that the group had begun to forget the researcher's ambiguous position in the Jewish community, and that they were brought up short when reminded of it. Several women suggested jealousy. One felt that the "Unitarian remark" was a deliberate slap in the face of the Jewish group. It was also suggested that resentment stemmed from the painful reminder that they, as parents, were caught on the horns of a cultural dilemma such as most of them wished to deny. The most disturbing charge was that the writer's wife was probably anti-Semitic (Women who actually attended the luncheon disavowed any such view.)

The writer made it known that he was hurt, offended and deeply angered by the charge of anti-Semitism. He reminded a few that his wife had grown up in and fled NAZI Germany and that she had shown enormous courage in front of party officials and military personnel.

This information spread. Several women apologized to the researcher, not so much for what had been said about his wife, but that the criticisms came back to him. Several also resented the charge of anti-Semitism.

Matters were as abruptly repaired as they had been disturbed. Some weeks after the luncheon talk, the writer's parents visited Middletown. Word was released on a Wednesday that the investigator's father would attend temple services that Friday night. One woman telephoned the news to others. The senior Gordon drew all eyes to him when he entered the temple waring a *yarmelkeh*. He and the rabbi were the only two people in the room attired in this traditional regalia. During the social hour following the service he fascinated the men with information about the Jewish community of Honolulu. He flattered the women from whom he parted with the comment that:

"We must go now, but let me assure you how nice it is to be here—to be able to go ANYWHERE in the world—and to be able to be among fellow Jews. And even if there is not a Jewish temple, I have always been able to find Jewish cooking and a Jewish heart. Good evening and thank you again."

One of the more sophisticated women winked at the writer, while another woman clutched the researcher by the arm and dug her finger-nails quite through his coat and shirt. With tears in her eyes she blurted out:

"With a father like THAT, you SHOULD be a Jew!"

The investigator spoke to the Jewish community on two occasions. In the winter he talked to the Sisterhood about the special roots of contemporary Existentialism. Toward the very close of the research year he spoke at a social hour concerning the research project. Both talks were carefully planned and well enough received.

* * * * * *

Among the many limitations of this work, none would appear to be more profound than the lack of a

control group of matched Protestants. For want of a control group the pivotal concept of stress and its analysis remain indeterminate in many areas of inquiry. Behavior patterns and group tensions on first appearance may seem to reflect role stress as engendered by marginality within the larger society. In actuality, those same stresses might be, and often are, evidenced within religious groups which dominate Middletown's social stage.

It is equally hazardous under these circumstances to suggest a differential analysis of culturally rooted behavior. What may seem to be a *shtetl*-like preoccupation with the making of money might be, in actuality, sturdy, American, Midwestern "Babbitry."

It would not be entirely correct to assume that the study presents a comprehensive description of Jewish life in Middletown, USA. There exists a limitation beyond the perceptual biases, prejudices, and blind spots of the investigator which limit and distort his choice of data to be presented. In selecting descriptive materials it would appear probable that an American scholar will select the dramatic moments and remarks rather than that which comprises the largest segment of his subject's lives—the routine, the trivial, the menial chores of house keeping and office. That such a bias in data selection exists may be realized when one notes that much of the conversation within Middletown's Jewish community concerns itself with bowling, other sports, business, cards, jokes, recipes, gossip, children, house furnishings and personal grooming.

And insofar as the project probed a religious community *per se* it should be noted that:

". . . There is something rash and presumptuous about sociological analyses of the 'religious situation.' For unless we commit ourselves to a natural metaphysic, it would seem obvious that religion necessarily tran-

scends the social and cultural framework in which it is embedded."[7]

Finally, in the personal realms of human experience it would appear erroneous to assume that one discovers any ultimate reality or feeling tone. Much data are more or less hidden behind the curtains of conscious actions and socially expected verbalizations. What appears to the researcher may, on one day, be near to the essence of a man's feeling. The next day one may encounter only the unrecognized facade which shields psychologically sensitized realms.

The shifting sands of data collection are not confined to the subjects. The investigator is also a part of social and psychological processes. As a newcomer to the group he may bring with him the advantages of fresh perspectives, insights and frames of reference. However, he also brings along a great deal of naiveté. As he becomes more intimately aware of the group structure he may come to appreciate his own earlier misconceptions and superficial inferences. He becomes, in short, more knowledgeable. But:

"The interviewer himself may become over-socialized and, hence, unable to probe for certain types of information because he himself accepts local taboos and, even more, premises."[8]

Nevertheless, a close and reasonably dispassionate examination of any institution and its participants may appear harsh and disillusioning. That such a strain between reality and preconception should frequently occur may speak more for the individual's unconscious acceptance of an "uplifting" culture than it does about his awareness of social realities.

An American, Reform Jewish community may be particularuy vulnerable to invidious comparisons. On the one hand, for all its efforts and protestations to the contrary, the group fails to be entirely integrated into the general society. And on the ohter hand, these Jews

may be lacerated for their abandonment of ancient customs, habits and values which were elaborated through a long and tortured history. Furthermore, as a religious group, drenched in a lofty and forthright ethical heritage, day-to-day failings and shortcomings are, potentially, cast in a very severe light. Indeed, the ideal and the real may appear to stand peculiarly far apart when the ideal was scratched on to sanctified parchment many generations past.

More mundane but no less dangerous problems exist at the level of seemingly straight forward data. Stendahl is reported to have noted the difficulty inherent in attempting to establish the validity of even the most unimportant fact.[9] Repeatedly the author was given simple and seemingly "unloaded" information which was erroneous. The errors that were not located remain.

Such errors contaminate what is, at best, no more than the "quasi-statistical" support of conclusions. And while the focused interviews may have gained a measure of "depth" by their open-ended form, they also permitted the entry of bias factors on the part of both the informant and the interviewer.

* * * * * *

One may ask the social scientist who collects field data about the extent to which he supressed information which was available to him. He may also be asked to face the ethical problems inherent in field work. The two questions are not entirely unrelated. Within this study only a smallest fraction of information known to the author has been withheld. In most cases the materials were personally scandalous rather than socially relevant. One sociologically significant event in the community was suppressed in the interests of the individual(s) involved.)

David Riesman, in his introduction to *Crestwood Heights,* speaks of the author's preoccupation with the ethical question of writing about a group that would

quickly and readily absorb research observations and conclusions. Riesman points out that the researcher's defenseless candor and courtesy further beclouds the true nature of the relationships which he establishes within the community.[10]

The research worker may meet the ethical standards of the anthropologist insofar as he does not change the situation, damage individuals or leave the field in a condition such as would bar later entrants. But the investigator is rarely entirely open in either his goals or his means. The study reported here was a purported inquiry into the life of Jewish families in a midwest American city. There was no mention of the orientation towards stress.

To the extent that one does not damage or warp human relationships in field research, he may meet the society's formal and ethical requirements. But an element of duplicity may be operating in many sociological studies and a touch of moral chicanery was present in the present work.

WHITNEY H. GORDON

Muncie, Indiana
September, 1964

Chapter I
PRELUDE TO STRESS

THE HISTORY and texture of Jewish life has been of interest to men throughout much of recorded history. Both Jewish community life and relationships with non-Jews have been commented upon and scrutinized at length.[1] Within Western society this small body of people has operated as a vital font of religious, ethical and social thought. Interest, or curiosity, has also been generated by their almost unique position in the world: Jews and Judaism have survived repeated, varied and, sometimes, brutal oppression.

In contemporary American society the question of Jewish survival persists, but it does so only if one turns the matter of "oppression" on its head and begins to speak of absorbtion, assimilation and of disappearance. It must be made quite clear that the "Jewish Problem" in Middletown is a dual one wherein, at one and the same time, there exists the putative danger of disappearance and the almost ironic corollary of continuing, if also marginal, discrimination. Should the American ideal of religious and, perhaps, cultural pluralism be realized, the Jewish residents of Middletown could "have their cake and eat it" as dedicated Jews and as fully accepted members of the larger society. While Middletown's Jewish children aspire to such a goal, their parents hope for it.

The issues are ones of how people in Middletown

feel about Jews and about *being* Jewish, how Jews feel about their partial social handicap, how they feel about their own futures and that of their children. Finally, one must ask how their relative social isolation and personal views color their relationships with coreligionists and with their religious institutions.

The research site was that of the middle sized, Midwestern community called "Middletown." The choice of this city was convenient and advantageous: Middletown is a singularly apt location for field work in social analysis insofar as the community has been the locus for the Lynds' systematic, sociological research dating as far back as 1890, although more especially since 1925.[2]

The descriptive materials contained in the present study were gathered over a year (July, 1960—July, 1961). Quasi-statistical data, field observations, focused interviews and a small questionnaire were the techniques by which data were collected.[3]

The rationale for the descriptive form of this research may be found in the Lynds' stated reasons for their initial investigation of Middletown:

"The aim of the field investigation recorded in the following pages was to study synchronously the interwoven trends that are the life in a small American city. . . . Neither field work nor report has attempted to prove any thesis; the aim has been, rather to record observed phenomena . . . . [in the manner of] the approach of the cultural anthropologist." [4]

In attempting to carry forward the essential ethos and format of the Lynds' work, there is the possibility that at times one may be reminded of the novels of Sinclair Lewis. H. L. Mencken drew this parallel as early as 1929 in his review of *Middletown* which he entitled "A City in Moronia." [5] It may be seen as unfortunate if such parallels continue to exist. And it should be noted, and underscored, that if such unflattering images

apply to the Jewish residents of Middletown, they do so as by-products of enormously efficient acculturation rather than as the result of "being Jewish." Banality is not unknown to Jewish culture, of course, but such are not the banalities of which these writers were speaking. Finally, one might argue that, at times, the mental lives of men are more subtle and more perceptive than are their spoken words.

* * * * * *

Any attempt towards an ultimate delineation of the Jewish population of Middletown confronts serious difficulties. Among others, Hitler and associates arrived at definitions such as appeared to identify all Jews within a community. The racial *cum* religious criterion and the consequences which flowed from these definitions have not been generally accepted. Nor have Jews themselves always been able to agree upon what it means to be Jewish.[6]

Jewish informants in Middletown were asked to present their definitions of "Jewish." The majority stated that "Jewish" implies a religious group. But others pointed out or implied that the appelation "Jewish" involves something beyond strictly religious elements:

"To be a Jew you have to live in a Jewish way, but don't ask me what that is, except that it is real and that it goes beyond eating matzos crackers once or twice a year."

"You are Jewish if the Gentiles say you are. That's all there is to it."

"Judaism is not a religion; it is a nation, a way of life, a CIVILIZATION! It is not just the negative proposition one sees here in [Middletown]."

"One has to be something religiously, so we become Jews religiously even if we couldn't care less about religion as it is."

"Rabbi [Dorfman] hit it on the head when he said, 'Judaism is a religious kinship.' "

A few individuals indicated a measure of inconsistency in their definitional efforts:

"The only worthwhile definition is religious. For instance, if a Jewish person converts to Catholicism he is no longer a Jew. But if he goes Unitarian he is still a Jew."

"To be a Jew means that you are religiously Jewish AND THAT'S ALL . . . . But you can't resign from Judaism, even if the Gentiles would let you. Down in your heart, in here (pointing to own chest) you are always a Jew."

For the purposes of this study five criteria were established. Individuals who met any one or more of the following criteria were designated as members of the Jewish community of the county in which Middletown is located.[7]

1. The individual, as head of an household, paid annual membership dues to the local Jewish congregation at least once in the period 1958-1961.

2. The individual (female) was listed on the roster of the temple congregation's Sisterhood at least once in the period 1958-1961.

3. The individual (child) received some form of Jewish, religious training in preference to another form of religious education during the period 1958-1960.

4. The individual was self avowedly Jewish in religious orientation *and* at any given level or ritual practice between 1958 and 1961.

5. The individual was religiously non-Jewish, but was the spouse of a religiously identified Jew. Further, the individual circulated, according to his own report, more extensively within the Jewish social community than within any other social group in Middletown between 1958 and 1961.

It should be very clearly noted that these criteria do not cover individuals who are defined by some segment of the larger society as "Jewish" but who, themselves,

do not meet any one of the five criteria above. These criteria result in the data as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Members of the Jewish Community Permanently Residing in the County in Which Middletown Is Located as of 1960-1961.

Characteristic	*Number*	*Per cent*
Adult, religiously-identified Jews	98	56
Aged, dependent, religiously-identified Jews	4	2
Adult persons not religiously-identified as Jewish but members of the Jewish community	8	5
Dependent children living at home and identified as Jews	63	36
The Rabbi	1	1
Total	174	100

The population which formed the working basis of this study comprised 56 Jewish households. The 4 dependent, aged members became part of the working data only at specific, relevant junctures. The rabbi is dealt with separately and may be viewed as a person who is "hired in" by the Jewish community and, as in the case of Rabbi Kreutzer, may remain only briefly. The 8 non-religious Jews (6 women and 2 men) who are part of the Jewish community are included or excluded from the data at various points according to the nature of the phenomenon under consideration. The Jewish students at the local state teachers college represent temporary, part-time inhabitants of the county. This group is dealt with separately, and, as a rule, the dependent Jewish children are dealt with separately.

In essence, this study concerns "stress" components in the lives of Middletown's Jewish residents, being mindful that much of that which puts their lives into tension is shared experience among their non-Jewish neighbors. And while it is hazardous in the extreme to generalize beyond one's data, it is hoped that the microcosm of Middletown's Jewish community may have some general bearing upon Jewish life in America.

Chapter II

THE HERITAGE IN MIDDLETOWN

The Heritage

The history of the Lynd's research site of Middletown has been not unlike that of many boom settlements on the Midwestern frontier of the early 1800's; by 1885 a county population of 6,000 was registered. A natural boom brought industry to the city and resulted in the eventual dominance of the famous "X" family.[1] This family's primary place in the community persisted until the 1950's.

It would appear that as early as 1900 agricultural dominance of the township and county in which Middletown is located had given way to industry.[2] The Middletown of pre-World War I years seems to have encompassed, in a somewhat transmuted manner, the ethos of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. At least the more comfortable segments of the community lived such an existence. But that all was not well in the post-war world of Middletown might be indicated by the sweep of the Ku Klux Klan through the city between 1923 and 1925. The movement was, perhaps, more anti-Catholic at that time than it was anti-Negro or anti-Semitic. It seems to have had its strongest and earliest support among the business classes and only later did it become a somewhat discredited, working class movement.[3]

The economic depression of the 1930's worked an enormous hardship on Middletown, and it was the Lynd's observation that the city, especially the business community, responded to the stress of the situation with an attempt to revalidate and to reassert traditional economic and social values.[4]

While the community moved toward the middle of the 20th Century after World War II in some of its institutions, the economic base indicated some signs of weakening. Nevertheless, the population of the county rose to 108,000 (est.) in 1960, with a state teachers college rapidly assuming a dominant place in the community.[5]

* * * * * *

The first Jewish residents of Middletown settled there in 1848. Some informants insisted that the early group was Orthodox. One individual reported that the early Orthodox Jewish families had built the temple in 1922. Ostensibly, it was later that the Reform Jews came to dominate the congregation. The vast majority argued with nothing short of vehemence that the early community was, as one stated it:

"A very high calibre of German Reform members."

And that only later, especially after World War II, did the Orthodox, Eastern European element intrude. Unless Middletown's early history was something of an exception to the Midwest's frontier experience, it would seem most probable that the early community was dominated by the Reform element but that Eastern, European Orthodoxy was present.

Apparently the building of a temple in 1922 galvanized the very small community of 45 to 50 Jewish families into a dedicated group. But, according to one of the more reliable and sensitive observers of the congregation, there was a marked decline in congregational activity shortly after the completion of the edifice. The

state of apathy seems to have lasted until the post World War II era.

World War II seems to have been marked by growing prosperity and by ever more extensive and horrifying accounts of Hitler's treatment of European Jewry. For many the war-time revelations seem to have sharpened their self-identity as Jews, but it would appear that many of them identified themselves with fellow Jews rather than with Judaism.

The continuing economic prosperity of the early post war years brought to Middletown some new Jewish "blood." It was a portion of this new group who most sharply challenged the Reform orientation of the temple organization. The challenge was short lived and it failed.

Although the Jewish group in Middletown generally prospered, primarily by way of retail trading, the Jewish segment has not grown in step with the larger community. In the early 1920's there were, as noted, perhaps 45 to 50 Jewish families in residence and, as of 1960 there were, by the criterion of this study, 56 families in residence. Throughout the same period of time the population of the county almost doubled.[6]

The Jewish community of Middletown is, for the greater part, in its middle years. There are few very young couples, and few aged and retired families. Yet of these families almost two-thirds of their parents were themselves of Eastern European origin. In short, these are middle aged, middle class American Jews born and raised in America but their parents came from *shtetl* (village) environments.

Their parents left Europe for many reasons but economic hardship, political upheaval and pogroms seem to have dominated:

"Now look here, what was the Tsar's army for me, a Jewish boy? IT WAS A PRISON! So I left one fine day, and I ran and I ran and I ran. Oh, how they hated us!"

That the place of birth was in America rather than in Eastern Europe did not always signify a total contrast of cultures. Gold, Wirth, and Kazin have attested to the European ghetto existence of much of American Jewry.[7] That the American ghettos may be held in nostalgic regard by some does not negate the grim aspects of that life. Kazin's type of intense and deeply mixed reaction is not unknown to some of Middletown's Jews. Early in the course of the study the writer conversed with one individual casually and, in an attempt to develop rapport, noted that the Chicago ghetto must have been rather colorful "in the old days." The effect of the remark was to destroy all but minimal communication for the time being. On another occasion an informal discussion in the temple turned to American ghettos, at which point a member of the congregation spoke out bluntly:

"And let's leave ALL that in the past; once and for all! Let's not pick it up."

The remark resulted in momentary silence. A different topic was then picked up. But not all would seem to be quite so sensitive to the American ghetto experience and a large portion of those coming from other Midwestern cities reported that they grew up in a lower-middle-class world filled with "cokes" and blintzes, Sunday movies and high school crushes.

Finally there are the 12 percent who grew up in Middletown or in somewhat similar communities. By their own report they were, to a vast extent, ordinary middle class American children; with the exception that they belonged to the Jewish faith. In any event, fully 75 percent of Middletown's adult Jewish population have resided in that city for 20 or more years. In the words of one long time, non-Jewish resident:

"Shucks, some of [Middletown's] Jews are more [Middletown] than [Middletown]."

If it would not appear difficult to surmise why Jews

left Europe, especially Eastern Europe; it is also understandable why some wished to leave the ghettos of the large American cities. One may even find rationales for leaving non-ghetto conditions in these cities. But why, then, did they come to Middletown? One venerable Jewish resident put his view plainly:

"And so why, why do Jews come to [Middletown]? Is it for the lovely climate? Is it for the great beauty of our mountains, valleys and seas? Is it, you ask, for the great group of Talmudic scholars which are here? No. I tell you truthfully; it is only a single thing that brings a Jew to [Middletown]. It is MONEY."

The interview protocols on this point do not contradict this informant. Over 90 percent of the heads of Jewish households stated that either family business ties or personal economic opportunities were primary in drawing them to this city. Some personal accounts ran as follows:

"Well, it was the depression, 1931. We were just married and things were a mess. Then one day my brother-in-law said, 'Look, I have an opening in my place.' So."

"I had been in the junk business before in N..... . C..... was selling out here and, of course, I knew him and bought him out."

When asked where they would *prefer* to live, fully 26 percent suggested staying in Middletown, 26 percent spoke of either California or Florida, 12 percent voted for other Midwestern cities and only 5 percent—all "senior citizens"—dreamed of living in Israel. It may also be noted that New York City, along with other vast Eastern cities, holds little appeal.

Rationales for one's preferred place of residence are climate, home and family, all of which rank above desire for a deeply Jewish milieu. However, the desire to be with one's kin may likely carry with it ethnic and religious overtones. Yet, for the greater part, it would

appear that creature comforts and "roots" draw Middletown's Jews much more than does Judaism *per se.*

Despite the economic advantages that might be at their disposal in Middletown, the grown childreen of the community have not, as a group, chosen to return. Of 28 grown children who were not enrolled in colleges at the time of the study, 75 percent are not living in the community. And fully half of those remaining harbor plans of "flying the coop."

The failure of many of the children to return to Middletown, coupled with the relative lack of new, young, Jewish families has led to frequent remarks within the congregation to the effect that Judaism in Middletown is coming to an end; a point which others contest, and one which will be returned to in later chapters.

For the moment it suffices to suggest that the Jewish community which represents a minute .22 percent of Middletown's population is not "dying." But this group's relative significance within the larger environment would seem to be shrinking to extraordinarily small dimensions. Many incalculable factors ranging from shifting economic and social conditions to world calamity and the role of the local college are so possible as to make extrapolations concerning the future Jewish population of this city hazardous indeed.

"KEEPING AFLOAT"

ALMOST one-half of early Middletown's Jewish men were retail clothiers, and it was one of this group who, purportedly, opened the city's first dry goods store. This heavy representation in one occupation characterized not only early Middletown's Jews but also the parents of the present Jewish populace, irrespective of their origins. Today's Jewish men persist along these lines with 45 percent in the retail trades. No other category of work, e.g. salvage and junk, automotive sales or the professions, involves more than 10 percent of these men.

It should be noted that the retail trades embody a range of activities from that of some of their fathers who peddled used clothes and rags to the past and present ownership and operation of svelte shops. Yet, no less than 29 percent of Middletown's Jewish men deal primarily in "handled" goods. Further, representation *among* local Jews in the professions has held steady through the years at 6+ percent; prior to the very recent influx of Jewish faculty at the college. That the young Jewish professors, all of whom came to Middletown after 1960, live professional lives quite unlike their learned and rabbinical forebears may be suggested by the remark of one older informant:

"Ah, how would you say? Mother made a living for him. What else for a really Orthodox scholar? Yes, he was a rabbi, but nothing at all like the ones you may have met. He was such a beautiful student (chuckle)."

The lack of professional men within the congregation of 1960-1961 was frequently commented upon. People, both in and outside of the Jewish group, pondered this putative under representation of physicians, lawyers and scholars. They wondered what might be the consequences for group life were there a larger portion of professionals within the Jewish community.

The economic poverty of many of the parents or the grandparents appears to be meaningful to a number of Middletown's generally affluent Jews. There were those who, as young men, inhabited the almost unheated back portions of stores and saved costs by turning on lights only as customers moved away from the light of the glazed front. There were those who pushed carts, had stones and epithets thrown at them and who were not above picking from refuse cans in alleys. Many were uneducated. On the other hand, a minority of the present generation are the children of secure, upper middle class Jewish families. And, in any event, the bulk of Middletown's Jewish inhabitants are today in a position

to enjoy a middle class style of life and standard of living.

But "the bulk" is not "everyone." Some men have not been successful. Several have given up branch stores and some "sold out" and moved. Some wish they could "sell out." There were, in Middletown, as of 1960, 9 families, i.e. 18 percent, who reported that their standard of living was falling. In some cases this represented the process of retirement along with the consequent loss of new income. For others, the "softness" of Middletown's economy since the end of the Korean War has sharpened the loss. These men might otherwise have remained situated on the national economic escalator. Among the Jewish merchants who have experienced a decline in business it is most discouraging:

"Ah, hell, business is terrible. It's getting so you wonder if it will ever pick up."

"We are pulling back. Business is so poor in [Middletown] these days; and prospects for the future don't look just too bright either."

Some met economic stagnation with touches of attempted humor:

"Let's go get coffee, I can't stand the crush any longer."

"Business is so good right now that I could retire and not lose one customer."

While the retail merchants felt the "pinch" some of the business men prospered. In fact, for one or two, business "has never been better."

It would seem that for many men in the Jewish community a great deal of idle thought, speculation and reverie is devoted to long range economic possibilities. While many toy with ideas of moving to new locations, building new establishments, diversifying inventory, investing along new or different lines, in the stock market and opening branch stores, a few contemplate

means of selling out weak enterprises without suffering a too severe economic shock. A very few hope to be in a position to relocate in another part of the country within the next few years. But the majority plan to stay on as is in Middletown. The current vicissitudes of the market place have been known before and, in spite of them, Jewish merchants have been successful there. As a group they tend to feel that there are no reasons to expect a really drastic economic setback, but few are unaware of the fact that most of the Jewish merchants have located in the deteriorating down-town area where long range economic prospects would appear to be hazardous. Finally, there is a view among some of the most sophisticated members of the Jewish group to the effect that small, independent and "chain" retailing outlets are doomed to fall under the weight of the large, and often multiply-located, department stores. These critical observers do not feel that personal adroitness or the rhetoric of "luncheon club" optimism will suffice in the years ahead.

Beyond the heavy representation in retail clothing, there is a further point; most of Middletown's Jews are self-employed, i.e. 65 percent, or employed by fellow Jews, i.e. 23 percent. There remain only 12 percent employed by non-Jews. Of these latter six in number, three are public servants.

It has been reasoned that this concentration in self-employed occupational categories stems from a desire to avoid discrimination.[8] It could also result directly from discrimination. In either event, the pattern has been well established. That the future might not indicate a similar mode of behavior may be suggested when one views the occupational choices of the grown children. Among them, 60 percent have accepted employment by non-Jews as opposed to 12 percent of their parents' generation. In the interim the fathers stay on at their stores and go to work as they have done so for years.

In order to get a closer look at their working days, three different Jewish enterprises were observed over a period of time and a compilation of materials suggests the following half-day construction; the verisimilitude of which are only impugned to the extent that they are compilations:

I.

W. opened the front door of his small shop at 8:59 A.M. The sidewalks were rather vacant except for a few men walking to their offices and small knots of secretarial help, scurrying along and bemoaning the lack of time. A policeman ambled by. He greeted W. and W. returned the salutation with, "Nice fall day; don't hit'em with too many parking tickets."

W. dusted and blew at some of the display items on the counter, peered in the window display from within and from without. The dusting was perfunctory but the study of the displays was protracted.

At 9:16 A.M. his young assistant arrived with a package. A drifter peered in the window and in the doorway. W. started to greet him, but the man moved on.

At 9:26 A.M. B. thrust his head in the door and called out toward the side counter where W. stood with his assistant showing the boy a trick cuckoo clock. "Hey, you no good, lazy bum, how-about coffee? Or are you too weak from bowling and raising hell last night?" The answer shot back: "Why, you dirty baboon; I was in bed by twelve o'clock, not a minute later, and I was a good boy." B. stated that he did not care what sort of *boy* W. *was*: "But if you want some coffee you'd better come." As they walked down the street, B. said, "Did you know what the priest said to the minister when they saw a rabbi washing his feet?"

W. and B. met 2 other Jewish merchants at a counter where they had coffee. They greeted some of the non-

Jewish merchants as they came and went. Conversation concerned bowling, women, 'doubtful' jokes and smoking. As they left, S. came in and joined them for a moment, then moved over to 'say hello' to a non-Jewish person when it became obvious that W., B., and the others were leaving.

W. reentered his store at 10:01 A.M. and was met by a woman and a teen-aged child who had inquired after green costume jewelry. As they left, a man came in to pay $5 on an account.

Between 10:05 A.M. and 11:57 there was no business within the store although the crowded sidewalks and streets included numerous pedestrians who 'window-shopped.' A few people peered in the doorway but did not enter. The assistant and W. filled the time talking about basketball, display techniques, and the two of them shifted some merchandise.

At 11:58 a woman came in to look at watches. W. waited on her with alacrity. After 7 minutes she settled on a $12 piece, "for my niece who's going to North Carolina next month." The sale seemed to be complete. Then the woman stated, 'I sure do like that watch. It's real pretty you know. But I just think I better wait 'til the first of the month before I get it.' W. offered to hold it for a small deposit. The woman did not respond to this suggestion. She left the store. In the interim, a man came in and paid $6 on an account. The assistant handled this transaction. It was time for a 'quick lunch' at 12:16 P.M.

II.

T. returned from lunch at 1:16 P.M. with some of the other Jewish merchants who more or less regularly eat at one of the local Chinese restaurants.[9] Upon entering his store he was called to the telephone. Three business telephone calls were made and at 1:47 P.M. T. went into the front area of the store, discussed in-

ventory with a sales girl and assisted another sales person in closing a sale on a light fall coat which was on sale.

At 2:25 P.M. T. went back into his office and worked over a portion of the papers on his desk. Trade circulars went, more or less routinely, into the waste basket. Orders and billings were sorted and some figures were totaled on scratch paper, then thrown into the basket. Prior to leaving for coffee at 3:20 P.M., T. had been interrupted four times by sales clerks or by the stock room attendant on technical matters, e.g. "Does this come in dark brown, or only in blue?" He had also been interrupted by two telephone calls.

At 3:30 P.M. T. put on his coat and went out of the store. On the street he saw R. who had just broken free from among the pedestrians waiting at the street light. They did not greet each other beyond a nod. Together they went down the street for coffee.

T. returned to his store alone at 4:30 P.M. He talked briefly with two of his clerks, checked his desk and left again at 4:40 P.M. to call for his wife. He did not return before store closing time.

III.

H. entered his office from a side door at 1:31 P.M. He was informed by his secretary that one client and three salesmen were waiting for him along with four business telephone calls and two calls from home. H. asked his secretary to return the business calls while he telephoned his house. The client was ushered in. As they talked about an order, delivery date and prices, the telephone communications became active. H. took the calls while simultaneously making notes on a pad *vis-a-vis* the client and the callers.

At 2:04 P.M. the client left and, as H. showed him to the door, a worker came forward. The worker asked H. to come and see 'the problem' in the warehouse. As

H. swept by the 3 salesmen and a women who had come to inquire on a matter of community charity, H. said, "Please excuse me a moment, something has come up. I should be right back. I'm awfully sorry."

H. returned to his office at 2:17 P.M. and again apologized to the waiting group as he passed them. A salesmen was ushered in, but H. was delayed in his conversation by two further telephone calls which had come in between 2:04 and 2:17 P.M. The one call was terminated in less than half a minute, but the other call, which came from a far corner of the state, generated three further long distance calls from Middletown. H. then telephoned back to his original caller to tell him, "Hey there, Charlie, my boy, I think I've got the stuff you want and in the sizes you want, but I'm not so damn sure we'll get the full amount. Could you wait on the remainder until next week? I could call you right away as soon as I know for sure. The price? As we agreed, but I want you to know, buddy, that I'm hardly making a cent on this because I got myself chiseled on it originally. Yea, sure I'm happy to get rid of it; in fact happy enough to scoot it right down to you in the morning. O.K. fellow, take care and give my best to Sheila and the kids. Oh, say hello to Old Charlie for me. O.K., I'll do that. Goodby."

By 3:32 P.M. the other two salesmen had been seen. A round of 'cokes' were served from the dispensing machine. The woman connected with the charity operation was ushered in, but before she left at 3:56 P.M. there had been two more business calls. As the woman left, a secretary came in to ask H. if he could return to the warehouse where 'the problem' persisted.

H. was back at 4:00 P.M. More people had come to see him and another telephone call awaited him. At 4:11 P.M. another call came from his home. By 5:15 the last of the afternoon's visitors had been seen, calls were tapering off and H. took the comparatively free

time to clear papers on his desk and to arrange the schedule with his secretary to whom he observed concerning the coming day, "Whatever the hell that will look like when it evolves! (mutual laughter)." He bid the last of his office help good-by and took one last call at 5:43 P.M.: "It's time to get out of this dump. I've got to take the kids over to school this evening, attend a meeting at 7:30, and next week we'll be out of town. What a break that will be!"

* * * * * *

Are these men satisfied with their work? One cannot say on the basis of available data. Moods would seem to shift over short and long periods of time. Moreover, stated feeling and covert experience may be correlated at no more than a superficial level. Finally, the recession of 1960 created, for some, a situation in which they experienced the spectre of economic aridity and the stagnation of their work roles.

Nevertheless, in the course of a year of observation certain consistencies would seem apparent. Some men stated that they enjoy their work. They discussed their days' activities with relish. Others seemed perpetually indifferent. There were those who stated that they are quite frankly unhappy in their work.

The Lynds observed in 1925 that the men of Middletown worked very hard.[10] Those who did have work in 1935 labored mightily.[11] Such was not only a necessity; it has also been a basic component in the American middle-class, male ideology. An emphasis on "hard work" would also seem to be a value known to the Jewish heritage.[12] So it is for some of the Jewish men of Middletown:

"I have always WORKED, hard work. What else is there for a MAN to do! I am up at seven and at work at nine. I take out no time almost for lunch and supper.

I work. I am through at nine as a rule. Then I come home and put my feet up; maybe watch a little television. I am through."

Another man asks himself, "Why Sammy Runs." He does not attribute it to his Jewish upbringing or to the pressures of the business world. He does not think that historical, social or economic marginality are the wellsprings for his prodigious output. He says of himself:

" 'Sammy Runs', at least this one does so, because he has so much energy; such a vital desire for life—this hard work and curiosity. Let's say that I am damned motivated, and I have capitalized on it."

But then there is the "Sammy" who does appear to run hard because he is "Jewish":

"I, frankly speaking, work like a goddamn son of a bitch. At first I did because it was so rough. But I would have anyway and I still do. First, I like to work hard—you know, hit 'em really had. I like a real tumble. Second, as wealthy as we are, way deep down inside, I think there is a little voice that I can't shut up which keeps saying to me, 'N....., you're a little Jew punk and you better show 'em that you're every bit as good as they are, even if your people did wear beards and all that junk.' I know I've made the grade; but down inside it's different."

Yet another man sees it differently:

"I think part of it [hard work] is the American, Midwestern, moral framework—the Protestant Ethic—which sooner or later envelopes you. And then, although professors may not always realize it, we do have to think about the so-called 'wolf at the door'."

On the basis of observation, reports by others and self reports, Table 1 was constructed as an extremely crude estimate of the overall working habits of Middletown's Jewish men.

TABLE 1

Estimate of Work Habits of Jewish Men

Characteristics	*Per Cent*
Intensive output	53
Moderate output	20
Minimum output	16
Partially retired	10
Total	99

Beyond the issue of working hard, one might ask whether adherence to traditional Jewish social values creates stress in respect to American business values? Such a query presumes that Jewish values are different from and exist apart from American values. Also, it presumes that the present group of Jewish business men and retailers in Middletown carry forward aspects of the Hebraic social codes; a presumption which several informants most seriously challenge.

It was noted earlier in this chapter that the majority of the parents of the present generation of Middletown Jews came from Eastern Europe. At the same time it was noted that the present generation is very much "American." In this context, it would seem that value stresses for the majority might be, as several suggest, merely the stresses inherent in American middle class business morality rather than tensions which might exist between Hebraic "orientations" and American business "orientations."

In dealing "over the counter" with these men or in observing them at their work one must remind himself that they are Jewish merchants rather than Baptists, Methodists or Presbyterian merchants. The bulk of their jokes, the conversations, interests and, presumably, business values would seem to be those shared by their

fellow, non-Jewish merchants. The Jewish merchants of Middletown are seen to be *petit bourgeoisie* rather than egalitarians or liberals in their thinking *on business matters.* Their business class views may be seen in comments on labor and the labor movement:

"So they have their goals—who can blame them? But this Hoffa man; now you know that is not very good. I believe in human dignity, but a man must work for it and working people aren't willing to work; including the ones I hire."

"Yes, I would definitely say that I am sympathetic to labor—the labor movement. But insofar as they make unreasonable demands such as excessive fringe benefits, annual wage—that type of demand—I can not be sympathetic."

It would be hazardous in the extreme to point a finger at the Jewish men of Middletown and say of them that they have betrayed the "underdog," or that they have openly denied their egalitarian heritage while in search for the riches and comforts of the American, business class society in which they steep themselves. On the other hand, it would seem equally bold for the Jewish merchants and businessmen to benignly assert, without personal quals of conscience, the lines so doggedly repeated on Friday nights:

"What mean ye that ye crush My people and grind the face of the poor. . . . I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the poor, and the right of the needy." [13]

It is not inconceivable that many of the Jewish men of Middletown simultaneously believe in "the cause of the poor" while at the same time rather fully accepting the anti-labor rhetoric which seems to characterize the general business community of Middletown. Psychological compartmentalization may be indicated. Sentiments fluctuate overtime, are dependent upon the situation or social context in which they are verbalized,

and conflicting sentiments may be harbored by the same person on different levels.

Again, it might well be that a conflict between traditional Jewish values and American business values hardly exist in light of the almost complete introjection of the business class social habits which carry with them their own moral conflicts and balms. Ancient religious commitments may have been rather fully displaced for most of these men. But as Dollard observed:

"My research has yielded no direct data on this point and it does not pay to guess." [14]

Stress or no stress, prospering—for the bulk who do prosper—generates thoughts upon the self and, possibly, a new expansiveness:

"Hell, yes, we've made it and I have worked like a dirty dog to get it—every bit has been my own hard work. And now we are enioying it."

Another sees matters diffrently:

"Now we're beginning to have something to show, and soon there should be more. Believe me, we're grateful!"

Lewin has suggested that the *noveau riche* is in a particularly awkward psychological position. He is caught without his old "identities" and without fully internalized new "identities." Compensatory behavior may result.[15] Such may be noted among a few of the Jewish as well as non-Jewish families of Middletown. Many of Middletown's Jews are exceedingly sensitive to the vulgarity of coreligionists. They abhor it and feel that vulgarity by any Jew makes all Jews vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination. Even more seriously viewed is high visibility "obnoxious" behavior which reinforces negative stereotypes among the non-Jewish business class. Perhaps it is noteworthy that some of the Jewish families who were most frequently mentioned as vulgar by both Jews and non-Jews of

Middletown, themselves, complain bitterly of "other Jews" who behave, as one put it:

"Like a bunch of goddamn rich, Jewish slobs."

On the other hand, the majority of Middletown's Jews would seem more nearly to fit a different mold:

"The new suburban Jew is, in many cases, but *once* removed from Maxwell Street. From slum to suburb is a dizzy climb, the way stations in between notwithstanding. It is remarkable how well and how easily it has been made. Today Jews act as if they have been suburbanites all their lives. The ethos of suburbia has been assimilated as rapidly and devotedly as was the style of life of the last temporary stop on the social escalator." [16]

And they are grateful not only "to be alive in suburbia" but to "float" as well as many of them do:

"Whatever I have is not thanks to me but to him, (pointing towards husband). I don't thank God for what I have. I thank [him]."

"I like the comforts of life; the things money can buy. You can see that for yourself. But I know damn well that there were six million Jews in Europe who went to the gas chambers and some of them had a lot of gold. So how can I take that stuff seriously?"

"When I was a boy I was a PEASANT and now, see? I look like a 'Big Frog.' If one is a little humble, it is not so bad is it?"

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In overview: Throughout the century and a quarter of the White Man's occupation of the Middletown area, the very small segment of the community which is Jewish has, generally, prospered in business, if not in numbers. Their representation within Middletown never rose beyond 0.35 percent and has fallen to 0.22 percent in recent years.

The early Jewish settlers seem to have been pre-

dominantly Reform; a characteristic which was not challenged until after World War II. The dominant motif of this group remains Reform and markedly "middle class Midwestern." Although they came to Middletown because of economic opportunities, they stayed, settled and sank roots. For many, whatever the cultural and personal limitations there might be for them as Jews, "this is Home." And if they are tempted to migrate, climate rather than "keeping kosher" or Yahweh seems to prompt them. But their children have migrated; the nature of their non-retail trades occupations propels them. (It becomes less easy than it may at first appear to predict the long range prospects for Judaism in Middletown. Nevertheless, the closing chapter attempts to explore this issue.)

The principal occupational activity of Middletown's Jewish community has been and continues to be downtown retail trade; as owners, operators or as employees of coreligionists. That which marks many of the newer group off from their frequently immigrant fathers is the present generation's rapid rise within the society. This economic advancement is even somewhat more noticeable among those few men who have broadened their activities into industry, real estate, finance and kindred activities.

The rapid economic rise has brought with it personal and social stress for some. Stress has been manifest in the defensive exhibitionism of the *nouveax riches* individuals who create anxiety and disgust among some of the other Jews of the community. However, in the main, the social and economic adjustments to new wealth, in the face of discrimination, has been strikingly successful.

Present, imminent and distant economic conditions for the downtown Jewish merchants seem to be clouded. There appears: (a) "softness" in the local economy; (b) progressive transportation, self-strangula-

tion in the business district where most of the Jewish merchants are located; and (c) increasing doubtfulness as to the future of small, independent or semi-independent retailing units.

In viewing the positive aspects of the future one may note: (a) a long-standing history of concrete economic advancement; (b) confidence in their own economic perceptiveness and flexibility; (c) faith in the long range leavening of the national economy; and (d) some acceptance of the pervasive rhetoric of business optimism.

Unlike their matured offspring who seem to feel secure working for non-Jewish corporations or in professions beyond Middletown and beyond the mantle of Jewish associates, many of these men continue to exhibit a critical eye and a slightly "uneasy heart." They draw parallels such as the following:

"Not only do I run my own business because I more or less inherited it; and it's a tidy little venture. But I run it because I never want to be caught in a 'West Berlin' situation when and if things should heat up, if you know what I mean. The analogy is not far-fetched. Remember, Jews have 'caught it' more than once in places where they thought they were safe."

Nearly half of the Jewish men seem to relish their work a good part of the time. The majority of them would appear to work very hard, except when business slumps—along with one's sense of economic security and role *elan*. And "hard work" may be a long standing Jewish tradition as well as a basic commitment of Middletown's business class society.

In business matters it would seem that the Jewish men have rather entirely internalized "American" values, attitudes, and practices. One might hazard the view that if these men suffer from value conflicts, they are conflicts which are internal to American, business class practices rather than being "luncheon club" versus Hebraic ethical discontinuities. Perhaps there is the echo

of a past value system but little else would seem to remain.

Their forefathers crossed the Jordan into Israel, their fathers crossed the Atlantic to come to America and the present generation are Americans. There have been both personal and cultural benefits as well as losses along this historical route.

Chapter III

DOMESTICITY AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Within some American communities there persists a tendency for Jewish families to concentrate in relatively small areas, i.e. ghettoization or self-ghettoization. The idea of self confinement would seem to be singularly unattractive to the vast bulk of Middletown's Jews:

"We got out of the ghettos. Let's not slip back into them."

"The suburbs can be as big a trap [for Jews] as was Halstead Street, even if it is a lot nicer!"

"Oh sure, the *shtetl* and the ghetto, they were great —all chummy and cozy little neighborhoods. What crap! Why do you think Jews have headed full speed into National Homes!"

There is no Jewish ghetto in Middletown. There is a concentration of Jewish houses in the West and North segments of the city, but, as of 1960-61, there was no tightly bound knot of Jewish houses near the synagogue. Rather, what may be observed is the investment of Jewish families in the middle class neighborhoods of the city. The high standard of living enjoyed by Middletown's Jewish population is reflected not only in the houses they maintain or in the automobiles they run and the servants which many of them employ, but also in

such matters as the presence of air conditioning in 66 percent of their houses.

Both the utility and status implications of the automobile in Middletown are to be respected.[1] Clearly, the tendency among Middletown's Jews is toward late model General Motors products, i.e 80 percent of all machines. And among large vehicles that company's prestige line seems to have a strong attraction; Cadillacs representing 20 percent of all Jewish owned vehicles. For Middletown's Jewish population the Cadillac would appear to be the paragon of desirable transportation.

The wealthy Jew who rides about in his vast Cadillac while smoking an expensive cigar is something of a stereotype. Middletown's Jews are not unaware of this image. The local Cadillac agent estimated that between 500 and 700 late model Cadillacs were running in the county in the year 1960-61. Using the conservative estimate of 500, it would appear that 3 percent of the locally owned Cadillacs were in the possession of local Jews at that time. The maximum number of 700 was suggested as a more likely figure. In that event 2 percent of locally owned Cadillacs were being driven by local Jews who, themselves comprise 0.16 percent of the county population. The stereotype of the Jew in his Cadillac is (statistically) realized on the streets of Middletown with only every 31st to 43rd Cadillac which one encounters.

If some of the men fortify and elaborate their sense of self by way of their automobiles and their work, many of the women may accomplish the same social and psychological ends by way of the decoration of their homes. On numerous occasions the writer was given to understand how important it is for many of the women to know about, talk about and see each other's houses. On occasion the interviewer was confronted with inquiries as to the latest decor of houses he had previously visited.

Whether one is seated in an Eames chair or within the bulging arms and swelling dimensions of a silver streaked and purple couch of recent origin, one gains the impression of a people who live comfortably. "Grand Rapids" Chippendale or contemporary *kitsch* may not represent the fullest possible aesthetic attainments of the society, but the contrast with the humble past, for many, should not be discounted.

Both musical tastes and reading habits range widely with several families deeply imbibing "high culture," many paying it lip service and a number exhibiting a paucity of either embellishment within their domiciles. There were reports that many of the Jewish families belong to book clubs. Many read the books they so receive.

Of magazines, *Life* predominates with 44 percent subscribing, whereas less than 10 percent of these same families subscribe to *Commentary* or magazines of similar calibre.

Table 1 depicts daily newspaper subscriptions among 43 Jewish households.

TABLE 1

Newspaper Subscriptions

Journal	*Per Cent*
[Middletown] A.M. paper	44
[Middletown] P.M. paper	33
A Midwestern metropolitan paper	11
The *Wall Street Journal*	7
The New York *Times* (daily)	2
A Jewish daily	2
Total	99

(The subscription to both local papers is tantamount to a double subscription insofar as both papers are owned, operated and printed by the same newspaper chain. Content, exclusive of comic strips, appears to be very nearly identical.)

* * * * * *

Many of Middletown's Jewish families lay claim to a taste for an excellent cuisine. For a few, such tastes imply the best of Continental or American cooking. For many, Howard Johnson's "best meal" seems to meet their expectations of fine food. Simultaneously, it was noted that few of the wives take the traditional interest in food preparation characteristic of European Jewry. Of 49 Jewish women 7 (14 percent) seem to take a strong interest in the culinary arts. The majority may have sympathy with the individual who commented:

"I don't like to bother cooking anything that takes longer to prepare than it does to eat. For one thing, I'm just too busy with other things which are, to me, more important."

This group has, in its own lifetime, tended to replace Orthodox Judaism with Reform Judaism. In that context the adherence to the traditional food laws was investigated. It was found that 79 percent of these families make *no* attempt to maintain any degree of *kosher* (ritually fit) law, 11 percent "avoid bacon" and 11 percent "keep *kosher.*" It should be noted that of the 6 families who maintain *kosher,* only one insists on rigorously abiding by the laws when eating in public. He said:

"How can there be any argument? It is the law of Great Almighty! I can not disobey it. I don't care what people say."

Others were less doctrinaire:

"Yes, we try to keep *kosher* although it is not easy here in [Middletown]. But when we eat out I feel that

it is unfair to be too insistant about it. When we can we avoid ordering pork or ham and many places we go the hostess looks after it—some of our non-Jewish friends are marvelous that way. But I put the feelings of my hostess before this ritual aspect of my religion. But at home you can be darn sure its strictly *kosher.*"

"I think a lot of us fail to keep *kosher* in public because we're embarrassed as all hell to look different."

"Either you keep *kosher* or you don't. What is this inbetween stuff I don't know. But it is NOT *kosher* I tell you. So I gave it all up a few years ago."

There are several forms of compromise. A family might eat ham but refuse to touch bacon. Another might keep milk and meat dishes separate but will put ham on the meat plate. Some insist on *kosher* meat cuts, but that is all.

Modern technology would seem both to complicate and to simplify the keeping of the dietary laws. Middletown lacks a *kosher* butcher shop, therefore one must either drive the 61 miles to the state capital for meat or have it sent in by bus. The coming of the deep freezer simplified this matter. On the other hand, the dish washing machine presents a difficulty. One woman would enjoy the convenience of one but she feels that they would have to have two washers in order to maintain *kosher.*

The majority of families make efforts to keep *kosher* when their parents visit them. Several households gave up the laws on the basis of cost, and some individuals reported that they feel there is little sense to *kosher* in a nation where the cleanliness of food is so nearly assured. Yet many of these same people stated that they find it difficult to enjoy bacon or ham. Some suggested that such foods lack an appealing flavor. Others speculated that it is their consciences which prevent them from enjoying *treyf* (the unfit).

But some of the women must attend matters far be-

yond the realm of domestic religious injunctions. It has been observed that the suburban Jewish house-wives:

". . . Not only drive the cars, do the shopping, transport the children to and from school and take them to keep dentist and other appointments; they also keep the checking account in balance, pay the bills and make the many other decisions which Jewish husbands were more likely to make in past generations." [2]

To be sure, the same may be said of their non-Jewish neighbors. Some of the mothers find this life a bit wearing. A very large number of the women made remarks not unlike the succinct statement of one:

"Honest to God, when my children learn to drive my functions as a mother will be just about ended. But in the meantime—oh brother!—each one goes to a different place at a different time. Honest, it's damn near killing. What's worse, between my husband and the kids I am gobbled up. The real 'me' doesn't have a chance. I have no inner life of my own and my resources are gobbled up. You know I really have to raise a little hell around here to get five minutes. Then they get scared and wonder what's wrong with me!"

Despite the lamentations, most of the women expressed a firm commitment to a middle class style of life. They appear to desire all the advantages they can possibly shower upon their children, irrespective of the costs and demands. Many spoke of the solidarity within diversity which they feel their homes possess. They are fully aware of the popular literature which has been focused on the advantages and disadvantages of modern America's middle class family styles. Hence, discussions about suburban living *per se* are not uncommon.

The religious ethos within their homes was discussed. One woman may have caught the attitude of many when she commented:

"First and foremost I try to be a mother to my children and a wife to my husband. I also try to preserve

something of myself. Now, mind you, I try to remind myself and them that I am CERTAINLY a Jewish mother and wife; and I want particularly the children to be as proud as I am about their religion. But first of all I try to be a good mother and wife. The rest follows 'though it's all tied up together; really'."

* * * * * *

There would appear to be as many types of marriage relationships within the Jewish community as there are couples. In the course of a year's observation the writer was informed, in the following terms, as to the nature of specific marriages. Several reports may well have been apocryphal: Gushers, Parakeets, The Anxiety Twins, Tense, Really fine, She cries, Two cars and about as close, Togetherness, Cool, Domineering, Old Coots, Adjusted at last, They scream, She's docile so it works, Hen Pecked, She's SICK, They fight, She's a Chinese wife to him, They're happy and real pals, She's got him figured, Messy, He covers for her, Real healthy, He's a *meshuggener* so what do you expect, They love each other.

Of the eight couples in the Jewish community who retain dissimilar religious bonds, all insisted that religious differences have have not injured the quality of their relationship.[3] Of the eight couples, four readily admitted to marital tensions. They reported that when the religious issue enters into their disputes:

"It is tagged on by me or by him to make the other more angry."

"It's not the basis of the argument. I just throw it up to him to add spite, I guess."

* * * * * *

Individual recreation and hobbies do not reflect a clear pattern among Middletown's Jewish residents. Less than seven informants from among the community

of 106 reported avid interest in any one of the usual recreations; excluding bridge and bowling.

Along with their non-Jewish neighbors, many Jewish families are ardent television viewers. Many of the informants lamented their "addiction" to this form of entertainment. In some homes one could find the set in operation whether or not any attention was being given to it. Social visits and prolonged telephone conversations are frequently accompanied by the chatter, music and visual movement emanating from the television set. One might suspect that television viewing is the most frequent leisure activity for a large segment of the group, when not specifically occupied with other matters.

It may be noted that while many of Middletown's Jews complain of a lack of cultural offerings in the city, few of them actually attend those concerts, recitals, and congruent activities which are made available. Among the 98 religiously identified Jews, 29 percent have attended courses at the local college. Many more stated that they hope to attend lectures when their time allows them to do so.

Drinking may be viewed as another form of recreation. In this regard it has been observed that:

"The drinking of alcoholic beverages is widespread among Jews and has been so since ancient times. Percentage-wise, there are probably more users of alcoholic beverages in the Jewish group than in any other major religio-ethnic group in America. Yet as has been shown repeatedly both in this country and abroad, rates of alcoholism and other drinking pathologies for Jews are very low." [4]

The reluctance to indulge in excessive drinking should not be attributed to a "rational theory" in which it is argued that, as a potentially vulnerable group, Jews feel they must not lose conscious control of behavior.[5] Rather, traditional Jewish culture may have vitiated an

undue aura about drinking by accepting moderate imbibing while condemning drunkenness.[6]

Snyder suggests that sobriety among Jews resulted from the Orthodox culture operating as a totality:[7]

"However, as religious affiliation shifts from Orthodox to Conservative to Reform to Secular, signs of drinking pathologies show marked and systematic increase." [8]

In Middletown seven Jewish men and five Jewish women were frequently cited as rather heavy drinkers. Another seven Jewish men and four Jewish women were reported to drink to excess on occasion. None of the above could be considered addicted drinkers nor do any of them manifest persistent role impairment as a consequence of their indulgence.

Grooming represents another aspect of personal life. Middletown's Jewish women closely parallel their non-Jewish, middle-class neighbors in the elaboration and concern with dress. Vast attention and care in the area of personal grooming was noted among a large majority of the women. As a rule, almost all of the Jewish women appear in public "well turned out." (In the privacy of their homes the same degree of personal maintenance is not always apparent.) A considerable minority of the Jewish women are, perhaps, over-dressed by Middletown's middle-class standards. This behavior was commented upon frequently by non-Jewish women. An element of stereotyping may be present insofar as one can find a considerable number of similarly groomed non-Jewish women in the better stores and churches of the city.

Many of the Jewish women complained of their own tendencies to spend idle hours and free time totally immersed in clothes buying, window shopping and narcissistic revery. It was also observed that a vast amount of social discourse revolves around clothes and coiffure. Face to face, the women invariably compliment one

another on the other's latest acquisitions; it seems to be part of the ritual when greeting. More private estimates of the other's appearance are frequently less generous. Grooming is seen to be not only narcissistic but also highly competitive. Public validation of one's person could be noted at an installation dinner in the basement of the Temple where a portion of the women wore furs although the humid, summer evening air of the Midwest prevailed along with the aroma of camphor. At the same dinner 14 of the 23 Jewish women present had their hair rather obviously dyed and another three women appeared to have dyed hair.

Several of the less wealthy women were heard from time to time to complain rather sharply about what they consider to be the excessive self-indulgence of the few. One outside observer of the Jewish community suggested that:

"If so much mental energy and time were not spent thinking about appearances and worrying about getting older, they [the Jewish women] might look a little younger than they do."

A prime form of leisure activity is represented in the annual vacation. For the affluent, Miami is frequently chosen while others visit relatives or take in cultural offerings in the larger Midwestern cities.

The "Miami Crowd," as some of Middletown's Jews refer to it, includes individuals who spend a large part of each winter season in Florida. Some are rather wealthy middle-aged families and some are older, semi-retired couples. In the former instances the male head of the household generally maintains close contact with his business activities in Middletown. And whatever the real nature of the vacation, it is invariably reported to others as "just wonderful," "really grand," or "fine." And the vacation is *always* "good for one's health."

The extreme concern for one's health among Eastern European Jewry has been commented upon.[9] It should

also be noted that a somewhat similarly intense focus on health has been characteristic of portions of the middle class in the United States.[10] This concern is so pervasive and intense in the Jewish community that in many cases it would seem to border on hypochondria. Most everyone is conversant with the current ailments of a number of other members of the community. At points a casual and untutored observer might conclude that the entire Jewish community of Middletown approaches physical calamity:

"K..... . looks awfully tepid these days. I wonder if she has mononucleosis or anemia. I bet it's mono."

"Now that's something for you! They scraped out 180 grams of stuff from her reproductive organs. That really was rough."

"Did you know that N..... . has hemorroids although everyone was saying it was something else. I tell you, it's serious."

For the older members of the community health problems do take on grave overtones. Beyond that there are the cases of cancer, the serious post-surgical bleedings, "scrapes," accidents, infectious illnesses and other physical crises. Despite the quality of modern medicine in an urban American community, death does come, four infants have passed away in recent years, three members of the community are physically handicapped and two of the children suffer from mental handicaps. One mother, in talking of her children, may have caught the mood of many:

"Maybe we Jewish—no—suburban mothers worry too much about the health of our families. But still, on one side and the other you see such awful things happening to people. You come to realize that not only can these things happen to people, but they DO happen. And even if it's not to you or your kids, it makes you think. So I worry."

Problems of mental health are also encountered in

the Jewish community. In this regard national data seem to suggest that among the major religious groups in America, Jews are markedly disposed toward neurosis while being neither more nor less inclined toward psychosis.[11] Among the 98 religiously identified, adult Jews of Middletown, 24 are known to the researcher to have suffered, at one time or another, mental impairments which were sufficient to seriously limit expected behavior. Symptomatology ranged from prolonged malingering, to repeated migrainoid conditions, to deeply neurotic behavior and to hospitalized, psychiatric cases. Other incidences may have escaped the writer's attention. Beyond that, there was no accounting made of individuals who "eat away" many hours of their own lives in self-eroding and fruitless anxiety, anguish or tension.

It remains a moot point whether incidents of physical aggression are evidence of a salutary degree of mental well being or whether they reflect less flattering aspects of the personality. In Middletown's business community it would seem that to be a "he-man" is laudatory. At the same time the "culture insists" that a fist fight with another member of the business group is in very poor form. Zborowski and Herzog have suggested that Eastern European Jewry had long felt that physical violence was singularly "un-Jewish" behavior.[12] But many more of the Jewish men of Middletown spent their childhood years in the rough and tumble of American ghetto and demi-ghetto neighborhoods than in the comparative safety of *Torah* and *Talmud* study. Among 49 Jewish men not less than seven were involved in semi-public fist fights with fellow Jews between 1958 and July, 1961. Other "scrapes" may have occurred which did not come to the writer's attention.

* * * * * *

It has been reported that American Jews tend to be

political liberals and, consequently, tend to associate with the Democratic party.[13] In this regard 73 percent of Middletown's adult Jews state that they are Democrats, 17 percent claim to be Republicans and 10 percent report that they are Independents.

Most of the interviews were conducted shortly before the nominating conventions which preceded the 1960 Presidential elections. The informants were asked whom, from among the potential Presidential candidates, they would wish to see elected to the White House. Table 2 reflects the views of 77 religiously identified Jews during the Autumn of 1960.

TABLE 2

Presidential Preference

Preference	*Per Cent*
Stevenson	62
Kennedy	7
Symington	4
Johnson	1
Nixon	9
Rockefeller	9
Lodge	4
Undecided	4
Total	100

Remarks overheard later in the year indicated that the Jews who had supported Mr. Stevenson moved into the "Kennedy Camp" when it became apparent that the Republicans would present a somewhat conservative candidate. Finally, it might be noted that Senator Goldwater of Arizona received no support among Middletown's Jews despite the Senator's seeming popularity

among a large portion of the local business community and his marriage into a Middletown family.

During the pre-election campaign of 1960 a number of informants suggested that a victory for Mr. Kennedy would remove the religious issue from American politics. They saw this as an eventual asset to Jews. On the other hand, four of those who commented on Mr. Kennedy felt that a Catholic President would present a political threat to American democracy.

At the local level, Middletown's Jews are, as a group, politically inactive. Among the 98 religiously identified Jews of the area only two have shown extensive participation in partisan politics. Another 17 have demonstrated some small degree of political activity at one time or other, e.g. voter registration activity. This political inertia at the local level has been noted as characteristic among Jews in America:

"We can hypothesize several reasons for this generally limited participation in public life: (1) Politics does not seem to be a part of the occupational tradition of Jewish families; (2) Jews may fear that identification with partisan causes conflicts with their professional standing or their business interests; (3) Political jobs may not appear especially rewarding to Jews; (4) Jews undoubtedly suffer in some instances from anti-Semitism." [14]

Dean's observations reflect the realities of Middletown. Several Jewish men reported that their business commitments and their social vulnerability restrain them from openly challenging the pronounced conservatism of the Chamber of Commerce, of most of the local politicians and of the newspapers which are printed in the city.

That this Jewish group was so strongly oriented toward Mr. Stevenson might support the view that most Jews are politically liberal in spite of the conservative environment. On the other hand, it was

also noted that the Jewish business men and merchants of the city tend—in the area of labor issues —to share many of the views of their *petit bourgeois* fellow citizens.

There were no left-wing radicals within the Jewish community. There were four and possibly five Jewish men who might be counted as staunch liberals. The remainder were either very cautious supporters of Mr. Stevenson or champions of less liberal views. Nevertheless, in a business community in which many felt that then Vice President Nixon was too far left, it is noteworthy that the Jewish community contains a core of liberals.

The ethics of the Old Testament and Hebraic culture were the fundament of ancient Jewish politics; and central to this ethical system was the dignity of the individual and the goal of human dignity. Middletown's Jews repeat on Friday nights the lines:

"As Thou hast redeemed Israel and saved him from arms stronger than his own, so mayest Thou redeem all who are oppressed and persecuted." [15]

A somewhat similar system of ideological commitments is part of the American "credo."[16] When discussions were pointed in the direction of the Negroes in American society one was told:

"The treatment of Negroes here in America is an absolute outrage against mankind an God!"

"How could the Negroes respect any of us? We have behaved like pigs for years and years."

"The Negro situation is disgraceful. We think we do right but we have only succumbed to our own propaganda when we believe that."

When commenting specifically on race relations in Middletown, one was often informed along the following lines:

"I think it's SAD! In one word, it's LOUSY!"

"It's not bad here unless you take the time and ef-

fort to stop and look around. Then it really looks pretty awful."

"In this rotten town one is called a Communist if she sticks up for a Negro."

"I don't make any fuss about things. I just won't go any place that refuses to serve Negroes in this town—and there're plenty of them."

It would be erroneous to picture Middletown's Jewish community as a bulwark of support for either the world's non-white population or for the city's Negro community. Through the course of the year individuals made direct and indirect references to racial questions. Their remarks might be categorized as: "predominantly favorable," "predominantly ambivalent" and "predominantly hostile" to Negroes. And ambivalence takes many forms. Further, the degree of self-awareness of the moral dilemma varies widely:

"We really have no Negro problem here. They stay in their place and don't bother anyone. So I am all for them as long as this doesn't change."

"We as Jews should be the first to stand up for the Negroes and Asiatics. But I think we're scared of sticking our necks out. I am. That's not very good is it?"

"I CERTAINLY would NOT want a Negro living next door to me, but I'd expect myself to measure up if that ever happened to me."

"I think I'd be O.K. until it came to intermarriage. There I'd balk no matter what I tried to tell myself."

"My god, we're the very last people in the world who should do that [discriminate]! But we all do it every day."

"My people all came from the deep South. We are proud of it. We are also very proud of the way we treat our Negroes. We are good to them and they appreciate it. But that's changing now. Some of them are even insisting that we call them 'Mr.' and 'Mrs.' "

The deep measure of ambivalence in dealing with the

Negroes of Middletown was, perhaps, most sharply illustrated during the formation of the "Jewish Country Club." This Country Club was organized as a direct result of discrimination against Jews at the pre-eminent local club. The Jewish directors of the newly established Greenwood Country Club, after considerable debate and "soul searching," decided against the admittance of Negroes.

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In overview. The Jews of Middletown were not found to be living in anything resembling a ghetto. Whereas the current residential pattern presents almost no cause for anxiety, prior social conditioning may have engendered a degree of uneasiness in this area.

Their present style of life with its comfortable homes, spacious and powerful automobiles, and trim if undistinguished yards, all suggest—overwhelmingly—the post World War II, American middle class habits. The *shtetl* and the American ghetto have been jettisoned *en masse*. Even the traditional, decorative paraphernalia of Judaism has been dropped from public display in almost half of Middletown's Jewish homes.

The artistic and aesthetic inclinations of the bulk of Middletown's Jewish community cannot be held up as paragons of "high culture." With a few notable exceptions, the Jewish community chooses houses, vehicles, art, music and interior decor which mirros the rather undistinguished tastes of many of their fellow citizens.

The present generation of Jews in Middletown do not exhibit their forefathers' reputed study habits. In only two households is there to be found something of traditional Hebraic learning. In three other households one could note a portion of literature which encompasses modern Jewish issues. Over all, and with a few notable exceptions, wide and sophisticated reading does not characterize the group. One man may have captured

the situation in which a few others find themselves:

"I always mean to get into some good reading but one way or another I seem to get bogged down with the kids, so-so reading or, worse yet, the TV. It gets worse every day. I gave up the [New York] *Times* several years ago and I struggle to get through the issues of *Commentary* which arrive. Right now there is a whole stack of them waiting for me. Let's say, 'They come to the house.' "

It was noted that the books, magazines and newspapers that are being read, tend toward a pattern which, perhaps, has come to be associated with the American middle class. Any preconception of the "studious Jew" would hardly seem to apply among Middletown's adult Jews.

It was also observed that the traditional Jewish culinary arts as well as the observance of the dietary laws have, to a considerable extent, fallen by the wayside. Throughout the full range of the dietary laws one could note the uneven response of Middletown's Jewish inhabitants. Here is evidenced a realm of contradictions, rationalizations, latent commitments, guilt, sentimentality and ambiguity.

For the women, especially the mothers, the stresses which most frequently confront many of them are those which one experiences in a middle class setting where one's roles are many and fragmentary and where there exists an overwhelming emphasis upon the nurture and training of the young. These stresses they share with their non-Jewish neighbors as part of the price to be paid for this style of life. In the suburban context Jewishness is only one among many role problems which confront the Jewish women.

Marriage relationships range from those that are reputed to be very successful to those that are an ordeal for both parties. Finally, those couples who remain (or became) a part of the Jewish community in spite of a

mixed marriage seem to fare no less well than the members of unions in which both parties are religiously identified as Jews.

It would appear that the bulk of Middletown's Jewish men gain their personal recreation in social contexts, e.g. golf and bowling. As spectators they most frequently select basketball and baseball games. These tastes are probably in concert with their non-Jewish, business class fellows.

Many of the Jews of Middletown complain of the paucity of intellectual and artistic offerings within the city. On closer inspection it was found that the group, with a few notable exceptions, does not take advantage of the intellectual and aesthetic activities which are available. Many suggested that they lack the time to take part in such programs. At the same time, the group does find time for bowling, bridge, golf and television. The Jewish community is not averse to drinking. A small portion of these people drink rather heavily but none could be considered alcoholic.

The Jewish women, especially the more affluent ones, were found to be enormously concerned with their own dress and grooming. The struggle to "keep one's looks," despite the inexorable process of aging, is evidenced by way of the extremely detailed care which one's body and its drapery receives. Parallel activity was noted among a considerable portion of the non-Jewish women of the "West Side." Finally, it was observed that several of the less affluent Jewish women resent the anatomical self-absorption of their more wealthy coreligionists.

An emphasis on and a concern with matters of health was apparent. One's physical ailments are discussed in detail and at length within the confines of the Jewish community. Such an orientation has been shared by *shtetl* society and by portions of the American middle-class.

The political preference of the majority of Middle-

town's Jews was toward Adlai Stevenson in 1960—liberalism with a consequent allegiance to the Democratic party. But the Jews of Middletown are neither left-wing in their thinking nor are they politically active. These same people were found to be under personal pressures insofar as their liberalism is undercut by *petit bourgeois* business ideology which encase their own occupations and which characterizes the general business community.

In the interim, Middletown's Jews might be reminded of their ideological commitments:

"None the less, Yussel—do not be misled!

Loveliness is only for the eye.
Let him really show a wonder.
Let him hand out Justice—
Evenly
One deal to poor
And rich
One measure
For the high and humble." [17]

Or in the language of one of Middletown's older and less wealthy Jews:

"Where, I ask God Almighty, is social justice! I don't care what the Chamber of Commerce or anybody else says. Where is social justice? Why don't the taxes catch the one-third loafers, the one-third big ducker-outers? Why must one-third carry so much of the burden? I despise it! But I do not tell this to everyone. I am careful. Any Jew in this town must be careful. But I swear before God, I want to see some social justice in this sorry world! A lot of the rich Jews talk about it; they give money for this cause and that—right here in [Middletown] they do it. But do they stand up for what God demands, what God and Moses asked of our people? NO! *Pfui.*"

For the greater part, the Jews of Middletown are keenly aware of the doubtful treatment Negroes receive at the hands of the Whites. Many of them are aware that they, as Jews, carry a double obligation on behalf of those who suffer from injustice, discrimination and prejudice. And some of the Jews of Middletown are painfully aware that they themselves are prejudiced, ambivalent and discriminatory when dealing with or thinking about the Negroes. "A White Man's Problem" is even more acutely, "A White, Jewish Man's Problem."

Chapter IV

FUN, GAMES AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

IN 1925 the Lynds commented on the delight Middletown residents took in talking.[1] Among the Jews of the city, this form of leisure continues unabated, and the Jewish community follows the local custom of maintaining almost exclusive realms of "man talk" and "girls' talk."

Among the majority of the men, off-color stories and jokes are standard conversational fare:

"There was this *shlemiel* who got himself locked in the ladies' john..... ."

"Did you hear about the time Khrushchev met Jayne Mansfield at a trade fair?..... ."

The stories include both jokes about Jews and non-Jews, sometimes to the credit of the former, ("A minister, priest and rabbi met on a train....."), but also, occasionally, to the humiliation of Jews.

A second major topic of conversation among the men, along with business, is bowling. Certain members of the congregation when together talk of little else. Other sports are discussed but rarely with the intensity or vivacity which is characteristic of bowling conversations. Frequently, the bowling banter takes the form of razzing or of hazing fellow team members.

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The bulk of the conversations among the women center on clothing, their children, the weather, cooking, school, husbands, illness, personality dynamics of congregational members and "life." Their exchanges probably differ little from those of the non-Jewish women of the "West Side." The one unusual characteristic among the women, as well as among the men, is the use of an occasional Yiddish phrase.

Especially among the women, the telephone serves as a major avenue of communication and diversion. It forms a means of carrying news and gossip. It may also represent a vehicle by which routine can be interrupted. Several of the women stated that they feel they should be ashamed of the amount of time they spend on the telephone:

"I don't say a thing because I know how fast word gets around here. Yet I'm a terrible telephone gossip myself, I'll be the first to admit. I'm just as bad as the rest—hours of it."

"Some of the women spend two and three hours at a time jabbering on the 'phone. It's disgraceful. But then I guess I shouldn't talk. I was on it for over three hours this morning with B....."

The few very long telephone conversations which the author over-heard (in part) were very leisurely in their pace:

"Oh, she's upset about a ride . . . Yes, I think that was the car she was to have ridden in . . . No, I think it's off-white . . . I know she thinks it's too big, but it is a Cadillac . . .Well, anyway . . . And she plays well enough, but I wouldn't anyway . . . I just don't like her way, cards or no cards . . . Yes, she WAS going to ride with her, I think."

Many men insist that at the end of a day they are content to stay home with their feet up in front of the television set. Almost all profess to like their home life. This information seems to hold true for many, but their

card playing habits would seem to belie some of these statements. A number of the informants were asked to enumerate the previous week's evening activities. Selected results may be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Selected Cases of Evening Activities During a Week

Evening:	*Case a*	*Case b*	*Case c*	*Case d*	*Case e*
Sun.	Guests	Cards	Movies	Home(TV)	Cards
Mon.	Bus. trip	Reserve	Cards	Club/Cards	Work
Tues.	Bus. trip	Cards	Bowling(wife)	Cards	Work
Wed.	Dinner meet.	Bowling	Bowling	Bowling	Bowling
Thur.	Bus. meet.	B'nai Brith	Cards	Club/Cards	Home(TV)
Fri.	Temple	Work	Work	Home	Work
Sat.	Home	Club/Cards	Trip	Sleep(9 pm)	Movies

It was noted that the less wealthy families often find it necessary to go out on alternate evenings while the home-bound partner "baby-sat."

Both social dancing and formal dinner parties have very nearly passed from the scene in Middletown. The parties that do occur in the Jewish community tend to be built around drinks or coffee and desserts. The card-playing "get-togethers" include, in the course of the evening, snacks and coffee. Social occasions are marked by the tendency of the men and the women to separate into different sections of the house or room.

Several informants stated that the opening of the Greenwood Country Club undercut formal home entertainment. The less affluent members frequently obviate the problems of food preparation by entertaining in concert at one of the less expensive local restaurants. The temple is utilized for entertainment only when the entire congregation can be invited:

"If you have a party at the temple everybody has to be able to come, and what kind of party is that?"

"There's nothing very exclusive about that old basement and miserable kitchen!"

Bridge and Middletown's "West Side" may almost amount to interchangeable descriptive terms. And of Jews and card playing, one of the older members of the community shouted:

" 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One!' along with a deck of cards! Why should they build a temple? It is already built on cards. Take cards away from the temple and YOU HAVE NO TEMPLE! CARDS! CARDS! AND MORE CARDS!"

Others said:

"Cards have gone wild here. Even after a good, cultural speaker we rush to play cards."

"Cards are so important here that if you don't play bridge, canasta or poker, you just as well kiss the place good-bye. And the Gentiles in this town are almost as

bad as we are, and you know we're pretty bad."

"Cards are their life. It's horrible. Just look at the gold trophies the L.....'s have, and the H.....'s too. They display them like so many heads."

Some of those who said they do not play insist that they are either not interested in "squandering" their time or that they find card games, especially bridge, generators of ill will:

"He liked bridge but I called a halt to it. It wasn't worth a divorce."

The actual number of the community of 106 who play cards, either regularly or on occasion, is 85, or 80 percent. Among the 56 households, 64 percent contain a member or members who belong to card playing cliques.[2]

Gambling with cards is particularly popular with the men. Among 51 men in the Jewish community, 78 percent are known to have gambled in the course of this study. Gamblers tend to separate themselves from the women and from each other in terms of financial ability. Gin Rummy and poker betting was reported to range from profits and losses on the order of $1 an evening among the less wealthy to several hundred dollars among the affluent men on rare occasions. The women seem to be resigned to their husbands' gambling:

"It's a lot better than a lot of things he could be doing of an evening.'

"I resent it in some ways but he gets a kick out of risking a little money. He works hard, so why shouldn't he?"

As card playing has become intrinsic to the social life of Middletown and to its Jewish community, so has bowling come to the city. Several years prior to this study, one of the most wealthy Jewish families converted a scrap yard into a bowling "palace" with bar, restaurant, charge accounts, nursery and 9:00 A.M. — 2:00 A.M. hours: "The Family Bowling Center." The

new Bowl-O-Rama was an immediate success. Among its large clientele is the B'nai B'rith bowling league built around three teams of four men each. Among 51 men in the Jewish community, 24 percent are regular bowlers, another 20 percent are frequent participants; 11 percent of the 55 women bowl. The centrality of this sport is so great that Rabbi Kreutzer had to assure his congregants that a holiday service (Purim) which fell on a bowling night, Wednesday, would end in time to allow the bowlers to meet for their match 8:30 P.M. at the Bowl-O-Rama. The high holiday of Rosh Hashanah also fell on a Wednesday. Rabbi Kreutzer resolved this problem by announcing from the pulpit and in the news bulletin that their games would be shifted to Sunday morning for that week. One of the results of this move was an exodus of male teachers from the religious school on that date. The new rabbi was sorely vexed at the outcome of his ameliorative efforts.

The joking which surrounds bowling acquired a cutting edge when one of the stalwarts of the B'nai B'rith team missed a match in order to take his wife to a stage play:

"Hey, fellows, maybe like we should ax this man. Look at him. He's totally hen-pecked. T..... ., haven't you got what it takes? Now, my boy, you can't live like that."

"To think, one of our own! You must be getting soft and long-haired in your old age. You should be ashamed of yourself. I never thought you, of all people, would be so dastardly, so bloody, so repulsive, such a coward."

The bowlers wear blue shirts with white script across the back, *"Bnai B'rith Lodge ..... ."* The evening's games are played with considerable focus on the match. The better bowlers are razzed and applauded. The less adequate participants, or the fumblings of an otherwise good player, are met with condolences and a, "That's o.k., pal."

After their Wednesday night game, the Jewish bowlers retire to a nearby pizza restaurant. The men appear relaxed as they eat. They discuss women, drinking and the evening's events. Entire segments of games are recounted. They tease each other about stealing or gorging on mutually purchased pizzas. By midnight, the group breaks up with each person making it a point to say "good-night" to every other member of the party.

Of the fifty-six Jewish households in Middletown, 45 percent contain Greenwood Country Club members. Among these, six families (not all of whom are golfers) are reputed to be strong social and financial club supporters. There are two other families whose active participation is a by-product of their intense interest in golf, and twenty-four other families contain active golfers.

The Greenwood club is known for its casual, rural setting and pleasant golf course:

"The club is used primarily in the summer by the golfers. The women bring their children out to the pool. When it cools off, the place almost folds up except for two or three families who hang out there. But basically, it's a place you can eat a good meal and get tanked and yet not embarrass anyone with it."

The club actually closes from January 1st until March 15th. For a number of years it was not self-sustaining but, by 1958, this situation was rectified.

The founder of the club and a few others are deeply devoted to Greenwood:

"I don't know what ails some of these people. Here is a wonderful thing, something to be very proud of. Also, it is a place where one can come and rest, golf, swim or drink in peace. And almost anybody can join. We did it ourselves. You should write a book about this club! Really, you should now."

There are others who feel less sympathetic toward the Greenwood club:

"It's o.k. and we go there once in a while. But C..... . and O..... . think you are crazy if you don't fawn over the outfit."

"Greenwood is a tragedy. It is a scandal. It is a disgrace. What kind of Jews are these?"

"The club has delayed the building of a temple. If men put up $3,000 to $5,000 for that place, what else can one expect?"

"The country club has split this congregation right down the middle. It drew the social life out from the temple. But maybe they were split anyway. This brought it home."

To these criticisms, one of the founders of the club retorted:

"We should have both and can have both a good club and a good temple with lots of temple activities. People do a lot of griping around here. They don't know what they're talking about and they're too tight to fork over. They crab instead."

After more than ten years of existence, the assets and deficits of the club to Jewish life in Middletown remain an issue.

* * * * * *

There is wide agreement in the Jewish community that one's social life is highly conspicuous:

"There are no secrets in this town! Believe me, I have reason to know."

"This place is a goldfish bowl. We all know what the other fellow is up to."

In a group in which many of the members travel frequently, one might note the extraordinarily detailed information available as to the departure, destination and return of others. Or the closest of information on a person's hospitalization is usually at hand from many sources within a few hours of the event.[3] One might suspect the conveyance of fresh news is one means by

which one's social awareness and, hence, status within the group is validated.

Concerning one's social life, Shosteck reports that 53 percent of "small town" Jews find their opportunities to carry on a satisfactory social life "Good," 32 percent find it "Fair" and 14 percent respond "Poor," (1 percent unknown).[4] The majority of Middletown's Jewish families stated that they are reasonably satisfied with their social activity within the community. On the other hand, no less and perhaps more than 36 percent of 56 households contain members who complain specifically about social life within the local Jewish group:

"Jews here smell you out like dogs do for your social and economic position. Then they place you and that is it."

"When you're poor, you're nothing around here. Make a little money the way we did and they love you. It's disgusting."

"Several couples tried to keep up with the big boys. They just didn't have the money and now they complain."

"Everybody is busy with old, long-standing circles of friends. So it it a bit hard for the new-comers."

One should expect that a man's view of the social life among his fellows is most profoundly colored by his personal experiences.

The informants were asked to state what they think is the basis of the clique structure within the Jewish community. Responses varied widely and included the following: Wealth, age, length of residency, family ties, business ties, proficiency at cards, club membership, Jewish community activity, prolonged Florida vacations, like-mindedness, bowling, emphatic personalities, propinquity, age of children, social origins, inter-faith marriages, and subtle, capricious judgments among the women, e.g. evaluation of dress, grooming and social poise.

The most frequently cited bases for clique arrangements were cards and wealth:

"Who's kidding whom? Some of us may deny it and a few simple souls are caught in the cliches. But you and I and a lot of others know that around here money pretty much talks to money."

A compilation of a number of reported conceptualizations of the predominant friendship patterns reads as follows: I — "Big Money," "Club Stalwarts," also known as "Big Givers"; II — "Egg-heads"; III — "Up there but not [enough money to be] in there"; IV — "The In-Betweeners," [perhaps somewhat more nearly conservative in religious identification than most other active members of the community]; V — "The Crowd," also referred to as "The nice small fry"; and VI — "The Old Folks" and the "Out of It."

A final question pertaining to the role of wealth in the social fabric of the Jewish community was raised by inquiring as to the extent to which wealth influences the decisions of the group:

"If N....., M..... and the other rich boys say 'yes,' you are in or it gets done. If they or their wives say 'nix,' man, you are done. We have seen it happen so often."

"Money does influence things enormously, especially among the women—no, maybe not; it is just as bad among us men—but the influence is not direct. If K..... wants to get something done in the temple, he talks to X, Y, and Z over drinks at the club. It gets done not just because the big money is involved but also because it is over drinks and in the palsy atmosphere of the [Greenwood Country] club that the push is made. So one more drink and the congregation is confronted with a virtual *fait accompli*. The money talks but by way of the club; never forget that."

"Money talks plenty in this crowd and when money talks it puts a man and his wife on top socially—in the

eyes of the rest of us. They may not always head the cliques. For instance, the R.....'s don't try to head up any gang, unless it's his egg-head chums, but they certainly throw weight and stand out among us and even among the Gentiles of this burg."

Among 34 heads of households who undertook to answer the above questions concerning finances and the social structure, 71 percent stated that wealth is either directly or indirectly of great importance in the making of decisions.

It would appear to be somewhat misleading to think in terms of a "king pin" or a "queen bee" within the Jewish community of Middletown. It might be more appropriate to conceive of the higher echelon of the power structure and of the status structure as very nearly identical matrices. At the same time, it should be noted that no clique, not even the "Big Money" group, represents an unremitting and really tightly knit coterie.

Several informants suggested that the clique structure is in no way entirely stable, that it is not a single unit and that the concomitants of wealth often appear to be more crucial than the wealth itself:

"There'll be no clean sociogram of this place. Sure, there are social groupings, but when C..... moved away it took the life out of that bridge circle, and new ones build up as playing skill and boredom with old faces humps up.

"For one thing, there are wheels within wheels around here, but it isn't even that simple. You see, some of these wheels turn on different axles, such as the big money is a set of wheels, or at least some of it is. But if there's somebody with only a medium-sized income who plays a good hand and is willing to put up the money when the men get to betting, then he becomes part of that set of wheels when it comes to some aspects of entertaining *etcetera*. But he's not IN in everything."

"The Florida crowd—I mean the real ones—it would

be hard to say that it's going to Miami that makes them a social circle. But they do come back with common things to talk about, and you can be dammed sure that you don't spend two or three months down there sitting on your fanny in the sun if you don't have oodles of money. That leaves some people out right now. But I would very much hesitate to call it a tight knit clique."

One of the more provocative differences of opinion concerns the perceived influence of individual personality upon the structure of cliques. There are those who insist, as did one woman:

"Now look at the intellectual circle made up of N....., L....., and G..... . They've got a lot in common. They are kind of egg-headish. They think a lot alike and react a lot alike. Is it at all surprising that they form a clique of sorts? Well, that's the way it is around here. The same holds true for others, whether it's high living, cards, or you name it."

This view is opposed by those who take the position similar in tone to the following statement:

"S..... . has said it time and again and I'll say it too, although we don't get on terribly well. If this community [Jewish] were somewhat larger than it is, most of us would never talk to one another. We have very little in common. In a big city you would associate with people who have something in common with you. But here we are wedged in together by the Gentiles who freeze us out socially. Consequetnly, we have to live pretty closely with each other and gain our satisfaction in this small circle. Personality differences which we could otherwise ignore we must meet time and again over the card table, in the temple, and at the club. I think that's the answer to a lot of our problems around here. But what can you do about it?"

The social life of the Jewish community operates in many spheres, the activities of which are built upon separate but partially overlapping social circles. Pro-

ficient card players tend to play together but the good player who lacks cash with which to gamble tends to be left out of the card games of the wealthy who gamble. Or age may be a factor in groupings, but age and wealth would appear to be correlated to some degree. Personality differences, life style and attitude do not always harmonize, but the wealthy are drawn together by common community concerns and felt obligations, and those who do empathize with each other are drawn into more or less permanent factions. Further, those who tend to form into specific cliques may not do so on the basis of money, but rather on the basis of those kinds of leisure activities which their financial resources will allow. Business and family ties do bind some individuals together socially, but there are also cases in which these bonds are the roots of alienation from one another. In short, a unidimensional theory of clique formation would seem to be an inadequate portrayal of the social structure as well as being an inaccurate presentation of the diversity of opinion present within the Jewish community. Nevertheless, certain broad and somewhat stable, if at the same time imprecise, patterns of social intercourse could be observed and checked against self-reports.

The focus on card playing in the social structure may be inferred from previous remarks and from the weekly or monthly card playing circles which operate exclusively within the Jewish enclave of the city.[5] Several respondents noted that the card circles vary slightly in composition with the changing of the seasons, i.e. when several people leave for vacations or business trips.

The plethora of card groups is noteworthy. Certain individuals are reputed to play almost daily.[6] It was widely remarked that women who do not play cards are virtual social isolates:

"Bridge is everything for the women. If you don't play cards you might just as well leave town or read a book."

"Rabbi [Blum's] wife did not play. Some of the women offered to teach her. In the end it was a horrible humiliation to her. It may have been a factor in their dissatisfaction with the community."

There are many who feel that cards are pivotal in determining the social structure of the group, but exactly how this activity determines cliques is not uniformally perceived:

"The social structure of this community stands squarely on the four legs of a folding card table. It always has and it always will, unless the Messiah comes. Then maybe they will take a short break."

"Look at T..... . They haven't much money, we all know that, but because she's a wicked canasta hand she pals around with the big money crowd of the club. That's the way it is here."

"Strange, isn't it, the so-called good players always seem to be the rich ones among us. They kid you when they say it's her hand that excludes her. We all know it's not so."

It may be noted that the so-called Groups I ("Big Money"), III ("Up there but not in there"), IV ("The In-Betweeners"), and V ("The Crowd"), tend to form semi-distinct card playing units. On the other hand, it may be seen that there are pivotal card players who tie the various social units together. These people are avid players who, either because of their proficiency or devotion, are welcome to play with those outside of their own circles. These people might be seen as liaison members within the social community.

Bowling also plays its part in the social structure of the community. Among the twelve avid male bowlers of B'nai B'rith, only one man comes from among the "Big Money" and he is the owner of the Bowl-O-Rama. This

man does not wear the Blue and white shirt of the B'nai B'rith team. Otherwise, the bowlers primarily represent members from among Groups III ("Up there but not in there"), IV ("The In-Betweeners"), and V ("The Crowd").

It is noteworthy that Group V ("The Crowd") is almost without representation at the Greenwood Country Club. The virtual exclusion of Group V not only reflects differences of social position and leisure habits, but also may be a by-product of differences in wealth. Club membership *per se* is not expensive but many of the activities which it offers represent a heavy burden to the man of modest means, e.g. meals, drinks, and golfing equipment. As a consequence, families who are required to select their leisure expenditures carefully are apt to rule out club membership:

"We have only so much money for good times. I don't play golf, my wife is a pretty good cook, and I can buy my own liquor cheaper than they supply it. When it comes to swimming we go to the Water-Bowl [semi-public]. So why would I fork over even a modest amount for club privileges? I can't see it."

Finally, one may note in Group VI—the widows, aged, and the individuals who are isolated from their coreligionists. These people live quite beyond the general fabric of the social activities of the Jewish community:

"We are old now. We don't much care to see people now, except the children. People, parties; it tires us."

"My husband is a lone-wolf because he is too inflexible. He says he has nothing in common with these people."

"I have no really close friends here. The Jews of [Middletown] are so wrapped up in themselves they have no time for anyone new."

Those who wish to climb up through the social ladder of the Jewish community do not simply rely upon the

accumulation and visible expenditure of wealth, club membership, Florida vacations, or public activity in the various temple affiliated organizations. There exists, as well, the day-to-day jockeying for position among individuals and groups:

"They freeze you out by giving luncheons on a scale that you can't return. Maybe it's not deliberate, but it does happen. That sets the stage for cards."

"Not long ago one of the less wealthy women gave a party and invited everybody to come. Right away the telephones began ringing and, before you knew it, a number of the wealthier women backed out in order to avoid having to reciprocate."

There are gambits of being "first with the news" and of being "one up" on the other person, e.g. a stranger to the Jewish community was caught between the intense and prodding argument of two affluent women who felt it necessary to make their respective points in regard to a certain restaurant: "Their service is buffet style" versus "Their service is smorgasbord style."

It has been suggested by Kaltenbach and McClelland that community activity is pivotal in establishing one's perceived, achievement place in a society.[7] In Middletown's Jewish community, a different view seems to prevail, as elucidated by one woman:

"Being an eager-beaver in the sisterhood comes as something of an outgrowth of being somebody. It's expected of you, then you are patted on the back very much for what you do. It is not the other way around. Look at Mrs. S..... . for example. She has worked like a demon for years in the sisterhood and where has it got her socially or any other way you look at it? I think most of us admire and respect her for what she has done, but she's still not looked up to particularly."

* * * * * *

Social activity among Middletown Jewry is tantamount to specific form of group leisure activity. Those who do not choose to live accordingly are somewhat likely to be at the periphery of the community.

Perhaps the most dramatic display of group leisure is to be found in the plethora of card groups. Where Torah study was woven into the very fabric of *shtetl* society, so card playing is intrinsic to Jewish life in Middletown. It frequently appears to members of the community that the social cliques, relative wealth, and the card groups are identical. Others feel that one's proficiency is the determining factor in the composition of these leisure groups. In actuality, as several informants noted, it would appear that while most card playing circles tend to coalesce with the clique structure, there also occurs a considerable measure of social dilution brought about by individuals who are exceptionally intense devotees to these games.

One is also made aware of the importance of bowling to many of the men. It might be noted that the social and financial leadership group is not inclined toward this sport.

Golf, but more especially the amenities available at the Greenwood Country Club, attract many of the more affluent. The club is the subject of near veneration amongst its strongest advocates. Against them are its detractors who argue that Greenwood is socially divisive, economically injurious to temple construction, and religiously offensive.

Generally, Middletown's Jews express satisfaction in their social life within the community. But a large minority complain sharply of snobbery, limited choice of potential friends, hardened social groupings and, perhaps most frequently, of cliquishness. Further, there is sharply divided opinion whether the social groupings are built along the lines of empathetic individuals or whether they are abrasive conglomerates of disparate

personalities who are thrown together because of the small size of the Jewish population and relative social isolation from the non-Jews of the "West Side."

Although social maneuvering, vigorous clique activity, proficiency at cards, club membership, Florida vacations, or voluntary service in temple organizations can further one's place within the social structure or within a given coterie, it would seem that real wealth is a prerequisite for rising to the level of social prominence and decision-making power in the eyes of one's fellows. If he gives of his wealth freely and consumes it lavishly, he is all the more likely to be regarded as the head of a prominent and important family. Only then can he and his wife become full members of Middletown's Jewish elite.

Chapter V

THE CHILDREN

Despite the historical centrality of procreation and the rearing of children within Jewish communities, fully 19 percent of the 54 Jewish couples of Middletown were without children at the time of this study. Among these 10 couples none were recently married. Both personal disappointment and personal choice seem to be implicated in these data. And that, among the 81 percent with children, no family exceeds four children suggests the wide spread employment of birth control techniques. Among the 97 living children which the Jewish families residing in Middletown had as of 1961, there were 19 of pre-school age and 44 of school age.

Parents who have growing children and who are not, themselves, "Old-World" Jews, are oriented toward American middle class rearing patterns. However, these children should also be proud and good Jewish people. To be a "good Jew" and a fully accepted junior member of the neighborhood and school is not without its peculiar problems and stresses. But the main realm of parent-child tensions are those which are shared by most all American families rather than being peculiarly "Jewish problems" or even "Jewish-American problems."

Before children attain school age the burden of their rearing falls almost entirely upon the immediate family

and, insofar as the parents exhibit the intense concern for their children which characterizes the middle-class American home, their burden is further enlarged. Many Jewish mothers of Middletown complained of the demands upon their own time and energy which their small children made:

"I love my children but, golly, they are killing me. The little one is especially trying."

"With two little children under foot all day you aren't worth much as a parent come night fall. I just collapse! Sometimes even the TV seems too strenuous after a long day."

"I'll tell you why mothers grow grey. It's not the kids' antics; it's the kind of care and feeding which we are expected to pull off day in and day out."

The multiplicity of fragmented roles which these mothers play in the family constellation does not end with school attendance. . . .

The concern the mothers evidence for the rearing and care of their children seems to be without respite. Any discussion which focuses on children, especially their children, brings close attention. Frequently discussions on seemingly unrelated issues or topics are brought into the orbit of "the children." Thus, the rabbi attempted to discuss Talmudic commentary on the dietary laws only to find himself enmeshed in questions as to the optimum frequency of children's dental examinations.

Middletown's Jewish parents are aware of the image of the over-protective "Yiddishe Mama." References to over-protective behavior came from parents who do and parents who do not exhibit this behavior. One also heard a large number of jokes about over-protective and over-indulgent Jewish mothers. Over-protection could be observed in various settings; the parents who feel they can not trust a baby sitter with their children, the mother who chaperones her teen-age son to most school

events, the father who gives his son large sums of cash and who, simultaneously, rescues the boy from repeated clashes with school officials, the parents who telephone their collegiate son several hundred miles distant and do so every second evening. Unfortunately, no appropriately comparative data were available such as might suggest whether the Jewish parents of Middletown are any more indulgent and protective toward their children than their non-Jewish neighbors.

The adults appear uniform in their attention to the matter of discipline. But their philosophies of rearing vary as widely as the application of their principles:

"We are very strict with the children. They know we mean what we say. Do that and love them openly and you'll have no trouble."

"When the kids act up I smack them down. Maybe it's not the best way but it usually works."

"Maybe some people say our kids are a bit undisciplined but we feel that, in the long run, allowing them to express themselves and to blow off steam pays off."

Parent-child relationship range from those which may be characterized as warm and relaxed through those in which internecine warfare prevails. Among 34 families with children living at home, 7 were known to the researcher to include cases of gross tension between a parent and a child. Again, for want of comparative data, there can be no suggestion that parent-child relationships in the Jewish homes differ substantially from those elsewhere within Middletown's "West Side."

In the realm of sex education the Jewish families of Middletown probably do not differ widely from their non-Jewish neighbors. It was reported to the writer that a few of the Jewish parents attempted to convey some knowledge about sexuality to their growing children. Several stated that the undertaking had been difficult to execute and had been poorly received. Others suggested that their children acquire essential information

in summer camps, through older siblings or by way of neighborhood peers. A few parents stated that they realize their children "know more about sex" or indulge in erotic activity to a much larger extent than is ever discussed or admitted within the family constellation. A verbal moratorium, a veritable "conspiracy of silence" is widely recognized.

In contrast, the intellectual achievements and potentials of the children are trumpted by the parents. The mothers seem to make it a practice to congratulate one another on the school room successes of the others' young ones. There also appeared an underside to this congratulatory rhetoric:

"Oh, she can be as gracious as you know what. But she can also be mean, and so jealous it's terrible. My child did better than hers on an intelligence test. Oh, was she unhappy! She wouldn't speak to me for a month."

It has been observed that Jewish children, as a group, do excel in school performance.[1] There was evidence that the Jewish children of Middletown do represent a rather markedly able and productive group with 9 "gifted" children, 18 "above average," 14 "average" and 3 "below average or retarded." The manifest pride of the parents in their children's academic accomplishments and potentials is seen to be generally justified.

Strodtbeck and others have presented data which support the popular view that Jewish parents realize and encourage intellectual attainments among their children to a degree not matched by several other subcultures.[2] No comparative data were collected in Middletown, but it was noted that among Middletown's Jewish families, with a few exceptions, the intellectual strivings, precocity and curiosity of the children is both tolerated and abetted. As a rule a child's comments or observations are treated with respect, attention and further intellectual engagement.

School administrators spoke of the intellectual leadership which some of the Jewish students exhibit:

"J..... and K..... are two of our most outstanding students. They are real leaders and they just sparkle with ideas."

"I have asked myself, 'Why do the Jewish students' —we always have a trickle—'show such leadership capacity?' They, some of them at least, seem so much more alert than a lot of our other students. I have come to suspect that it has to do with their home life. Now take the P..... children. I've been in their home and, you know, their parents let them speak up and they get listened to. I think that there's been a long, historical habit this way. Besides, most of them are very able people and our able ones naturally tend to take the spot light."

Middletown seems to abound with the folklore of the "loud-mouthed Jew kid." A total of 10 of the 44 students were reputed by Jews to be verbally and socially aggressive students. The school personnel were uniform in their suggestion that when such behavior does occur, it is the result of personal or social insecurity rather than being a by-product of a subculture's *modus operandi*. The administrators insisted that the stereotype of the aggressive Jewish student does not apply in their experience. All suggested that identical behavior problems are no less obvious among non-Jewish students:

"I work on the assumption that any kid who is new here is apt to be a trouble maker. They're insecure. The rough ones fight and the bright ones argue. The Jewish children are the bright ones there. Either that or they become wall flowers. No matter which way they handle it, we try to bring them around to meaningful and constructive roles in group centered situations."

"It has been my experience over many, many years that the children who come from families that have

suddenly made a lot of money are likely to be hard to live with. They don't know how to handle themselves any more than do their parents when their way of life changes rapidly. And, of course, some of our Jewish families HAVE made a great deal pretty quickly."

The few Jewish parents who take little notice or care in regard to the academic work of their children seem to have internalized a different and, perhaps, a more provincial American view:

"Sure, brainwork and an education is fine, but if he can't work and think clearly I'll kick myself."

"I wish our boy would go to work awhile and then finish whatever schooling he wants."

It is not only in scholarly work that most of the Jewish parents harbor aspirations for their offspring. They also encourage their children to be poised, "well rounded" and well mannered American children, and they wish to see them derive genuine satisfaction from their lives. Jewish children in Middletown take part in school activities ranging from chess clubs to the basketball "mania" of Middletown.

In this regard the present group of Jewish school children reflect their parents' confidence in what they see to be a rising tide of religious tolerance within the United States. Of the 44 pupils, 82 percent were uniformally reported by parents. other adult members of the Jewish community, and school personnel as being reasonably well adjusted to their Judaism in a non-Jewish, school society. The Jewish parents were immensely pleased to report the comfort and pride with which the children "wear" their Jewishness:

"I was always SO ashamed of my mother's thick accent and the *hazzarai* that went with it. And funny, my kids aren't the least. They're amused and even proud of it. I don't understand."

"I never get over the shock of it. Among her friends she talks about being Jewish and her soul-mate even

kids her about it."

"We always felt just a touch of uneasiness about being Jewish. But the children wear it so well. To them it seems to be no burden."

It was suggested by several non-Jews that the high school girls are more prone to discuss and to display religious attachments than are their male peers. It was noted that 5 of the 6 Jewish high school girls did wear (on occasion or regularly) pendants, bracelets or finger rings which displayed either the Star of David or Hebraic symbols. One of the Jewish high school students may have summed up the thinking of many when he said in front of a group:

"We are proud to be Jewish just as we are proud to be Americans. We take both for granted. We also believe that we can and should make it known that there is NO conflict between our religious dedication and our patriotism. In our eyes, a slur on one becomes, also, a slur on the other. We believe we can be a credit to our nation abroad and to our religion everywhere—including right here in [Middletown]—without waving a lot of flags or beating our chests."

In any event, there is not a sufficient number of Jewish students of similar ages in any one school to form a coterie. A few of the Jewish parents expressed concern in that their children dated non-Jewish classmates, but the majority recognize that their children have little choice. The alternative would be social isolation for their offspring and on this the young people were outspoken:

"My parents hit the panic button. They are eager for us to be right in there but when it comes to dating they tense up. Just because you date someone it doesn't mean you're going to run off and get married."

"Either you date what is available or you're 'dead.' I know my parents want me to marry within my religion. That's fine by me. And they don't have to worry

in the meantime. Can't we have a good time together without you know what's happening."

In other aspects of their lives these children are found ot be deeply enmeshed in the school community. They could be found talking on the telephone at great length discussing those matters which absorb teen-agers and one gained the impression of capable, vigorous American youth living under conditions of affluence.

Yet mutual social ambiguities remain and, at times, appear. One of the six high school girls told her mother on returning from a Jewish youth conclave:

" 'Mother,' she said to me, 'I am terribly distressed. The Jewish youth conclave has made me realize something. I have had life-long Christian friends who were as close to me as anybody.' She said, 'You just don't open up in front of most people. BUT at the conference in C..... . I found that within a few hours I was as close to some of those kids as I am to some of my non-Jewish friends here after years and years. And then she said to me, 'But Mother, it shouldn't be this way!' "

Perhaps a tangent to these remarks and indicative of less than total acceptance may be the fact that while Jewish students are not denied entrance into any of the semi-autonomous and exclusive high school clubs, a school administrator observed that:

"They [Jewish students] are admitted to the Violet Club and Sewing Club, but it has been my impression that they have to be just a little bit better than they would have to be otherwise. The ante goes up a notch for them when it comes to their social—but not athletic—life. Now, understand, the ante, so to speak, may go up but once they're accepted there is simply no difference."

Several Jewish parents stated that the Jewish students are socially set apart to a small but *persistent* degree. Other parents do not feel this to be the case and it was

reported that only five precent of the Jewish children were subjects of more than one anti-Semitic encounter of any form. Nevertheless, at least a few of the children may not always be quite so comfortable as they might seem. During 1960-1961 several concealed their Jewish identity whenever possible and two children tended to provoke others by the aggressive assertion of religious differences.

Other Jewish children participate in social activities which are illegal. These actions are kept out of the courts and newspapers as are some of the crimes of their non-Jewish peers. Among 27 Jewish boys, who ranged in age from their pre-teens through the 20th year, at the time of this study, one third were known to the researcher to have been involved in delinquent behavior at one time or other. The data do not include cases which may have escaped the author's attention. As a group, the Jewish girls were much less frequently involved in delinquency. The few known offenses were predominately sexual in nature. The differential delinquency pattern between the sexes and the forms of delinquency would appear to be characteristic of American teen-agers.

* * * * * *

Despite the lofty sentiments and the general good will, a few of the Jewish students did, obviously, experience anti-Semitic thrusts. Again, it is not always clear whether their Jewishness was the source of the hostility or whether their religious identity was a handy, emotional spike on which the unliked Jewish child could be impaled; e.g., a little Jewish boy was a neighborhood "terror." Teasing others, fighting and assertiveness on his part was widely reported by both Jews and non-Jews. In turn, he was ostracized and taunted with the epithet, "Jew." It later came to light that his little playmates were confused as to a distinction between Pro-

testant and Catholic. It would seem that their notion of *Jewish* was equally vague and muddled.

In recent years there seems to have been only 2 dramatic, anti-Semitic incidences in the schools. Both episodes occurred prior to the onset of this study.

In the one case, a Jewish, senior high school boy was intimidated by another student. The rather sturdily built Jewish young man took his antagonist aside and attempted to "reason" with him. The intimidations continued until the Jewish student pursued the following course:

"I took the guy on and beat the hell out of him. Then I talked to him again. After that I had no trouble."

The second incident occurred in the Spring of 1958 and took place at the "West Side" high school. This was most distressing to the community, the students and the school. Knowledge of the tension was widespread and the scandal occurred within the college affiliated laboratory school. Both Jewish and non-Jewish parents were angered and shocked to learn that neo-NAZI behavior had broken out in the most respected sections of Middletown.

The matter first became public when several of the Jewish families received obscene telephone calls. The telephone messages were brief, erotically suggestive and religiously abusive. Particularly offensive were remarks concerning the dating of Jewish students. Shortly after the initial calls, a few non-Jewish parents received similar messages. They were abused for allowing their children to date the Jewish pupils.

School and police officials traced the calls to a clique of the more aggressive boys at the school. Administrative personnel noted that one of the boys who was a marginal member of the coterie was, himself, Jewish. It was also pointed out that another boy in the clique was dating one of the Jewish girls. Apparently the Jewish boy was unaware of the activities of his clique.

A further pursuit of the matter indicated that the trouble had started some time earlier. One of the Jewish pupils had antagonized others by his putatively "cocky" behavior. His primary antagonist was a boy who had clashed frequently with school authorities and teachers. The Jewish student was vexed in the halls with the remark, "Who knows Jew nose!" Apparently, it was at this time that the non-Jewish boy made several obscene telephone calls. Shortly after the first calls and the "Who knows Jew nose!" refrain, the two boys may have scrapped. The matter (then) came to the principal's attention.

The Jewish student's father was outraged. It was reported, and denied, that the Jewish father grappled with his son's antagonist to the latter's humiliation. It may have been shortly after this encounter (if it did occur) that the obscene telephone calls increased in frequency and in the number of people abused. These latter calls may have been initiated at a party dominated by the troublesome, non-Jewish student. The school apprehended and disciplined those who had been involved in the episode.

School life was not so dramatic or singular for the Jewish students during the year 1960-1961. Many of these pupils differ from their friends only insofar as they are excused from classes during the High Holidays. The younger children are uniformly encouraged to bring religious artifacts to class.

Most of the parents object to the Christian pageantry in the public schools, but the majority are resigned to it. They are almost equally divided in their advice to their children at the Christmas and Easter seasons. Some of the parents instruct their children to refrain from participation. Others take amusement in their children's contributions:

"My boy, the little one, played Joseph in the Christmas play last year. Now how could I object; wasn't

Joseph one of our boys yet? He's got a better claim to the part than some Baptist or Methodist."

"She sings "Silent Night" right along with the rest of them. I think that's amusing. It's also healthy for her. This is a Christian country and she better learn to make her peace with it early."

"Do you think my children will give up their Judaism just because of the Christmas play? If they're that poor as Jews I couldn't keep them anyway. Some parents expect a conversion to occur right there on the stage. Either those parents are hysterical or they think in terms of having a damned orgasm."

The parents who view the Christian holidays with less sympathy reported that their children feel vaguely uneasy during the classroom festivities.

Many of the parents expressed a deep concern on behalf of the separation of Church and State. In 2 cases the adults appear to be somewhat obsessed by the issue. Herberg has commented on the peculiarly intense feelings some Jews show on this topic:

"It is not difficult to understand why an extreme secularism and 'separationism' should appeal to so many American Jews as a defensive necessity. At bottom, this attitude may be traced to the conviction, widely held though rarely articulated, that because the Western Jew achieved emancipation with the secularization of society, he can preserve his free and equal status only so long as culture and society remain secular. Let but religion gain a significant place in the everyday life of the community, and the Jew, because he is outside the bounds of a dominant religion, will once again be relegated to the margins of society, displaced, disfranchised culturally if not politically, shorn of rights and opportunities. The intrusion of religion into education and public life, the weakening of the 'wall of separation' between religion and the state, is feared as only too likely to result in situations in

which Jews would find themselves at a disadvantage—greater isolation, higher 'visibility,' an accentuation of minority status. The most elementary defensive strategy would thus seem to dictate keeping religion out of education and public life at all costs." [4]

A few years prior to this study the Gideons' Society distributed Bibles in some of the local school rooms. They accompanied the hand-outs with "a song and a dance routine," as it was referred to by one principal. Several Jewish and Unitarian families objected vigorously. School officials ruled that Bibles could only be given to students who had received signed acceptance notes from their parents. The Gideons felt they could not accede to these terms. Their program was terminated.

Under day-to-day circumstances, the Jewish parents are not inclined to be a source of annoyance to the schools. Administrators uniformly reported along lines noted below:

"The Jewish parents do worry about things. But so do the Gentiles. The Jewish parents are not on our backs. If anything, they get on their children. We could use more families like that."

"I think it is unfair to confuse the interest and heartfelt concern some parents demonstrate with obnoxious intrusions into the school. Our Jewish parents are some of our best school friends. Most of them don't try to tell us what to do. They ask what they can do. It's very healthy."

The majority of the parents are satisfied with the schools that their children attend and the women are, perhaps, more inclined to participate than their husbands. A few said that they find the intellectual calibre of school personnel or curriculum somewhat disappointing. But, almost without exception, the parents of the present generation of Jewish pupils stated that the social climate and formal education which their children re-

ceive is vastly superior to that which they were subjected.

Religious Education

The religious school meets from 10:00 A.M. until Noon on Sundays, hence it is popularly referred to as "the Sunday school." During the winter of the study there were 56 children enrolled in its 11 small classes. Ages ranged from 3½ through 16 and 77 percent were from Middletown. Of the 57 local children who were of an age suitable for religious training, 13 were not participating in the program. These absences may be noteworthy insofar as the majority of the Jewish parents place a heavy emphasis upon religious training.

Among the 44 Middletown children who were enrolled, an attendance of 70-75 percent was not unusual. This record may be thought of in conjunction with the low level of adult participation at the Friday night services. It was widely reported by temple members and by visitors that in previous years the religious school had not realized an attendance record as impressive as that achieved under Rabbi Kreutzer's tutelage. It was only during the depth of the winter months of 1960-1961 that participation fell off.

The teachers in Middletown are the Jewish parents and young adults (including a student from the college) who are paid by the congregation for their services. There is an incessant complaint that few of the teachers can be relied upon for habitual participation. The rabbi also noted that, beyond a very few exceptions, the more affluent parents seem reluctant to assume teaching responsibilities.

The rabbi directed his teachers with something of an iron hand. It was not always appreciated. His manner with the children was directive; but the young ones appeared to respond well to his warmth and interest in their activities. His conduct of the school itself was

rarely challenged although early in his tenure he was frustrated in his attempt to extend the classes from 9:50 A.M. until 12:30 P.M. The parents objected. They stated that the proposed shift would unduly postpone the luncheon hour. This the rabbi did not appreciate and during a post service social hour he upbraided those present for their lack of support by saying:

"You get AWFULLY upset if a Sunday school class is cancelled or if there's any question about the school's continuing to operate. BUT you will hardly lift a finger! Just try to get teachers or substitutes. It's almost impossible!"

No one answered the charge and a number of people fidgeted or looked at a table top or at their laps when the rabbi asked for a response to his point.

The parents were asked to comment on adult participation in the religious school:

"Some of the women bowl Sunday mornings. Can you blame them for not getting involved? But I guess we should all chip in more than we do."

"We like to go to the club Saturday night. Sometimes we're not just too eager to run over to the temple at ten the next morning. But we do always get the children over and back."

"I feel that through the years I've done my part. I think it's only fair that some of the younger women take their turn at things. Besides, we could hog or dominate the Sunday school and that wouldn't be good either."

Generally, the parents reported that they are satisfied with the religious school although aware of its limitations. By way of example, one of the most persistent problems concerning the religious school is that of the effectiveness of the program. There were those who insist that a smattering of knowledge about Judaism is worse than none:

"So he comes out knowing nothing much; that is good? It is a waste of time, a waste of money and a

shameful disgrace. Better he do something else instead than think our religion is this pap."

"It isn't the poor calibre of their religious education that disturbs us so much as it is the realization that, having once turned the training of the children over to the Sunday School, the parents abdicate any further interest in the matter. If there weren't the Sunday school classes they'd have to stay on the stick."

The majority seem to feel that the religious school is a desirable institution and are eager to support it, if not in practice, at least at the verbal level. They are, as well, willing to transport their children.

Another problem concerning the religious training of the young is the very inadequacy that some of the parents feel as religious mentors:

"It's a real riddle to know what to tell our kids about Judaism. We really don't know ourselves. And maybe what we do know isn't really pertinent or meaningful. I am not at all surprised that so many of us are just as glad to let the religious school handle these questions. Now look at C..... . for an example. He feels no religious identity for himself, but he does feel very much obliged to give his children a positive religious heritage. Now, will the kids buy it or will they sense the facade? He's no hypocrite, but you see his problem. He senses the problem too. And yet if his kids grow up somewhat devoid of their Jewish identity he'll feel guilty as all holy hell. He would feel—he knows it—that essentially, he has failed."

A number of the parents suggested that the adults seek a religious training for their children as a palliative against their own guilt for feeling little spiritual enchantment. Some also seek, quite frankly, to protect the youth from their own state of religious limbo.

The religiously oriented conversations that parents did have with their children, which were heard by the writer over the course of a year seemed more often

than not rather strained or lacking in spontaneity:

"Now you are asking about, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth?' I would answer you by asking you the question: (a) What do we really mean by, 'an eye for an eye'? (b) What meaning would the doctrine have for us today? and (c), What do, what did—now, do you recall something on this mentioned in Sunday school about Second Isaiah? In other words, how would it look today or what would you think if someone else took that stand?"

One suspects from time to time that, in the eyes of the parents, the ultimate measure for a statement of dogma is its relevancy and consequences for children growing up in American, middle-class society. Consequently, a pragmatic basis for ethical and personal decisions may cause traditional religious lore to appear more as an impediment than as a guide to the living. Further, the many parents who are rather unsure of their knowledge of Jewish history, theology, and dogma may feel on firmer ground when dealing with day to day questions.

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The actual conduct of religious classes was hindered by the then cramped working spaces, the restlessness of the children and the inadequate presentation of materials by some of the teachers. The children were not overly attentive. And when the rabbi announced the Christmas season holidays the children winked, poked and smiled at each other. One little boy remarked:

"Oh, boy, am I glad there is a Christmas! Think; we'd have to come back next week and the week after if there weren't any Christmas."

A second system of religious classes at the time of this study was the Hebrew school which comprised two classes each of which met twice weekly and which were sometimes cancelled. Classes were conducted by

the rabbi. Enrollment in the first class was three and that in the second class was seven. Attendance varied from none to three and from three to seven respectively. Inclement weather seemed to have a very detrimental effect on attendance.

The rabbi was a stern task master in his classes. One parent remarked that Rabbi Kreutzer's management of the Hebrew school carried a bit of the flavor of the Orthodox *cheder* (primary school) where one's ears were boxed for appearing without lesson preparation or for seeming to be a dolt, but the children responded enthusiastically to the rabbi's humor and obvious good will. Yet the rabbi was not in good humor when he confronted the parents in regard to the Hebrew school:

"They want a Hebrew school but it isn't very high on the list of things they want for the children. They want ME to shift the hours around to meet THEIR convenience. . . . You can see what they think of Hebrew school, but if I were to suspend it they'd be all over me. Why don't they make up their minds what kind of Jews they want to be or not be!"

The quality of the children's Hebrew would seem to be in doubt. They acquired a weak reading knowledge of the language which would see them through their Confirmation (for the boys it was often spoken of as their *Bar Mitzvah*). Nor did the Jewish youth of Middletown exhibit a profound enthusiasm for Hebrew, e.g. a pre-class review among the second class pupils quickly slipped into general school conversation.

The culmination of the Sunday school (including the rabbi's confirmation class) and the Hebrew school is Confirmation. This ritual event is seen as most vital and pleasurable to the community. Within the Jewish households of Middletown, 91 percent have realized Confirmation for all of their children who have come of appropriate age.

The festivities which accompany the initiation of a child into the adult congregation have been described as follows:

"When the W..... kid was confirmed, they put on a party afterward at a night spot here in town. I never saw such a potlatch in my whole life. It was staggering."

"When we had our confirmation for our child, we did it up in a big way, but we also showed these people just what their Judaism could be like. The entire thing was done with all the dignity inherent in our tradition. It really opened some eyes up around here."

* * * * * *

The Youth Group (Mamnako) encompassed 11 of the 15 teen-aged children in the community during 1960-1961. The 4 young people who were not participating were children of parents whose presence in the congregation was nominal. The Middletown Mamnako unit met monthly and held sessions jointly with groups in four neighboring communities. Among the 11 local Mamnako youth, six or seven were reputed to be interested members although the lament of "poor attendance' at meetings was frequently voiced. *In toto* the region contained about 15 active members at that time.

The small group was a singular phenomenon in the Jewish community. Their organizational enthusiasm, sophistication, intellectual prowess, social poise and tact coupled with forthrightness was often quite superior to that of the fully adult members of the congregation. Their young president from Middletown was an unusually gifted and alert person. The parents who observed the Mamnako activities were cognizant of the precocity of its members:

"They were discussing what it is to be Jewish. I think they were arguing if being privately religious was ade-

quate or if Judaism must include being a part of the group. They were also kicking around the idea of being Jewish as a single, religious part of life against those who said being Jewish was through and through you. At times they almost lost me."

"They said that poor attendance on Friday nights could be attributed to boredom, redundancy, a lack of a Sabbath style dinner at home prior to the service, store hours and God knows what else. They concluded that their parents—we—goad them but don't carry through ourselves. And they thought basketball was an excuse because when there are no games people still don't come to *shul.*"

The young people dabbled rather successfully with an unannounced socio-drama, entered into inter-faith work, conducted Friday night services, put on a colorful "Haman's Hide-away" party for the adults, played chess and presented folk dancing and folk songs of "Pete Seeger" vintage.

Parents and children commented upon the limited support and interest the adults showed toward the youth group. A Mamnako conclave in Middletown drew 5 local adults and the rabbi. A card party which they scheduled for the congregation was cancelled because the parents insisted that an excess of other plans had filled their social calendars. Among 56 households only three evidenced more than perfunctory support of the youth activities, and the rabbi, who was one of their staunchest supporters, had his reservations:

"The kids are much too idealistic in some ways. They're way out in some things. They had a big discussion on housing segregation. What right have they—what do they know!"

Mamnako is a direct impetus toward attendance at a Reform Jewish summer camp located within the state.[5] Table 1 indicates the camping experiencess of

the oldest child from 29 households in which children of camping age have resided.[6]

TABLE 1

Camping Experiences Among Eldest Children of 29 Jewish Households

Camping Activity	*Per Cent*
Exclusively Jewish	17
Exclusively non-Jewish	17
Jewish and non-Jewish	24
No camping	41
TOTAL	99

A number of the parents stated that they do not approve of sending children away to summer camps. Others frankly admitted that they look forward to the privacy and quietude that result during the absence. Several parents said that they would feel uneasy if their children were away for more than a night or two.

The majority of the children who had attended the Jewish youth camp near the capital spoke of it with great pride. Apparently, the program is socially and psychologically sophisticated in its construction and implementation. The indoctrination and group *elan* at the camp is strong enough to elicit a measure of concern among some of the parents:

"I'm just a little annoyed at the emphasis camp puts on ritual and, of course, whatever camp thinks is straight from heaven."

"It wasn't 'til she returned from camp that I heard her say, 'Mother how COULD one marry a non-Jewish person if she'd been brought up in a Jewish home!' "

* * * * * *

But one *could* marry a non-Jewish person and that fact looms large in the eyes of many Jewish parents. Of Middletown's 50 Jewish households in which both partners of the marriage survived as of 1960-1961, 8 or 16 percent represent marriages in which one of the participants remain outside of the Jewish faith. Earlier it was noted that both parents and teen-aged children presume that there will be inter-faith dating in Middletown where there is a paucity of Jewish youth. The children do not anticipate inter-marriage, but the parents remain anxious:

"The kids tell us, 'Don't worry, we won't let you down.' But even in this small town some of our young couples are inter-faith marriages and two of the four up-coming marriages in the near future are to Gentiles. I think that certainly makes one stop and think."

"The thing that really worries me is the matter of inter-marriage. It really scares me because, well frankly, here in [Middletown] we are so likely to lose."

One might note in this regard that among the 24 married children of Middletown's Jewish households, 17 percent had wed non-Jews who had no known plans of converting to Judaism.

Data gathered by way of the questionnaire indicated that most of Middletown's Jewish parents consider it important to have their children marry Jews. In fact 52 percent of the parents felt it "very vital" that their children marry within the faith, and 39 percent answered "moderately vital," whereas only 10 percent stated that they have "no preference" in the matter of inter-faith marriage.

Those in Middletown who feel strongly on the topic of inter-marriage reported along the lines of the following:

"I'd never get over it if my child married a *goy*. I would never be the same again."

"I don't know how many nights' sleep I lost worry-

ing and even praying, imagine me praying, when it looked as if our R..... . was going to marry someone out of the fold."

"I tell you that my wife cried forever when our child married a Gentile. But now it is fine. She got over it; I think."

The parents are quite frank in looking to a large college or university where they hope their children might have little difficulty in finding acceptable, Jewish mates.

Those who feel less intensely about inter-marriage, yet who prefer to witness their children wed Jews, frequently cited social and psychological rationales for their views:

"It's not at all vital to me to have my children marry Jews but I do prefer it because their lives together will be easier if they don't have to make an adjustment to differences in religion as well as to differences of opinion, differences of tastes and all the rest."

"If she marries a *goy* who will be their friends? It might not be so good."

But almost all the parents agreed that if their child were to marry a non-Jew, they would try to accept that fact and to capitalize on the positive aspects of the marriage rather than attempting to undermine it.

Intimately related to the question of inter-faith marriage is the issue of abandoning Judaism. No exact data were available in regard to the number of persons in Middletown who were reared in Jewish homes and who, subsequently, surrendered their Jewish identity. It has been estimated that about 40 percent of American Jews avoid any avowed commitment to a Jewish community or to Judaism.[7] The Jewish children of Middletown are not unfamiliar with the calamitous nature of desertion from the Jewish community as seen by the Orthodox who hold burial services for any member who abandons Judaism. At the same time, there

operates the traditional democratic and Protestant values which suggest that each individual is at full liberty to determine his own religious definition. One could observe both points of view in Middletown when Jews, who were members of the congregation, sought to terminate temple affiliation:

"So, why shame them? If they want to quit that's their business, isn't it?

"Some people think that they can be good Jews all by by their little lonesome. THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT JUDAISM STANDS FOR! If they knew an ounce about their religion they would know that to leave the group is to die. You are dead if you leave the group and you are buried for good when you give up your religion all together. It is an unthinkable thing for a Jew to do!"

Among 76 informants who commented upon Jews who abandon their Jewish identities, 22 percent expressed strong disapproval, 28 percent expressed mixed feelings and 50 percent indicated "no hostility."

Of those Jewish individuals who have chosen not to affiliate with the Temple Emanu'El or with the Jewish community of Middletown, the writer gathered direct or indirect information on 14, including two students at the college. The stated reasons for the rejection of their heritage vary widely:

"Frankly, I am indifferent. I wouldn't say I'm an atheist, and people are welcome to know that I was brought up in a Jewish home and all that. I am really an agnostic, a member of the human race and a Bearcat [local high school] fan."

"It is a rich man's religion. They have little use for us ordinary, honest folks."

"I think that a lot of us turn toward Unitarianism or Universalism because Judaism appears to us to be much too parochial. Some want to hide their background but with others of us it is ideological. The oneness of man

and the common brotherhood which oneness implies to us makes Universalism more meaningful than does Judaism even though Judaism certainly lays claim to a universalistic point of view."[8]

"Ah, Christ, some of my folks way back when were a bunch of Jews but, believe me, I want NOTHING to do with that stuff. Leave me out, man!"

Informants were asked about Jews who attempt to resign from the Jewish congregation and community. It was generally agreed that such succeeds only in name and that the individuals who attempt it are the unhappy demi-outcasts from both Jewish and non-Jewish groups:

"Being a Jew in [Middletown] is like being a Negro most places. You can't resign."

"What chance has a Jew to leave when even in a Christian church here the minister speaks of them as his, 'Jewish members.' "

"R..... . tried to resign. He actually wrote the congregation a letter and joined his wife's church. But do you think that got him anywhere? Hell, no! He's frozen out everywhere and now he sulks about it. If you want to pull that stuff you have to settle somewhere else."

In actuality, among those previously avowed Jews who have left the faith, the majority do in no way attempt to conceal their religious roots; and of those in Middletown who have "passed" (perhaps upwards of 40 percent nationally) little may be said at this time.

Education Above All

Without question it is evident that the grown children of Middletown's Jewish families are better educated than their parents. Whereas 32 percent of the adult Jewish population possess at least a bachelor's degree or its equivalent, fully 71 percent of their matured offspring have done likewise. Further, they are unlike their fathers in that the present group has turned away —often with parental encouragement—from the retail

trades. Finally, 43 percent of the new group of men are working for non-Jews (usually outside of Middletown) whereas only 12 percent of the previous generation do so.

Members of the adult, Jewish community were asked to comment on the occupational choices of the children:

"Why should my kids get stuck in [Middletown] the way we did?"

"Oh, I've heard the others talk! They feel just the way we do. We'll be sick if ours settle for anything less than their capacities allow."

"Life for our children is going to be different from what it was for us. God knows how it will actually work out; but I am reasonably confident that America has matured to the point where our kids will not have to hide behind the wall of the traditional Jewish occupations."

Some parents are sorry to see their children "fly the coop," some are glad to see them escape the confines of Middletown, a few worry about those working for non-Jews, but all are truly proud of the academic, economic and professional successes which the new generation is registering. (Two of the almost adult young people were attending the local institution of higher learning at the time of this writing.)

The "X" State Teachers College enrolled slightly in excess of 7,000 students in the Autumn of 1960 among whom there were a total of 12 self-identified Jewish students, i.e. .17 percent. In the course of the academic year 3 of the 12 scholars were dropped with failing marks, six were average or below-average students and three did superior work. Those in the Jewish community who were aware of the indifferent performance of the majority of the Jewish students attributed it to various factors:

"What is there here in [Middletown] to attract a

Jewish student? No community, no potential mates and little enough academic status."

"If they make the grade someplace else, that's where they'd be. We get the remainders unless somebody's awfully hard up for money AND wants to get a good training for the teaching profession."

The Jewish students concurred among themselves in the view that the student body appears to be vastly more anti-Catholic than anti-Semitic. There were five Jewish students distributed in two fraternities and one sorority. The Jewish girl who joined a sorority in 1961 was previously turned down by a different group on the avowed grounds of her religion. The girl stated that she was somewhat shocked and hurt at the frankness with which she was informed of her unsuitability.[9] The college outlaws restrictive covenants, but informal restrictions appear to operate in several of the fraternities and sororities.

The Jewish students reported that in their day-to-day activities at the college they suspected prejudice in others but rarely, if ever, encountered discrimination. Over half of the group stated that prior to coming to college they had been hurt by anti-Semitic encounters. At the same time, most of these students admitted to their own distaste for Negroes:

"I feel that Colored People should have a fair shake all the way down the line. But when I see one of our white [college] girls walking down the street with a Negro and I know they are going together, I just turn over inside. I know I shouldn't but I do. I can even feel my face flush. And yet, you know, I am rather swarthy and often have a good tan. When I was in Kentucky I was refused service in restaurants and I even was refused a drink right here at the B..... . I was madder'n hell! I asked them what the big idea was, and you know what they told me? They said, 'We are terribly sorry but we do not serve Colored Folks here.'

That really hit me and yet I can't bring myself to accepting Negroes on a really intimate basis. It's a crazy world isn't it?"

During a Jewish student group discussion of conduct as Jews in an overwhelmingly non-Jewish college one of the more assertive students argued that as a recognized Jew he was particularly discreet and mindful of his conduct on campus:

"I know darn well whatever I do reflects on all Jews and that the stereotype thinking of the others makes even innocent things I might wish to do look a little funny."

The group and the rabbi took sharp issue with his point of view. They insisted that to behave in such a manner was to validate the notion of religious inferiority. They felt that such conduct is unnecessary and indicative of an "inferiority complex." It seemed that the other students were also somewhat personally distressed and upset by the young man's argument. (Later, another Jewish student confided that he often felt all too keenly as did the evening's protagonist.) The rabbi warned the students that "good behavior" on the part of Jews did not necessarily insulate them against anti-Semitism. The discussion shifted back and forth between the one student and his antagonists until one of the members of the group said:

"I am a Jew because I am and I act accordingly. I believe in it. I could not honestly act otherwise. I behave as I do not because I'm told to do so by rules. I am afraid of proselytizing but I must do as *I* do because I am what I am. I think that's all there is to it."

The student who made this confession of faith was frequently the subject of derisive remarks. When asked to explain the source of this hostility the other Jewish students stated that this young man wore a *yarmelkeh* (skull cap) in his dormitory rooms, was "prickly" on the subject of his religion and, above all, embarrassed

the others by his beard which was known to be the by-product of his faith. The voluntary removal of the beard toward the end of the academic year did much to reinstate this student in the eyes of his coreligionists.

The group was almost equally hostile to the rather assertive Jewish student who had initiated the discussion reported above:

"His loud mouth ways give us all a bad name. It's hard enough being Jewish without a guy like that on the scene."

"He brags that he's leaving his Judaism behind yet he boasts that he is Jewish. Now how do you think that looks to some of these holier-than-thou kids around here? They don't know what to make of that kind of person. They expect every Jewish individual to be a compliment to his religion."

At the same time, the group was very antagonistic to yet another Jewish student who flaunted his disregard for his religion, although he did not do so in front of non-Jews. The young man was hissed at when he announced that on the "Day of Atonement" he had a date with a non-Jewish girl and that they were holding tickets for a horse race.

In short: these students seem even less able than their elders to agree upon what is appropriate as Jewish conduct in a non-Jewish society.

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Shortly after his arrival in Middletown the new rabbi contacted the Jewish students at the college and suggested they organize a fellowship group. The 12 members of the unit were supplemented by a non-Jewish girl who was seriously contemplating conversion to Judaism. Student attendance at the monthly meetings varied from none to nine with a year's average of five, and occasional guests.

Rabbi Kreutzer saw as his goals for the fellowship

the enhancement of their self-awareness as individual Jews and the reinforcement of group identity. One might also suspect that:

"The need for Jewish organization has become an end in itself, while the clarification of purpose is relegated to lesser importance." [10]

Student participation in discussions was flaccid and the tendency of the rabbi to turn a group conversation into a didactic lesson muffled the comments which might have been forthcoming. Business meetings stumbled on trivial points and inattention. The selection of "next month's topic" led to the tedious search for "something to talk about" and the secretary occasionally failed to mail out reminders of coming meetings. One student probably voiced the sentiments of others when he said:

"This outfit is a good idea but in operation it is absolutely dead on its feet. I couldn't care less about this show."

But when a few of the Jewish students got together over coffee in the Student Center and were removed from the formal fellowship organization they could be heard discussing such topics as: The Eichmann trial, "wenches" (Jewish and non-Jewish) and their differential dating expectations, courses, examinations, professors, art as opposed to pornography, card playing customs in different regions of the nation, home cooking, odd ethnic groups that have migrated to Israel, and the sexual behavior of giraffes.

The one discussion topic at the Jewish fellowship meetings which met with wide and intense interest was that of dating and marriage. The rabbi made it known that he was strongly opposed to inter-faith unions. His arguments encompassed both sociological information and folk-lore. He sought to counsel the Jewish students away from serious involvements with non-Jews:

"If I can help it he won't be pinned to that Gentile of his for very long. Maybe it's breaking up anyway.

You know which way I'm going to pull if I have the chance."

For their part, the students recognized the desirability of wedding coreligionists but they found it difficult to rationalize exclusiveness if romantic love intervened. Most of them were dating non-Jews and, in the course of the year, several were "pinned."

As for virginity, the young men seemed to assent to the statement:

"Sure, it would be nice to marry a girl, a Jewish girl I grant you, who had not slept around one bit, but I hardly expect that. And I don't see how we can fairly demand virginity when we cut up the way we do with our dates—you know. But it would be sort of nice, I know. In the meantime we can't pretend that most of us don't get a little when we can, especially if she's just some broad. We may put pressure on a girl we might marry, but that's different from just going out and raising a little hell. But, in the end, it comes to the same thing. We're probably not any more angels just because we respect a girl, a Jewish girl maybe, while giving her the old line. With a broad it's a little different. You hardly pretend to respect her character and all that stuff."

"Stuff" or no "stuff," the Jewish students were not habitual attenders of Friday night ervices. One student who also taught in the religious school and the girl who contemplated converting to Judaism were the only frequent participants. Their attendance fell off in the Spring of 1961 when the one began courting and the other had "second thoughts" on becoming Jewish.

The Jewish community had very little contact with the students except during the high holidays when four households invited the out-of-town Jewish scholars for dinner. Beyond that, only two families appeared to befriend two of the students; one was the girl contemplating conversion and the other was the serious young

man who wore the beard, *yarmelkeh*, and who taught in the religious school. It may have been indicative of student-community relationships that when the scholar who had taught in the religious school was in need of funds to continue his education, only two of ten leading heads of Jewish households could even recall the young man in question.

The rabbi took issue with his congregants for showing little interest in the Jewish students:

"I said to C..... . 'Why don't you have some of the Jewish students over for dinner?' And you know what she had the gall to say to me? 'Why? We've got nothing in common.' The L..... .'s have been very nice to Miss M..... . and the G..... .'s try to look after D..... . but that's about all. How's that for *Klal Isroel* for you!"

On the other hand, the congregation did donate $50 to the fellowship group for expenses and there was talk within the sisterhood of raising money to enable the one student to complete his education. Nothing came of this latter project.

It might be argued that while, in theory, the Jewish community is Jewish by common religious bond, the actual operating basis for group solidarity is more nearly built upon patterns of social intercourse than it is upon a religious fundament. As a consequence of these conditions, the Jewish students, by virtue of age, financial and marital status and temporary residency, remain rather isolated from "the oneness which is Israel."

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In overview. It would appear that an historically conditioned emphasis on "brainwork" is, generally, carried forward and is buttressed by the socially induced academic pressures operating simultaneously on them and on their non-Jewish, middle class cohorts. Nevertheless, scholarly achievements are not to pre-

clude social activities such as are emphasized in Middletown's schools.

The Jewish pupils appear to be vastly more relaxed and comfortable in their Jewishness than many of their parents had been. Parents accept the fact that Christianity infuses the schools. They object to it in theory, but in practice are pleased to see their children and the school community juggle with aplomb and tact the areas of potential religious tension. Many of the parents interpret this concord as the coming of fruition of an American, ideological "dream."

On the other hand, a few students did show signs of ambivalence in the public display of their religion. Apparently, it is not the fear of discrimination *per se* that generates their mixed feelings, but rather it is the "being visibly different" which may embarrass them and bring about their anxiety as to the display of their religion.

Except for a single episode, there have been no major outbreaks of anti-Semitism in Middletown's public schools in recent years. There are points of slight discomfiture for some of the younger Jewish children during the Christian holiday season and the older pupils may experience a tinge of discrimination at the hands of their peers. But, over all, they share the creature comforts, entertainments, concerns and worries of their non-Jewish classmates. They also must define their religious commitments and come to terms with them in a non-Jewish society. And that when they "get into trouble" they should do so in the "West Side" manner may only attest to the thoroughness of the Americanization process.

Presumably, a religious upbringing is a buttress against deviant behavior. Further, for Jewish parents, such training is essential to the preservation of the faith. Nevertheless, 23 percent of the young people were not participating in the religious school at the time of this study. While the parents profess a keen interest in the

educational functions of the rabbi and of the temple organization, in practice only a few of them are willing to make extensive physical efforts on behalf of these activities. Hence, teacher reliability, preparation, and sophistication of presentation vary widely. The children, themselves, appeared somewhat less than enthusiastic about their training and their parents find themselves in the vulnerable position of saying, "do as I say, not as I do."

Simultaneously, many parents are made uneasy when they contemplate the possibility of their emotionally suspectible adolescents going "over-board" on being Jewish:

"I know very well, as do most of us who think a little, that our children will not be respected if they don't stand up and be counted as Jews. Gentiles much prefer a Jew who is truly Jewish rather than some 'fish.' But I can't help but wonder. The rabbi and especially camp distress me a little. Do you think they are going too far with tradition? This wouldn't be the first time in history that Jews have managed to exclude themselves needlessly. How can we complain about things if our own people start shutting themselves off? The kids don't see it this way, I realize, but they haven't lived as long as we have and they're still young enough to be pretty darned idealistic about things. But it is nice to see them so eager to be what they are."

But the danger of going "over-board" generally seems much less hazardous than the possibility that their children might marry outside of "The House of Israel"—all of which has become a reality for one out of six of the local Jewish families and their married children.

When it comes to the possibility of actually abandoning Judaism, half of Middletown's avowed Jews disapprove, some with vehemence, whereas the other half seem to accept such choices as properly within the domain of one's "private life."

In any event, the majority of their grown children have received advanced academic degrees and are successful in their careers outside of Middletown. These are the, generally, the children of proud parents.

In the 1960's, the few Jewish students at the local college represented the exceedingly small portion of .17 percent of that population. As a group they did not present a very distinguished academic record. They stated that they were well enough received, but they were divided and troubled when they considered the matter of their conduct in a non-Jewish, college environment. Several felt they were expected to conform to a style of life which was described by one young man:

"I told that punk to be a Jew, of course, and to be proud of it. But, damnit, in a place like this you want to be kind of cool about it too. You know, don't give anybody the creeps or the wrong idea as if we were strange creatures."

The Jewish student fellowship group which was organized under the auspices of the new rabbi proved to be something of a disappointment; their only area of vivid, common concern being that of courtship and marriage. They concurred that it was desirable to marry within the Jewish faith but they found it difficult to insist upon this position in the face of their belief in the pre-eminence of romantic love.

The Jewish students were not habitual participants in the Friday night services and their contact with the Jewish community of Middletown was almost nonexistent. It might be suggested that this cleavage, which runs counter to the commitment of *Klal Isroel* (The Oneness of Israel), may result from their social impotency and their ephemeral presence within the city.

Chapter VI

JUDAISM IN MIDDLETOWN

Personal Aspects of the Religious Life

From what manner of religious background do Middletown's Jews come? Sixty-seven percent grew up in Orthodox homes, 11 percent in Conservative environments, 18 percent in Reform homes and one percent, each, in Sephardic, Christian and a-religious situations.

In a nation where 60 percent of Orthodox Jews are over 50 years of age and only 10 percent are under 40 years, it should not come as a surprise to find that the essentially "middle years" Middletown Jewish community identifies with the Reform movement.[1] In fact, 81 percent of this group is Reform, with only 11 percent Conservative, a smattering of independents and no Orthodoxy evidenced. To some extent a Reform orientation is generated by the Temple Emanu'El's affiliation with the Reform groups i.e. the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

There are those who complain, as they have in other smaller American cities, that the temple pulls them toward the Reform movement against their own inclinations.[2] Several families at one time drove 61 miles to the state capital to attend more traditional services. But the time and cost, especially for those reluctant to motor on the Sabbath, discouraged them. But, if granted their preference in religious practice, 25 percent would seek a

Conservative identification and five percent an Orthodox affiliation.

Obviously, the vast bulk of those who are dissatisfied with their affiliation in Middletown prefer a more ritualistic or traditional religious life than that which they practice in their homes and in the Temple Emanu'El. In view of the Orthodox upbringing of many, these data should not be unexpected. On the other hand, many of those who shifted from Orthodoxy or Conservatism on coming to Middletown expressed satisfaction with the Reform movement:

"When we came to [Middletown] we were pretty shocked. I said to my wife, 'Is this Judaism? Are these people ours?' But now I think Reform is fine; the best."

"Reform is the best thing that happened. It is human. You don't yak yak at 240 and one can be a Jew and a member of the 1960's. But was it ever a surprise!"

In any event, Rabbi Kreutzer held Hebrew classes for the children and read the *Torah* in Hebrew to his congregation, followed by a loose translation or resume of the text. The rabbi's marginal command of the language hardly left him in a position to "yak yak at 240." Among the adult male members of the Jewish community there are 12 who can read or follow Hebrew with comprehension and during the Friday night services observed there were never more than three of these men in attendance.

Yiddish is much more widely understood. Among the 98 religiously identified, adult Jews, 72 percent comprehend a measure of that language when spoken, but the daily usage of Yiddish is unknown in Middletown's homes. Three Jewish families in Middletown take some interest in preserving Yiddish literature and humor. However, the vast majority see little merit in the preservation of a "dead language":

"Why should we worry about Yiddish? Soon it will be gone. English does the job."

"I see no particular merit in preserving Yiddish or the culture that surrounded it. I am not running away from my past but I just don't see how it can contribute to our lives here and in the future."

"Yiddish and everything that went with it, I could just as well see buried and gone. It has been a needless lodestone to us."

The vast absorbtion and erudition in Talmudic learning which marked Eastern European Jewry is not to be found in Middletown. Three men (related) of advanced years each received between 9 and 21 years of *Yeshiva* (rabbinical school) training. Of these men, two allowed their interests to turn away from that form of scholarship and the third is no longer able to focus his thoughts for more than brief moments on detailed points. Two other men received a smattering of Talmudic training in their youth but neither pursued such studies. The majority of Middletown's Jewish community experiences little sense of loss. Some spoke of the confining nature of that study while others pointed out that Reform Judaism is deeply committed to an escape from intellectual parochialism. In rebuttal one of the old *Yeshiva* scholars stated:

"Yes, the Yeshiva and Talmudic scholarship were like prison to us! I used to hide my copy of Schiller, Heine or Goethe in the covers of my books. But how profound our study was! Generation upon generation of our best minds wove that fabric. And what has come of it? In Israel it is guns; imagine! And here in America it is our Mr. Paar on that thing (pointing to the television console) and bickering over a new *shul*. They do not know what they are losing—an entire culture and the most exquisite thinking the world has ever known. But don't they see what they are doing?"

The transfer by Jews of Biblical scholarship to the secular realm has been widely noted.[3] With a view toward adult study the incoming rabbi of 1960 established

a women's afternoon group which met in the early Spring of the following year. At the first session eight women appeared. The second meeting drew four, the third drew three and the fourth drew two women and was therefore cancelled.

Later in the year the rabbi held a series of four evening discussion sessions with the Episcopalian curate. These meetings were repeatedly announced in advance of the public sessions. The attendance from the Christian group ranged from eight to 14 persons. Between one and six members of the Jewish community attended the discussions. Rabbi Kreutzer was not pleased with the participation of his congregants in these educational activities:

"They say they want me to be their rabbi—their teacher. Nuts! What is Judaism if it isn't learning? They paid good money for me and they have to shell out pretty heavily each month for me. And then look at what they do. What's the matter with these people? If all they want is Jewish wisdom for their children and a 'face to the Gentiles,' why are they spending this kind of money on me? They're kidding themselves and spending a lot of dough in the process."

Some, but not all, of the members of the congregation took a different view:

"So he wants to tell us about Genesis? What does he know about Genesis that I don't know?"

"He means well but he's ineffective as a real teacher. I don't know why; he just is. But the real problem is that we're all so tied up with other obligations and things to do. I would really like to know more about my religion, but there are other things to do that keep crowding it out."

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But the commitment to study persists and on Friday

nights those who attend the temple are reminded that, besides learning:

"The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the Children of Israel forever." [4]

Most of Middletown's Jewish community expressed the view that their personal religious sentiments urge them to keep the Sabbath as part of their "Jewishness." At the same time the majority of the same people stated that Saturday store hours and pressures from the children undermine this religious observance.

Even the high holidays seem not to generate a religious "Sabbath aura" for most of Middletown's Jewish families. All but three of the Jewish business and merchandising operations continued to serve the public during the high holidays of 1960. A few men maintained their businesses but stayed away from the office or store on those days insofar as it was feasible. There were no newspaper announcements of holiday closings as there had been in 1935 when 25 of the Jewish business houses ran such a notice.[5]

Neither *Torah* nor Talmudic study, nor the traditional customs of Orthodoxy, nor Sabbath observance, nor regular service attendance would seem to function as personal definitions of religious behavior among most of Middletown's Jews.

There was a further attempt to discern what individual Jews think it is that makes a man religiously Jewish. Direct questions to this end frequently elicited a quizzical evasion or silence. Some people simply said, "I don't know." Glazer has noted the vacuity of conceptualization in this regard.[6]

Indirect references and incidental remarks drew a variety of definitions as to the meaning of being religiously Jewish. Although there are champions of the State of Israel, no one suggests that Zionism made a

man religiously Jewish. Philanthropy is important to most of the community but this was not put forward as a religious definition of Jewishness. Five women stated that to be religiously Jewish one had to maintain a "Jewish home." When queried, these women suggested that a Jewish home implies observance of rituals which would impress a sense of Jewish identity upon their children. They were then asked what it implies to have a Jewish identity:

"Well, to think of one's self as Jewish, I guess, and never to forget it."

"To be true to God and to live good lives like anybody should."

"I don't know. But it's something and it's there. You can't deny that a Jewish home is different from a Gentile one."

Five people suggested that the essence of being religiously Jewish is to be part of a Jewish community and of *Klal Isroel* irrespective of any doctrinal commitments.

That definition of religiosity for Jews which was most frequently put forward involves some orientation toward ethical conduct as elaborated by Jewish law and commentary. Of 84 religiously identified, adult Jews from whom information was gathered, seven stated that ethics are the fulcrum of an Hebraic religious identity. Of these seven people, five were 60 or more years of age at the time of the study.

The majority of those people who did grapple directly with the question as to what made a man religiously Jewish gave answers along one of the following lines:

"Judaism is, 'What do I want out of Judaism?' That's what Judaism is."

"To be a religious Jew you have to be publicly Jewish; be proud of it. If you are proud of being a Jew then you are being religiously Jewish."

"I really can't say, but you certainly aren't Jewish in a

religious way if you go around being a bad or vicious person."

"I have enough trouble trying to figure out what it is to be Jewish. I haven't begun to think through the religious end of it yet. But at the rate I'm going I may be dead before I can tell you or anybody else. I just may give up trying."

One older man took the rather Orthodox view that:

"A law is a law! The commandments of Him are everything. If you live by them you are religious. If you do not practice them you are no longer a soul; you are nothing."

This same individual, at a later date, took a somewhat different view:

"What does it matter? If a man is a real *mentsh* he is one of His and he is a really religious person. To live justly and to be decent that is what is asked. Then we are religious."

Eleven percent of the informants took the view that all religions are the same insofar as one "felt something spiritual." When asked to define their concept "spiritual feeling" most respondents alluded to a belief in an ill-defined or somewhat passive Supreme Being. There were only three people who spoke of the Deity in terms of a personal, anthropomorphic and active agent.

Finally, three people suspect themselves to be agnostics. They insist that there is no necessary conflict between being a good Jew and being an agnostic. They take the view that Reform Judaism is sympathetic to such an intellectual posture.

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Despite the vagueness among many as to what Judaism or religion might imply, there were some indications that denominational tensions do exist within the Jewish community. These disagreements are not sufficiently intense to break down social intercourse or to prevent the

presentation of a unified religious front, but they are strong enough to operate as an abrasive factor among numerous individuals:

"How can I respect a man, that man who is such a somebody in that synagogue, when we know that his Judaism, the Judaism of him and his cohorts, is NOTHING, NOTHING but *gefilte-fish* Judaism!"

"I stayed away from temple that night's holiday service as a protest against Rabbi Kreutzer's introduction of traditional elements."

"Now you heard that man say the other night, 'Why can't we bowl on a holiday? Aren't we Reformed Jews?' Now what is that man; Jewish?"

One of the few more dramatic denominational encounters occurred during the high holiday services. While a service was in progress some of the older congregants took the opportunity to walk about the sanctuary and to visit quietly with friends. These people appeared completely at ease, as were their forebears in Eastern Europe. Many worshipers ignored them but a small portion of those present glared rather pointedly toward the wanderers. And, in turn, several of the latter group returned the "looks."

Those who defend Reform in the face of Orthodox criticism insist that their movement is appropriate to the times and that the children comprehend it and sense the relevancy of "enlightened" Judaism. Several informants implied or admitted that they are inclined toward Reform because it reduces, to a degree, the ethnic visibility of being Jewish:

"I won't deny it, a lot of us took to Reform because we don't stick out so much then."

"All the Orthodox rabbis in the world have not done for the Jews what the Reform movement has done in just over a hundred years—you know what I mean. There's nothing to be gained and a lot to be lost by being needlessly different."

That the factor of being socially conspicuous is an important charge against traditional Judaism might be indicated by way of the hostility and anxiety which greeted the new rabbi's seemingly minimal innovations in dress and ritual. He was accused of undoing years of hard work, of retrogressive social behavior and of provincialism.

On the other side, the defenders of Orthodoxy commented on the aesthetic and emotional appeal of traditional embellishments. They feel that if a strong measure of Orthodox custom is not maintained, Judaism can not survive under the secular pressures of the larger society. At the same time, those with Orthodox inclinations conceded that the religion of the *shtetl* is not feasible in modern Middletown.

The attraction of Orthodoxy seems most forceful at the time of mourning:

"See, when somebody dies or there is a *Yahrzeit* service, then they wear their hats in the *shul!*"

"Perhaps it is only out of respect for our parents that we go back to Orthodox ways for memorial services. But there is also a pull that way when one thinks of the lost generation."

An overall sense for some of the doctrinal and denominational dilemmas of Middletown's Jewry was expressed by one of its oldest members:

"Orthodox Judaism has no chance in America. It is only for a certain world and a certain time. And that is all dead, dated, slaughtered by Hitler. If you are Orthodox in this city you are living on a shipwreck, an island. But then is Reform Judaism the answer? No, how can it be? They tell you it is a rebirth of Judaism for this age, a renaissance. No, it is only a beautifully dressed up corpse. It is dead too. So what do they fight about all the time? It is not religion or wisdom; no, they are not interested in these things. They are interested in money, in being good fellows. So they chase after

American things. That is not bad. It is very good. but then, my; how they worry about our universal and particular heritage! Should they not feel guilty? They don't know. No, it is so sad. It is not the Divine they worry about; it is not the human community they worry about; it is not even *Klal Isroel* that worries them. Sad it is to say, I think, they worry about the Jews they are not being and about the Americans they are not quite yet because they are Jews. Do I make any sense? I am probably wrong. You listen to an old man who believes in Israel, but all is not well there either. No. Judaism has always gone forward in its thinking. The Orthodox do not do it. The Reform only think they do it. Israel; a question. Enough."

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However badly stranded—religiously—many may be, their commitment to philanthropy, especially Jewish causes, remains clear and strong. Sklare and Vosk observed in their study of "Riverton" that:

"Even the individual with no synagogue affiliation, no Jewish organizational membership, no degree of cultural distinctiveness, still walks in step with the Jewish community in this one respect—he gives." [7]

Between the close of the Second World War and July 1960 the Jews of Middletown raised $250,000 for Jewish causes. Beyond that they are reputed to be liberal contributors to non-Jewish philanthropic endeavours. In Middletown's Jewish community a man not only gains honor for his economic generosity but he is, as well, forgiven many shortcomings:

"So maybe he can be obnoxious and rough, but he is still the MOST outstanding one among us. How he gives!"

The converse appraisal is also evident:

"I don't care if that guy has the best brain in this whole damn burg; he's never home when you come

around for money. I can't stand a guy who isn't charitable. He just as well leave us and the world for all I care."

"I don't mind his aloofness from the community or his hoarded wealth, but what disgusts and angers me is that that old tight-wad is the stingiest bastard in the city. I'd knock that guy in the kisser at the drop of a hat. I could respect him more if he never took baths."

It has been generally recognized that American Jewry, while willing to support the State of Israel financially, are not inclined to take up residency there. In Middletown only five members of the Jewish community expressed a desire to make their homes there. All five of these informants were beyond their 60th year at the time of the study. In the interim, four of the city's Jewish families have toured Israel.

When asked how they feel toward the "Jewish homeland," over 50 percent of the religiously self-identified Jews of Middletown responded favorably. Nevertheless, Zionism is not popular. Even the supporters of Hadassah all denied that they were Zionists. One man may have caught the mood of many when he commented:

"I'm one-hundred percent behind the States of Israel but I am NOT a Zionist. I think Zionism has outlived its usefulness as a point of view. It's also a little bit embarrassing with its old political overtones."

In sum: the group was almost uniform in its insistence that Israel is a fine achievement, an asset to Jews everywhere, worthy of economic support but NOT a suitable or desirable substitute for being an American citizen.

From these observations it might be suggested that the crux of their seeming ambivalence toward Jewish nationalism resides in the fear of being suspected of dual national loyalties as well as reflecting their profound emersion and commitment to the nation of their father's choice.

USHERING IN THE SABBATH

As with Jews from time in memoriam, the 56 Jewish households of Middletown usher in the Sabbath; some by means of dinner candles and temple service attendance. The aging but well-kept temple sits near the decidedly "tacky" downtown. At the time of construction in 1922 the building stood in a middle class residential district but by 1960 the adjacent properties had deteriorated into a dingy, working-class neighborhood. Here, set down in a city of now 70.000 people, all 174 men, women, and children ostensibly and partially unroll their ancient heritage; all formal programs beginning in mid-September and terminating early in June of the following year. This is a "school year" schedule to which must be appended the realization that the more affluent are in Florida for much of the winter.

The temple organization has engaged a number of students, permanent, part time and visiting rabbis through the years; for the one year 1960-1961 it was "permanent," in the form of Rabbi Kreutzer. He was 25 years old and not yet married. The new rabbi came to the community eager to discharge his duties. He was, as well, somewhat anxious lest his youthfulness negate his rabbinical authority in the eyes of his congregants.

Friday evening services usually open with four or five people present. Prior to the services they talk quietly about such matters as the weather, their children and someone's health. In warm weather, when the windows and doors are open, sidewalk conversations and the noise of large trucks in the street are sufficient to mask the words coming from the pulpit. The silent period for meditation and prayer is particularly vulnerable to the chatter of people or the sudden rap of a "glass pack" exhaust system. Congregants were questioned concerning their sentiments during the silent prayer periods:

"I try to pray and think appropriate thoughts but I never seem to really mean it then."

"I just reel off during the silent prayer. I know I won't be bothered or talked at for a few moments."

"I sit there and wonder what other people are praying about!"

Rabbi Kreutzer conducted his services with dignity but also with humor and an occasional quip from the pulpit. Beginning with his first service, however, he did create a degree of negative comment by his employment of several traditional symbols; the *yarmelkeh,* the use of Hebrew at frequent points and the increased length of the services (about one hour). Yet, non-Jewish visitors to the Friday night services frequently commented on the similarity between the Jewish service and those of the "West Side" Protestant churches:

"If it weren't Friday night, and if he didn't use a little Hebrew, any intelligent Martian would think this is just another Christian sect."

"I've read about the Protestantization of the Catholics and the Jews in America. Now I believe it. I wonder if they both haven't surrendered something vital as well as beautiful."

Nevertheless, a large portion of Middletown's Jewish congregation held fast to their objections to the infusion of "traditional" elements in the new rabbi's services.

Rabbi Kreutzer's sermons, which most agreed were "the heart of the services," could be divided into three categories: 1) those essentially rhetorical in form and content (many of these sermons were recreations of student talks); 2) more nearly personal pronunciations, and 3) brief comments concerning *Torah* passages which had been previously rendered in Hebrew and in English. (There were a few services in which Rabbi Kreutzer gave no sermon. On these occasions he "walked the *Torah*" up and down the center aisle of the temple.)

The revamped student sermons constituted the majority of pulpit addresses. They were liberal in tone, couched in ministerial phraseology, sociological in thought and they were meticulously prepared:

"Like children we cry when hurt and yet we demand our freedom."

"There is ambiguity and a duality in our feelings toward mothers. We can not love those who inhibit us but we can honor them and they can love us. In this we have recognized Freud and his impact."

The rabbi's sermons were politely if also indifferently received. Rabbi Kreutzer was aware of the ineffectiveness of many of his sermons.

"The sermon is the most important thing I say to the congregation and yet look at them. They don't really listen. T..... . very nearly went to sleep; the bum! They crab if I go over twenty minutes and if I cut out the sermon they yell. I can appreciate it that people get restless after a few minutes, but their lack of response ——ugh! And if I talk on current issues in Judaism or anything else, someone starts saying 'The rabbi doesn't know what he's talking about.' So I stay to more traditional rabbinical subjects and they say, 'Who cares about that stuff?' "

The rabbi's more nearly personal sermons were the outgrowth of issues which developed around him *vis-a-vis* a new temple drive. These sermons were more closely followed by most of those in attendance and, when anticipated, drew slightly larger audiences:

"Too many in our group enjoy the fruits of others' labor. And there are those who do little and what they do is usually negative. And then there are those who do NOTHING."

"I came to you innocent and confident. I later learned to accept some of the gossip and criticism. At times it has been painful."

It was widely reported that Friday night attendance

during previous years had been extremely poor. It seemed to be the consensus of opinion that Rabbi Kreutzer drew more congregants and visitors to his services than had most other rabbis. When student rabbis were engaged, the turn-out was more often than not less than a *minyan* (quorum of 10 males) including women, children, choir and hired organist.

There were evenings during the year of Rabbi Kreutzer's tenure in which the service would begin with as few as two people present in the pews and conclude with 10 or 11. The largest number attending on a Friday night was 41. This turn-out occurred on the night of a most crucial congregational meeting. The average number of all persons (exclusive of blocks of Christian visitors) attending Friday night services was 20 and usually, "the same faces." In fact, only 15 percent of the congregation attended more than one-third of the Friday night services during the year 1960-1961 and 38 percent of the congregation failed to attend *any* regular, Friday night services during that year.

Some of those who appear at services, do so under moral obligation, e.g., the president of the congregation, the Jewish woman who frequently presents the musical offering, the *"shammes"* (sexton) and two women from the sisterhood who prepare the tea for the ensuing social hour.

Members of the community commented on Friday night service attendance as such:

"Look at it this way. Last Friday night a lot of people were away [Winter holidays], others work 'til nine and are tired, V.....'s mother is ill and R..... . went to see the children. Besides, it was dreadfully cold and mean Friday night. And for some it means getting a baby sitter. So who's left? Yet you know, it's still unfair to the rabbi."

"I feel guilty about not going but, golly sakes, with a busy week, long hours and all the rest, I'm not very

eager come Friday night. Now the other Friday we were all set to go. I really meant to, but then C..... . called and said he had a couple of Bearcat [high school basketball team] game tickets—so you know what happened. But I really wanted to go."

"Oh, why did I come! There are so few here and I was nice and comfortable at home in my slacks."

"I wouldn't ever walk into that place if she didn't make me. I think the whole thing is stupid; the way it's handled—repetitive bunk."

"I feel fine until the service starts. It is a pointless ritual. It may be instrumental in generating unity within the group and that is good. But the shallowness of organized religion drives me batty."

A lack of ego involvement in the services seems apparent when one observes that congregants yawn, study their own clothes, whisper to each other or pass glances during even the more solemn moments. Those who enter late are spied by those already present, and on one occasion some of the male members of the congregation circulated photographs taken at a beatuy contest. An unusually smoky Sabbath candle or the choir's fumbling brings smiles and winks to the faces of worshipers. It is the exceptional person who sits, seemingly, absorbed in the rituals. Hymns are sung poorly but the group prayers, especially the short ones said while standing, are enunciated clearly and vigorously. Longer prayers are often accompanied by yawning. (During a high holiday service at which 129 people were present, one could note between five and eight yawning simultaneously at any given moment during the longer prayers delivered from the pulpit.) Nevertheless, at the close of the service, families embrace and radiate a momentary and authentic glow as they celebrate one another in regard to the Sabbath and to the goodness of life which its entry manifests.

The nine o'clock store closings on Friday nights con-

tributes to the tardiness of arrivals for services that begin at 8:30 P.M. It was noted that 62 percent of the services began with less than one-half of the closing benediction's complement of persons. Not only are many of those who do attend late in arriving, but they are extraordinarily late. It is not unusual to see worshipers entering the sanctuary during the closing hymn.

The young rabbi was deeply offended by the poor attendance and by the tardiness of so many who did appear. He was asked how it felt to speak to a nearly empty room:

"When it gets really bad, then I try more than ever to get something out of it myself. Maybe it works, sometimes."

Late in December when only one congregant and the researcher were present at 8:29 P.M. the rabbi remarked from the pulpit:

"I never would; I never could expect it to be this bad."

At other times he was more aggressive in his statements:

"I am going to tell them. Believe me, they're going to know what's for. I won't do it in front of the congregation. That doesn't work well and it just scolds those who do come. I'm going to let the board know that I'm damned fed up with this stuff. The word will go out from here."

Rabbi Kreutzer was not without some sympathetic supporters:

"All this talk is nonsense about the rabbi. No attendance—they are not satisfied? They are lazy and they think they are real *mentshen.* Nonsense! You do not treat a man, any man, rabbi or not, like that! And yet, you know the funny thing; these people think they are noble, decent—real *mentshen.* It is a disgrace isn't it?

"There he is up there knocking his heart out for us

and this is what he gets! (sweeps arm about nearly empty room)."

Toward the Spring of 1961 one of the women stalwarts of the community began bringing pressure to bear on others to attend meetings. She described her encounters and her own rationale:

"I telephone them or talk to them when I see them. You get kind of sick of their excuses. This one says, 'I'm really not interested.' That one says, 'He uses the *Sephardic* pronunciations.' 'I'm too busy.' 'I don't like this rabbi.' Or you hear, 'I'm too tired,' or "Something else came up.' My answer is, 'So who cares what you think? You don't just HIRE a rabbi. You have to show up if you like it or not. You took this obligation upon yourselves.' "

The results of this woman's efforts were tangible but not imposing.

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Most everyone who attends the services remains for the *Kiddush* (blessing) and the *Oneg Shabbat* ("social hour") which follows. There were Friday evenings on which more people were present at the *Oneg Shabbat* than at the service. The Temple Sisterhood carries the responsibility for the refreshments and, according to numerous reports, it is necessary to cajole some women into taking their turns.

Informal conversations, while sitting or standing with one's cup and saucer include a full range of topics: Salutations, air craft crashes, juvenile crimes in Middletown, tight corsets, trade barriers, drama, vacations, dietary laws, dieting, ailments and building costs.

On occasion social jockeying may be sensed. As people leave the tea table and move toward the sitting area one might note an attempt to head into comfortable or advantageous company. The more confident or ag-

gressive congregants who are already seated sometimes hail an individual:

"Hey, don't be shy. Come on over here. I want to see you, you old bum."

"Won't you sit here and join us? You're not too important to do that, are you?"

At times individuals might go aside to discuss private matters. Occasionally a sharp argument might break forth concerning dues, the temple fund drive, or the rabbi's actions.

The rabbi programmed a discussion topic for the social hour on several of the Friday nights. When visiting Christian groups were present there was often a "Question and Answer" period. The planned programs met with uneven success. Sometimes one witnessed exceedingly rapid and, frequently, sharp exchanges. But the majority of the sessions were stifled either by the group's indifference to the topic at hand, e.g. food laws or by the rabbi's seeming need to dominate the discussion.

The lack of group support of Friday night services and of special programs angered, humiliated and depressed the rabbi. And it was particularly upsetting to him that bowling or bridge parties were sufficient reason to turn interest away from special programs or non-Sabbath services. At the conclusion of one such service the rabbi became involved in a discussion with some of his congregants on the topic of attendance in general:

Rabbi: "I'm awfully disappointed in this group!"

Mrs. H.: "You'll have to get used to it, Rabbi."

Rabbi: "I expect a poor turn out on *Shabbes* but not on a holiday. Now how come the B'nai B'rith fellows bowl then? The organization bars holiday recreation. So what are they doing bowling Wednesday night?"

Mr. O.: "We didn't know. No one enforces it or reminded us of it."

Rabbi: "SO!"

Mrs. H.: "And the doubles at bridge will go on and on. If it's a choice between the service and bridge; well, you and I both know how it's going to be, Rabbi. You just wait and see."

Rabbi: "They'll hear from me!"

Mrs. H.: "And basketball has hardly begun. And that'll fix services! You wait and see. You know your stuff, Rabbi, but you've still got a lot to learn about [Middletown]."

Rabbi: "I tell you I won't have it. They'll hear from me."

Mr. H.: "Yea, Yea, and you'll be ostracized. Rabbi [Blum] tried to shape the group but he got no support."

Rabbi: "I don't care. I'm going to tell the parents just what's for if they goof off on holidays."

Mr. G.: "You're asking for it."

Mr. O.: "Rabbi, you push your views or will and you will get it in your face."

Mrs. G.: "That's so."

Mrs. H.: "But Rabbi, you'll have to take your stand here if you want to be respected."

Rabbi: "But I have, haven't I? This congregation isn't leading me around! Many didn't come because they are not used to it. But then they must be trained to get the habit of coming."

Mr. H.: "It's sure death if you fight them."

Mrs. H.: "But Rabbi, you stand up for your principles. It's the ONLY thing to do!"

Rabbi: "I AM!"

Mr. H.: "It's your will versus their will. They know your stand and you know their's, so? It's a draw, *nu.*" It was a draw.

Civic Responsibility

The annually elected officers ("the Board") and, especially the president's position, is socially honorific. The president's position is also reputed to be a somewhat trying one. He is obliged to sustain the impact of divergent views within the congregation and to deal with the rabbi. The setting of dues can be a particularly difficult issue for the elected officers. On the other hand, there have been periods of slack when the board's monthly meetings were terminated in 15 or 20 minutes. Such, however, was not to be the case during 1960-1961.

The president for 1960-1961 appears to have been chosen with an eye toward the building of a new temple. Then President Pele is among the more affluent members of the congregation. He and, especially, Mrs. Pele have shown considerable interest in congregational activities, yet he is reputed to be something of a political neutral. It was also reported that Mr. Pele attempts to avoid embroilment in acrimonious controversies. His one major antagonist in the Jewish community has taken little part in temple business. Pele, himself, seemed to be flattered by his election and by the thought that under his administration a new temple would be built. It was recognized that his own part was more nearly that of a mediator than that of a strong leader.

The young rabbi's assertion of his own leadership role appeared to generate some concern in Pele. At least Rabbi Kreutzer felt such was indeed the case. He reminded himself, from time to time, that the President, as Kreutzer perceived matters, was a man who *might* feel somewhat inadequate in his position, fearful of fumbling the temple drive and wary of those who appeared to invade the president's domain.

From rather early in their relationship President Pele and Rabbi Kreutzer seemed to stimulate the others'

areas of emotional vulnerability and when the temple drive, to which both men were profoundly committed, began to encounter difficulties their relationship progressively deteriorated. The rabbi became ever more antagonistic, and moralistic. The president became increasingly irritable.

The conflict of authority between the rabbi on the one hand and the president and the Board, on the other hand. was reflected in remarks such as:

"Why should I listen to that guy [the rabbi]? What does he know? He's just a kid. He means well but he's mostly hot under the collar. I know what he's going to say even before he starts."

"The Rabbi can talk because he's not footing the bill for things around here. We're the guys who have to fork over—including his salary, which is not small—and, anyway, we live here, not him."

"If he would stay strictly to religious matters no one would mind. But just because he's the rabbi he thinks he should sound off on everything."

The rabbi said:

" 'Look,' I say, 'Gentlemen, as long as I am hired to be your rabbi I am obliged to discharge my duties as I see them. Otherwise I would not be your rabbi. I have to take a stand on some of these issues. And I've got an obligation to all the little guys who aren't here. Somebody has to speak for them.' "

As the winter of 1960-1961 approached, community tensions concerning the disputed temple fund drive mounted. Several of the board members began to nag the rabbi with complaints or close queries as to his incidental expenditures:

"Let's face it; they've got the rabbi by the throat. He can't spend a dime without getting the board's O.K. That's humiliating. Both sides are being pretty petty right now."

By Spring the rabbi's relationship with the board had

been somewhat stabilized in a stalemate. Rabbi Kreutzer continued to attend board meetings, although with misgivings:

"There's no use. Why should I go? They don't listen and they don't care. We've been 'round and 'round. Maybe I should say, 'They don't want to care.' I go in there—It's no use. It only depresses me and I don't like to be made to feel like a little boy who needs a spanking. Also, it's all so unpleasant. How I wish I had a different board!"

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One of the most vexing problems which confronts the board is that of setting dues. Heads of Jewish households are assessed to the amount that the board feels each is capable of sustaining without the creation of hardship or inequities within the community. The dues structure is renegotiated annually. These proceedings were purported to have been the source of exceedingly unpleasant board meetings through the years. The discussion of assessments for 1960-1961 was aggravated at several points; poor business conditions in the city, increased economic demands for the new temple and the cost of retaining a full-time rabbi. Nor is the matter of dues simply one of money; a fundamental moral obligation is also implied.

In the fall of 1960 several members of the Jewish community wrote letters to the board or went before it with requests for the remittance of dues. This plea was particularly upsetting to those who were pressing for the construction of a new temple. On several occasions exchanges resulted in challenges to fist fights:

"They behaved like a bunch of children. . . . Can you imagine a bunch of prosperous men behaving like that? It made some of us sick. Others got a big bang out of this kind of stuff. I don't see it."

In the Autumn of 1960 the channels of gossip were

clogged with financial rumors as to who was "hurting," who was asking for a remittance, who was threatening to resign from the congregation in protest and who was holding larger resources than admitted. Attempts to remit only a portion of the assessment was rejected by way of returning the check. It was understood that non-payment of dues was tantamount to being exiled from the congregation until such time as fees were once again being presented to the board to the amount assessed.

Forty-three percent of the heads of Jewish households expressed, or were reliably reported to have expressed intense dissatisfaction with the dues structure:

"It's robbery. The poor ones pay through the nose and the big boys pay a lot more, but they never feel the pinch the way we do."

"Last year they gave C..... . a plaque for his outstanding contributions to the congregation and this year those bastards are ready to bar him and his kids—imagine, even his kids—from the temple because he hasn't paid up. Hell, he can't afford to. He's hurting something awful."

"G..... . is absolutely furious. He was assessed as much as N..... . who's even richer."

"I grant you that the big boys pay for the bulk of our expenses, but that doesn't mean they can then dominate the majority. So I have mixed feelings. When I become really annoyed I wish we had a different economic arrangement, then a few would not feel that they can dictate policy to the rest of us."

At the time of this study, dues of $100 or less were applied to 44 percent of the Jewish households while 37 percent were assessed upwards of $400 and 19 percent were asked to pay $500 or more.

One of the most controversial assessments concerned the least wealthy member of the congregation. Sam Walters is a manual laborer and had a net income of slightly less than $400 per month in 1960-1961. The

Walters have several young children. A few years prior to this time, there had been a scandal concerning Sam's failure to support and care for a relative for whom Sam was supposedly responsible.

In the Autumn of 1960 Sam requested a remittance of dues on the basis of recent illness and medical expenses. The board took the position that Walters could and should meet his dues which amounted to less than 50 cents per week. Sam was accused of, "wanting something for nothing." He was warned that if he failed to pay the family would not be welcome in the temple and the children would be requested to drop out of the religious school. Some members of the board and the congregation argued that the children should not be punished for the actions of the parents. One board officer took the stand that:

"We are not punishing the children. The parents are punishing them."

The rabbi stated:

"One buck a week; he can do that much. I won't have his kids in my Sunday School until he starts paying up. I'm sorry! Every month he's got a new story to tell the board. He's ready to swear on a Bible his good intentions and faith. He talks in circles. He has wild ideas and he is paranoid. He wouldn't commit himself to anything. He's out as far as I am concerned."

Sam was invited to attend a board meeting in which his dues were once again to be discussed. He did not appear. This inaction was taken as evidence of Walters' refusal to cooperate. The Walters were stricken from the Temple Emanu'El's membership list and the children barred from the religious school. One of Sam's champions remarked some months later:

"[Walters] had been ill, he makes little money and has four kids. He wasn't going to go before the board and beg poverty in front of those. . . . Can you blame him?"

Sam and his wife stated that they had never felt a part of the congregation and that the dues issue justified their deprecating estimate of the group.

The board's absorption in establishing and then collecting the year's dues began in September and continued into the Spring of 1961.

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One of the primary organizations of the Temple Emanu'El is the Temple Sisterhood composed of the wives (or widows) of all members of the congregation. Virtually every Jewish woman in the congregation is a nominal member of this organization.

The officers of the sisterhood are a socially heterogeneous group. They hold their own small monthly board meetings and, during 1960-1961, the monthly luncheon meetings of the sisterhood drew between 14 and 29 women, i.e. 25 percent and 53 percent of the membership. Those attending seemed to represent a cross section of both the younger and older women as well as the more and less prosperous.

It was frequently remarked that a few women do most of the actual work in keeping the sisterhood "going." Those most often cited as major contributors are, with one notable exception, women of financial means. It was also reported that many women shirk their duties or that they can not be relied upon to undertake routine chores.

The sisterhood is primarily responsible for the religious school and for honorific dinners. They raise money by way of rummage sales, card parties and luncheons. It was reported that these women are pivotal in keeping the congregation intact during the periods when a permanent rabbi is not engaged. There was wide agreement that the sisterhood represents the most reliable source for congregational action within the Jewish community:

"When this outfit was just about on the rocks, it was Mrs. P..... . and the sisterhood that kept it going until things picked up speed."

"The women do a lot of insignificant little things but they, much more than we men, have been responsible for the presence of a live rather than a dead Jewish group in this town."

The monthly luncheon is prepared by one of the group's many committees. The food, in contrast to many non-Jewish women's organizations, is ample and generally tasty. At the close of the meal four or five might excuse themselves. The business meeting opens with a short prayer followed by as many as five committee reports and four budget reports. During this time four or five more women might tip-toe out, leaving slightly more than half the original group to attend the entertainment program. There is, of course, a committee responsible for the entertainment.

There were repeated suggestions that the sisterhood needs to initiate vigorous programs. At one business meeting the following exchange occurred:

Mdm. Pres.: "How do you ladies, girls, suggest we pep up our meetings? . . . I'd like some suggestions from the floor if you please."

Mrs. W.: "Well, I understand that the group in M..... . instituted a marathon mahjong game going at the temple and in their homes."

Mrs. C.: "Sure, but can we form amicable groupings?

Mdm. Pres. It would be complicated I guess in a very few cases, but it could be done.

Mrs. B.: "I think it's a good idea IF it works. Let's not kid ourselves; cards glue a congregation together."

Mrs. T.: (An aside) "Or what ails ninety-nine out of a hundred congregations."

The marathon mahjong game did not reach fruition.

Although sharp exchanges do occur from time to time and discreet jockeying for social positions is ob-

servable, the overall tone of the sisterhood meetings is decorous. The night before one meeting a Jewish junk firm was bombed and earlier in the week one of the Jewish "corporation men" had been released from his job. The news of the bombing had been on the front page of the morning paper and word of the dismissal was spreading rapidly. Nevertheless, neither incident came up openly nor privately during the course of the luncheon. Later, when I inquired as to the lack of comment on these unusual events, he was assured on several sides that it would have been considered extremely poor form to impugn such distressing issues during the monthly sisterhood luncheon.

The sisterhood, despite its frequently trivial self-concerns and lack of active participation by many of its members, operates as something of a bulwark within the congregation.

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There is a second Jewish women's organization in Middletown; Hadassah. A local chapter was advocated during the Israeli war of 1948 when local sentiments on behalf of a Jewish home state ran very high indeed. It was reported that some of the sisterhood members resisted the formation of a local Hadassah unit. They contended that a second women's group would not further the cause of Israel any more than existing organizational structures. Some women also suggested that a second group would be a divisive influence within the Jewish community. Finally, there were a very few women who felt uneasy in regard to the close identification with a foreign state which Hadassah might suggest to the larger community.

Nevertheless, a local unit was established in conjunction with interested women in a neighboring city. The group's primary function in Middletown seems to be that of raising money for worthy causes in Israel.

Membership during 1960-1961 included 73 percent of the Jewish women from Middletown. It did not include any of the less prosperous Jewish citizenry despite the possibility of being assessed as little as $6.

Many of the women commented upon the social and economic composition of Hadassah:

"I am a member of Hadassah but I have little use for the women's clubbish atmosphere. I prefer the sharp, young, trim sisterhood."

"Hadassah's fine but it's too showy—the neat blue folders with the emblem, the fancy coffee when they meet and all the rest. They think they're something awfully special. I resent it."

"There was a group of women, I call them 'The Crowd'; they are perfectly nice, understand, but not really up to par in some ways. They were in and out of Hadassah. Now they've chosen to stay out and I suspect for good."

As with Temple Sisterhood, a minority of the women attend most of the Hadassah meetings. During 1960-1961 the Middletown contingent present at regular monthly meetings ranged from six to twelve of the thirty-six members. It was widely commented that two or three women from Middletown undertake most of the chores. It was further reported that their programs suffered each winter because of prolonged Florida vacations. The writer attended one monthly Hadassah meeting. The women present were groomed to perfection, firmly corseted and many were deeply tanned. Exceedingly rich and handsomely wrought cakes were served with coffee. Social conversation drifted from food to clothes and then to recently concluded vacations. There were compliments for those who were well burnished by the sun.

The program consisted of selected readings from the correspondence of Henrietta Szold. The letters chosen by the reader expressed Szold's intense commitment

to humility, simplicity and reflected her extraordinary degree of selflessness. The immaculately turned out women appeared to be profoundly impressed by these thoughts.

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B'nai B'rith maintains a chapter in Middletown. Membership is open to all Jewish men. Dues were $20 per annum at the time of this study. The local chapter was reported to have been dormant for many years. In the mid-1950's one of the least wealthy Jewish men stimulated its renaissance. Statewide recognition came to the man in 1961 despite his near expulsion from the congregation in the Autumn of 1960 for failure to meet his dues.

Eighty-two percent of the local Jewish men were members of the lodge in 1960-1961. Meeting attendance ranged from thirty-five percent to fifty percent of the roster. At the monthly evening meetings there were never more than two of the ten most heavily assessed members of the congregation present. Some of the group articulated views on the membership of the local lodge:

"Everyone's welcome and most of the men belong but you can see as well as I can who shows up and who does the work."

"B'nai B'rith is for all of us but the guys who get into it in a big way are usually the more regular fellows such as F..... who has been the real spark plug around here for a long time. It's a good gang."

"I'm in the B'nai B'rith, of course, but I am too busy to spend an evening a month horsing around doing nothing. They're a fine group and all that but while I am for them I just do not have the time to goof off."

It was widely reported that the hard working, impecunious and self avowedly unsophisticated Mr. Spinoza was responsible for the local lodge's activity. He prepared the buffet meals, sent out communications and,

"talked it up." It was noteworthy that the one night Spinoza was unable to attend a meeting, the food was inadequate, the meeting poorly attended and conversation terminated early in the evening.

As with the sisterhood the B'nai B'rith has its own board, board sessions and plethora of committees. After the meal the business meeting commences with a solemn pledge to the flag. Ribaldry, mockery of the Roberts Rules of Order and a general tone of levity characterize the evening. The mood of the meetings changes to one of sobriety only when matters of major policy are brought up. As if by unspoken understanding all joking is set aside. Aside from an annual fund raising scheme, the primary activity of the lodge is the Wednesday night bowling session. After the brief and playful business meetings, men either drift out, settle down for a game of poker, or chat for a while.

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In broad perspective: It would appear that neither the rejection of formal religious content nor the abandonment of the law are seen by most of Middletown's Jews as a repudiation of their commitment to Judaism. One wonders if it might be a failure in articulation by the congregants which leaves the observer with the impression of ideological vacuity among these people. Perhaps, behind the poverty of words there lies a latent and reasonably well integrated fabric of commitments which reflects their ancient and uniquely ethical heritage. But, again, perhaps there is nothing but the memory of the echo of that heritage. Such profound matters lie beyond the purview of this research although the profile of vacuity has been suggested.

In any event, there exists some denominational conflict which probably also involves considerations of social status. In this regard it has been suggested that:

"Since traditional Jewish worship is *actually* charac-

terized by so many patterns which are, according to American norms, typed as being lower-class, the identification of Orthodoxy and social inferiority has been especially pronounced."[8]

Indeed, in Middletown some of the "old guard" Reform congregants and some of those who recently acquired the status of Reform Jews react sharply to a seemingly minimal injection of ancient custom.

Irrespective of the essence of their religious experience, the bald fact remains that the organizational activity of Middletown's Jewish community is singularly flaccid. There are many possible sources, many of which are shared by their Protestant cohorts, which might account for this social fact.

In brief: the rabbis attracted to Middletown have often lacked maturity and depth, and they suffer from an ambiguity of authority; the congregants—perhaps somewhat unlike their Christian cohorts—doubt that Sabbath services are pivotal to being "Jewish"; individual notions of the meaning and content of Judaism are, at least at the overt level, both extraordinarily vague and nebulous; service rituals are seen to be redundant yet lacking in dramatic pageantry; a tradition of minimal Friday night attendance has become well established; and, perhaps, most singularly—anything other than Sunday morning religious services are both a social and economic anomaly in Middletown. Further, there are the individuals who prefer Conservative services, individuals who prefer to see themselves as uncolored by anything but their own immersion in "the good life," individuals who genuinely feel they have transcended institutionalized religion altogether, and individuals who have "soured" on the coreligionists who dominate the local congregation.

In sum: It might be suggested that the decent, hard working fragment of Middletowners who are adherents to Judaism, who are Friday-tired and Service-bored,

usher in the Sabbath with almost singular, group indifference. Granting that there persists the notion that the coming of the Sabbath on Friday night is both a promise of fulfillment and its reification, there remains the blunt reality that Saturday is a working day.

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Down through the years the elected officers of the Temple Emanu'El have rotated seats. One of their most serious problems during Rabbi Kreutzer's tenure was the inherent conflict between the rabbi's extensive claims to authority as the representative of institutionalized religion and the secular authority and vested interests of the board members. The officers held the upper hand in the relationship insofar as they employed Rabbi Kreutzer, held his "purse strings," out voted him and even ignored him when they felt that was necessary or desirable.

Board duties are made more complex and emotionally demanding by virtue of the fact that the ability of families to support the temple has to be carefully and more or less equitably appraised without the use of exact data concerning the incomes and expenditures of the participating families. Tension seems to have been furthered by the rather considerable levies which were needed in order to cover the expenses of the temple and the employment of a full time rabbi. It is noteworthy that the rankling argument over the annual dues structure for 1960-1961 extended over six months out of the nine months of organized religious activity. Added to the board's and the community's difficulties is the intensely moral overtone which the discussion of monetary issues assume, especially in respect to "equity." At the same time, philanthropic activity continues as a strong and binding value among Middletown's Jews, whether directed toward local charities or toward the state of Israel.

Of the other ancillary temple organizations, the ultimate questions that might be asked are, perhaps, two: (1) Do the organizations reinforce and assist in the preservation and enhancement of the central religious institution and its ideals? (2) Do the ancillary organizations meet the needs of the participants to the extent that these individuals will identify with and carry forward the goals of the supporting institutions? In Middletown it would seem likely that while both of the above questions might be answered in the affirmative, that affirmation must be qualified by the knowledge that neither bowling matches nor covert style shows reflect the generally understood ideals of the Judaic heritage. At the same time, these very activities which might be viewed as such doubtful renderings of *Klal Isroel* do, obviously, meet the needs and wants of at least a minority of the congregants. And, at least to this extent, they might be viewed with empathy and sympathy. Finally, it should be noted that neither in content nor in form nor in pattern of participation would these organizations seem to be unlike corresponding non-Jewish religiously ancillary organizations in Middletown; all of which may attest to both the success of Judaism in America and to its defeat.

Chapter VII

THE RABBI AND THE TEMPLE DRIVE

A number of the older members of the Jewish community of Middletown insisted that the role of the rabbi in Jewish life had been down-graded since their childhood:

"When I was a little boy it was made very, very clear to me that a bright Jewish boy . . . could go into one of three occupations. He could become a doctor or a lawyer or a rabbi. Anything else was pretty much unthinkable. Now all that has changed. You must cross the rabbi off of your list. His place is almost nothing today. We see it in the way they are treated and the way the average rabbi behaves. We don't get the same quality there either."

Many members of the Jewish community pointed out that the local pulpit is not an easy one to hold. In measured phrases and in heavy tones the researcher was informed by one individual that:

"THIS PLACE IS NOTHING LESS THAN A MEAT GRINDER FOR RABBIS."

Others put it less strongly:

"[Middletown] has been something of a hornets' nest for rabbis and their wives."

"This community is a hot seat for rabbis and we

all know it. They are good for two years here and then that's about it."

Several members of the congregation may be inclined to take a perverse pride in being "hard to live with":

"So we give them a bad time? It does them good. They have to learn. Not every congregation can say that much for itself."

Almost no one suggested that the congregation's relationships with previous rabbis had been at all felicitous.

During the year 1959-1960 student rabbis served the congregation and the Reform seminary was, as in the past, requested to put forward a candidate for "full time duty" at the Middletown pulpit. The Jewish community recognized that they were not in a strong bargaining position with the seminary:

"Who would come here after our record with rabbis! Then there is the fact that [Middletown] has little to offer a rabbi in the way of its congregation, its cultural advantages, or its Jewish life."

"Either we get the young men who are moving up in the rabbinate; they certainly don't wish to stay here more than two years, and we know that. Or we get a burned out fellow like [Fisher]. With the shortage of rabbis we certainly aren't apt to get superior men who will stay on."

Rabbi Kreutzer was sent up to Middletown where he lunched and conferred with the board, gave a guest sermon and put forward his views. He made it clear that he fully supported the trend toward the reintroduction of ritual and cultural tradition within the Reform framework. It was reported by several informants that Rabbi Kreutzer was warned of the difficult relationships the group had known with previous religious leaders.[1] The board elected Rabbi Kreutzer with one member dissenting.

The new rabbi was welcomed to Middletown with

an open house given in his honor by President and Mrs. Pele. There was only one jarring note. On first meeting, one of the wealthiest members of the congregation confronted the rabbi with the assertion:

"Don't expect to see me at temple. I never have and I never will be one for that, even if God were giving the sermon. I just don't like that stuff. And I'll tell you something: the first few times they'll come to service, to see who you are and to hear what you sound like; then it will be the same old story—four, six or eight people will show."

The rabbi passed the remark off. He did not concur when several congregants suggested that his confrontation was with one of the *balebatim.* (man of substance).

The bulk of the congregants, having preceded the new rabbi's arrival but having followed his pre-hiring contacts, were afforded an opportunity to acquire first impressions of the man. In that sense there was a covert reception for Rabbi Kreutzer as well as the open house reception. Among 71 informants questioned, 21 were favorably impressed by the incoming religious leader. But several observed as did one:

"He seemed very nice and personable and I was favorably impressed by the man. But so have they all (winking) when they first came to this town."

There were 16 who stated that they would prefer to suspend judgment. Reservations were harbored by 14.

The new rabbi arrived in Middletown escorted by his fiancee and his mother. It was understood that the marriage would take place in New York shortly after the Autumn high holidays. An apartment was located and the prospective couple set about furnishing it. But shortly after the return of the women to New York serious difficulties in the relationship arose; the wedding plans were terminated. The rabbi was obviously distraught during a service prior to travelling to New York.

He abandoned his sermon, "walked the *Torah,*" and his voice quivered. Those in attendance eyed each other.

In the following weeks the young rabbi spoke of the romantic debacle in terms of his new-found maturity and independence as well as in terms of his increased longing for a home and children. A number of those who attended Friday night services were of the opinion that the tone of his sermons had become more sober and sensitive. He felt that he was in a better position to do personal counseling but even after almost a year's tenure he observed:

"As for pastoral counseling I have done virtually none. Oh, Miss H..... . called me. She said she had a moral problem about buying an Olympia [German typewriter] that she thought was the best choice. I said, 'So?' And who's kidding who about ritual advice. No one comes to me on that sort of thing. Heavens, they're shook up enough that I wear a *yarmelkeh* in the Temple."

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Shortly after World War II the Emanu'El congregation discussed the prospects of building a new temple. A special congregational meeting was called at which time the purchase of real estate on the "West Side" (the Riverside property) was agreed upon. The session ended at midnight and there were heated exchanges. There followed repeated efforts to raise money for a building. These drives were not successful:

"Part of the trouble with our fund drives for the temple in the past has been that certain individuals are too frightened that they'll be made to look like pigeons or chumps by being caught holding the bag. Therefore each one says, 'I'll give this much IF so and so will also give this much.' You can't build anything that way."

"Past drives have done more to tear this community

up than anything else. All the small grievances are magnified."

The penultimate drive to the one of 1960-1961 (explored in this study) was carried on during Rabbi Blum's tenure. A professional fund-raising service was employed. The drive moved ahead but soon collapsed. Adequate pledges were not forthcoming. Rabbi Blum, who had advocated the building, announced his resignation in the middle of the drive and one of the most wealthy men in the group withdrew his support at a critical juncture. At the time of this study there remained a range of explanatory theories in regard to the failure of that drive:

"The big givers pulled back when the rabbi dropped his bomb shell about resigning."

"Too many people didn't like professional money raisers. It was a sucker deal if I ever saw one."

By the early Summer of 1960 there was again a movement to build. It was suggested that only classrooms and a social hall should be constructed. It was felt that the social hall could function as a sanctuary until such time as there might be adequate funds to complete the project. An architect was engaged and by late Summer, a month prior to Rabbi Kreutzer's arrival, the new board with President Pele at its head was ready to call a congregational meeting at which time it was hoped that the group would endorse the plans and the necessary increases in personal assessments.

During the Autumn of 1960 informants were probed for their feelings and views concerning the new temple fund drive. Among 75 individuals questioned in terms of their feelings about the temple drive, 24 percent spoke against it:

"It will fall into the lap of a few of us. We know that but what can you do?"

"They need money for scholarships, not for a lot of vulgar buildings to keep up with the *goyim.*"

"I am against a temple drive because I know it will fail even before it starts. The fat boys won't float that kind of money when they begin to add it up and see just how much it will take."

"Build a temple when five people show up for a service? That hall is empty. When Rabbi [Fisher] was here there were times when only his wife was sitting in the pews. We are perfectly happy with what we have."

The other 76 percent were either moderately in favor of the temple or were very enthusiastic:

"Only an idiot won't build! This is the greatest thing that could happen to this little band of people."

"I don't really know much about it, but I think we are all pleased by the thought of building something handsome and nice."

One of the central figures in the controversy which arose concerning the 1960-1961 drive commented, in the early Autumn of 1960:

"We disagree with the temple and its building plans but we gave it one-hundred percent support when the majority decided in favor of it."

When asked, "What are the reasons for building a new temple?", the majority of those in favor of the program argued that the facilities of the religious school were totally inadequate. Other rationales were also put forward:

"We want to preserve our Judaism and doing things that bring it prestige and that enhance it in the eyes of the children are valuable to us."

"We need it in order to hold us together. If we have something to do which is a struggle for us, we will cooperate with each other. It really doesn't matter what it is so long as there is something that demands something from us. The mortgage will unify us."

"I say, 'Look, fellow, you live in a nice house and you

have a Cadillac and then you go to that OLD temple. It is part of your home too.' "

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It was well understood by interested members in the Jewish community that the special congregational meeting (first) called for the late Summer of 1960 was to be an endorsement of Phase I, the construction of classrooms, and of Phase II, the construction of an adjacent social hall which could serve as a temporary sanctuary. The total cost for the bare structure was estimated at $55,000. It had also been rumored that there might be a suggestion that the structure be completed at the same time, i.e. Phase III, the permanent sanctuary.

The evening of the first congregational meeting, President Pele and the important Mr. Protz brought together over drinks and dinner at the club three other leading members of the congregation; Novid, Love and Noel. At this time these men tentatively agreed to finance Phase III. One of the five men present had made it known that he would donate a very large sum if the congregation would vote in favor of the entire project. It was suggested that several of the other wealthy members of the community might follow suit with gifts ranging from $3,000 to $7,000. It was felt that an amount close to $30,000 would be required to build the basic structure of the permanent sanctuary (Phase III). The funds for the first and second phases would have to come out of dues, supplementary assessments of all congregants and a bank note which would be underwritten by the pledges of the congregation. It was recognized that the complete building program would work a hardship on the Jewish community and that it would require the support of most everyone who was in any way affluent.

Before the first congregational meeting opened there was an air of excitement, good feeling and expectancy

among those there. Present were 34 percent of the Jewish community and the architect. The group included representation from all of the more socially prominent families. There was only one representative from "The Crowd." Only a handful of the older or more nearly isolated members of the community attended the meeting.

A number of the less affluent members of the group were later questioned as to their absence:

"Why should I go to the congregational meetings? They're going to go ahead and do what they want anyway. I'll get assessed and pay out of my skin but that's the way it is."

"The wealthy ones among us must pay for the largest portion of the new temple, so it's understandable that they do most of the talking. Therefore I don't go."

"My husband won't go to temple meetings anymore. It's just too painful and upsetting for him."

The meeting opened with the protagonists for the new temple expounding their arguments:

"Above all we need a Sunday school worthy of the name. . . . We can not hope to do justice to them [the children] otherwise."

"This place has served us well for years but now the time has come to move upward with the community. . . . The neighborhood is run down, the fire hazard is real, we need parking facilities and we are crowded here."

Formal meeting procedures deteriorated as people began to engage in side conversations and debates and as the building charts were passed around and discussed. Opposition began to be heard:

Mr. T.: "Mr. Chairman, I think we must consider the hard facts of life and costs. The cost of the proposed Phase I and II work does not include those items which are essential if it is to be an inhabitable building."

Mr. P.: "We always hear that, but when there is a

real need for money it has always appeared."

Mr. N.: "Yaa! Out of my pocket, too (general laughter)."

The meeting became one of fitful squabbling and there was a loss of direction. President Pele repeatedly rapped for order.

At an auspicious moment Noel put forward the construction advocates' so called, "ace in the hole." Noel suggested that he and some of the other more prosperous men would like to move to have overall dues assessments raised by 20 percent. However, the more wealthy members of the congregation would be called upon to increase their remittances by 30 percent as well as agreeing among themselves to attempt to produce the necessary funds with which to build the permanent sanctuary (Phase III). There followed a period in which the proposals were clarified. Then one of the more hesitant supporters of the temple drive swung in favor of Noel's propositions. Further clarifications of motions and amendments to motions were called for. The critical motion stated that Phases I (the class rooms) and II (the social hall *cum* temporary sanctuary) be accepted and that assessments be increased as outlined by Noel. The crucial commitments were voted upon and passed by the overwhelming majority of congregants present. Phase III (the permanent sanctuary) remained an open question but it was well understood that the pre-meeting dinner group would put this matter in hand. It was known that Protz, Noel and, to some extent, President Pele were enormously eager to achieve the early completion of the permanent sanctuary. The meeting was adjourned with the president's testimonial remarks and Noel's applauded statement:

"At last, after so many delays and fizzles, we will start building!"

The Noels held an impromptu party immediately following the dispersal of the group.

Thirty-seven heads of Jewish households were asked why they thought the temple plans had succeeded at this time and in light of previous failures:

"Last time we had no real plan. We just wanted to hit the rich. The general community wasn't brought in and the big givers were not agreed among themselves. Also, this time we have set it up as a painless extraction."

"This time the big money came together, therefore it goes. The little fellows could never do it on their own, therefore agreement is crucial."

"Much of it has to do with President [Pele's] leadership. In his quiet way he's got all the important figures to pull together reasonably well. That and the promise of a better community future which is likely with a new rabbi coming; well, how could it have turned out otherwise?"

Only two men among 37 householders questioned suggested that the authorized building program might not come to fruition. The roots of their views lay in the extended financial arrangements which would be called for in order to complete all phases of the program.

Rumors of "complications" arose by late September when there were no obvious, further steps in the building program. These were countered by the report that the board was waiting on bids, upon possible sale of the old temple and upon financial arrangements with the bank. It was thought that the full costs for all three phases would approach $125,000.

The rabbi, after the shattering of his romance, desired to put himself entirely behind the temple drive in every way open to him. He devoted a great deal of energy to this end. Toward the close of September he complained that he was not being kept entirely abreast of events and he felt, as the rabbi, that he should be fully informed.

On September 30th a meeting was held at the home

of the finance chairman, Novid. Also present were Noel, Protz, Pele, two other wealthier members of the community and the majority of the board members. The rabbi was not present. It was stated that he was to have been called for but, through an oversight, this had not been done. Several members of the community were incensed that the rabbi had been slighted. Somewhat later the rabbi reported:

"I went to the movies that night. I was supposed to call someone or something. It was mixed up. I don't know. But nuts on it, I'd had ALL I could take for the moment and I wanted to see 'Sons and Lovers' anyway."

The meeting concerned assessments and donations for the new temple. The third phase was a point of particular concern. The group more or less agreed on a policy by which those who were to be asked to donate heavily for Phase III would be expected to put forward the sum suggested. Several present thought that one could not treat benefactors in such a manner.

By early October of 1960 it became increasingly apparently that the building program was not making much headway, but no clear statements as to what were the "problems" was forthcoming. It was suggested that President Pele felt obliged to abide by the will and interests of concerned parties and that, as a consequence, he would not press for construction if there might be strong resistance from any important sector. It was said that the president had become increasingly enthusiastic but also increasingly aware of the heavy expenses which would be required to equip and furnish the rooms. It was his stated intention to work toward an agreeable goal with a minimum of public commotion. He felt that more progress could be achieved if discretion were his rule. Those who took issue with Pele implied that he and some of the other wealthy members of the community were indulging in *sub rosa* maneuvers. A good

deal of misunderstanding may have been generated by the apparent secrecy of the president who perceived his mode of procedure as effective and, perhaps more crucial, ethically proper and socially appropriate.

The rabbi's exclusion from critical discussions became more obvious. During a Friday night social hour three of the leading figures in the group abandoned their religious mentor and a member of the "In-betweeners" to carry on a discussion of real estate possibilities in the hall way. This action drew a measure of unfavorable comment.

In a moment of despair one of the staunchest advocates of the new temple exclaimed:

"There can be no mistake. The board has a clear mandate to start on Phases I and II; but we may yet oligarchize our way out of it."

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The officers for the year were formally installed at a temple service and dinner on October 9th. At this time there was talk of imminent construction although there were side remarks to the effect that hurdles were still to be met. Rabbi Kreutzer was installed in office on November 13th. He had been sorely tempted to speak out against what he termed the "shilly-shallying" of the board and some of the wealthier members of the congregation. He desisted.

Several days later the rabbi was again tempted to belabor the board and the leading members of the congregation in public for their lack of execution of the authorized construction as well as Phase III:

"I have my job to do, to see that the temple gets built. I have a lot of support from the little fellows and their votes are real. They're solidly behind it and I am going to stick up for their point of view which is mine too. If necessary I'll really let [Pele] and his friends have it."

Among the rabbi's supporters there was concern lest he behave unwisely and naively. One man dreamed of Rabbi Kreutzer. He envisioned the young man "making a fool of himself" and saw himself counseling caution. Others were less sympathetic:

"What's the use of having the rabbi over and trying to explain to him just how things are in this community? He's so wrapped up in getting the temple built now that he only hears what he wants to hear."

One of the wealthy supporters of the temple building program reported:

"I've talked with S....., H....., J....., and M....., [among the least wealthy] and they and that whole bunch are for this thing [temple building] the whole way. They think [Rabbi Kreutzer] is their spokesman. They know he is for it too. But these fellows won't speak up when the going gets rough. They will leave the rabbi holding the bag because they don't want to seem naive or to look like chumps in the eyes of some of the rest of us. And maybe some of them don't think their voices will be heard anyway. That's not the right attitude. The rabbi means well but he's got it figured all wrong. Money talks, and are you surprised when a man is asked to lay out ten-thousand dollars for this temple?"

On the other hand, there were a number of people who had little contact or concern with the day to day tides of gossip which concerned the temple drive. Among 56 households not less than 20 percent were almost entirely oblivious of the immediate controversy. These people comprised the social isolates, some of the older citizens and several of the least wealthy.

The president was torn between his desire to see the temple built and his concern lest he contribute to a splintering of the congregation which would be injurious to its membership and destructive to the building plans. One of his closest sympathizers stated:

"[Pele] feels very much obliged to consider all points of view and various alternatives to building on the new site, but his heart really isn't in it. He wants to see a new temple go up just as badly as the rest of us, maybe more so. . . . But some people are stubborn, tight and stingy. It's not business conditions that stop them from giving. . . . He really wants to get going but he feels he just must have the support of all the people who count for financial reasons and because of principles. He's working on it and in the mean time he does consider alternative plans such as possibilities where we are now."

The rabbi was increasingly antagonized and angered by his exclusion from critical discussions and by what he took to be the vacillating behavior of the president. He was also annoyed with the lack of board action on behalf of their mandate to build:

"The bank will loan the money. It's there waiting for us! But those guys won't underwrite it. They sit around listening to a lot of stray ideas and suggestions which have nothing to do with what is to be done NOW. It's been voted for hasn't it?"

Finally, Rabbi Kreutzer expressed annoyance that the architectural drawings had been deemed only physically adequate and aesthetically disappointing by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

By the end of the second week in November rumors had reached epidemic proportions:

"It's definitely true. K..... . will give $31,000 if it's all completed in one shot, otherwise he won't give one cent extra."

"We're right back where we've always been, 'I'll give providing you do this or that,' and therefore it always gets stopped. It's tyranny. And believe me they'd not come through at all if you insisted on no strings. I cringe every time I hear those arguments again."

"C..... . is going to ruin the whole thing by trying

to get too much done at one time. That's what I hear."

"They say that the rabbi thinks too many corners have been cut on the temple plans. It's not inhabitable the way it is now planned."

It was suggested that any two of the six or eight most wealthy families could collapse the building program if they were to back away from the temple fund drive. It became ever more widely rumored that two such families were of such a disposition.

A second congregational meeting was scheduled for November 18th, but prior to it there occurred a clarification of opposition to the building mandate and a sharpened awareness of the economic recession.

It would appear that the Loves had been, as they reported in the late summer, hesitant to support the building program and had acquiesed only when it became evident that the overwhelming majority was in favor of immediate construction. In the face of the increased cost estimates of September and October they moved to withdraw their support. The Novids concurred and also pulled back, although he was the head of the finance committee. Both families suggested more modest plans which would in some way utilize the old temple site. This news in the second week of November brought forth intense recriminations which were passed around the telephones and over the card tables:

"I saw the [Loves] the other night and we gave them hell for what they've done. I blistered them."

"Those families are the most selfish people I have ever known. They are RICH but they won't give a cent! There has been talk of pulling out altogether, but people don't believe that one any more."

Although they were drowned out by their many critics, the aggrieved were not without voice:

"They want ten-thousand lousy bucks from us for the temple. Some may think we have that kind of money, but it just isn't so. It isn't even a matter of not

having it. Such a layout at this time isn't one bit sound for us."

The tone of the exchanges became ever more personal in nature. The rift was generally perceived in terms of the malevolence of individuals who blocked the mandate or of the naiveté of the ardent building supporters. Further, a man's position in regard to the temple drive was increasingly viewed in unambiguous terms. Noel's champions saw him as a "visionary" and his critics took him to be a verbally fluent weaver of gauze. Love was seen by his friends as "hard headed." His critics charged him with being "cold hearted and selfish." The rabbi was spoken of as "a budding leader of real character" and also as "an idiot kid." Few questioned their own almost undiluted definitions of the character and motivations of others. It was the very rare individual who would say as one did:

"The basic issue here is money versus sentiment and you can watch both in all their virtue and shabbiness."

Protz, who had been a major figure in urging the temple construction and who had been the prime instigator for completion of Phase III, observed developments, said little but registered considerable concern. The rabbi responded in his own, consistent manner:

"Damn it, I'm going to get a temple built and no one is going to stop it! . . . I'm going to give them what's for. This vacillation is poor business and bad psychologically. The board and the others can not do this to the congregation. I'm not going to fool around with them much longer."

The deepening of the recession (locally) contributed to an increasing air of pessimism. Retail sales had languished through the summer, and the anticipated Autumn expansion of business had not occurred. By the first week in November there were warnings that Christmas sales would likely fall below expected levels. Lay-offs were increasing at the local automotive plants,

scrap metal was not being drawn back to the smelters and there were repeated rumors of Jewish families seeking to gain a remittance on a portion of their dues. A further blow to the group's morale came when it was realized that one of the prosperous, older men of the community who had remained beyond the building discussions, decided against a large donation.

The president was asked to entertain alternative plans to building on the "West Side" lot (Riverside). The most promising suggestion seemed to be the purchase of a lot next door to the old temple. This real estate could function as a parking lot or as a site for a social hall, and the basement of the old temple could be converted into class rooms. It was thought that $25,000 might cover basic construction.

Those who were anxious to build on the "West Side" were opposed to plans of remodeling and extending the old location, but Noel, Protz and Pele could envision the purchase of the adjacent land as an *investment* which would enhance the sale value of the old temple. President Pele commented:

"The alternative plan of buying next door and doing something with the land—we can't say yet what—makes economic sense at a time when we are all hurting more than we had expected, and it is SOMETHING."

Love and Novid supported Pele's line of thought but did not foresee the imminent move to the "West Side" which Noel and Protz envisioned as a next step.

The president was challenged for his seeming disregard of the congregational mandate to build Phases I and II on the new property and to do so promptly. Pele took the position that to construct the first phases might result in the permanent refusal by some to finance the sanctuary. Further, he said that he did not wish to run the risk of being stranded with a make-shift sanctuary for an indefinite number of years.

The rabbi was not inclined to compromise and he felt that he spoke for the majority in the face of the "Big Money." At the close of a social hour shortly before the second congregational meeting he quarreled with Noel in the presence of several congregants:

R. K.: "So we fool around and this goes on and on. I tell you, I won't have it."

Mr. N.: "Look fellow, I'm with you but they're playing around with this building here next door and we'll have to see. But by Christmas something will be done I think."

R. K.: "But this is NO GOOD. Here thousands of dollars are tied up which I need and can't get my hands on for books, supplies, the library. I'm not going to go on fooling around like this forever. Either we get going or I'd better get on where I can grow. Do you think I am going to run a Sunday school in this place, under these conditions next year! And how about some run down, dilapidated houses next door? Not on your life!"

Mr. N.: "That's a thought."

R. K.: "And look at the money we've wasted—several thousand dollars for another architect."

Mr. N.: "Wait a minute now; it isn't wasted. We've got a plan, plans and eventually we'll get going on it when these people wake up to the necessity. Not unless they're under pressure do they pull together. It is also that way about a rabbi. This congregation has always felt undressed without a rabbi. But a temple is another matter."

R. K.: "So we go through this ritual every year and it comes to nothing? How's that for a congregation? They vote on something and get their hopes up and then nothing comes of it. I've got an obligation to protect these people and if they won't speak up I'll do it for them."

Mr. N.: "Yes, you might do that. That is part of your jŏb, maybe."

R. K.: "You bet it is! And I'm fed up. We won't mention services and attendance and lateness now but, I won't have this stuff, not as long as I'm the rabbi around here."

Mr. N.: "Look fellow, hold on a minute. The rabbis in the past . . ."

R. K.: "That's not NOW. This has gone on too long and I've had enough. Either we get going on a temple now or I'd better pack up—by next year for sure."

Mr. N.: "You just may. That's your privilege. Why don't we hold on this?"

R. K.: "No, let's get things straight."

Mr. N.: "No, fellow, enough. Let's all calm down a bit and we've got to go."

By November 14th, the rabbi had decided that he would go into the crucial, second congregational meeting of November 18th with a tactful but firm approach to the outstanding issues. He felt that had he been a factor in crystallizing sides in the argument, it was salutary.

* * * * * *

The Friday night service of the 18th was attended by representatives of all the major families except two, and they appeared for the congregational meeting which followed. There were four representatives from "The Crowd" and from among the isolates. There was a block of 45 Christian guests present during the service itself. President and Mrs. Pele entered with the Noels. This was noted and a congregant who was a strong supporter of the temple plans sighed:

"You can kiss the temple good bye right now. Why bother with the meeting?"

The rabbi's sermon opened with a recounting of the conflict between Jacob and Esau. He went on to state:

"There is the grim need for money, teachers and

equipment in the religious school. . . . We all expect so much from the religious school but the rabbi's hands are tied. . . . This is a prosperous society and our affluent members who want so much for their children's Jewish upbringing will not give or sacrifice. . . . We can not have a divided house. This is the lesson of Jacob and Essau."

The benediction included, as usual, the plea for "Sabbath peace."

The visiting Christian group did not stay for the social hour. As the congregation filed into the basement one could overhear comments in favor of the sermon and against it. The social hour was brief and muted. President Pele and the leading board members arranged themselves around a makeshift speaker's table on which stood an inverted bucket and wooden spoon. The president rapped the bucket and called the meeting to order with 48 people present (45 percent of the adult Jewish community):

"We've got a lot of business to do tonight and it's late. Let's get started. OK, come on, let's get under way."

President Pele explained that there were various aspects to the building plans and that there existed, as a consequence, alternative programs:

"Items and facts have come to the board's attention since the previous meeting. . . . Some of the congregation and the board, and not just one or two, have suggested that we look into possibilities right here around the temple."

The president went on to describe the $8,000 lot available next door to the temple which could be utilized in various ways but he went on to say:

"The board was NOT unanimous. . . . There was a question whether the land should be purchased as an investment which would enhance the value of the temple as a parking area for another occupant, or, to utilize it

ourselves as a parking lot or, more likely, as a site for a Sunday school. . . . Therefore the board makes the simple recommendation that the community purchase this lot."

Novid raised his hand, was recognized and began to speak from his seat located toward the front of the room. He neither looked up, faced around nor rose. He was heckled by several persons. The burden of his rather lengthy remarks was located in the statement:

"This community better make up its mind once and for all. We've been playing around for years, and it seems that the only result of this is that we keep buying real estate; here, Riverside, the Wheeling Avenue house and now this. I suggest we make up our minds and then get out of the real estate business. We've kicked away ten-thousand dollars and what have we to show for it? . . . But I can't claim I don't think we should get rid of the building lot on Riverside and buy here and add rooms. . . . I just say we should buy here and sell elsewhere and make up our minds and then get out of the real estate business."

Novid continued on over the same theme as side conversations increased.

At the conclusion of his remarks a man who is not among the most prominent families nor among "The Crowd" rose to speak as the president called for order. Mr. F..... noted rather pointedly that the congregation had agreed, voted upon and approved the construction of Phases I and II on the "West Side" building site:

"So why are we now talking about buying more land? What has that to do with our plans which have been voted upon and passed?"

President Pele answered the question by stating:

"This new angle came up and the board felt obliged to look into it, because several people in the congregation and some of the board requested it. And I didn't

think it would be fair to go ahead without giving this possibility real consideration. You can understand that I am sure? I gather that some people also had second thoughts about building out at Riverside at this time. They point out that the sanctuary is rarely full except on high holidays, that parking is not impossible and that really all we need at this time is the Sunday school. And finally, there may be another reason which has not been stated; but on that I won't say. And, let's face it, if we were to build out there it would keep us economically strapped pretty far into the future, and this would necessarily have to fall on the shoulders of the few families here who are relatively wealthy, and finally, this would mean—because it would be such a load—that ALL the more wealthy families would have to support it."

Novid raised his hand and began speaking simultaneously:

"I'd like to say this; I'll tell you why I changed my mind. I have nothing to hide (some heckling). Some people can say all they want about ideas and dreams and plans but you and I both know that in the end what counts and what gets things done is dollars and cents on the barrel head. I've been into finance drives and hell, oh excuse me, we just aren't getting the necessary pledges. What I was going to say was that we're having a lot of trouble just raising the regular dues to pay the rabbi and to meet expenses; and you want to go out and raise over a hundred thousand dollars to build a temple. I ask you, 'Where's it going to come from?' I sure know it won't come out of the sky just because somebody has an idea or because once it gets under way people will produce money out of their pockets just because we are hard up. That's not good business and this is a business issue. Let's keep the other stuff out of it for now. And I say let's make up our

minds and then get out of the real estate business once and for all."

Novid rambled on recovering his own remarks. President Pele attempted to indicate that he should close. Then, with edge in his voice, Pele gavelled and said:

"Mr. [Novid], are you through? Are you through Mr. [Novid]? Thank you."

Procedure broke down into a series of side conversations. The president attempted to speak and Novid began talking again:

"I think the group ought to know what the UAHC thought about the plans. . . . All we'd have is an unaesthetic shell."

President Pele succeeded in shutting off the discussion with the remark that architectural originality was not the issue of the evening.

One of the men from the "In-betweeners" was recognized:

"Well, I don't know about all this but I do want to say that the situation is pretty bad as it now stands. We can go on arguing forever about the temple and real estate but in the meantime my kids are suffering! They're going without while we sit around here and argue. I think that's not fair in any way!"

There wa a period of absolute silence followed by agitated general discussion. Costs were debated. The "In-betweener" went on:

"I advocate that we buy the lot next door. It would cost us one-third as much as building out on Riverside and it should be got to NOW. We need facilities for the children."

One of the members of the "Egg-head" group gained the floor:

"Mr. Chairman, I wish to say something. I think that out first goal is to maintain and build unity within the congregation and we cannot afford to let this issue tear us apart. We cannot pretend that a small proportion

would not have to put up at least fifty percent of the money. . . . Solidarity and unity must be our first concern."

When this speaker sat down the rabbi leaned over to him and whispered:

"How could you? How could you? Don't you see what you are doing?"

The man shrugged his shoulders and remarked:

"What else was there to do?"

Again, order was abandoned until Noel was recognized and began speaking:

"I agree with those who say our discussion here tonight should be frank and open. I can see [Pele's] point of view and [Protz's] and his friends and other stalwarts, and I think we can all agree with H..... . who reminds us that the healing of wounds is most important. I think we also have to recognize that this thing would be extremely costly for a few of us who have been rather unusually successful. And it's equally true that one or two can make it or break it. But I think we had better shake out some shibboleths around here and some hypocrises. As my friend, [Novid] says, 'It's about time this community makes up its mind about a few things.' And that, my friends, includes the temple plans, and by the way, I am fed up with this talk about rabbis being only resident rabbis.

"We've got to decide whether we want a permanent rabbi or not and treat him accordingly. You know, my friends, ten years hence we won't count a thing and some of us in this room may be dead. But I do think the temple is vital for the health of the community. I think we must accept the fact that this is an extremely heterogeneous group. No more than four or five of us would really know one another were it not for our common element; and that is that we wear the Jewish label! And I think there is ample evidence that there is no Jewish future here or in other small cities. But

that doesn't make any difference. I am for the temple all the way. But on the other hand, as I have told the board and others: If I don't get what I consider to be the best thing for the community, it doesn't mean that I will go home with my dolls because I don't get my way. . . . THAT'S been a threat held over the head of this congregation for too long. And I want to say this last thing, and I've said this before: Ideas do have power and nothing worth anything ever got done in this world without them. Our parents who came over here from Europe had an idea, a dream of a better life and we've got them to thank for whatever we've got now. . . . And finally . . . this end of [Middletown] is dying but I am ALSO for the purchase of the land as an investment. . . . The temple is truly the focal point of our people despite the country club. Surely there is nothing wrong with this building, but, [Novid] you just built yourself a fine new office. You would not have done that without an idea, anticipation of something beyond the present. . . . I just want to say one last thing then I promise to shut up and sit down. There is one thing I will fight: My kids won't attend Sunday school in the present buildings on the land next door. Those things are fire traps and we've had enough of that stuff around here. THAT I'LL fight!"

After further remarks and repeated assurances of cessation of speech, Noel sat down.

The president attempted to tell a joke but it did not seem to amuse the group. Love, who was the recording secretary at the speakers' table, sought the floor:

"I had not intended to say anything here tonight, but now I feel I must. I think we all appreciate [Noel's] eloquence. He has always spoken effectively and swung groups around on that basis. I do not have his wonderful ability to make flowery speeches and all of that. . . . But to build a temple a good deal of money is needed and we're strapped now, and all the flowery speeches

[Noel] can make do not change the situation. And I am not impressed with all this talk of dreams and ideas. If you were such a dreamer, [Noel], how is it that you had to add to your new warehouse. . . . As for parking, I've never had to walk more than two blocks, even at the high holidays, and the rest of the time you can usually park right out front, and I don't see how walking two blocks is going to kill anyone. A new building out on Riverside as contemplated would cost us about one-hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars and that's just the bare bones. . . . And it's hard to see why this temple should be seen as inadequate. Except on the high holidays it's usually almost empty and even on the holidays no one has ever been turned away at the door. Now, the big complaint is the Sunday school and there, there is reason to be distressed. But we could tear down the building next door and add on to this building all the Sunday school rooms you could want, equip them and the rest for one-third the cost of building out there. That's why I have taken the position that I have on this."

Love sat down amidst an increasing number of side conversations among which were remarks that Phases I and II would cost no more than remodeling and extending the old premises. Others insisted that $125,000 would include all finishing work and equipment for Phases I, II and III.

After another period of procedural confusion, Novid assumed the floor. He repeated his early arguments and then went on to say:

"I built that new office with MY money, not with other people's and not with promises. And you can be darn sure that [Novid] didn't build that if he didn't think it meant a bigger income. . . . I'll tell you why our parents came over from Europe; it wasn't an idea or a dream! It was because things were so bad and they figured it couldn't be any worse than it was with

the pogroms, the Tsar's army and things like that. So they got out, and they were a success here because they worked HARD and saved. It wasn't dreams, [Noel]. . . . Moreover, temples don't make good and united Jews and ideas need not be gambles. IF we could afford it I'D DO IT. I don't know where people got the idea that I was against the temple; I'm not. We've tried for six years and we can't do it. And at first we were going to build the Sunday school, Phases I and II, and suddenly it's the whole thing or nothing! How did that get into it?"

Novid was drowned out by voices from the floor that insisted that he had been a leading advocate of the simultaneous completion of the entire building program.

The confusion subsided when the president recognized Mrs. Noel who asked for clarifications on the specifications of the neighboring lot. She then stated:

"I really see very little saving in this move to purchase next door. But now I'd like to call on Mrs. P..... .to tell us just how much the temple cost back in 1922; Aunt [Ida], tell us how it was."

The elderly Mrs. P..... was applauded:

"Well now, I think at that time it came to about forty-thousand dollars and it was quite a struggle for my husband and some of the others."

Mrs. Noel resumed her own line of thought:

"Let's see, by today's prices, that would be—let us say about one-hundred and twenty-thousand dollars. . . . And the community was much smaller then. Four or five families had to carry the vast bulk of it."

Mrs. Noel was interrupted at this point by another woman who mimicked her and pointed out that the "X" family had contributed $5,000 to the old temple.

There was further confusion. Mrs. Noel presisted:

"Was it harder then than it is today to build a temple? Would you tell us about that Aunt [Ida]?"

There was another moment of complete silence before Mrs. P..... . spoke:

"Yes, I should say that it was more difficult. We were smaller then, but I should say that it is harder today because there is much less interest."

As the elderly woman sat down, numerous people began demanding the floor. President Pele repeatedly called for attention as he banged the inverted bucket with the wooden spoon.

The third member of the "Egg-head" circle was recognized:

"I should like to make a few observations if I may. There is the question whether it is a few who block the temple while the bulk of us, who are economically unable to build it, should have our way. . . . But I think a second consideration is important. We must realize that we represent one-third of the religious life of [Middletown] even though we are a small fraction. American society may be thought of as Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. . . . In 1923 this place was a real show place. But time goes on and compare it today with [Middletown's] churches. Look at them, the..... nuts.....the Methodist church, that is the new one; the First Presbyterian and the Christian churches. They are lovely and a compliment to the city. Now, we could add on here and we could have everything we need but one thing, status. . . . This is an old building in an old neighborhood. The community up at M..... . tried this solution recently. They enlarged the old temple and so forth and put into it about eighty-thousand dollars, but it has been a failure. . . . We can do that but we'll have to admit that we are now second rate. If that's what we want then that's what we can have, but it is second rate and that is that."

There ensued another breakdown in discipline. The rabbi, who had been sitting in the very back of the room, in a corner, still garbed in his black robes, raised

his hand. President Pele did not recognize him until several of the people next to Rabbi Kreutzer motioned for the president's attention. The rabbi was recognized:

"I was sore this evening and I have been for some time. I still am. Some may discount my remarks or think that I am too green to comment. Well, that may be so. but I have worked with three other congregations and I have never seen anything like this. As your rabbi I must tell you that this is a DISGRACE. A few people are not interested in seeing a temple being built, but THE MAJORITY is for it. A few big men are against it and can stop it. And I think it is pretty rotten and unfair to allow hopes to get up and then to throw cogs into the wheels. And do you really want or need a rabbi, too? You have to clarify your thinking in this area as well. You must realize that the relationship between a rabbi and his congregation is a very close one, an intimate one, not unlike a marriage contract. But I tell you I was shocked when I realized that our efforts to build a community were being frustrated. I see possibilities for this congregation, great possibilities in fact. But I am shocked and ashamed! Good evening, gentlemen."

The rabbi strode through the seated crowd and out of the room. There was a moment of silence followed by some commotion. Noel and another man hurried out of the room and up the stairs in pursuit of Rabbi Kreutzer.

There were eight people who rose and left at this time. Several appeared upset or annoyed. Novid began speaking from his seat, first in a soft voice but then more distinctly as the room became more quiet:

"I am truly sorry to see the rabbi so upset. But I do not think it's the rabbi's function to tell anyone how he should spend money. Nor do I think it is becoming language or appropriate for the rabbi to talk of some

people being 'rotten' or 'throwing cogs in the wheels.' I also . . ."

Novid was interrupted by an exchange between several people, in which it was said:

"He didn't say that! That was not implied the way you mean it!"

The rebuttal by one woman was:

"Oh YES he did! YES he did!"

Cutting across the arguments and silencing Novid and the others was a clear, sharp and scolding voice. Mrs. Noel silenced others as she said:

"Now [Novid] YOU MUST STOP THAT! YOU STOP THAT RIGHT NOW! You have NO right to say such things about anyone! And you, least of all in this congregation, have any right to talk about the rabbi's proper functions. You should be thoroughly ashamed of yourself!"

There was a prolonged silence. The president then spoke but his voice perceptibly quivered:

"I'm sorry that personalities have to get involved in this discussion. It always seems to happen and it's unfortunate. Let's try to get back to the business at hand."

President Pele elaborated details of the real estate holdings, of possible transactions and of interest rates. He also attempted to unravel the procedural status of several motions. About six more people left the room. None of them were among the more wealthy members of the congregation. Mr. Noel had returned and sought the floor:

"Mr. Chairman, I think we have to find out what we can agree on first. . . . I should like to talk to some of the more affluent among us directly; I mean you [Protz], [Novid], [Pele] and [Love]. We have to see if we have what it takes financially, if we can agree and if so to what extent. . . . But let's see where we are and on what we can agree."

As Noel sat, Love spoke from his seat:

"[Noel]! Don't put me on the spot! That's not fair."

President Pele assumed the floor and said:

"I should like to state my own views on this matter. In view of the alternatives which have come up and, especially, when one realizes that the financial strain now appears larger to some of us than it did in the past; I can't help but wonder if the new temple project isn't too big a bite for us at this time."

Many side comments and conversations were then in process. The tenor of some remarks was hardly positive:

"It's no use. It's all over; defeated again. Why did they bother to call the meeting?"

"Here we go again, 'round and 'round and nothing is one bit settled."

About eight more people filed out leaving the room with 25 persons in it, including all of the major figures in the discussion.

A question was raised as to the actual moves which had or had not been made concerning the real estate adjacent to the temple. President Pele spoke:

"Well, as a matter of fact, we have already put down five-hundred as a deposit on it, and I will personally take the loss if the community rejects it. . . . That's o.k. by me, but we had the chance and it seemed best to move fast."

There were comments to the effect that this was a presumptuous act on the part of the president, but the remarks were almost lost in the confusion of many voices.

Eventually, earlier motions and their amendments were withdrawn.Noel moved that the land next to the temple be purchased and that all other decisions be postponed until tempers had calmed and until a more precise estimate of financial and real estate possibilities had been explored. The motion was voted upon

with 25 persons present and was passed with 13 supporting, 5 objecting and 7 abstaining.

As further technical questions were being discussed a woman who was not among the most wealthy group rose and, in a choked voice, exclaimed:

"I'm sorry but I don't see the point of all this. Why did you call this meeting and get us all down here and put us through all this only to get approval of what you were going to do!. . . . It's quite clear to some of us that ninety per cent of the community can not afford to build this temple, but that ninety per cent of us want it!"

As she spoke a woman from among the "Big Money" commented:

"Who invited her anyway!"

The meeting was thereupon and most immediately broken up by a motion for adjournment. Several women were wiping their eyes as they stood up to leave. Except for Novid and Love, the leading participants in the evenings discussion stood about the social hall after the adjournment.

To an observer the night's events might have appeared as a crushing defeat for those who sought either congregational unity, or a new temple, or a withdrawal from extended real estate investments or who envisioned clarification of long range policy. Such, however, was not the case. Noel spoke of the salutary "airing of dirty linen" and, thereby, of "a victory for the future." Protz stated that:

"We have bought the land and given up nothing along the way, and if the rabbi resigns, well, greater losses in this world have occurred. . . . Apparently the community is not ready to build a temple yet. In time we will get there."

A number of those less directly involved in the meeting's exchanges presented less euphemistic appraisals within the next 24 hours:

"I am dreadfully upset. It is all I can do to hold back the tears. I feel so sorry for [Pele]. He hasn't often gone through anything like this, and my heart bleeds for the rabbi too."

"I didn't sleep one minute Friday night. I kept worrying. This is such a mess now."

"The rabbi did not serve himself well the other night. But, o.k., he's young and I felt sorry for him. But he really doesn't know what it's all about. [Novid] runs hot and cold but he'll give in the end. . . . He attacked the wrong person. . . . But I understand that he feels the need not to be wishy-washy the way Rabbi [Fisher] was and he's got to prove he's a man. But still!"

The rabbi contemplated resigning:

"Maybe I ought to quit. There is no future here and who is on my side who counts? Even the 'Big Money' boys who were so eager two months ago to build have run for cover. Maybe I won't even last long enough to resign. What a bunch! This is some kind of bad dream for me. But I won't quit a fight that easily!"

The rabbi took some measure of consolation in the thought that he had solid support among the less wealthy:

"You know, I really feel most at home and most comfortable with the regular people of this crowd; guys like G....., H..... and T..... I don't like the snootiness of the country club crowd."

But even among these people he vented his hostility:

"On the way to N....., I got into it needlessly with G..... I don't know why. It was a small point, but I really let him have it. I'm afraid he's miffed. It wasn't even his fault."

A week after the second congregational meeting, a number of the less affluent members of the community met at the home of one of "The Crowd." The rabbi was present. They proposed to the rabbi that they embark on a money raising scheme which would finance

the construction of Phases I and II. They advocated card parties, automobile raffles and special activities. The rabbi was particularly touched by a proposed agreement by which to raise funds:

"Believe it or not, they were willing to put into hock all their assets and belongings in order to underwrite the bank note. Wait 'til the 'Big Money' boys hear this! Here are some real human beings."

The elite either derided the scheme or politely discouraged it:

"The ninety percent, as J..... calls them, can't succeed with their own fund raising by means of card games *etcetera.* That's hopeless!"

"That's real sweet, but who are they kidding? They'll get laughed at."

Neither the Novids nor the Loves were on speaking terms with the rabbi:

"It was after the community meeting that we were through with [Kreutzer]. At first it was only my husband who said, 'That man is no longer welcome in this house.' But the very next night at the club there was the president's dinner and my husband was elected president and the rabbi was there and he didn't even have the decency to come up and greet or congratulate him. Then I was THROUGH. . . . I have to be hurt hard or my loved ones—there I am especially sensitive—before I turn on some one, but then I am THROUGH. . . . . He can't leave soon enough for me. The rabbi's done more to tear this community apart than anyone."

The rabbi gave a somewhat different account of the evening at the club:

"Everybody was there, and, boy, were I and my date discreetly snubbed! Only [Protz] and one other fellow came up and spoke to me. It was a big shindig with the new president and all. He didn't even see me when I said 'Hello.' . . . [Pele] said something to me but I

doubt if he remembers. . . . I think he's taking this awfully personally."

The exact nature of Rabbi Kreutzer's encounter at the club was debated for several months. Personal perceptions of the encounter were used to justify and validate the alienation which existed.

* * * * * *

By mid-December the rabbi had more or less decided to leave Middletown at the end of 9 months service. He continued to toy with the thought of resigning at once. Several families advised against such a move:

"If you go there will be no more rabbis in this town. The UAHC took our side in Rabbi [Blum's] case but not again. And you are needed here more than ever to hold the congregation together."

The rabbi's morale began to improve slightly and he resolved to make one last attempt toward building on the "West Side."

"This is a game of cat and mouse, but I am not always the mouse. It shifts and two can play as well as one."

But nothing of substance came from his effort and the board meeting of December was a painful one for the young rabbi:

"[Protz] wasn't there. I had no one and C..... wouldn't speak up. [Pele] started right in, first on H..... and then on me. H..... interrupted him and said, 'Pick on me; I'm more experienced' . . . . I felt horrible last night. I was so down that I even thought for a while of calling my mother and asking her to come out for a few weeks. . . . I am nothing around here now, even with G..... and A....., who have always been solidly with me, I am not worth much. I can't do much for the little fellows; that's obvious. And I don't even want to go to the office since [Pele] treated me like a little boy who needed a spanking. . . . I'll stick it out

one year but that is a sad way to have to think about being a rabbi."

After Christmas the Peles, the Novids and a number of other wealthy families left for prolonged Florida vacations. It was widely noted that no major decisions would be made until late Spring. Shortly before leaving for Florida, President Pele and the rabbi were to lunch together. Rabbi Kreutzer felt that it would be a "showndown." He did not relish the encounter. The Christmas rush intervened and the confrontation was never realized. By the first of January the president chose to ignore the rabbi and to treat his rather personal sermons lightly. President Pele went so far as to tell Rabbi Kreutzer that, while he objected to the young man's actions, he recognized the religious leader's right to "sound off."

The rabbi knew that he had been neutralized as an influence in temple decisions. He talked of acceptance of "certain things" and he purchased his first automobile which brought him pleasure and mobility. Yet, while softened in tone, he was not entirely resigned to his reduced position in the community. He brought tears to the eyes of several women in a January sermon when he said:

"Many things have passed in our congregation since last August. . . . It has been a hard road, yet also there have been many accomplishments. . . . I apologize if I seem to come to you with the idea of knowing it all. Yet I have more experience than many grant and more dedication. . . . Let us not wait until I am eighty before you let me become your rabbi."

The rabbi began to talk about "sticking it out" for two years. He felt that the automobile and friendship with an Episcopal curate would be his consolation.

The January board meeting was attended by Pele who flew up from Florida for it. According to an informant, the evening was spent fruitlessly:

"It went around and around and sometimes was pretty unpleasant. Nobody knew where we were going and there were no clear cut goals. Nothing was accomplished. Off we charged in all four directions at once. It was a complete waste of time. . . . Fortunately, nobody took out after the rabbi TOO hard."

February and March of 1961 were quiet months. The "Big Money" circle was away and those who remained stated that they were saturated with the temple issue. The rabbi indicated that he found his work much less demanding, but in March he complained of sleeplessness and of headaches. He suspected that these symptoms were related to the imminent return of President Pele and of the others. But his anxieties were unfounded insofar as there was a measure of reconciliation with the Novids and the Loves. According to the rabbi, his differences with the family whom he had encountered at the club were resolved in the following manner:

"Mrs. M..... wanted us to get together. I was encouraged to telephone them and to try to work it out. I called and was I ever relieved to hear that nobody of importance was home! I left word for her to call ME. Finally she called and I said I gathered there had been some misunderstanding concerning this or that. I told her that I truly regretted it if they took it personally at the congregational meeting. I told her that I simply felt the time had come to speak out and to take a stand on the matter of building. Boy, did she let me have it! . . . . Finally she calmed down and chatted about this and that and we nagged back and forth about that night at the club. She still denies that I tried to say 'hello' to her husband. Finally she said, 'Well, this is really between you and my husband. You talk to him.' A little later I ran into him; he was at the side of a car. I recognized him. He gave me a big smile, came over and shook hands and was all cordiality. What a surprise!"

The "annual congregational meeting" (the third of the year in actuality) was scheduled for mid-May. The rabbi once again contemplated resigning and he thought he might suggest to the congregation, as he had advised the board, that they should best dispense with a full-time religious leader.

Several days before the third congregational meeting, a few of the more important men of the community met informally and agreed that they would urge the retention of Rabbi Kreutzer for another year. Further, it was felt that Protz would make an excellent president for the coming year insofar as he was socially adroit, beneficient in mood and well regarded by most members of the Jewish community. It was appreciated that Protz would be inclined to advocate another temple drive.

The third congregational session was attended by 37 individuals (35 percent of the Jewish community) among whom were included representatives from all the principal families except Novid's. The rabbi's report did not include his resignation or a suggestion that the community rely upon student rabbis. He thanked the president and admitted that the year had not been an easy one. The president stated that the meeting was open to remarks from the floor. The few hostile or provocative questions which were raised in regard to the temple drive were circumvented by Pele who stated that such matters would be the business of the new board. The rabbi was then asked to excuse himself while his position would be under consideration. The following exchange took place:

Mrs. C.: "Mr. Chairman, what about the talk of breaking his contract?"

Pres. P.: "Nobody's talking about breaking the contract."

Mrs. C.: "There has been talk. Let's get to the bottom of it and how about his failing to make personal calls?"

Pres. P.: "He's been to see the sick. He spends a lot of time on that."

Mrs. B.: "He does visit. . . ."

Pres. P.: "Our rabbi is trying. . . . He's young and immature but he is not intentionally that way. We need patient understanding. NOW he welcomes understanding and criticism, but we must give him the opportunity. There is no use to carry a chip for a few early errors. . . . Forgive and forget, otherwise we are wasting our money if we don't support him."

Mr. N.: "We always gripe and we always want a bit more spiritually in our rabbis and this man has it and though he has weaknesses, he certainly is the most spiritual young man we have had and it is our observation that he does more than a lot of people in supporting Jewish values."

President Pele suggested that the vote of confidence for the rabbi be unanimous. This was accomplished after which point there seemed to be a new and marked degree of relaxation among those present.

The nominating committee put forward the names of the new officers and they were voted in, accompanied by jovial remarks about "railroading." The meeting was adjourned. An air of good feeling and solidarity seemed to pervade relationships, although several people noted as did one:

"It was the most sickening gush session I've been to in a long, long time."

Nevertheless, one might suspect that the majority relished a ritualistic reaffirmation of their identity as a cohesive group.

* * * * * *

Rabbi Kreutzer planned to leave Middletown for the summer during the first week in June. Protz, who had been carefully exploring temple matters with various members of the congregation, asked to meet the rabbi

for lunch before his departure. Rabbi Kreutzer stated that he went into the luncheon so totally unprepared for what was said that the full impact of Protz's remarks eluded him until they had parted. The lunch consumed a large part of an afternoon. The men parted with the understanding that their discussion was to remain confidential.[2] Apparently, Protz made the following points which the rabbi attempted to counter:

1) Protz: The rabbi was under criticism for failing to make pastoral calls.

The rabbi: He would not mimick the Protestant clergy. It was not his own mode of procedure. Those who needed him most closed their doors to him and he would not invade a family's privacy. (In actuality, the rabbi made pastoral calls or visits on 24, or 43 percent, of the Jewish households.)

2) Protz: The rabbi was under criticism for being excessively oriented toward groups outside of the Jewish community.

The rabbi: He had been under very heavy pressure by leading congregants to take an active but also discreet part in inter-faith activities. He complained to Protz that these efforts received almost no support; to which Protz responded by suggesting that, perhaps, the rabbi had done too much in this direction thereby resulting in poor attendance.

3) Protz: The rabbi appeared too frequently to assume that he was right and that others were in error.

The rabbi: He defended his authority as religious leader and stated that he had never rejected frank criticism. He only quarreled with those who created gossip rather than openly confronting him with their complaints.

4) Protz: the rabbi had offended members of the congregation and had made a questionable impression upon non-Jews insofar as he was not to officiate at any of the summer season's weddings.

The rabbi: He noted that there were unique and sound

rationales in each case for the weddings to be handled in the manner that they were.

5) Protz: The rabbi had offended a large portion of the "Big Money" over the temple drive issue and, to succeed, he would be compelled to win them over. The rabbi was warned that the hostility of the elite could seriously damage his tenure of office. It was implied that several leading families were contemplating a withdrawal from the congregation for the duration of Rabbi Kreutzer's tenure in office.

The rabbi: He asked Protz why these charges had not been brought forward during the third congregational meeting at which time he had been given a unanimous vote of confidence. Protz responded that the presence of the researcher may have discouraged criticism. Rabbi Kreutzer dismissed this explanation on the basis that the writer could have been asked to leave and that, apparently, the rabbi's re-appointment had been agreed upon in advance.

6) Protz: The rabbi was free to follow his own course of action, but it was Protz's suggestion that, in light of the criticisms of Rabbi Kreutzer's conduct in office, he consider assuming another pulpit in the Autumn of 1961. His summer vacation was seen as an opportunity to seek employment elsewhere. Protz repeatedly insisted that he was NOT pressuring the rabbi to leave. He was only alerting Rabbi Kreutzer to dangers and was suggesting alternative remedies. He assured the rabbi that he would respect and support the young man's decisions. He wished it to be understood that he spoke as a concerned member of the congregation who sought the best interests of the entire community and its rabbi.

The rabbi: He, in turn, assured Protz that he understood the nature of the discussion, and would consider his remarks and suggestions.

The rabbi left Middletown for the summer vacation

a week after his luncheon with Protz. He had come to no decision but rather expected to return to Middletown in the Autumn, although he planned to make job enquiries in the East.

To the utmost surprise of the Jewish community, Rabbi Kreutzer flew into Middletown on July 11th and informed Protz that he was requesting release from his contract, that he would ship his belongings to the East, and that he had been offered a pulpit elsewhere. Protz's first reaction seemed to be one of surprise and offense, but they agreed upon a luncheon date. The rabbi was excited about his prospects in the East, but he complained of having slept poorly during the previous four nights. He said he had been anxious concerning Protz's reaction to his decision.

A special board meeting was called for July 17th. Rabbi Kreutzer was requested to remain in town until the conclusion of that meeting which he did not choose to attend. The news of the rabbi's plans spread rapidly. Many professed to be shocked at the rabbi's behavior, but they were somewhat more stunned to learn of Protz's early June luncheon conversations with the rabbi.

The rabbi's luncheon meeting with Protz in mid-July was cordial. Protz offered to take full responsibility for the early June conversations. At the special board meeting Protz was questioned closely by those present:

"As an individual it was O.K. for you to talk to the rabbi the way you did last month, but as president you had NO right to tell him he ought to think of looking around for another position."

But, at the conclusion of the session, it was agreed that the rabbi should be released from his contract and that Protz should not be "persecuted" for what he had done.

The rabbi had one last encounter with the Jewish

community before he was taken to the landing field on July 18th. He requested travel expenses for his trip to and from the East. The board objected but did make a check for the amount specified. Rabbi Kreutzer did not call for the money:

"Why should I? They can mail it to me! I have been busy packing and I don't have a car. Let them send it to me."

This behavior was interpreted by some people as a sign of essential immaturity.

After the rabbi's departure, members of the congregation were asked for their views on Rabbi Kreutzer's release:

"I think the tenor of feeling is one of relief even though [Protz] was hit pretty hard at the board meeting."

"This will bring about unity in the congregation. It is a good thing he has gone."

"If that's the way he feels, we're better off without him."

Even some of the rabbi's champions began to have reservations:

"I think what happened at the end is indicative. We got taken advantage of. He should not have left until the movers had come."

But others said, as did one member of "The Crowd":

"It's a damn shame, isn't it? He was A-o.k."

Plans for the coming year called for the employment of two student rabbis who would come to Middletown on alternate weekends. There were reports that the dues structure would be modified downward and that a period of social consolidation was indicated. Most members of the congregation who were questioned felt that the year had been a peculiarly unhappy one. Virtually without exception they hoped for "smoother sailing" in the future. In this regard, many felt that Protz was an ideal choice for the presidency.

Middletown was not found to be a propitious location for rabbis. The rabbi's role is inherently difficult to fulfill insofar as conflicting expectations are present. Further, the religious leader's post is a lonely one in that it is desirable to maintain some measure of reserve in relating to his congregants. The position was made even more lonely for Rabbi Kreutzer by virtue of his lack of interest in golf, bowling or cards and by the turbulent conclusion of his courtship.

Past temple fund drives by the Jewish community of Middletown may have collapsed under economic conditions which required heavy outlays by the group and extraordinary donations from almost all of the most wealthy members. A complicating circumstance which, to some extent may have been the outgrowth of the severe financial demand, was the ambivalence several of the elite families maintained in regard to the essential desirability of constructing an entirely new temple. Several pivotal members of the group responded positively to the 1960-1961 plans only under social pressure and at moments of peculiarly intense group identification. Their support was not apt to be sustained at times of negative economic or social conditions. The tradition of provisional donations did not facilitate group action. Beyond that, 24 percent of congregants questioned indicated that they did not advocate the building of a new temple at the time of this study, irrespective of the status it would confer upon Middletown's Jewish community. Finally, in some quarters there was a reluctance to look bluntly into total costs of adequately equipped buildings.

The uneven distribution of wealth tends to engender the domination of the wealthy in an ostensibly democratic organization. This form of minority rule is seen by many as a somewhat justifiable inevitability. Others object to these conditions on grounds of ideological egalitarianism.

The new rabbi was entirely committed to the building of a new temple. It was his own aspiration as well as his moral commitment to represent the views of the majority. His unbridled enthusiasm and weak social position in the community moved him toward the ranks of the relatively impecunious and uninfluential members of the group. He was, thereby, progressively isolated and alienated from the seats of power. His posture in the discussions concerning temple construction became progressively less effective. In the end, the rabbi lost the backing of those members of the elite who terminated their prior support of immediate construction; although in so doing the expressed wishes of the majority were undercut by these leading congregants.

The incipient split between the "idealists" (Protz and Noel) and the "hard headed economists" (Novid and Love) deepened as the drive began to falter. Personal animosities were sharpened and the economic and ideological cleavages present were progressively seen in terms of the personal inadequacies and malevolences of individuals.

The three congregational meetings of the year were attended by 24 to 45 percent of the Jewish community. The sessions were almost entirely dominated by the elite and the crucial vote which scuttled the mandate to build the religious school and social hall *cum* temporary sanctuary was executed by a total of 13 votes, i.e. by no more than 12 percent of the adult community. The majority of congregants were either resigned, indifferent or resentful of the oligarichal tendencies of the leadership group. Those who resisted the power structure, including Rabbi Kreutzer, met with little success. For their part, the elite seemed to have little recognition of the presumptuous appearance of their conduct, e.g. the purchase of the neighboring lot in advance of congregational affirmation.

Among the leadership group, the collapse of the

temple drive seems to have occurred when President Pele swung away from the optimistic financial views taken by Protz and Noel. Pele joined with Novid and Love in their doubts about the economic resources of the Jewish community. The president was also concerned lest the congregation be irrevocably divided on the issue of building; nor could he overcome the tradition of conditional donations which demanded the completion of the entire project at one time. Finally, Pele and Novid, but not Love, found the thought of a temporary sanctuary repugnant. As a consequence, the president did little to salvage the congregation's explicit mandate for the construction of the religious school and social hall *cum* temporary sanctuary. As a result of his failure to proceed with the building of those projects approved of by the group, he was accused of betrayal of the majority. For his part, the president reasoned that economic reality and group solidarity required his cautious course of action in regard to the mandate to build.

The tortured second congregational meeting of the year may be particularly instructive in that each of the five major participants spoke out with a large measure of candor, with considerable sincerity and at least with moments of eloquence. President Pele, under greatest pressure, attempted to maintain a posture of moderation, flexibility and a willingness to accept responsibility for his own actions. Novid spoke in bluntest terms about finances, "reality" and the need to clarify congregational goals. Love pointed toward prudence, modesty and clearly realizable goals. Noel plead for the "Dream" which would help the congregation transcend itself. The rabbi flourished his rabbinical authority which is premised upon his formal training and upon long tradition. (Protz did not participate, preferring to bide his time, to be a peacemaker and to return to his version of the "Dream" at a slightly later date.) This does not

suggest that elements of vanity and confusion were not writ large within the evening's events, but it does suggest that villains and charlatans were not the evening's speakers.

The immediate aftermath of the collapse of the temple drive was a mood of bitterness and alienation, although several leading advocates of immediate construction applied the mental alchemy (ego-defending rationalizations) which allowed them to perceive the events of the second congregational meeting as a "victory of clarification." At the very most, that "victory" was tactical. The larger strategic goal of a new temple was, rather plainly, scuttled.

The rabbi's position in the community sank to a very low point as did his own morale. Concurrently, his conduct appeared to regress along the lines of ill directed aggression. He vaciliated between retreat, withdrawal and overt hostility.

The coming of the lengthy winter vacations allowed a considerable degree of reconciliation to take place among individuals. The extent of reintegration was reflected in the relatively benign third congregational meeting, at which time the rabbi was given a unanimous vote of confidence by those present.

Rabbi Kreutzer's resignation in the summer of 1961 was the outgrowth of the confidential lunch which he had with the incoming president, Protz. The incoming president had sought out the views of a number of the more wealthy families of the Jewish community from whom he gathered that there was a large measure of lingering antipathy toward the rabbi. Protz took it upon himself to advise Rabbi Kreutzer of these sentiments. He suggested that the rabbi would be well advised to submit to the negative criticisms or consider seeking a pulpit elsewhere. Protz did not pressure Rabbi Kreutzer toward a resignation, but, when confronted

with an auspicious job offer, the rabbi chose to leave Middletown.

Protz was sharply criticized for his presumptuous action but, in the end, the majority of the leadership group closed ranks behind the paternal and "steady" incoming president. Rabbi Kreutzer departed.

Chapter VIII

MIDDLETOWN'S ADULT JEWS AND NON-JEWS

It would require Gaullist illusions for Middletown's 56 identified Jewish households (comprising 174 inhabitants) to consider themselves a "community" encased as they are within a city of about 70,000 inhabitants. But in the interests of economy this heterogeneous group of predominantly Reform and small business class Jews will continue to be identified as the "Jewish community."

Middletown's avowedly Jewish families, as a whole, do not share their more intimate thoughts or their more deeply comfortable friendships with non-Jews. Yet, for historic, economic and personal reasons this group manifests a sweeping and sensitive concern with its relationships to its *almost* mirror image fellow residents of Middletown. It is the purpose of this chapter to glimpse into some of these relationships.

* * * * * *

There is unanimous agreement within the Jewish community that anti-Semitism has decreased markedly since the turn of the century. Several older informants observed that anti-Semitism had become more "polite" or insidious:

"When I was a young fellow collecting scrap metal along the alleys here, it was terrible. They would yell, 'Christ killer!' and the boys would throw stones at me. Now it is all very polite most of the time; but how many of our people could get into the good country club?"

"During the days of the Ku Klux Klan, during the 1920's, it was a bad dream. They would march down the main street every Saturday. You have no idea what it was like to sit inside and watch it. But they never touched me and it is dying down now. I don't think it is different now but it is hidden below the table cloth."

In their 1925 study of the city the Lynds reported that although the working class fed upon the incendiary remarks of the Klan, the Jews were allowed into the smaller civic clubs.[1] The 1935 study of Middletown noted that while individual Jews might be acceptable, there was frank but usually mild social discrimination.[2] During the early post World War II period there was published in Middletown for several years a scurrilous paper, The *X-Ray,* which fell into severe disrepute among the "respectable" citizens. Eventually the paper failed and the editor was pressed to "leave town."

Since the mid-1950's there have been very few anti-Jewish outbreaks which came to the eyes of more than a small portion of the city's populace despite the steady trickle of crude and vicious hate literature which the local papers receive and which they destroy. Occasionally a religious fundamentalist's letter to the editor might be construed to be implicitly anti-Semitic, but a muted tone of anti-Semitism remains a day-to-day reality for most of Middletown's Jews. Allport states that:

"[Studies] tempt us to estimate that four-fifths of the American population harbors enough antagonism toward minority groups to influence daily conduct."[3]

Yet, it must be appreciated that Middletown is not "a hot bed of anti-Semitism" and while this study necessarily focuses on those points and occasions of tension,

it should be remembered that most personal encounters are entirely benign and that a few close Jewish-non-Jewish friendships do exist.

But when overt anti-Semitism confronts the individual Jew of Middletown, it does so in any one or more of several general forms:

(1) Encounters with disturbed individuals or individual acts of violence, e.g. a pedestrian peers into a Jewish merchant's doorway and screams, "Jews, Catholics and Niggers are Commies!"

(2) Unwitting or tactless remarks, e.g. "Can't I Jew you down on that coat?"

(3) Social "snubs" and cuts, e.g. non-reciprocation of social invitations or non-acceptance of social invitations.

(4) Areas of discrimination and exclusion, e.g. Rotary, "Western Woods" real estate area, "high society."

Encounters with "cranks" or vituperative drunks were reported to be comparatively rare. The Jews who spoke of such incidents all state that their initial reaction is one of surprise and offense followed by a recognition that they are dealing with a disturbed or deranged person. These situations are handled either by leaving the situation or by ejecting the antagonist. Those who are faced with inadvertent or slighting remarks about Jews or Judaism are not uniform in their mode of handling the situations:

"When somebody makes a nasty crack or says something stupid I just say to myself, 'They're clucks.' "

"A customer once said, 'Let me Jew you down.' I didn't say anything but you can be darned sure I sold the item and at the marked price!"

"When I hear the casual stuff one hears from people who don't know you are Jewish, I ignore it. It may even be a little bit healthy that they are not sniffing to see if you are what you are."

"A man once came in. He was a bum and somewhat

tight. He asked for my husband. He said, 'Where's that old Jew?' I brought him to a halt and said, 'I am Mrs. C..... ., and I am Jewish also.' He apologized."

And, from among Middletown's elite one who was *not* identified as Jewish could hear such statements as the following (which would be deplored by others):

"C..... . [a Jewish businessman] is a great guy. Really he is amazing and so able. You should see his impersonations. . . . But even with C..... ., well, sometimes there's just a false note that doesn't sit right with you."

"Oh, those dark, dark sun glasses with white rims! If they aren't a give-away every time."

"Damn it, they are vulgar, loud and obnoxious. There's just no getting around it. [Q: Could it be that such Jews are insecure?] Hell no! They're richer than all of us. That couldn't be it."

In fact, hostile and naive prejudices concerning Middletown's Jewish population are widely and readily apparent and, among some citizens, the Jewish threat seems quite real despite the fact that this minority group represents no more than one person among 500 within the city and that Jews are not to be found in positions of social, economic or political power. Nevertheless, the Jews of Middletown are credited with the following:

"All Jews are rich; Jews run the banks; Jews control retail merchandising; Jews run the city government from behind the scenes; Jews are money mad; Jews are naturally the shrewdest businessmen in the world; Jews are pushy, vulgar, loud, fat and they all have big noses; Jews have smelly breaths and oily skins; Jews are clannish; Jews try to worm their way out from among their own people and into Gentile society; Jews will bleed a man white in business; Jews have strange and secret customs; Jews think they are God's chosen people; Jews are needlessly different; Jews are cowardly;

Jews drink heavily in church; Jews all go to Florida; Jews don't work; they are economic parasites; Jews are mean to each other and argumentive; Jews turn their religion on and off at will; Jews murdered Christ and rejected God; Jews are radicals and some are even Commies; Jews always work together; Jews play dirty pool in business; Jews are all brainy; Jews want to make [bed] Christian girls; Jews have sex on the brain; Jews believe in mixing races, and Jews aren't really loyal to America."

Consequently, informants were asked the extent and form of anti-Semitic encounters they had experienced within Middletown during the preceding five years or, in cases of more recent residency, since their arrival in the city. Table 1 indicates the responses to this question.

TABLE 1

Self-Reported Anti-Semitic Encounters

Type	*Per Cent*
Severe or frequent	1
Once or mild	27
Unwitting or unpointed	23
None	30
Rejected question or avoided comment	5
Unknown	14
Total	100

The data in Table 1 may be compared with the findings of Sklare and Vosk who found that 75 percent of the Jewish informants of "Riverton" reported experiencing anti-Jewish encounters.[4]

There may be a considerable measure of under-reporting of anti-Semitic encounters in Table 1. Beyond

the five persons who avoided the question for reasons which were not stated, 14 persons who claimed that they had never encountered anything more severe than an unwitting remark were known to others to have been involved in deliberate rebuffs or verbal attacks from non-Jews. It is also noteworthy that the lone informant who reported repeated as well as severe encounters is, himself, known among his acquaintances as a singularly aggressive and hostile person.

Except for a high school fracas, there was only one serious incident: the bombing of a Jewish enterprise in 1961 (scrap yard offices). This was not the first dynamiting to have occurred in the city. Through the years labor disputes have resulted in occasional acts of violence. This was, however, the only report of the blasting of a Jewish enterprise.

The Jewish community was shocked when they read of the incident on the front page of the morning paper. Those informants contacted within six hours of the radio and newspaper reports were upset, angry and frightened. Most of them assumed that the attack was directed specifically against Jews:

"And in your heart the VERY first thing you say in these times is, 'Is it because of anti-Semitism?' "

"As a Jew, I ask myself, 'Why? Why? Always Why?' In Germany, in Poland, everywhere and now even here, 'Why?' "

"My first thought wasn't for poor old G....., although you feel sorry for anyone in that situation. My first reaction was. 'Oh. my God, here too? Oh, my God, MAYBE I'M NEXT!' I was worried about my family and I momentarily wondered if they would confine their activity to offices. I've been shaky inside all morning; and angry!"

The young and new rabbi resisted the suggestion that the Anti-Defamation League be called into the case:

"They'll hit the panic button and raise a big cloud.

That would draw an awful lot of unfavorable comment in a town such as this. They're just not discreet enough for a place like this where getting excited is NOT the thing to do."

The city police, fire department and the FBI were called into the case. It was stated that the company had a trouble-free labor record. As of the summer of 1961 it was the opinion of several investigators that the perpetrator of the crime may have been a striker at a local hotel at which one of the other members of the G..... . family lives. (This member of the G..... .'s is a part-owner and operator of a second junk yard.) He had, apparently, offended the strikers by walking through their picket line to take his meals in the hotel dining room. This member of the G..... . family reported to the police that he had received a threatening telephone call within the 24 hours prior to the blast but had not informed the police of it until his brother was hit. The incident was closed although the police department anticipated that they would, eventually, apprehend the bomber, perhaps, initially on a different charge from that of dynamiting.

* * * * * *

In the realm of routine economic activity the Jewish businessmen of Middletown are accepted as members of the local Chamber of Commerce, and with only two exceptions, the 48 heads of households questioned stated that in all their purely business or professional dealings they are treated without discrimination. At the same time, many of the Jewish merchants suspect that, below the surface of their relationships, the non-Jewish business men of the city are frankly anti-Semitic:

"In every dealing I have had in this town, I have been treated by the *goyim* with utmost respect, but I know as well as you do what some of the bums are thinking."

"As long as you are talking business, it's o.k. Beyond that I don't even like to think about it because I know what they are thinking."

It was also reported that the Jewish merchants and business men maintain very cordial relationships with non-Jews when their work as such brings them into less formal contact:

"I was head of the Christmas decorations in the city a while back. I got a big kick out of it and so did some of the other guys who certainly aren't Jewish. We really had a ball together on it, but I wouldn't pretend that it went beyond that."

"We run our businesses and they run theirs. We circulate in almost totally isolated social circles but I can not recall when I was ever snubbed or treated rudely by a non-Jewish business man in this city. We always say 'Hi' to each other and carry on that sort of pleasant but pitifully limited kind of contact. It is expected behavior on both sides."

Behind the display of informal courtesies there is considerable sensitivity on the part of the Jewish community to the attitudes and reactions of non-Jews:

"As a Jew you must lean over backwards in business and really play it fair."

At the same time it was reported by Jewish merchants that:

"In our business life a lot of us Jews create the anti-Semitism we run into."

"Nothing is more obnoxious than the slick Jewish merchant. He feeds the fires of anti-Semitism which neither Jew nor Gentile can afford."

Such negative evaluations of one's own group came from Jews who are reputed to "bend over backwards" and from Jews who are known to coreligionists as "hard," "brutal," or "rough."

Sensitivity to criticism from the non-Jewish business community was seen at one point during the course

of the study when a Jewish family found itself quite suddenly ostracized by a number of the other Jewish families. The merchant in question had found it necessary to declare bankruptcy on an abortive merchandising venture. The Jewish community heard that at a bridge party among non-Jews a man may have said:

"Only a Jew would do a trick like that!"

The family felt severely abused, depressed and contemplated leaving the city when they were informed of the source of their social isolation. They found it particularly painful that it was implied that they should have sharply reduced their standard of living. One Jewish observer reported:

"Any other [non-Jewish] business man in this town who has to declare bankruptcy, or if he's one of ours and is rich enough, is expected to do the best he can but nobody expects him to skin himself or prostrate himself in front of his creditors. Maybe he should, but that's not the way it's done. And yet here these jackasses are asking the V..... .'s to do just that."

But within three months of the incident, the Jewish group had rewoven the discredited family back into the social fabric.

In the Spring of 1961 the Jews of Middletown were distressed to receive word that two of the three Jewish "corporation men" had been released from the company in which they had been employed as management personnel for several years. There were rumors that the men lost their positions as a result of presumed anti-Semitism. Other members of the Jewish community felt that religious hostility had no part in the action. Nevertheless, the group found it deeply disturbing to find two of its successful members economically cut off within a single week by a non-Jewish employer:

"Maybe there's nothing to it. But I think it looks pretty strange; all in one week and the same company and both Jews."

"I don't know yet why it has happened but I do begin to wonder about economic equality in America. I hope I am in error."

Later reports both from within and without the Jewish community indicated that one of the men had chosen to resign for personal reasons which had no relation to his being Jewish. The other man was released from his position but for reasons which had no obvious connection with his religious identity. A close and knowledgeable observer to the corporation suggested that:

"B..... . was not the only person out there to be fired recently. The outfit is in trouble and they've been tightening up all down the line. Others have been let go, so you can hardly say that an-Semitism was the reason. Yet the fact that he is a Jew probably didn't help him one bit, but it would not have been sufficient cause for his dismissal. . . .

"If there was any anti-Semitism in A..... .'s resignation I certainly didn't spot it. I think he was highly regarded by the company. . . . He pulled out when he wanted to. He doesn't have to work a day, so why should he put up with a lot of pressure? . . . The G..... . family [owners of the corporation] are not anti-Semites in that sense of the word, but they themselves probably share the small town prejudices in which they were reared. That includes Jews, and it also includes their thinking in politics, cultural and artistic outlooks too. One should not read too much into those events although it is understandable to me that the Jewish families of [Middletown] would certainly consider those ugly possibilities that have been talked about."

One of the more common accusations against the occupationally independent Jews of Middletown is the charge of monopoly in given sectors of the economy, e.g. banking, junk, and retail trades. Table 2 indicates

the degree of representation Jews maintain in selected occupations within Middletown.

TABLE 2

Degree of Jewish Representation in Selected Occupational Categories

Occupation	*Total No. of Establishments*	*No. Jewish*	*% Jewish*
Junk	8	5	63
Used goods, pawn shops and "surplus"	8	4	50
Business machines	10	2	20
Jewelry	16	3	19
Retail Clothiers	41	7	17
Personal Loans	27	3	11
Dry cleaners and towel services	29	3	10
Used Automobiles	44	1	1
Attorneys	71	1	1

It may be seen in Table 2 that the Jews of Middletown simply do not monopolize *any* occupational category. (They are unrepresented in banking and medicine.) Perhaps most striking is the place of Jews in the retail clothing trades. The representation of 17 percent may be somewhat misleading insofar as the category does not include the department stores, e.g. Sears Roebuck, J. C. Penney's, which are present within the city. One may also note that the only categories which Jews do dominate (junk and the used goods area) represent occupations that deal with "handled property." If one searches for Jews he will find most of these men standing among the "respectable small fry" rather than

mingling with or standing behind those who inhabit the seats of power.

* * * * * *

Back to back and, at times, adjacent to business activity in Middletown exists the world of social intercourse. And in the sub-realm of the business men's luncheon clubs, the Jewish struggle for acceptance has been unceasing. Jews may be found among the rosters of the less prestigious groups such as the Good Fellows and the Toastmasters. They may also be found in the Elks, Lions, Masons, and the Kiwanis. But Jews have not been accepted in the Rotary or in the most exclusive of the city's clubs, The [Middletown] Club.

Jews gain entrance to the clubs, as a rule, only after much maneuvering by such groups as the Ministerial Association and the members of the college faculty who hold membership in these "knife and fork" organizations:

"H..... . was a transfer from the East, so he couldn't be barred but now K..... .'s name is up. We think he's a grand guy and all that but there has been a terrible fight over letting him in. I don't think we'll let him make it."

"I got up in front of the club and threw into their faces their own ideology. I think it made a difference coming from a professor, along with the appeals of some of the ministers."

The Jews of Middletown harbor mixed feelings toward the luncheon clubs. They resent their discriminatory tendencies and they agree that the clubs present rather uninteresting meals, programs and conversations. Further, they recognize that the admission of Jews is apt to be limited and nominal. At the same time, local Jews take satisfaction in noting that those who adhere to the traditional food taboos are catered to with an air of "matter-of-factness." The Jewish com-

munity was pleased with young Rabbi Kreutzer's successful talk before one of the Kiwanis clubs and several of those who read *Middletown* spoke with warmth of the Chamber of Commerce talk given by one of the G..... . family in the 1920's at which time:

"A Russian Jewish junk-dealer is speaking in broken English in answer to a speech of welcome by a local lawyer:

" 'It is not the Chamber of Commerce but Uncle Sam who is our host tonight. I came to this country expecting to find it a land of gold. But the gold I found in New York was carefully locked up in other's people's banks. Slowly I came to realize that America is rich in another kind of gold. I was a peddler with a horse and wagon and one night I asked a farmer if I could stay on his farm. He himself unhitched my horse. I thought he was trying to take it away from me. Then he gave the horse real oats—the first it had ever eaten!—with his own horses; he took me in and fed me with his family—chicken and everything. When I came to leave I asked him what I owed and pulled out half a dollar. He shook his head and I saw my week's savings going. He said, 'Young man, if you want to pay me, give up this wandering life, settle down, and when men and women come to you for help, pass on to them what I've done, if you think it worth anything.' The little Jew paused in embarrassment, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and said: 'I am sorry I cannot speak better. I honor your schools that are teaching us. But I do want to say that you have gold in America—not paving your streets, but gold of this sort in the hearts of your citizens, the gold which, too, makes each of us able to go all over the world with respect and safety as American citizens. We who have come to your land have left behind us our own ways of living and things dear to us; we gladly take yours and offer you all we possess—our future and our children.' After the dinner a business

man, who tells risque stories and in the next breath quotes Henry van Dyke, a boisterous, successful booster of 'magic Middletown,' remarked in a husky voice, 'This is the greatest meeting ever held in the city of Middletown.' "[5]

At the same time it seems flagrantly obvious and unfair to many of the Jews of the city that for a Semite to enter a given club it is necessary that he be vastly overqualified in terms of wealth, community prestige and inter-personal discretion.

The male heads of Jewish households were asked if social discrimination (the so-called "5 o'clock shadow") has been a part of their own experience in Middletown and 63 percent responded in the affirmative and another 12 percent avoided comment.

Those who feel that social discrimination occurs point to the country club that bars Jewish membership and to the paucity of social intercourse maintained with the general community. Among the more prominent Jewish families one might, on occasion, detect the edge of bitterness when discussing social discrimination:

"Sure there is five o'clock shadow around here. I don't know of more than one or two Jews that have been invited at all frequently to parties in the Promised Land [the exclusive Western Woods residential area] even though some of us are equally wealthy, at least equally cultivated and in somewhat similar occupations."

"One or two of our most wealthy Jewish families are somewhat brassy and for it the Gentile upper crust rejects all of us. It is their excuse for violating their own principles although they should also realize that cold-shouldering a human being is not apt to make him more coy in his social contacts with non-Jews."

"It has been my observation that the Gentiles in [Western Woods] are as worried about their reputation as much as we are. I know women who have close

friends over there; and strict Jews at that. BUT wait 'til there is a party or something where other Gentiles will be present, and you're NOT invited to come around then!"

The Jewish community is divided in its thinking in respect to social isolation. There are those who feel that they are living in a social ghetto which has been built by non-Jews. Others take the position that any ghettoization is self-made and that one could point to numerous, close ties between Jews and non-Jews. Finally, there are those who suggest that the "5 o'clock shadow" could be overcome but that it means turning one's leisure hours into a psychological ordeal ("tight-rope walk").

The one point of agreement among the informants concerns the type of conduct which they feel is most likely to insure their acceptance by non-Jews. A member of the Jewish community presented what he termed the "Formula for Success" with non-Jewish business associates:

"Be openly and frankly Jewish but don't for even one moment act like anything but a quietly successful, Midwestern business man of solid virtues and Methodist and Republican leanings."

* * * * * *

But the "Formula for Success" does not entirely remove the problems of property ownership. In the 1920's "Western Woods" and, later, "Pill Hill" were plotted as expensive real estate developments on the desirable "West Side" of Middletown. Both contained clauses which excluded Semites and non-Caucasians generally. After World War II it became apparent that these provisos would not be upheld in the courts if challenged, but an informal understanding of property holders in these neighborhoods persisted. The Jews of the city were fully aware that any attempt to move into

these districts would result in counter pressures. A third development, "Kentwood," was reputed to be restricted but as of 1960-1961 there were two Jewish families living in that neighborhood.

It was stated that realtors put Jewish clients off by several means: Open refusal to act as an agent, threats of neighborhood retaliation, dissuasion of client or procrastination. Several realtors took the view that they would sell property indiscriminately were it not for the need to protect their own reputations in the eyes of some of their potential clientele.

Among the 56 Jewish households of Middletown, seven are known to the writer to have encountered resistance in attempting to acquire real estate on the socially desirable "West Side" of the city. In other cases, the prospective home owners anticipated opposition which was not forthcoming. Informants spoke of their encounters with realtors and neighbors when they either bought or attempted to buy (or rent) in these sensitive neighborhoods:

"When we bought here we cleared it first with the realtor who made some inquiries and that was all there was to it."

"There was one trouble-maker in the neighborhood. He called a meeting without stating its purpose and when everyone arrived he told them that it would be a very good idea to block our purchase. The neighbors really landed on him and that was that. We have been treated as decently as anyone else."

"After the War [II] we wanted to build in [Western Woods] and we negotiated for a piece of property. Everything went ahead well until somebody woke up. There must have been a quiet uproar. The excuse was a very shabby one. They substituted a double lot across the street—some call it the Jordan—and this is where we are."

The latter-most case may be noteworthy insofar as the

family is known to those residing in "Western Woods" as a "quiet, nice family."

At the same time the Jewish families of Middletown have shown a marked reluctance to pursue their constitutional rights which would allow them to purchase land wihtin the restricted neighborhoods. Informants were queried on this point:

"Make a big stink, go to court and raise a little hell and lose all my customers for it? Sure, any day! I happen to like to feed my face and living isn't that bad here."

"It would be uncomfortable for all of us and it would probably undo a lot of the good work we have done over the years. Remember, this is [Middletown]. Here you don't carry on crusading in a public way."

"I wouldn't raise anybody's hackles because I could never afford to live there ['Western Woods'] anyway. Let R..... . and some of the others have it out if that's what they want."

"Outsiders say that the Jews of [Middletown] are cowardly in not fighting residential discrimination which is clearly illegal. But we all know that the old restrictions are rapidly disintegrating; look at the T.....'s in [Kentwood]. It is much more disturbing to be on the inside doing the fighting for your rights and risking your friendships and income than it is to be on the outside holding forth about man's rights in an open society."

Despite the problems of acquiring property in some sections of the "West Side," there is almost universal agreement that one's neighbors are not only cordial but also friendly.

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Perhaps one of the most distressing areas of discrimination, in the eyes of Middletown's Jews, concerns the exclusive country club and the consequent formation of the Greenwood club by several leaders of the Jewish

community. According to one popular and possibly apocryphal account, the older country club excluded Jews during the 1920's. Apparently, two Jewish club members invited a large number of Jewish friends from the region for a day of golfing and a picnic. The group was accused of rowdiness and carelessness with property. At an ensuing Board of Directors meeting all Jews, with one exception, were asked to resign. During the 1940's there were repeated attempts to reopen the club on behalf of Jews. These efforts were not successful although from time to time members dropped out of the club in protest against discrimination toward this minority group. (Several Jewish families take satisfaction in the knowledge that the club has rejected a membership application erroneously. The man in question came from Protestant forebears throughout his entire family over several generations, but on the basis of his German name and "the way he waved his arms" he was refused admission.)

The formation of the Greenwood club in 1950 drew several members from the older club, in part, because of principle and, in part, because of the moderate membership dues. A number of the college faculty joined this so-called, "Jewish country club" along with other less wealthy citizens including a few day laborers.

Social relationships between Jews and non-Jews at the Greenwood club were reported to be no more than cordial. The Jewish group are not agreed whether the cordiality reflects aloofness on the part of the non-Jews or whether it is the outgrowth of differing social circles. No one suggested that relationships are in any way strained.

Within the Greenwood club's Jewish membership there is sharp disagreement and expressed uneasiness in regard to the policy of discrimination against Negroes. The issue came up early in the life of the club when an upper middle class Negro applied for member-

ship. He had been welcome to play on the golf course as a guest but membership was barred. At a later date, golfing privileges for Negroes were also withdrawn. The rationale for these actions was lodged in the argument that a number of non-Jews would drop out of Greenwood in protest were Negroes to be admitted. It was felt that the club which, during its first six years, operated at a deficit, could not afford to lose members. The majority of club members were questioned on the topic of Negro membership:

"The club has made money for several years now. The excuse of lost revenues is just an excuse. It's the most disgusting, un-Jewish spectacle I have ever seen. IT STINKS!"

"Why should we take in any goddamn Negroes? Let them form their own club the way we did."

"Negroes wouldn't join the club anyway. I don't think they would want to."

"It's a problem that haunts us, of course. I don't know the answer. We're trapped between our ethics and the facts of life. Eventually it will get solved one way or the other. I don't think any of us really feel right about it. And after the way we have been treated!"

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Beyond the leisure contacts at the Greenwood club, Jews and non-Jews meet in recreational activities at bowling matches, at card games, and on the golf course. Especially the most avid bowlers, bridge players and golfers fraternize across religious lines, but even in these sports religious and social dilemmas arise which make one's life as a Jew awkward.

The stress and social complications experienced by some of the Jews of the Middletown was dramatized during a B'nai B'rith meeting when a question arose which destroyed the evening's frivolity. The session had been marked by ribaldry. The concluding committee

report came from a golfer who announced that a golf jamboree was set for a Saturday early in June. The Knights of Columbus, Scottish Rites and B'nai B'rith would participate. The matches were to extend through the afternoon at the Greenwood club, followed by a dinner, drinks and cards at a local hotel. The report was applauded and the meeting adjourned, but before the men had left their seats Rabbi Kreutzer hurried over to the chairman and whispered in his ear. The chairman was obviously annoyed by the rabbi's words. As Rabbi Kreutzer walked away he said:

"But those ARE the rules."

Simultaneously it was announced that the B'nai B'rith bars lodges from taking part in sports activities on the Sabbath.

This news silenced the room for a period in excess of 45 seconds. Men stared at the floor, at the ceiling and into space. One man mumbled, "Oh, damn!" Eventually the problem was restated. Muted discussion began. It was evident that a Saturday was the only date available to the other groups. Further, a decision had to be made promptly because the committee head was to report to the Knights of Columbus and to the Shriners at another meeting within the hour.

The room was again quiet until the chairman asked the question:

"O.K., men, what shall we do?"

At that moment the rabbi and another man began to put forth the identical solution. Rabbi Kreutzer was given the group's attention. He suggested that as long as the match was held among individuals and not as an official function of the B'nai B'rith, he could not object; participaion in the jamboree would become a matter of individual conscience. One of the older men whispered to his companion:

"Maybe now the rabbi has a Talmudic head after all?"

The proposed solution seemed acceptable to those present but the vivacity which had characterized the earlier portion of the evening was not recovered.

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Herberg has pointed to the emphasis many Americans place on inter-faith activity.[6] The Jewish community of Middletown is no exception in this regard. Most of the city's Jewry stressed the need for inter-faith work, except for a few of its older members who took Rabbi Kreutzer's view that contacts with the *goyim* are of much less importance than the success and unity of Jewish life. It is assumed by many that the rabbi should be the chief agent in the inter-group endeavors.

Rabbi Kreutzer did not hold a very high opinion of the majority of his Christian counterparts, and he found the meetings of the Ministerial Association both dull and superficial. His gratifying contacts with the Protestant clergy were confined to the Episcopalian curate and the minister of the Universalist-Unitarian church. His encounters with the clergy of the working class were very infrequent and sometimes somewhat ludicrous, e.g. as on the occasion when the rabbi was asked how he handled sacrificial animals since the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem. On another occasion he was asked to speak at a rural church on brotherhood during the week dedicated to that goal. The rabbi found it necessary to request an engagement after the specified week, to which the clergyman replied: "But that won't do, that's not Brotherhood Week."

The efforts Rabbi Kreutzer did make in the direction of inter-faith work were not matched in his congregation despite the insistence upon such activity by an important faction of the group. His public discussions with the Episcopal curate, his Jewish music program and his guest sermons in Christian churches were all applauded by his congregants but their presence at these events

was minimal. At the most, six members of the Jewish community appeared at the majority of these programs. At such occasions one might note as did a member of the Jewish community:

"The well-heeled middle class of [Middletown] meet the well-heeled middle class of [Middletown] here. They differ in religion and the one group is more liberal than the others except in the case of the Universalists. What do they accomplish in the way of brotherly love? I don't know, but I see polite conversations and that's about all. Even then they clump themselves at opposite ends of the table. This is inter-faith work, yet? It looks pretty dubious to me."

It was only rarely that casual observation appeared to contradict the above appraisal. Nevertheless, such fraternization between Jews and non-Jews remains a vital goal for most of the Jewish residents.

Closely related to religious "good will" for many Middletowners is community work. In this regard a number of the older informants reported that Jewish activity in community work had increased through the years. The maiority of the Jewish group take the view that one is obliged to contribute both to the welfare of local and world Jewry as well as to the needs of the general community.

To be selected for the Hospital Auxiliary board of directors represents an honorific accomplishment for almost any woman in Middletown. One of the Jewish women on the board commented:

"I felt particularly honored knowing that some of our real blue blood has not been elected. It is a matter of what you contribute and not just who you are. . . . When I was asked to suggest further candidates, I put forward Mrs. T.....'s name. They said they didn't know her but if I thought that well of her they were confident. . . . They contacted her immediately. . . . And they were mortified when I was served ham at a lunch

by mistake. Five years ago they would not have known the difference!"

It was noted by Jews and non-Jews alike that the members of the Temple Emanu'El are particularly sympathetic supporters of liberal causes. However, extensive, concrete action resulting from their moral and public postures has not always been apparent:

"You watched the Universalists and this group [Jews of the congregation] talk about the liberal element of the city standing together and doing SOMEthing which would be constructive. . . . The evening is over and they really didn't decide on doing ONE thing, but they eased their consciences for a while by talking about it."

The distinction made between Jewish participation in community projects on the one hand and leadership or social acceptance on the other hand should be noted. The Jews of Middletown are sensitive to this distinction but are inclined to the view that any degree of community participation is better than none.

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However muted or infrequent the actual incidents of anti-Semitism, the majority of the Jewish community appear to be exceedingly sensitive to the hostile and deprecating views of the majority. In fact many of the Jewish group suspect themselves of being hypersensitive to criticism:

"Maybe ninety-nine out of a hundred things a man says about Jews may be favorable but if he makes that one crack that indicates he is against us, I figure he's an anti-Semite all along."

"We are hypersensitive. As a Jew you have to learn to relax a little. I can recall when I used to read and my eye would jump ahead for that capital *J* somewhere on the page."

"We joke a lot about Jews being pretty aggressive in

an argument but underneath it, when we are not with fellow Jews, we could kick ourselves every time we sound out of place."

"We're too touchy. We should learn to accept the fact that a lot of Gentiles are suspicious of us and then let it go. As it is we keep ourselves worked up."

It is not uncommon for Jews and other minority groups to accept and internalize the prejudices of the dominant group.[7] That some Jewish women wear "dark, dark sun glasses with white rims" is self-evident; but, of course, many Jewish women do not wear these glasses and a number of non-Jewish women wear them.

At times the portrayal of Jewish "characteristics" which are not flattering (whether from Jewish or non-Jewish sources initially) are accepted and exchanged with good humor:

"No, you'll never make it J..... . [a Jew speaking to a non-Jew at a Jewish reception], your nose isn't big enough."

"The Jews would never have crucified the Messiah. The Romans had to do that because we could never have got together on when or where to do it."

At other times self-deprecating remarks may be less lightly put forward:

"We stay here in [Middletown] because of money. It's the only thing that would keep a Jew here. That's the way it is."

"Some of our own people give us the bad name we've got, but I'm afraid that if any of us [Jews] made a lot of money we'd behave pretty much the same way. A lot of non-Jews show more sense that way."

Many informants wonder if the so-called, "Jewish mannerisms" are peculiar to the Jewish group or if such behavior is typical of the middle class generally:

"Are we really more argumentative, doubtful, egocentric, and aggressive than the others? I've asked myself that question so often and so have others I suspect.

I think most of us WANT to believe that when Jews act like pigs it is because they feel insecure and NOT because these are Jewish traits."

"Don't let anyone kid you. Jewish traits are pretty dead. There isn't anything Jews in [Middletown] do that you can't find Christians doing too!"

Jewish acceptance of the negative views of the dominant group has been spoken of as self-hate. Lewin has observed:

"That self-hatred is present among Jews is a fact that the non-Jew would hardly believe, but which is well known among the Jews themselves. It is a phenomenon which has been observed ever since the emancipation of the Jews. . . . Self-hatred is both a group phenomenon and an individual phenomenon. . . . It may be directed against Jewish institutions, Jewish mannerisms, Jewish language, or Jewish ideals."[8]

Among Middletown's Jewish populace, to be accused of being an anti-Semitic Jew would seem to represent very nearly the ultimate in despicability. That the charge is a dangerous and threatening one may be suggested by the consequences, i.e. partial ostracization by fellow Jews.

The consequences of self-hate may be further complicated by the subtle nature of the phenomenon and, insofar as one has accepted the pervasive prejudices of the dominant culture, he remains vulnerable to self doubt as to the strength of his Jewish loyalties. Many Jews were probed on the topic of self-hate. Indeed, most respondents indicated or implied that the subject is a sensitive one and a portion of those questioned found the topic "loaded" to the point of evading the issues. There were 53 people who answered the question,

"Have you observed any Jewish self-hate here in [Middletown]?"

Among this group, 21 percent stated that they had observed such behavior, 37 percent said that they had

reason to suspect that self-hate existed in the community and 42 percent insisted that self-hate was not present. (There was a lack of uniformity as to the types of behavior which are viewed as indicants of Jewish self-deprecation.)

One might infer a measure of frank, individual self-hate in the community from statements made by some of the individuals who were interviewed:

"I'm in favor of Reform because it is less repulsive to me than Orthodoxy."

"There are times when I cannot deny that I am jealous of the Gentiles. When that mood hits me, well, then, being Jewish gets to look like a pretty painful thing. It blows over and happens rarely you understand, but when it does I don't like Jews."

Such frank and candid views are infrequently expressed. Much more common were statements of a more nearly neutral tone:

"If I were a newcomer in this world and if I had a free choice I'd never be a Jew. Why suffer the pain of it unnecessarily—to have to be always a bit extra careful? I don't think I'm being unfair when I say that. We all know that you pay a certain price for being Jewish."

"Self-hate is really rare here. Much more common is the feeling, sometimes, of being a bit sorry about being Jewish with all that the title implies. Some of us, especially the women, can be a little jealous of their Gentile sisters."

"Once in a while you get the feeling—it's much less than self hate—that, 'Damn it all, why do I have to be a Jew?' "

The majority of respondents stated, at least "for the record," that they find unique rewards in being Jewish, that they are proud of the religious and ethical values of Judaism or that being Jewish is a fact of life which should be capitalized upon.

"I am an old Jew. How could I be anything or anyone else? Do I look unhappy? If I am unhappy it is because I can't do the things I used to do or because I am exasperated with this group. But I am a Jew and I like it that way. I would be a very poor Methodist?"

"Sure, we get our bumps on the nose for being what we are, but it's more than offset by other things."

"I used to think all Jews were New York Jews and I felt damn sorry for the poor Gentiles (laughter)!"

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Among the matters which concern members of the Jewish community is that of the "visibility" of Jews. It is widely recognized that many non-Jews assume that Semites can be identified by facial appearances, by the type of name a person carries and by manners of speech and gesture. The Jewish group is not united on this matter. A minority suggested that Jews are usually identifiable by name or face while the majority insisted, some with vehemence, that the uniqueness of Jewish names or faces is folklore. (So-called Yiddish accents are also a point of debate.) In regard to appearances, Allport states that experimental evidence indicates that about 55 percent of a sample of Jews are identifiable by means of photographs.[9]

One might anticipate that a large portion of the Jewish group would speak with a Yiddish accent or that they would employ Yiddish colloquialisms in view of the number who departed from the urban ghettoes of America within the present generation. Such an expectancy was borne out at times although those who were reared in Middletown or in somewhat similar environments speak in the manner of Midwesterners.

The desirability or undesirability of remaining a distinct and separate group is no more settled in Middletown than it has been elsewhere among Jewish com-

munities, although one might assume that those Jews who wished to be absorbed into the larger community tend to be lost from the ranks of the Jewish group which formed the basis for this study. Nevertheless, a sensitivity to the appeal of assimilation was noted among the staunch supporters of the Jewish community. One man stated this feeling explicitly:

"Non-Jews find it hard to appreciate the appeal assimilation holds for most of us. The idea of being really accepted, of being able to let down your guard; the nagging doubts about an anti-Semitic outburst—most of us know it's a remote possibility, but as long as it is possible, and being aware of Jewish history, well, it haunts the back of a guy's mind. One would have to pay the piper for answering the siren call and that might raise a lot of guilt feelings and anxieties of its own, but to be really free inside and accepted outside, Oh! Nobody who is not on the receiving end of prejudice, and I don't care HOW mild it is, can ever fully appreciate what it feels like. Non-Jews in this country are lucky that way. I hope history won't change things for them."

For the greater part, the majority of the Jewish community follows the "formula for success"—overtly maintaining their identity but doing so with discretion:

"There's no need to offend people by being conspicuously different. These hicks think we're odd enough as it is. Why else do so many of our people panic if the rabbi wants to wear a *yarmelkeh?* I'm Jewish but I'm sure not going to advertise it to the bigots if I can help it."

It is noteworthy that in public Jewish matters are often, although certainly not always, spoken of with circumspection, even when the content of the discussion might appear to the knowledgeable observer as of little inherent interest:

"This thing is not too good. I wish it had been done

in another way. As it is it has created some ill will among a few over there. I told our friend that it might have been better had things been set up along different lines. Then they, especially some of them, would not b in a position to complain about it."

And the desire for relative anonymity among many Jews has been widely observed. Kaplan has suggested that:

" 'He wants the world to forget about him.' . . . The Jews in these small communities [American South] live out their lives, on the surface at least, as other people do, but they are never quite normal, never quite at ease, never completely secure, and seldom imbued with the sense of worthwhileness that members of other religious groups are. Outwardly they may be calm but inwardly they are worried."[10]

In Middletown one was told:

"Some of our people like K..... want to be crusaders. That's foolish. As members of a suspect minority group it can only hurt us in the long run. We have to let sleeping dogs lie if we want to avoid losing ground. Things are getting better all the time and we've got a lot invested in where we've got. I'd be for more social action if I thought it would help."

From the above one might be tempted to conclude that a number of Middletown's Jews have not accepted some of the evidence from the Jewish experience in Nazi Grmany.[11] On the other hand, Rabbi Kreutzer and other members of the congregation did stress the dangers of pursuing an entirely ameliorative course of action when confronting the non-Jewish world:

"They won't respect you, and in the long run you won't even be safe as a Jew if you don't stand up for what everyone knows you are anyway."

"Too many Jews use their disadvantage as a crutch for failures or the like and for NOT doing what should be done to make the world a better place to live in."

The rabbi in a moment of intense exasperation exclaimed:

"Oh God! Won't they EVER learn that good behavior didn't save six million Jews!"

But several informants did speak with feeling about the fate of European Jewry and noted that there were local lessons to be drawn from that experience:

"Zionism was right in one thing: Jews had to have a homeland. The danger always exists and we should not kid ourselves about it. It seemed pretty remote to a lot of liberated Jews in Germany and see where their approach got them."

"My father and my brother didn't leave Lithuania because they thought they couldn't be happy here. My father said that he could not keep *kosher* in the U.S.; and so what happened? Everything was ruined. They were burned with all the other Jews, and IN the *shul.* Even the Jewish grave yard is gone. The Nazis dug it under. Liquidated, gone, nothing left. . . . One must know better now how to look at things, how to face up to what can happen most anywhere."

The drawing from the past and the fear of what might happen in the future was reflected on the numerous occasions during which the researcher was asked whether he, as a sociologist, thought there might be the possibility of an anti-Jewish holocaust occurring in America.

Informants were questioned as to what was being done to combat anti-Semitism. The respondents spoke of the efforts of the Anti-Defamation League and of the work of Jewish public information organizations. Many noted that Jews in America are no longer benignly acquiescing to discrimination:

"The Negroes are where we were about World War II. I mean that we were then really getting under way with various defense agencies. The Jews were coming

out of their shells. Now we have gone on to more positive programs and goals."

But when asked what the local Jews are doing to combat anti-Semitism one was almost invariably told either, "nothing," or "very little." Several people suggested that Middletown's Jews give money to defense agencies or that by their own conduct they hope to be a credit to Judaism. In terms of concrete, local action there appears to be a single form of positive engagement with anti-Semitism, i.e. a portion of the Jewish community avoids patronage of business establishments which are reputed to be operated by anti-Semites. One individual observed:

"Hell, they're all anti-Jewish, so I just avoid the worst of the crowd."

Chapter IX

STRESS AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

IT WOULD BE advantageous to specify the extent to which stress within the Jewish community of Middletown is a by-product of minority and marginal status within the larger society. Likewise, one should wish to determine the extent to which outright social isolation, insofar as it exists, contributes to a supposed "hothouse" atmosphere among the Jews of the city. Further, felicitous research would note the dimensions of stress as it might be generated by clashes between the ascendency of American, middle class culture and the parallel decline of traditional Jewish values, mores and folkways. Finally, the stress generated by discontinuities and conflicts inherent in each of these cultures (and their variants) might be extracted from appropriate sociological data.

The findings of this study do imply, at points, that all of the above sources of intrapersonal, interpersonal and inter-group tension do exist (on occasion) for some individuals alone or in combination. But the data do not permit a differential analysis of these sources of stress. Conceivably, variables which appear to be sources of tension might be found to play no part in generating stress or, alternately, a variable might be

found to play a complex role, e.g. relative social isolation might induce deliberate inter-group good will while engendering interpersonal tension.

These and other avenues of inquiry within Middletown remain the property of future research. In fact, at this point the only really secure observations in regard to stress are that the Jews of Middletown are troubled by and endure a slight but persistent measure of anti-Semitism; and that there exist potential areas of cultural conflict for these people. Concurrently, it should be noted that the descriptive aspects of the research cast a more sturdy net than do the analytical points which follow.

* * * * * *

Intrapersonal stress: It was noted that no less than 24 percent of the Jewish community of Middletown labors under a measure of psychological malaise of sufficient intensity or frequency to jeopardize socially expected behavior.[1] While acknowledging the internal stress factor in neurosis, the sociological analysis presented here focuses upon the impact of these emotional disorders upon Jewish group life. There is some indication that the disturbances harbored by individuals, even if less than neurosis, do add to tensions within the community, e.g. the rabbi was the recipient of rather persistent, waspish and destructive criticism from three of his congregants. In each case the individuals were widely reputed to have demonstrated somewhat similar attitudes toward other individuals and rabbis. Although many members of the community felt they could discount these carping aggressions and hostilities, the rabbi and others were adversely effected by them.

Other behaviors of doubtful contribution to on-going group life were observed among those persons in the communications network who project their own dis-

torted interpretations on to events and on to the motives of others:

"D..... . is dominated by her own prejudices and half these folks don't realize it."

"C..... . is so scared of being a sucker that he balks at everything that calls for money! He can't believe that a raw angle is not involved even though he is, himself, a task master at playing dirty pool."

To be sure, in a group of long standing acquaintances, the prejudices, biases and the reality-distorting needs of individuals are frequently subtracted from what is said; but this was not always seen to be the case. Hence, tensions do mature as an outgrowth of the peculiar needs of individuals, and attendant gossip becomes necessary if one wishes to clarify conflicting "news." By way of example, a sharp exchange at a board meeting could generate a rash of telephone calls the next morning in which women commented upon and, to some extent, distorted the events of the previous evening. In turn, further calls were necessary in an attempt to clarify "what really happened." One outgrowth of the exchanges of information and misinformation was, at times, the inflammatory charge of untruth:

"If that is what F..... . said she either doesn't know what she's talking about or it is a LIE. And *I* do't want to have anything to do with liars!"

One might well expect that F..... . would deny the charge and add further to the verbal conflagration concerning events at which none of the conversants were present.

There are operating, however, personal stresses which are either partially or fully justified by events. Women who were seen to be deeply concerned with their physical appearance could only look with increasing foreboding at the aging process. There are the anxieties as to the welfare of children, health, marriage relation-

ships and business prospects. Further, there are those who suffer emotionally because they are somewhat aware of their own limitations and psychological vulnerabilities:

"L..... . sat in this office and bawled his head off to me. He said he knew he was ruining his kid and that he could not help it. I've never seen a guy suffer worse. What killed him was that he knew it was his own fault and that he couldn't stop himself."

But more frequently evidenced than the anguish which comes from insight into one's own deeply rooted and injurious tendencies is the ego shielding act of rationalization. Vidich and Bensman have observed the:

"Almost infinite capacity of individual social elasticity and adaptability in dealing with immediate situations in such a way as to avoid or suppress what appears to the observer to be an obvious contradiction and a potential basis for intense personal conflict."[2]

Any folklore which premises the well being of Jews on an extraordinary degree of rationality would seem to be somewhat inapplicable in Middletown. The leading members of the Jewish community and the less influential members of the group all displayed considerable facility at juggling their views of events in such a way as to defend and to justify their own egos and decisions, e.g. the conclusion of the second congregational meeting.

While many illusions might be disadvantageous to the group, e.g. the naive, initial estimates of temple building costs; others may serve individuals as a personal prophylactic against interpersonal hostility:

"I think everybody REALLY likes everybody else here. You hear gripes but underneath I honestly think we are one happy family."

"Some say that the big boys ignore us small fry when it comes to deciding things in the temple. But it is

not really so. We all have an equal say in things and I've never felt that it was otherwise."

Further, there are those who are keenly aware of negative realities but who choose to accentuate the positive aspects of situations in an attempt to make their own lives and group life more saisfactory:

"Now mind you, I can find plenty to get disgusted about with this group, but then what? Things are just as nice as you make them, so why not look for the best in them?"

The range of intrapersonal stresses does not end with the resolution of one's perceptions of his social environment. The Jewish residents of Middletown face a number of troubling religious or semi-religious questions, all of which might also produce internal tensions:

Who is a Jew and what makes a Jew Jewish?;

A free society implies freedom to choose one's religion but to abandon Judaism is a serious transgression;

As a liberal one is free to be his own religious mentor but one owes a large measure of obedience and deference to the rabbi as religious leader;

Money, quite understandably, 'talks' but the egalitarian roots of American democracy and of Judaism condemn it;

Ideals should triumph but one must come to terms with "reality";

One should utilize the temple for social functions but it brings little prestige;

Romantic love should triumph over all obstacles but one should marry a coreligionist;

The children should be masters of their own lives but they should also be 'the right kind of people';

Jews have a tradition of moral forthrightness but the most fruitful and 'appropriate' approach to issues may be to practice quiet diplomacy;

Religion is a private matter but Judaism cannot survive if it is not a group phenomenon;

Judaism makes universalistic claims but it remains a particularistic commitment;
One is obliged to contribute constructively to the temple but one has a right to hold himself aloof from the 'un-*mentsh*' like behavior exhibited when temple decisions are made.

There are further dilemmas which individuals confront in regard to such traditions as the dietary laws, service attendance, the Sabbath, Talmudism, and the preservation of Yiddish. Individuals understand that they are to live by the law and not to die by it; but many have also been taught that to surrender the past folkways and mores is to undermine the survival ability of the group. Abandonment of the arbitrary symbols of the Jewish heritage is, supposedly, a betrayal. Glazer has commented upon the above situation by stating that:

"[Traditional] Judaism governed all the minutiae of life, not to enhance it, but to fulfill the word of God. And insofar as it is inconceivable for modern man to live so as to fulfill the word of God (unless that word is bowdlerized—which many ministers of religion are happy to do), Judaism is as badly off as any other religion."[3]

The plight of Middletown's Jews is reflected in their personal distress and felt inadequacies when confronted by their children with questions of dogma, theology and religiously premised conduct. Not only are they at a loss as to what to advise the young; they, as parents, feel uneasy if not also guilty as a result of their own incapacities as religious mentors. They encourage their children to uphold the uniqueness of Judaism as a religion and as a way of life while, simultaneously, desiring to see their offspring participate fully in the American, middle-class society. Perhaps the full measure of this aspiration of "having one's cake and eating it" is to be seen in the deep resistance many adults expressed when confronted with the suggestion that the

traditional emphasis upon "brainwork" is not absolutely in concert with the American middle class culture. Only insofar as the individual could sincerely believe that he and his children experience no conflict between Judaism and the American middle class way of life could he escape the inner dilemma of being attracted to partially divergent goals.[4]

The appeal of moving headlong into the non-Jewish world is recognized by many although the majority probably would choose to reject the opportunity. There are those who see the appeal of abandoning Judaism as a frankly rational response to the disadvantageous position of Jews in the larger society. But others wonder if the appeal of assimilation is not also a reflection of a hidden desire to jettison their religious identity as such. These people are also troubled by the possible validity of the stereotyped pictures given by non-Jews. If one denies the veracity of these images he might be denying obvious realities which Jews should accept, even humorously. On the other face of it, he might ask himself if the acceptance of these usually unflattering stereotypes indicates that he, as a Jew, secretly derogates his own heritage. In this regard, Adelson has observed that:

"It is doubtful whether many individuals, Jewish or Gentile can completely avoid incorporating our society's stereotype of the Jew. . . . The nonauthoritarian Jew rejects its validity, fights its existence within himself, and is sometimes ridden by guilt when he is unable to do so completely."[5]

In theory and in public one is always "proud to be a Jew," but underneath the surface of the words one might frequently sense that, for a portion of the Jewish community, Sartre's point is applicable and troubling to such individuals:

"What stamps the inauthentic Jew is precisely this perpetual oscillation between pride and a sense of in-

feriority, between the voluntary and passionate negation of the traits of his race and the . . . participation in the Jewish reality."[6]

From what has been suggested concerning the internal stresses experienced by individual Jews of Middletown, one might be inclined to the view that a large number of troubled people live unhappy lives and contribute to an unending flow of ensuing tensions within the Jewish community. Such simply is not entirely the case and only a portion of Middletown's Jews might properly be designated as "inauthentic." Concurrently, many persons are capable of overcoming or of circumventing their own problems and limitations to an adequate enough extent that they are able to live constructive and meaningful lives within the general society as well as within the Jewish community.

Finally, it should be quite clear that the non-Jewish world of Middletown is not without its own sources of intrapersonal stress; many of which are entirely congruent with those sources which act upon the city's Jewish residents.

* * * * * *

Interpersonal stress: One of the most disturbing problems in the eyes of several members of the Jewish community is the enigma of frequent and intense interpersonal tension among a group of well meaning individuals. Rabbi Kreutzer asked the question:

"How can it be? These people are pretty decent. You take them one at a time and they are O.K. Sure, I don't always see things their way but that doesn't matter. But get them together on anything and WOW! They act like a bunch of two year olds, only worse. I don't get it."

Others commented:

"We thought that coming to a small town would be like joining one big, happy family religiously. Now we

are greatly disillusioned. They ACTUALLY hate each other much of the time."

"The Gentiles think the Jews stick together. Little do they know that we hate each other more than they could ever hate us."

In this regard it was noted that, with the exception of a single person, no one person among the 106 members of the adult community escaped hostile criticism and evaluation (as reported to the researcher) during the course of this study. The one person, a woman, who may have escaped all antagonistic or derogatory appraisals moved away from Middletown toward the end of the study. It would appear that this fabric of antagonism goes beyond the saying, "We all have our faults."

One of the contributory factors to interpersonal stress may likely be the very large diversity of personalities who interact within a somewhat encapsulated social community. Just among the affluent persons there is a range from those who practice ostentation, to intellectual acidness and acuity, to persons who are "close mouthed." The temple fund drive of 1960-1961 required the closest of personal contacts and, in its wake, may have done much to heighten and sharpen the awareness of personality differences. The second congregational meeting, beyond the many attendant financial problems to be faced at that time, revealed just how blunt may be the collision when "dreamers" and "realists" unavoidably meet. Those individuals who project their own weaknesses and proclivities on to undeserving adversaries only contribute further to interpersonal confusion and tensions when decisions are to be made. Nevertheless, relatively few clashes are so utterly blunt or of such long standing that a measure of rapproachment is not possible prior to further clashes.

As noted earlier, gossip which reverberates through the Jewish groups is another possible source of tension.

Even those who feel that they resist this habit are often caught up in gossiping:

"We don't believe in talking about others. It does nobody any good! . . . . That STUPE, B..... . do you know what he said!. . . . That's the God's truth, forgive me, but it's so."

In regard to gossip, Vidich and Bensman reported on it in the small "upstate" New York community:

"What is interesting about gossip is that in Springdale it seldom hurts anyone. Because it occurs in small temporarily closed circles and concerns those who are not present, the subject of the gossip need never be aware of it. Moreover, the *mores* demand, or better still one should say that it is the iron law of community life, that one not confront the subject of gossip with what is said about him."[7]

In one most significant regard gossip within Middletown's Jewish community differs from that in "Springdale;" gossip is fed back to the vital person who is the subject of it. This hurtful and often ego-threatening feed-back of gossip contributes most singularly to the intrapersonal and interpersonal stresses experienced by the "individually decent" Jews of Middletown.

The increasing tensions that arose out of the deepening difficulties of the temple drive contributed to aggrieved social relationships insofar as individual animosities were expressed in every more personal and vindictive terms. In the early Autumn of 1960 one was told that V..... . was thrifty, if not also, a bit tight. By late November V..... . was spoken of by the same informant as being:

"The dirtiest, meanest, nastiest sonofabitch I've ever known! He'd sell his mother down the river if it meant a few bucks. That guy is not only stingy; he's ugly and meaner than all hell."

One might anticipate the enormous displeasure with which V..... . would receive such a report were the

chain of gossip to bring it back to him. In the course of the study a number of informants were asked:

"Why is there so much gossip?"

Replies varied widely but most informants who had a "theory"suggested boredom, custom or the "natural tendencies of women." It was the observation of one informant and of the researcher that women may validate their status by displaying knowledgeability in terms of the latest "news."

The group also jockeys for social positions in terms of their children, dress grooming and household decor. Women, as well as men, add further to their status by shunning social reciprocity with "lesser lights." To be sure, such social distinctions run counter to the ideology of the group, i.e. *Klal Isroel.* These violations of principle may contribute to individual feelings of guilt among those who discriminate as well as to resentment among those who are slighted.

Counteracting some of the stresses which arise between persons are individuals who serve as peacemakers and as bridges between cliques. These individuals were especially instrumental in softening the antipathies between the rabbi and President Pele. Although it was recognized that some people who take these ameliorative tasks upon themselves do so out of personal needs which are not always entirely altruistic, their influence does contribute to the on-going stability of the group. There are others who make it their business to build social unity within the group at every possible turn; to which the rebuttal by one man was:

"I have a right to choose my own friends. Believe me, after twenty or more years here you get to the point where you really don't want to be bothered with people who don't interest you."

Some people may retard the growth of interpersonal conflicts by their desire to remain aloof from quarrels,

congregational meetings and gossip. Further, there is the tradition of maintaining appearances:

"So they crab at each other and go around on this or that. You saw, didn't you, at the last sisterhood meeting that D..... . and G..... . prepared the lunch together and were sweet with each other. They crab a lot about the chores and so forth, BUT it does force individuals to put up a front of graciousness with each other and that helps tie the group back together at a time when things are up in the air the way they are right now about the temple and the rabbi."

Reconciliation between individuals is absolutely necssary if any semblance of group life is to continue. Time, i.e. intervening events, washes over old arguments until they no longer appear relevant to the contending parties, e.g. Rabbi Kreutzer and the "country club snubs." Beyond that, the Jewish group is somewhat closeted with itself, hence past feuds are put aside in order to re-establish the ideal of unity and to obviate both social isolation and the awkwardness of public encounters with antagonists.

While they are genuinely committed to the ideal of group solidarity on a religious and historical basis, the majority of Middletown's Jewish community appear to premise their actual solidarity on social groupings generated by cards, bowling, the club—all in the context of the group's comparative social isolation.[8]

One critic of the Jewish community quipped in a paraphrasing of Franz Werfel:

"More and more I think we have less and less to hold us together. Good thing it is that the Gentiles treat us as they do, for there is less and less that is unique about US that keeps us what we are as Jews."

That there is a paucity of ongoing sources for solidarity withn the group may be reflected in the fact that many suggested that most any project, e.g. group monetary

indebtedness, would be desirable in that it would cement internal ties.

A contributory factor pointing toward the lack of unity is the inability of individuals to agree upon a commonly accepted definition of what it means to be a genuinely "good Jew." There are those who see the outstanding Jew as a scholar, others think in terms of ethical conduct and others imply adherence to traditional customs. And, religiously, the traditionalists accuse the active participants of the congregation of a betrayal of Judaism. For their part, the active congregants feel that the aloof traditionalists are "running away." Both parties contains members who perceive the other faction as self-haters.

Another facet of this lack of unanimity in the desired attributes of "good Jews" is a lack of consensus as to one's just claims to status. By way of example; if a man is prudent and thrifty he is "no *mentsh,*" but if he gives lavishly to the temple he is at least vulnerable to the charge of being a "white father" or of attempting to "have things his way." If he spends his wealth on himself and upon his family he is open to the charge of being self-centered, vulgar, "pushy" and selfish. If he is in a position to spend lavishly both upon the temple and upon his household he surely appears awesome in his wealth but he might be accused of "trying to impress people" and of "spreading himself too thin." Further, he can spend without public display but such conduct gives rise to rumors that he is much more wealthy than he admits, i.e. he is "no *mentsh*" and, hence, not a good Jew. A man might attempt to disregard such criticisms but, insofar as there are multiple criteria for prestige present within the community, he remains partially unconfirmed in his assumption of high and lofty status except among his personal coterie who share his values concerning one's proper claims to honor. (In this regard, the group therapist might be inclined to suggest

that a more generous attitude toward diversity could reduce some of these tensions.)

That virtually no one is above the abrasive criticism of others might be taken to indicate a healthy measure of group self-criticsm and internal review. The same behavior might also be interpreted as aggressive expressions which undermine individual confidence and group solidarity. It might also be inferred that a few members of the Middletown Jewish community fail to make an operating distinction between intellectual probing and what borders on a habit of mental negativism when confronted with most any assertion:

"What do you mean you think it's going to rain today? It is only sprinkling!"

Zborowski and Herzog have commented upon internal group criticism as it operated in the *shtetl* society of Eastern Europe:

"No matter how wise a scholar may be, his words will be weighed, examined and questioned not only by his peers but also by those who admit that his learning far outshines their own.... testing the behavior of all against their own judgement.... Everyone feels free to challenge the connoisseurship of anyone else.... Because it is accepted with qualification only as long as it expresses one's own point of view."[9]

The writer, in his cautious discussion and report to the congregation concerning his research, noted the above phenomenon and suggested that while one might prove his intellectual acumen, and while one might defend or enhance his own ego by intellectual challenges or defiance, there is also the possibility that one threatens other people's egos by a mode of social discourse.[10] At the conclusion of the talk, 13 of those present personally thanked the researcher for his report and among these individuals, 5 made it a point to tell the writer where he had been in error.[11]

Public debate is made even more explosive and dis-

tressing to individuals by the practice which one might term, "moral brinkmanship." That is to say, disagreements or positions taken on any given issue are readily transmuted into moral stances involving one's personal integrity. This proclivity on the part of some, but not all, generates stresses by implying that one's basic and intimate commitments are at stake, even on seemingly minor points. There results little room for diplomatic bargaining, negotiation or compromise.[12] And when a compromise is achieved, the individuals concerned in the charges and countercharges find themselves justifying their retreat by means of rationalizations and by a show of personal bluster which serves as a denial that a withdrawal from non-negotiable positions has occurred. That brandishing of one's irrevocable, moral commitments does not lead to suits of libel or very frequent fist fights may stem from the fact that the Jewish community rather anticipates a certain amount of internal blustering.

Among the stresses experienced within the Jewish community, denominational tensions, while present, are among the less central ones. Several informants object to the dominance of the Reform movement and a number of the "old line" Reform are threatened by an influx of Eastern Europeans. In actuality, many of the complaints against those of Orthodox inclinations are not clearly religious in nature; the threat of social retrogression seems much more important:

"We've come a long, long way and now some of these people, INCLUDING the rabbi, want to go back to wearing *yarmelkehs* and that sort of thing in the temple. You don't have to act like the Lower East Side or like my grandfather with his *tefillin* in order to be a good Jew, you know. How do you think that kind of stuff looks, anyway? It's o.k. for the old folks and all that. I have nothing against it, but still it just doesn't go here in [Middietown] and there's no need for it. Ortho-

doxy can only hurt us in a place like [Middletown]."

A more evident source of stress is the matter of temple dues. It should be recalled that the annual assessments are made by the board on the basis of informal and often contested estimates of a household's "ability to pay." Matters were not facilitated in 1960-1961 by the relatively large amounts required in order to support the old temple and its full-time rabbi. The congregation is quite aware of these problems:

"I think that if we cut dues back it would take some of the pressure off of people and a lot of tension would be reduced. All this haggling and so forth over a man's dues and their being heavy and all; it's not good for the congregation."

The economic recession in the Autumn of 1960 coupled with the added assessments for the temple drive also nurtured ill feelings among individuals and toward the board.

Antagonisms between the more affluent and the less wealthy are also present. The prosperous members of the congregation had little patience with Sam Walters who felt that he could not contribute 25c to 50c a week to the temple. From the opposite perspective, the least wealthy may be inclined to over-estimate the liquid assets of the most affluent families. One of the wealthiest informants suggested that:

"The little fellows overrate our ability to contribute by a long shot because they feel like big shots when they think that we are rolling in dough. They don't really see things for what they are. They are dazzled and flattered by OUR wealth and then they turn around and squawk because we don't fork over the kind of money they think we should have. Truly, it just isn't there. They are imagining it. That's my theory."

Indeed, wealth and its distribution played a large part in the quarrels that surrounded the 1960-1961 fund drive. It was repeatedly suggested that the financial

main-stays of the community were not of one mind as to their economic responsibilities to the temple. Further, the uneven distribution of wealth (or that appearance) does drop major decisions into the hands of a few congregants, almost all of whose support is required if any major building projects are to succeed. In that sense, a man is in a position to use his wealth as a club in order to have the group submit to his personal wishes:

" 'Do it my way or forget me' is a theme we have heard for years. We all know that the board is over a barrel on these things. You can't turn your back on five or ten thousand dollars in this small group."

The less wealthy members of the congregation resent the formation of an unplanned oligarchy. They, and many of the affluent persons, submit to the ideology that group decisions should be reached by a democratic process which contravenes influence as it might be generated by the power of money. The temple fund drive of 1960-1961 heightened and made more public the value conflict between power of wealth and the power of numbers as expressed through the democratic process.

The majority of the congregation, i.e. the less wealthy, were defeated on the major issue of the year which was the temple building drive. Matters became the property of a minority of the more wealthy families. For their part, many of the most prosperous and influential members of the congregation did not perceive themselves as oligarchical or presumptuous, e.g. the pre-meeting purchase of the lot adjoining the old temple. The wealthy feel sincerely dedicated to the best interests of the entire congregation as they see them. They had little tolerance for Rabbi Kreutzer's denunciations of their actions.

The temple drive itself was further hindered by the fact that 24 percent of the informants questioned stated that they were against a new temple prior to the 1960-1961 drive. Further, those who did advocate building

were not of one mind as to the goals which such a project should achieve. Finally, the drive became deeply confounded when individuals reduced genuine differences of opinion to the level of the presumed malice of others. Even when such invective was not present, interested parties rationalized and projected their own vested interests as the best interests of the congregation. In the succinct words of one individual:

"It became an unhappy mess."

Aside from the temple issue and the question of assessments, leisure activities are a fort of group solidarity *and* the source of a large measure of interpersonal stress. Almost every informant commented negatively upon the prominence of cliques within a community committed to extensive brotherhood and unity:

"Oh yes, oh yes, there is togetherness here. I tell you IT IS TOGETHERNESS IN FACTIONS; AIR TIGHT CLIQUES!"

Factional groupings, as Simmel suggested, tend to correlate with broad and basically similar incomes, interests and *weltanschauungen*.[13] Only in the realm of card playing does there appear to be many individuals who bridge social coteries.

The Greenwood Country Club contributes markedly to the divisiveness of the group insofar as it makes more evident the separation of economic groupings, detracts socially as well as financially from the Temple Emanu-El and insofar as it exposes the deeply compromised attitude of many Jews toward another minority group, i.e. Middletown's Negro community.

Again, one should be reminded that the Jews of Middletown have no peculiar option on interpersonal stress. And more than one local church has suffered building drive debacles every bit as unpleasant as that occurring among the congregants of the Temple Emanu'-El.

* * * * * *

To be a rabbi in Middletown involves several distinct disadvantages which are inherent in the position. The city offers a limited range of amenities for a religious leader oriented toward Jewish culture. Beyond that, those informants are not entirely in error who suggested that only if the rabbi and his wife are avid card players could they be happy in the community. His position is further handicapped by his necessary isolation. Ministerial discretion and, possibly, authority require a certain degree of social distance. A rabbi in Middletown has no colleagues within the immediate vicinity with whom he can consult or associate. These handicaps became particularly injurious to Rabbi Kreutzer when temple issues became extraordinarily personalized.

The many and conflicting demands that are put upon the rabbi's office, along with the carping criticism of his execution of duties, as well as the indifferent attendance at services, all contribute to the discouragements he may experience as a religious leader. These handicaps added to the spectacle of congregational strife engenders a psychological malaise described by Braude:

"And while the rabbi and the lay group which he serves may clash, the real struggle is going on within the rabbi. How is it possible that 'my people' do not listen? Why cannot I reach them? Is it I?"[14]

Beyond these rabbinical hardships, Rabbi Kreutzer was confronted with his own, psychological vulnerabilities. The rabbi's psychological well-being was further tested by the disintegration of his engagement shortly after arriving in Middletown.

In his assertion of authority, Rabbi Kreutzer wielded the sanctions of his office (walking out of the second congregational meeting after challenging the elite) with doubtful effect. Actions which he saw as vivid expressions of moral integrity, many of the group perceived as juvenile histrionics. Such moves weakened rather than strengthened his influence among the pivotal members of

the community. But even were Rabbi Kreutzer to have been an extraordinarily mature and adroit rabbi, social stresses within the community such as were deflected toward his person and office may have made his position very nearly untenable. The degree to which Rabbi Kreutzer was to be held responsible for community tensions was, at times hotly debated. There were those who spoke of his personal limitations and there were those who noted that the congregation had thus far proven constitutionally incapable of working vigorously and effectively with any rabbi for any length of time.

The rabbi was also troubled in that he felt especially caught on a singular dilemma. On the one horn rested his commitment to the role of prophetic and morally inflexible leadership and on the other horn was impaled his obligation to be a healer of group fissures:

"If I do as some of the big boys say and make more of an effort to placate people, am I really doing the right thing or am I crawling on my stomach to them? I honestly don't know . . . . Maybe I should extend myself more, but I'm really not that way AND I shouldn't have to assent to a lot of pretty rotten behavior. On that sort of stuff, I have to speak out if I am going to be a rabbi."

Although Rabbi Kreutzer was not always sure of his proper role, he was sufficiently domineering and adequately resolute to suffer deep discomforture when he did capitulate to the laity. His rabbinical training also militated against compromise. In this regard Braude has observed that:

"It is here [in the seminary] that he [the rabbi] is presented with a quite distinct identity and a mandate to perform in terms of that identity . . . . [It has been] legitimized by receipt of the diploma of ordination. With this identity he structures the nature of his ministry. But his identity is frequently challenged . . . . Since he is loath to change his identity and since he is

powerless to change the particular situation with which he is confronted, the only course by which identity and situation may be brought into consonance and the problematic situation resolved is to simply leave the situation and find a position more congenial to him."[15]

A number of the congregation were both sanguinary and more cynical than Braude in their view of the rabbi's adjustment to his position:

"He's learning; he's falling into line with the way we do things here in [Middletown]."

"Oh, yes, [Kreutzer] is getting the swing of things now. You might say rather that he's capitulating. If he surrenders everything that matters, he MIGHT be a success here, 'though even that has had its exceptions."

The rabbi was sorely and publicly rankled at the limited conception the community had of his role as the religious leader:

"Sometimes I think that only a few of the old timers have any idea what it means to be a rabbi. The others simply don't or won't realize that it doesn't matter who or how old I am. The fact is: I am in the rabbi's office and they owe that office some respect!"

But in any "show-down" with the laity it would seem that the rabbi, who is both hired and dismissed by the congregation, must be the loser. Rabbis may come and go but the Temple Emanu'El is fixed in Middletown with its families who have long standing social and economic, vested interests in the city. These "involvements" are rarely shared by the rabbi. One member of the Jewish community summarized several aspects of the relationship between the rabbi and the congregation by saying:

"[Kreutzer] and the rest of them [rabbis] have a religious ideal for the community. Many of these people don't really share it. They think only in social terms; card and club terms. He wants to be a real teacher even if he does not know very much and, believe me, he does

not. He also sees himself as the leader of everything to do with Judaism in [Middletown] and this they can't tolerate. He says, 'I will not be a glorified Suday school teacher,' does he not? But that is what THEY want and if he does not agree, then what? Then his throat is cut! He wants, so he says, to grow and to make Jewish life better. The first he may or may not do, but the second; there is the trouble. His idea of a better Jewish life and their idea is really not the same. His throat is cut, I tell you! He is young and he has his own problems. We do not get great rabbis here. But their [the congregation's] conduct is a SCANDAL!"

Not only is there a clash of role definitions between the rabbi and the majority of the congregation; the members of laity themselves hold, as noted, widely diverging conceptions of the rabbi's proper conduct:

"We met the new rabbi [Kreutzer] and the first thing he did was unbotton his collar and pull down his tie a bit. There is NO hope in a rabbi like that. It is impossible to have anything to do with that sort of person."

"It was blistering AND sweltering the day we met Rabbi [Kreutzer]. He's an o.k. guy I think. He opened his collar just like anybody else would on a day like that. I think we'll understand each other. It should be a good year."

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"The rabbis don't feel like the servants they are and should be. They are hired and they should never forget that they are here to serve us—and that goes twice as much for their wives. They think they can sit around and be waited on. I don't go for that."

"The rabbi has too many demands made on him and he's answerable to too many voices. No one can take that for long."

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"He pals around the big boys and that is no good. He should be everybody's rabbi."

"The rabbi has little judgment. He must get in good with the Big Money boys or he is through. Rabbi [Kreutzer] and Rabbi [Blum] haven't learned this. They count on the friendship of the little fellows and that gets them nowhere."

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"He acts like any other damned minister in this town. How can you call him a rabbi? Exchange him with L..... . [a Protestant minister] or any of the others and no one would know the difference."

"What does that man [Kreutzer] think he is anyway! I can just see him at the Ministerial Association meetings sticking his nose up at the bacon. That's o.k. I guess, because it's up to him. But this *yarmelkeh* stuff and some of the rest of it! What's he trying to prove? Everybody knows he's Jewish so why must he make it stick out so much"?

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"The rabbi is here to serve the religious needs of our Jewish families and especially the children. A man, a rabbi; he must be a Jew first."

"We had no use for Rabbi [Fisher] and his mousy ways. We need men like Rabbi [Blum] who went out into the world and took the bull by the horns. Jews will get nowhere as long as they ghettoize themselves. Rabbi [Blum] really tried to put us on the map, although he may have been a little too aggressive about it"

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"He [Rabbi Kreutzer] spent all afternoon with D..... . at the hospital. Why should he bother? That guy is virtually out of the congregation. He wouldn't turn his hand over for his own people. The rabbi has

other things to do. Anyway, D..... . wasn't really that sick."

"I was FURIOUS when I heard that people were bitching about the rabbi spending time at the hospital with D..... . The guy was almost gone and the rabbi burned up a whole afternoon and those stinkers crab. Of all the disgusting, revolting things, that takes the cake!"

Whatever the role conflicts the rabbi experienced within himself were more than matched by the multiplicity. divergency and mutually contradictory nature of the performances expected of him by both individuals and cliques. And, obviously, role conflicts are not the sole property of any one faith's clerics; albeit Middletown's rabbis seem to have a few "added burdens."

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Inter-group stress: The Jewish families of Middletown have struggled toward and succeeded in achieving the style of life and the standard of living almost identical to that of their non-Jewish, middle-class neighbors. They have also, thereby, acquired the stresses which mark the American middle class way of life. Beyond these emotional and social demands there are persistent, if also latent, anxieties as to possible anti-Semitic outbursts, unexpected social snubs and the shock of rude encounters with "cranks:"

"Sometimes I think many of us really forget that we are what we are; that is, people just a shade apart from the majority. But most of the time I see things through the eyes of someone who is on the short end of things. Laura Hobson was right in *Gentleman's Agreement* when she pointed out how big and strange the chasm is between sitting on the Jewish side of the fence and sitting on the Gentile side. It's something that's hard to put your finger on, but once you have run into it you know what I mean. Inside yourself, you find you are

asking yourself a different set of questions when something comes up. I bet you never ask yourself right off, 'Is this guy going to change even a wee bit if he finds out I am what I am?' When you are thinking like anyone else that kind of question seems ridiculous, but when you are on this side of the fence that question or one like it has a way of popping up like a shooting range target. Many of us deny 'til we're blue in the face that there is ANYTHING different but they're just trying to convince themselves that they are not any different than the guy next door. Down inside we all wish we didn't react the way we DO and I bet most of the people you have been talking to would take issue with what I say. They hate to think that it is so. Maybe a few of them are lucky that way—or pretty naive."

As noted, Middletown's Jews face the day to day necessity of maintaining their Jewishness while seeking full and active membership in the larger society. The most popular solution was expressed in the maxim that when in the company of non-Jews one should be "cagey," i.e. discreet and tactful. At the same time, one should never *kotow,* i.e. he should exhibit forthright, self-respect as a Jew. One must, by all means, avoid appearing defensively assertive. Stereotyped conceptions of "Jewish behavior" should never be displayed. With it all, "he must be himself." These several strictures may represent an almost unobtainable synthesis of divergent behavior patterns. And to shift back and forth between Midwestern social patterns and ethnic subculture modes of behavior is to risk the accusation: "Two faced Jews."

Rabbi Kreutzer spoke out sharply on several occations concerning internal contradictions in the response of congregants to their marginal social position:

"I'm sore as hell with H..... . She's so proud that I talked to the E.U.B. church the other day but she's scared stiff at the suggestion that the temple solicit

building funds beyond the Jewish community."

"D..... .'s afraid that any clearly united front effort by the Jewish community pushes us into ghettoization in the eyes of the general community . . . but he is the first one to stand up and say we should assert our identity as a religious group with pride and dignity." A member of the congregation observed:

"Every day they go around saying that they want to be treated as first class citizens and yet every day THEY crawl around like second classers lest they rub some Gentile the wrong way!"

Perhaps this partial failure to come to terms with one's identity is, at times, turned inward upon the Jewish group and, particularly, upon the office of the rabbi. When questioned on self-hate one informant answered:

"Oh yes, indeed, there IS self-hate here although you might not recognize it at first sight. I think it has been the crux of our trouble in finding an acceptable rabbi. Until we accept ourselves we can never find an acceptable leader who represents us to the *goyim.*"

An ex-member of the Temple Emanu'El explicitly elaborated the possible relationship between self-hate and the inability to find a satisfactory rabbi:

"They complain about the way the rabbi combs his hair and things like that, but that isn't really the issue at all. They project their OWN inner struggle as to their Jewish identity on to the rabbi. They are pulled to keep their identity AND to lose it among the Gentiles. The rabbi is only the symbol as to their Jewishness. So they project their problem on to him pretty deeply. They want the rabbi to get names in the paper but when it does happen they resent it. You see, that only keeps them apart and they can blame the rabbi for it at the same time that they tell him he must do more inter-faith work and get Jews more on the map, so to speak. He makes a fine scape-goat for their own dilemma."

When the group has to choose between their Jewish-

ness and their participation in the larger society (the golf jamboree issue) the *modus vivendi* selected is one of compromise in which the participants acquiesce to the non-Jewish society while upholding a legalistic or formal commitment to their Judaic obligations. In this regard Seligman has observed:

"The overadjustment of the American Jew has reflected itself in a willingness to bend all incompatible elements of his heritage to the need for acceptance. If traditions hindered accommodations to the middle class way of life, then they had to be made to conform. Bar Mitzvahs and weddings had to become middle class 'potlatches'; synagogue architecture had to become monuments to parvenu wealth."[16]

Another area of "overadjustment" is seen in the vulnerable position the country club took when confronted with the hard decision of acceptance or rejection of Negroes.

In every case the compromises made on behalf of American middle class culture can be defended by the participating individuals as essentially harmless to the deeper commitment to Judaism and to its preservation through the training of the children. It is also reasoned that to resist the trends of the larger society is to expose the group to needless anti-Semitism and to impede personal, social and economic advancement in the nation. The frankly marginal position many of the Eastern Seaboard or "Big City" Orthodox Jews hold in America was frequently cited as an example of the price one has to pay if he chooses to uphold tradition.[17]

In the interim, the majority of the Jews of Middletown remain, as has been suggested, caught between the promise of the non-Jewish world and the remaining ties to their Jewish heritage. They are almost—but not quite—able or allowed to reconcile the two . . . in clear favor of the American middle class.

In this regard a non-Jewish resident of Middletown commented:

"For the Jews of this town it is all the more painful that they can look into the promised land every day. They can even drive through it [Western Woods] on their way home after work. But I'll be damned if they can settle there. And when they do get in some place such as one of the knife and fork clubs, they have to be so overqualified it's ridiculous if not also humiliating. I wonder if their lives would not be easier if they lived out of sight of [Middletown's] 'Holy Land.' "

Finally, the Jewish community can not point with much pride to their local efforts toward the reduction of anti-Semitic discrimination. What efforts are made in this direction are carried out entirely within a framework of Midwestern gradualism, optimism and rather compliant good will. Whether their behavior reflects intelligent "adjustment" to social realities or ingratiating "overadjustment," as Seligman has suggested, remains a moot point. One need not only couch the argument of "adjustment" *versus* "overadjustment" in these implicitly moralistic and polar terms. The non-militant approach to social problems by Middletown's Jews may, to a great extent, reflect the degree to which they have absorbed local, middle class mores and folkways. By Mosaic standards such may reflect "overadjustment," but it does not necessarily follow that these people are ingratiating themselves in front of the dominant group. They are simply being the Midwesterners that they are or have become.

Nor would militancy directly erase from their lives in Middletown their own pervasive—however muted—feelings of denigration. It is granted that almost all of the time and under almost all conditions these people are American Midwesterners who move most freely among their non-Jewish fellow citizens. They certainly do not carry Stars of David in front of their eyes as

they walk down Main Street or as they shop in the "West Side" supermarkets. Outwardly they are mirror images of the non-Jewish business community. But inwardly there is a difference that goes beyond their uniquely ethical heritage or their somewhat liberal politics or their Friday night religious services. These people are—at least lightly—scarred.

The scarification may take the form of the eye sliding down the page looking for the capital "J"; it may take the form of social hypersensitivity and perceptiveness; or it may take any number of other forms. Probably one universal outcome of these damages is a nebulous yet pervasive, an almost indistinguishable yet oddly palpable atmosphere of "grayness" and of quiet oppression which is woven into the fabric of their lives. "Horsing around" over pizza after bowling, or coffee and "small talk" during a bridge party, may dispel the "grayness" but so long as one remains Jewish in Middletown that coloring does, inevitably, delicately tint a portion of one's days.

Those non-Jews who are aware of the extensive if sometimes mild damage done by way of marginal discrimination seem to be genuinely horrified at the consequences. One stolid citizen, who may not be atypical of his business class cohorts, remarked:

"Good grief; none of us ever meant to, ever even remotely wanted to hurt anyone at all. If we ever knew what it was doing to these guys we'd never do it—not for a moment. You know, it's a real, dirty shame all the way around, isn't it?"

* * * * * *

Personal problems (including those of Rabbi Kreutzer) and their projection into group life creates a considerable degree of interpersonal stress beyond that stress experienced internally by individuals. The vast array of personalities who are more or less socially

closeted with each other also contributes to the tensions within the Jewish community.

Gossip abounds and is, frequently, destructive in tone despite the admonition read on Friday night which implores,

"O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile."[18]

The gossip reverberates through much of the community and often finds its way back to the person under discussion, thereby creating further animosities and ego threats. In some instances the impact of gossip is offset by individuals who are either aloof, peacemakers, or who discount the biases of others along the communication networks. A further deterrent to interpersonal embroilment as it is generated by gossip is the felt obligation to "keep up appearances" when confronting an antagonist in public. Finally, the maintenance of minimally rewarding group life simply requires that many arguments be abandoned.

Individually, the members of the Jewish community are faced with a multitude of perplexing religious, semi-religious and social questions. The doubts and quandaries of the parents are reflected in the tutelage of their children; the lack of assurance as adults only adding to parental anxiety.

Frequently the parents are caught in the enfilading fire of conflicting values. They hope to harmonize the remnants or essence of traditional Jewish values and behavior which will qualify them and their children for unencumbered acceptance in the larger society. In short, they seek the American ideal of Unity (and true acceptance) in Diversity. But in Middletown the ideal and the real are not one.

As a group they endure those role stresses which characterize American middle class culture as well as enduring the divergent values operating within American Jewry. Finally, they are faced with the manifold

stresses which result from a position of social marginality in American society.

In public a large number of the Jewish residents of the city attempt to juggle their desire to uphold their religious commitment to Judaism along with their desire to submerge themselves within the larger community. A recurrent theme is that of objecting to needlessly "sticking out." The very quality of "sticking out" might insure group preservation, but it also entails likely personal handicaps. For the greater part, when a choice has to be made between religious commitments and a desire to get on within the secular life of Middletown, the religious obligations and injunctions are severely compromised.

The rabbi may serve as a focal point and as a scapegoat for many of the unresolved personal and group conflicts concerning the public identity of the Jewish community. Many Middletown Jews find it difficult to tolerate a rabbi who reflects in any serious measure their Jewish heritage rather than displaying the predominant social values and habits of Middletown. When unable to totally imprison the religious leader within the American middle class mores and folkways, a considerable portion of the congregation are inclined to urge the rabbi's replacement with a man more nearly attuned to their goals, social customs and aspirations. But, when "captured" by the laity, the rabbi's very effectiveness as a Jewish "face to the Gentiles" only increase the group's ambivalence toward him for he then makes the city at large more aware of the still divergent group's presence. One might infer that many members of the Jewish group are convinced that Middletown penalizes one for being a conspicuous member of one of the country's (two) less dominant religions. At best a Jew "sticks out" at least a little bit as an American Jew and, at worst, he "sticks out" as a culturally alien Jew.

Some members of the Jewish group, but by no means all, intensify interpersonal tensions by practicing "moral brinkmanship." These "irrevocable" public stances on any given issue make the necessary, later compromises within the community unusually difficult to achieve without a loss of face. A measure of amelioration in this regard is to be found in the fact that many of the group rather take for granted these displays of impermanent intransigence.

The temple fund drive of 1960-1961, the issue of dues and their relationship to the markedly uneven distribution of financial resources within the community added to the problems of group living. The heavy monetary demands of the drive and the rabbi's salary contributed to the veritable veto power by any minority within the circle of the most wealthy families.

The less affluent resent both the presumptuousness of the elite and the veto power held by any combination of them. For their part, the very prosperous perceive themselves as working toward the ultimate good of the entire Jewish community of Middletown. They also note that they carry (or appear to carry) the bulk of the financial load for the entire congregation.

But, ultimately, perhaps the gravest aspect of stress for the Jews of Middletown is the extensive if muted psychic damage which seems to result from mild but persistent discrimination at the hands of their fellow Americans. Among the multitude of stresses which the Jews of Middletown experience and which they usually share with their non-Jewish neighbors, the stresses resulting from discrimination remain almost singularly theirs—and singularly painful.

Chapter X

TOMORROW: PERIL OR PROMISE

AT THE OUTSET of this study it was indicated that the research is oriented around the sensitizing concept of stress. Consequently, matters of personal and social discord could only appear as a dominant motif within the lives of these people. Unless one is alerted to the contrary, it might too easily be assumed that social intercourse within the Jewish community of Middletown functions in a manner similar to that of a self-disintegrating centrifuge. (A similar frame of reference applied to the larger community of Middletown would surely suggest similar self destruction.) While this research does not systematically encompass the necessary data which would facilitate an analysis of the social sources of group persistency or reintegration, some highly tentative and closing observations in this direction are indicated.

It should be noted that Judaism in Middletown persists, at least in part, as a result of discrimination. Beyond that, the general society demands that middle class respectability include a specific religious identity. Other sources of group survival might be located in long-standing social cliques; the need to maintain somewhat amicable relationships as a by-product of the desire to

have friends and to "keep up appearances" when repeatedly encountering each other; potential guilt concerning renunciation of one's heritage; and positive religious or social rewards derived from group activity, e.g. bowling and high holiday services. For some there may be satisfactions found in a discreet sharing of the remnants of Yiddish culture. Further, there exists the overwhelming concern that, whatever their own lapses may be, the adults are morally obliged to create a "Jewish environment" for their children, and that would be little more than a specious articraft were it not to include a religiously premised and organized Jewish community. Finally, one should not underestimate the degree to which many of Middletown's adult Jews were themselves, as children, first "drenched" and then steeped in the obligation to preserve Judaism. (At the same time, it should also be noted that there are a number of local residents who were reared in Jewish homes but who do not affiliate or associate with the Jewish community of Middletown, i.e. they do not respond positively to or contribute to organized Jewish life despite the attractions and pressures here noted.)

It was suggested that gossip which finds its way back to the victim is a source of considerable intrapersonal and interpersonal stress. But, to the extent that gossip operates as a means of social control, it may be viewed as a community vehicle which nudges or coerces individuals toward group expectancies (insofar as the group could agree upon their expectancies). The individual Jew either submits to this form of pressure and thereby validates and furthers his relationship with the Jewish enclave of the city or he may, eventually, withdraw from group life and sustain the consequences which include potential or relative social isolation. Whether gossip permanently alienates more people than it socially intimidates remains a moot point, but it might be presumed that on given occasions such talk

does contribute to the preservation of the group.

Several informants insisted that the researcher had found the Jewish community during a most difficult period in its history. It was argued that the temple drive, falling incomes and the presence of a new rabbi had all contributed to the turmoil which characterized group life during the time of the study. It was pointed out that over many years the Emanu'El congregation led an existence which, if not very active or stimulating, was at least somewhat benign. There exists tentative evidence which both contests and supports this view.

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In attempting to assess the future of Middletown's Jewish group one might note the widely held view that:

"A 'disinterested social science' is . . . pure nonsense. It never existed, and it never will exist."[1]

To this extent, if the observer is at all sensitive to the cultural and ethical elaboration and sophistication of traditional Judaism, he may find it rather easy to belabor Middletown's Jewry for their abandonment of their heritage. One might castigate the Jewish community for an absorption in petty squabbles and concerns about their temple, each other and their rabbi. One could suggest a very negative picture of this group's future based upon their present conduct. Nevertheless, the writer experienced and noted that much of the time the Jews of Middletown, on a person-to-person basis, are enormously kind, generous, vivacious and open. This discrepancy between many individual relationships and the frequent turmoil of group efforts, other than leisure activities, is a noteworthy reality; all of which might have bearing upon the prospects of the group's future. One of the aged *Yeshiva* scholars commented on the markedly uneven display of simultaneous harmony and discord:

"These Jews and many other Americans are naive in thinking that individual goodness automatically rears up the good society. Society, real society, is an organic entity and these poor, well meaning souls talk about *Klal Isroel* but they don't grasp the central point. They often, too often, lack the generosity of heart with each other to see that group life means more than each one going after what he wants with no regard, acceptance you might say, for what others want. The whole lesson of Judaism is what you now call 'sociological,' but our own people have forgotten that. Sad it is that now your discipline must tell the Children of Israel what it means to be Jews, to be a group. They talk a lot about it, they believe in it but, as you can see, they do not have it in their hearts. The group, the group, that is everything! These Jews are dead without it. It is sad, is it not?"

The rebuttal to this type of lament was stated by an active member of the congregation:

"So the G.....'s. and J..... . D..... . talk wonderfully about their Judaism and about the human race —it's appealing—but what do they actually DO about it? That's what's going to count in the end. They bemoan the way things are; so?"

But for all of the "doing" of the temple stalwarts, many members of the Jewish community feel that Judaism's prospects in Middletown are, indeed, poor. They speak of the unchanging size of their religious community, of their children's departure from Middletown coupled with the "death" of small business, of the poor group morale, and they note that which appears to some as the ultimate irony:

"During periods of tolerance and acceptance, Jewish customs and religious practices have waned and marriages outside the Jewish sacred society have increased. On the other hand, Jewish loyalty and identification, as well as Jewish religious practices, have been strong and secure during most periods of persecution."[2]

In this regard an outside observer to the Jewish community of Middletown commented with edge in his voice:

"What this congregation needs to snap them together is a touch of anti-Semitism."

When this suggestion was raised with a number of informants, most of them took the statement to be rather dangerous and several questioned the likelihood that "Gentile hostility" would have the desired effect.

A further question was put to selected members of the Jewish community with a view of gaining some insight into the prospects for the group:

"Why do the Jews of Middletown cling to their Judaism?"

A frequent answer was along the lines of the following:

"We are Jews because there are Gentiles and as long as the Gentiles act like Christians we'll be forced to be Jews."

Others took the nearly antithetical view:

"I think we stick with it because we would feel so guilty if we didn't. Remember how it was impressed upon us as the most important loyalty—along with some others."

"I, and please don't think I'm being sentimental, really find it very rewarding and gratifying to say to myself, L..... ., you are a Jew. I have never found it a burden, but only a deeply rewarding thing which I suspect a lot of people never experience."

"I don't know why we hang on to it. Sometimes I think many of us do so out of sheer cussedness. How often I have heard Jews say, 'Jews have survived everything. No group matches us.' I suspect that some even see the hand of God in it."

"They hang on to their Jewishness because of a CULTURAL TIE. There's no faith or spirituality in

it. Their problem is that they can't tell the shadow from the substance."

It would appear that many of Middletown's Jews, as Glazer has suggested, exhibit one common commitment:

"They are prepared to be some kind of Jews."[3]

A further indication of the determination to maintain a Jewish presence is to be seen among those who do contribute time to congregational activities however bleak the long range prospects:

"So, should we get disgusted like D..... . B..... . and pull back or pull out? What good does that do anything? Before you know it, things are left entirely in the hands of the wrong people."

"Sometimes my husband gets so fed up with the congregation that he is ready—and so am I—to pull into a shell! But then, we DO have a commitment; and so we get in there again and start plugging. Maybe we're crazy."

"When I get really discouraged I remind myself of Moses coming down from Sinai. Our people have always been stinkers and if I quit trying to improve things then the Golden Calf just may win."

"To be a Jew without a purpose is to be no Jew, and my purpose is Judaism's survival."

Gans's appraisal of the on going prospects for much of organized American Jewry would seem to apply in Middletown:

"On the one hand, the group's cohesion is so minimal that social pressure has to be applied to get things done, but on the other hand it is sufficient to tolerate the application of pressure."[4]

And that which one does witness in Middletown is the survival of an essentially secular social group within a nominally religious context. By way of example, it was noted that the researcher could inquire after the technicalities of bowling or card games and receive explicit

as well as extensive replies, whereas similar questions addressed to Jewish doctrinal, historical or ethical matters usually brought forth the very vaguest of comments.

One of the areas of greatest hope and confidence concerning the future of Judaism lies with the children. The adults know that few of them will cary on their heritage within Middletown, but they are confident that their youth will become well educated, sincere and respected members of American society. It is also felt that at least most of the children will maintain what one informant termed, "the echo of the difference." An example of this characteristic could be seen in the youth group's strong orientation toward vigorous political discussion of a markedly liberal disposition.

The confidence which the children express in respect to their future lives as Jews presumes that American society will respect religious pluralism. In this regard it should be noted again that they are more optimistic than many of their parents. The adults are inclined to the view that if Judaism thrives in America it will do so as the result of sheer social isolation as much as it will do so as an outgrowth of the children's loyalty to their heritage. In any event, the majority of the adults are, indeed, committed to carrying on organized Jewish life within the city and Kaplan may have touched on the quintessence of their feelings when he observed:

"As a group the Jews find it very difficult to break with their past nor are they ever quite accepted into the larger society. Thus they . . . . live in two worlds—a little disillusioned in both."[5]

Middletown's Jews have jettisoned an ethnic identity on the grounds of the social handicap that status engenders. Culturally they have almost entirely, but not quite totally, immersed themselves in the ways of the Midwest. To this extent they have gained the many comforts and rewards of that pattern of culture; but they have paid the price. They (or their fathers) have sur-

rendered and almost entirely lost a heritage which has been maturing for in excess of 4000 years.

That which they have chosen to keep from the past, and that which they hope will not bring down upon their children social stigmata, is their religion. But even here, using religion as their anchor buoy, they are confronted with a problem and confounded by a dilemma.

Their problem stems from the highly ambiguous nature of almost all organized, middle class religion in America.[6] Once one abandons the dogmatic markers of fundamentalism and orthodoxy he is apt to find himself "at sea"; and, indeed, many of Middletown's "West Side" citizenry, Jew and non-Jew alike, would seem to be "bobbing about." Such a state of affairs does not bring comfort to those who concern themselves with Judaism's survival.

Their dilemma stems from what may be an almost impossible situation and desire. These people are committed to the preservation of an identity which is uniquely Judaic while seeking to carry out that religious existence in a culturally non-deviant manner. But that religious uniqueness to which they are committed inescapably drives them along a slightly oblique course. Hence, they modify their Jewish identity in order not to "stick out" but, ironically, they remain socially shut out from the main stream of Middletown.

NOTES

PREFACE

[1]It was assumed from the outset of the study that the researcher's personal remarks would be widely and rapidly circulated. Personal circumspection seemed to be both necessary and prudent.

[2]Vi60a, p. 309.

[3]Vi60b, p. 196.

[4]The same custom of "best foot forward" seemed to pertain when the researcher interviewed public school administrators.

[5]Vi60a, p. 302.

[6]Several informants investigated the author through colleagues and administrative personnel at the state teachers college where the researcher lectured.

[7]Ar55, p. 49.

[8]Vi60b, p. 197.

[9]Duh61, p. 61.

[10]See56, p. x.

CHAPTER I

[1]Gra, *in passim.*

[2]Ly29, *in passim;* Ly37, *in passim.*

[3]A large body of comparative data in regard to other Jewish community studies was dropped in the interests of efficiency when this study was transmuted from the status of a dissertation into that of a book.

[4]Ly29, p. 3.

[5]Me29, pp. 379-381.

[6]Let61, pp. 68-72.

[7]The concept "community" is here utilized in a most general sense. There is no implication of an exclusive residential, political or economic life within the city of Middle-

town. Only in terms of religious affiliation and in terms of social intercourse might one approach a strict use of the term.

CHAPTER II

[1]Ly37, Ch. III.
[2]Ly29, Ch. III.
[3]Ly29, Ch. XXVIII; Ly37, pp. 323-324.
[4]Ly37, *in passim.*
[5] Han60, p. 8.
[6]Han60, p. 8.
[7] Go30, p. 14; Kaz51, *in passim;* Wi56, p. 232.
[8]Se158, p. 93.
[9]The C..... Inn seems to have been the favorite among some of the Jewish retailers in recent years. Several informants reported that the location and the membership of the "Jewish Luncheon Club" tends to shift over a five to ten year period.
[10]Ly29, Ch. VIII.
[11]Ly37, Ch. II.
[12]Zb51, *in passim.*
[13]Un40, p. 41.
[14]Do57, p. 130.
[15]Lew45, pp. 146-148.
[16]Seli55, p. 111.

CHAPTER III

[1]Ly29, pp. 251-263; Ly37, pp. 265-269.
[2]Gor59, p. 60.
[3]Several of the "mixed marriages" outside of the Jewish community of Middletown were reported by Jews and by non-Jews to suffer under the burden of religious differences. (In several cases both parties abandoned all formal religious ties.)
[4]Sn58b, p. 560.
[5]Sn58a, pp. 5-6.
[6]Sn58a, pp. 74-76.
[7]Sn58a, p. 96.
[8]Sn58b, p. 562.
[9]Zb51, pp. 354-355.
[10]See56, pp. 76 and 245.
[11]My58, p. 553.
[12]Zb51, p. 424.
[13]Fu58, p. 611.

[14]De58, p. 307.

[15]Un40, p. 42.

[16]Myr44, Ch. 1.

[17]From "Rabbi Yussel Luksh of Chelm," further source unidentified.

CHAPTER IV

[1]Ly29, p. 226.

[2]To be sure, there are social isolates who neither carry nor receive information, as may be seen in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

[3]Sho53, p. 38.

[4]There is no suggestion that the Jews of Middletown play cards any more avidly than do their non-Jewish neighbors. Further, a very few members of the Jewish community play cards in non-Jewish card circles.

[5]Mc58, p. 131.

CHAPTER V

[1]Mc58, Ch. IV.

[2]Mc58, Ch. IV.

[3]This report represents a synthesis of various accounts of the incident as given by Jews, non-Jews, students and school personnel. No two reports were entirely alike, therefore a large margin of error in this compilation should be assumed.

[4]Her60, p. 239.

[5]A Jewish camp in a neighboring state is also rather popular among some children.

[6]The data were derived from a questionnaire, therefore information requested was confined to the experiences of the eldest child.

[7]Gor59, p. 153.

[8]There were 8 members of the local Universalist church who were known to the researcher to have come from Jewish homes.

[9]Several faculty advisors to the fraternities and sororities have challenged or upbraided their groups for discriminatory practices.

[10]Seli55, p. 112.

CHAPTER VI

[1]Po58, p. 327.
[2]Sho53, p. 27.
[3]Po58, p. 603.
[4]Un40, p. 18.
[5]Ly37, p. 313, footnote number 34.
[6]Gl58, p. 18.
[7]Sk57, p. 23.
[8]Sk58, p. 358.

CHAPTER VII

[1]At a later date the rabbi denied that he had received any such warning during his initial visit to the community.

[2]The researcher was the only person to know the contents of their exchanges prior to the rabbi's resignation, at which time their entire conversation became both public and the subject of public discussion.

CHAPTER VIII

[1]Ly29, pp. 479 and 483.
[2]Ly37, pp. 462-463.
[3]Al54, p. 78.
[4]Sk57, p. 45.
[5]Ly29, pp. 407-408.
[6]Her60, p. 245.
[7]Sha61, Section 3.
[8]Lew45, pp. 187-188.
[9]Al54, p. 133.
[10]Kap57, p. 158.
[11]Lew45, pp. 162 and 182.

CHAPTER IX

[1]It should be recalled that one of the limitations of this study is the lack of systematic measures of individual psychological states; therefore, inferences concerning intrapersonal stress are sharply limited in scope and precision.

[2]Vi60a, p. 304.

[3]Gl57, p. 10.

[4]An alternative means of escaping the split between two value orientations is to remain secluded in the world of Orthodox Judaism or to embrace, without reservations, the dominant culture.

[5]Ad58, p. 479.
[6]Sn58b, Cited p. 581.
[7]Vi60a, p. 45.

[8]It would seem that, unlike the Jews of Park Forest, the Middletown Jewish group is not held together to any extent by shared cultural and intellectual interests which are superior to their non-Jewish neighbors. Why56, p. 216.

[9]Zb51, pp. 120, 129 and 421.

[10]Some informants pass searching criticism off as normal and even ignore it in the search for a telling rebuttal; but to some of Middletown's Jews and to many non-Jews such verbal jousting, however acceptable in *shtetl* society, is seen as personally-distressing and as socially inappropriate in the Midwest.

[11]Only two of the five critics who volunteered their views were in agreement as to the errors they perceived.

[12]This pattern of "brinkmanship" might be compared to customary procedure as seen by Vidich and Bensman in their study of the small, up-state New York community:

> No member irrevocably commits himself on an issue and, hence does not alienate himself from the other members of the group. Vi60a, p. 130.

It should be noted that 3 male members of the "Big Money" group ayoid the practice "moral brinkmanship." While their leadership proclivities may be furthered as a consequence, they do become liable to the charge of being "spineless."

[13]Si55, p. 156.
[14]Br60, p. 50.
[15]Br60, pp. 44 and 49.
[16]Seli55, p. 111.

[17]For their part, the minority who harbor traditional inclinations point to the putative superficiality of Jewish life in Middletown:

> It is an HYPOCRISY! It is a TRAVESTY!

These men might be willing to "pay the price" in the coinage of ghetto living.

[18]Un40, p. 24.

CHAPTER X

[2]Gre60, p. 56.
[3]Gl56, p. 20.
[4]Ga58, p. 245.
[5]Kap57, p. 156.
[6]Her60, *in passim.*

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