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## THE JEW IN AMERICAN SOCIETY\*

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### I

In grappling with the theme of "The Jew in American Society," I find it impossible to sunder the American Jew of today from an historical continuum reaching back to the dawn of civilization in the ancient Near East and forward into an endless future. I can only bring the insights of perspective, a perspective drawn from an appraisal of powerful forces that shape and pattern the surface of events — forces that have a staying power measured in decades, centuries, even millennia — forces that bind events, and people, and even thoughts to an unseen architecture of development. These forces have shaped the world, these forces have shaped the United States, these forces have shaped the Jew.

The American Jew has no simple identity. His past is neither linear, nor repetitive, but winds through the cultures and civilizations that mark the development of the modern world. The many faces of the past are imprinted upon him, and his hallmark has been a creative response to the unforeseen.

We would therefore not be wide off the mark were we to affirm that Jewish history is the saying "yes" to change, to novelty, to innovation, to unthinkable thoughts. Jewish history is strewn with abandoned structures, beliefs, and institutions, even as it records the persistence of that which endures. The Temple and its sacrificial cult stirred the Psalmist to his innermost depths, but for us is only a memento of an historical epoch; the *Beth Din Ha-Gadol* has not been with us for many a year, and still we survive; and the *halakah* that once held the Jews in thrall neither binds nor loosens — only stirs debate. Jewish identity is a creative response to change.

### II

The tempo and quality of change has varied throughout mankind's history. But however slow or precipitous change may have been in the past, that change took on a new dimension with the emergence of capitalism. Capitalism can survive only if it grows and develops. It must

\* The reader might find my "A Decisive Pattern in American Jewish History," in *Essays in American Jewish History* (Cincinnati, 1958), helpful as an introduction to the theme of this paper.

continuously create capital or wither away. The lure of profit stirs competition, and competition is sustained by the potential of widened markets. Those entrepreneurs whose restless spirits are stirred by the excitement of profit not only undertake risks and hazards, but unleash innovation and undermine the citadels of tradition. In a word, *developing* capitalism generates permanent revolution.

This proposition is not nearly so bizarre as it may seem. Consider, for a moment, the traditional Europe of the fifteenth century, and compare it with the Europe of the nineteenth. The old regimes have either disappeared or are tottering on the brink of dissolution. The traditional systems of thinking grounded in revelation are fighting last-ditch battles for survival. The scientific mind has been freed from the coercive threats of church and state. Urbanization is rampant, the peasant society is disintegrating, peoples are on the move, the spirit of revolution is nurtured by hopeful expectations of individual freedom, economic opportunity, governments responsive to the people, and a strong, proud, and noble nation state. Find capitalism in the nineteenth century and you will find the old order either vanquished or in disarray; find precapitalism and the medieval world is still with you.

The developing, innovating forms of capitalism continuously struggle against earlier and outmoded forms. Developing capitalism always generates a twofold revolution: one against the precapitalist, traditional order, the other against its own traditional and obsolescent forms.

This twofold inner dynamic compels developing capitalism to be corrosive and ultimately destructive of traditional systems. This corrosive and destructive effect unleashes critical rationalism and radicalism; for radical thinking is the most effective weapon against traditionalism. It exposes the irrationalities of obsolescent systems, and shapes modernized societies. Developing capitalism thus encourages free thinking, individual eccentricity and religious experimentation. It gives sustenance to radical self-criticism, providing a free market even for the ideas of a Karl Marx.

Far from narrowing the spiritual and intellectual options in its economic interests, it spurred the intellect and the spirit to new endeavors, literally subsidized the exploration of the frontiers of mind and spirit, and prized highly the inventive genius. Never before in the history of mankind had the mind been so unfettered and the spirit so free.

### III

Among the revolutionary consequences of capitalism (and indeed, an additional proof of its corrosive effects on traditional systems) was the emancipation of the Jews. The record requires no exegesis. The unshackling of the Jews begins in the great centers of commercial capitalism in Amsterdam and London, and moves steadily eastward as the new economic forms first infiltrated and then disrupted traditionally structured societies.

But the consequences of developing capitalism for the Jews in Europe,

as revolutionary as they were, were nonetheless limited by the stubborn resistance of pre-capitalist forms. Tenuous compromises had to be worked out again and again with king, aristocracy, and church and their powerful economic and institutional strongholds.

Not so in the United States. Born of the outreaching of emerging entrepreneurship, this country never had to enter the lists against traditional economic patterns. Its battles were waged between developing capitalism and earlier capitalistic forms. Its revolution was mounted against English mercantilism, against rivals in trade, commerce, and profit-seeking. The only fetters that restrained American capitalism were of its own making.

Little wonder that the Jews in this country were spared a struggle for emancipation, and little wonder that the range of opportunity steadily widened for the Jews. Not that anti-Semitism evaporated, or that discrimination was unknown or unfelt, but these were reduced to a minimum. In the epoch of American commercial growth, Jewish entrepreneurs were given a free hand. In the westward movement of free enterprise farming, Jews found no restrictions placed on their peddling and merchandising endeavors. In the industrial phase, Jews were not excluded from setting up factories, or opening department stores, or coming in the hundreds of thousands as immigrants to an option-rich, industrializing and urbanizing America. A careful analysis will reveal that the opposition to Jews stemmed from the old capitalist elite threatened by the riotous explosion of the new industrial society.

On the eve of World War I, the existence of a multi-million Jewish population, basically free to choose its future from a wide variety of viable options — business, labor, professions, politics, creative writing, the fine arts — and free to have the religion or irreligion of its choice, bore witness to the handiwork of developing capitalism.

But all its fruits were not goodly, for the development of capitalism brought in its wake the dislodgement of the peasant, the displacement of artisan and craftsman, the disintegration of pomp and pageantry, the undermining of immutable beliefs, and the tarnishing of sacred institutions. In the crucial phase of primitive industrialization, it did not spare man, woman, or child from ceaseless and crushing labor, at subsistence wages. Unionization was resisted at every step, and many a bloody battle was fought before even minimal demands were met. Nor must the greatest scourges of all be overlooked: the ominous business cycle, with its periodic purging of both capitalist and worker, and of the wars between rival capitalist states that impressed the young, the brave, and the noble into mass armies marching off to slaughter.

But having recorded the travail, we must note that by 1914 the movement of real wages was upward and the total augmentation of capital was far beyond any attained previously in the history of mankind. And though the price had been high in human suffering, it had generated a freedom for the individual, a freedom for the mind, a freedom for creativity, and a freedom for diversity of religious expression that had

never existed before. And it had within its dynamic the potential of economic growth so limitless that were it ever actualized it could wipe poverty, hunger, ignorance, disease, and even war from the face of the earth.

#### IV

Such a potential, however, seemed doomed as the western nations, enriched by capital augmentation, hurled their armed forces at one another. The end of the World War I found Russia engulfed by an anti-capitalist revolution, the proud tower of German capitalism toppled, and imperious England stumbling through to World War II wracked by chronic unemployment, economic stagnation, and a convulsing empire.

By 1939, the face of the western world had become everywhere disfigured. Hitler was fashioning tools to forge a totalitarian European system from the North Sea to the Urals which would "solve" the economic *and* the Jewish questions. Incipient fascism in France was barely held at bay by a desperate attempt at a popular front, and the grand tradition of French anti-Semitism was seeking to regain its tarnished prestige. Mussolini was demonstrating that an Italian fascism could not only bring and preserve order, but knew how to build an empire. The Soviet Union was proving to all but its blinded worshippers that primitive accumulation was being achieved at the expense of human life and individual freedom. Liquidating millions of stubborn peasants, and purging a generation of Bolshevik heroes, Stalin posed as the liberating heir of bankrupt capitalism and the guarantor of a totalitarianism built on writings more solid than *Mein Kampf*.

Just as the extension of freedom had gone hand in hand with the extension of the market, so did the crushing of the individual and the shrinking of economic, political, intellectual, and religious options go together with the shrinking of the market. And just as the emancipation of the Jew was the gift of developing capitalism, so was his degradation, humiliation, even annihilation, the fruit of its collapse. Anti-Semitism was once again a living faith. Those of us who were old enough during the Depression to be aware found evidences of anti-Semitism with weekly regularity on the air waves of America. That there was some direct causal connection between the Depression and the spread of anti-Semitism needs no documentation, only a few moments of thought unclogged by emotion.

Let me pause for a moment before the next step in the analysis to make certain that I have made my thesis so far crystal clear. I have attempted to demonstrate that there is a causal connection between developing capitalism and economic growth, representative institutions, individual freedom, expanding options for the mind and the spirit, and, of particular significance for us, freedom for the Jews and for Judaism. I have likewise argued that when the developing sectors of capitalism are blunted, the system stagnates and disintegrates and spawns totalitarian solutions. The Jews and their Judaism have proved to be especially

vulnerable to capitalist stagnation and decline. Furthermore, the Communist alternative to capitalism is an invitation to economic backwardness — Russia is still years away from agricultural efficiency and is just now beginning to learn the elemental rules for economic growth — political totalitarianism, intellectual and cultural authoritarianism, and possibly extinction for Jews and Judaism. The crucial problem therefore must be the question of capitalist development. Why did the development sectors fail to carry through the functions that for more than three hundred years had enabled capitalism to cut down precapitalism and to achieve supremacy over obsolescent forms of capitalism itself?

The answer to this question is to be found in the limiting and obstructive role of the nation state. Capitalism was a product of historical forces and not of theoretical planning. It arose wherever it secured a beachhead. But the beachhead was always within a political frame that had been constructed for the economic and political problems of kings, and barons, and popes. Europe had been carved into territorial sovereignties with no thought of a rational utilization of economic resources on a continental basis. The massive military effort by Napoleon to unify underdeveloped and pre-capitalist territorial sovereignties of Central and Eastern Europe collapsed only because capitalist England brought decisive support to traditionally structured societies. The unification of Germany under Bismarck sealed the finite, nation-state solution; for not only did he abandon Austria to underdevelopment, but he set some of the stage for World War I by his annexation from France of Alsace and Lorraine. By 1914 the most developed states of Europe, those which had become strong economically, politically, and militarily, were arrayed against each other either as open enemies or as temporary allies. It was on the bloody battlefields of Europe that the concept of the nation state triumphed and lured its devotees down the paths of stagnation, lined with hunger, deprivation, fascism, and war.

The containment of capitalism within the confines of a nation state had ideological concomitants that spelled trouble for Jews and Judaism even before the debacle of 1914-18. Developing capitalism, which in its beginnings had generated and underpinned such universal concepts as inalienable natural rights, was constrained by nation-state rivalries to endorse patriotic nationalism. Nationalism proved to be double-edged in its thrust. So long as a nation state was in the making, nationalism might be revolutionary and developmental, but once a war of mass armies was a possibility, only raw nationalism with all of its appeal to the most powerful instinct in man — the preservation of himself, his family, and property — could be counted upon to cause him to lay down his life on the field of battle.

The Jews were deeply affected, positively and negatively, by the triumph of nationalism. In the emergent phase of the modern nation state, it was simply one of the concomitants of emancipation and went hand in hand with the duties of citizenship. Jews had no difficulty in identifying themselves as Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, and Amer-

icans. Indeed, they were firm in their belief that Judaism taught loyalty to the nation state as surely as they knew Judaism affirmed the faith in a single God. The Sabbath prayer for the state was, and still is, the public pronouncement testifying to the national loyalty of the Jew.

Nevertheless, the growing intensification of nationalism that accompanied every crisis that beset the nation state — the business cycle, financial scandals, threatening socialism and anarchism, imperial rivalry — found the Jew and his religion an irresistible target. The crucifixion of Christ, so it was alleged, had only launched the career of Jewish infamy. Anti-Semitism proclaimed that the role of the Jew in history was to sow the seeds of decay. The nations of the world are his prey. No nation, so the anti-Semites preached, is safe from his predations, for patriotism of the Jew is his most cunning weapon of deceit.

Triumphant nationalism also gave birth to Zionism, which offered a solution to the Jews of East and West. Despairing of emancipation, the Jews of Russia and Poland needed a star to guide them; and bewildered by the ease with which anti-Semites exploited nationalist passions, some Jews of the West yearned for a national identity of their own. Ethnic ties could bind more securely than religious ones. Those modern Jews of West and East who felt no attachment to Judaism nonetheless experienced their Jewishness vividly. They shared with other submerged nationalities a keen yearning for self-determination, even nationhood, preferably in their ancestral national home. Jewish history was drawn upon to reveal a national spirit fathering the religious spirit, a nation covenanting with God, a messianic hope of a people restored to the land. Fired with nationalist zeal, Zionist ideology could erase the anomaly of a non-nation, and stir heroic hopes and deeds among the disillusioned and the dispirited. On the eve then of World War I, and even more so in the inter-war years, Jewish nationalism and ethnic kinship protected Jewish self-esteem against the disintegrative pressures of collapsing societies. Turning to an inner light, Jews tended a wounded spirit with the pride of past and a faith for the morrow.

#### V

Capitalist development in the United States did, for a time, escape the limits on expansion set by the framework of nation states. Trade flowed, unobstructed by impenetrable tariff walls; capital moved freely; labor, unhampered by immigration laws, responded to markets; ideas had room to breathe and circulate. A continent had been ploughed for as many varieties of human experience and experimentation as for the bewildering array of products that its soil sustained. Nowhere was the harvest more abundant than in the fruits of the spirit; for it was here, and here alone, that religion spawned domesticated and wild varieties to prove their fitness by survival.

So sturdy was the mesh that held this nation together that it could also contain, absorb and sustain the bewildering assortment of ethnic

and religious strains of millions of immigrants. No coercive legislation stripped the alien of his ethnic identity, and no insurmountable barriers were erected to bar him from ancestral ties or to deter him from forming communities with kith and kin. The Jews were never *compelled* to give up any ethnic or religious tie; its bind was as compelling as its adequacy. To exercise the option to disassociate was no more a betrayal for a Jew than the championing of agnosticism for a descendent of the Mayflower.

The United States was a nation state, but with a difference; for it demonstrated concretely that the nation-state form was not an economic necessity for developing capitalism. Surely Illinois, Texas, California, and Alaska had no less potential for nationhood than, let us say, Belgium or Czechoslovakia in Europe, or Argentina or Paraguay in South America. The pre-Civil War South was as differentiated from the North as France from Italy. Yet, though delicately balanced on the ebb and flow of battle, the vision of a single nation, one and indivisible, proved to be no dream of the night. The subsequent expansion of the nation to the western edges of its land mass and its successful adjudication of clashing economic, regional and class interests confirmed the possibility of a *global* unity that could sustain an almost limitless range of diverse interests. Only the natural limits of the universe itself and of man's knowledge need deter the tempo of development.

But such a vision of unlimited possibilities was shattered by a resistant reality. The American system was brought to a halt by Mexico on the south, and by Canada to the north. How easily they might have been assimilated is demonstrated by a Texas, a California, and an Hawaii. But they were neither ripe for absorption, nor easily conquered. As for Europe, she was clearly beyond reach and caught up in nation-state rivalries that confirmed the wisdom of isolation. Central and South America beckoned, but only as an area for imperialist probes and dollar diplomacy; Africa and Asia were undeveloped parts of the world whose doors to trade and investment had been locked by England, France, Belgium, and Holland.

When, therefore, the conclusion of World War I ushered in the age of capitalist stagnation and decay, the United States might still for a decade wrest development out of its internal resources, and out of a promising venture into mass production and consumption, but it could not stave off permanently the collapse into stagnation. The growing efficiency of its machines, labor, entrepreneurial inventiveness, and corporate forms saturated an expanded market in a few brief years, and then the system seemed to disintegrate as machines, separated from men, rusted and decayed, while men, freed from machines, knew not where to turn. Captains of finance and industry piloted a rudderless ship, without map, compass, or star to steer by. Politicians barely managed to preserve democratic institutions, as Right and Left clamored for a new order that would eradicate the evils of capitalism and the pain of options. The gruesome reality of an Hitlerian Germany or a Stalinist Russia could not curb the fantasies of a society freed from freedom and hunger.



## VI

And then the grand reversal. World War II liquidated the Depression, shattered the Nazi and Japanese war machines, and concentrated in the hands of a single nation, the United States, a coercive power of such compelling quality that, wielded with firmness and purpose, could shape a global society of freedom, diversity, abundance, and peace. If nation-state barriers to economic development could be eliminated; if the underdeveloped parts of the world could be loosened from the grip of imperial policies strangling economic growth; if Eastern Europe could be redeemed from Bolshevism and its economic system rationalized; if the fruitful partnership of state and private enterprise that had spun off miracles of productivity and technological innovation during war could be sustained; if the rising living standards of the workers could be guaranteed by heightened productivity, and their unions recognized as legitimate bargaining agents and sources of dignity and self-esteem; if every resource and asset were mortgaged to the mitigation of the business cycle; if the taxing power were fashioned into an instrument for attaining sustained economic growth; if, in a word, a revived capitalism could be free enough to excite the entrepreneurial spirit with the lure of profit and yet controlled enough to preserve the system from the ravages of its less responsible devotees, then a global world order would be not only possible but inevitable. And if it were fashioned with the blueprint of American experience as a guide, it need not eliminate the diversity of national styles in the process of denying to national sovereignty the unrestricted right to wage war.

It is my contention that the United States did commit itself to such a global goal following World War II, and it has been unflagging in pursuing it ever since. Although the surface of events, and the seemingly haphazard diplomacy that accompanied them, may obscure the long-range policies that successive administrations. Democratic and Republican alike, steadfastly pursued, the evidence of global plan and purpose is now available in concrete accomplishments.

Let me tick off only the most significant:

1. The Marshall Plan.
2. The successful building of the European Economic Community and the establishment of a common market enclosing a multi-national population of more than two hundred million.
3. The favorable outcome of the Kennedy Round and the reciprocal reduction of tariff barriers laying the foundation for a meaningful Atlantic partnership.
4. The decision to rebuild West Germany and Japan rather than permit them to breed new wars out of the stuff of hunger, despair, and desperation. The fantastic results of this application of theory to reality even the blind can see.
5. The intelligent and responsible utilization of the ever expanding nuclear and conventional coercive resources of the United States to

(a) dismantle the Cold War; (b) dissolve the iron curtain; (c) loosen the grip of Moscow on its satellites; (d) set in motion forces that will, in time, create a market economy in eastern Europe and spin it off into self-sustained economic growth; (e) liquidate nation-state imperialism and its colonial, semi-colonial and discriminatory arrangements that condemned the underdeveloped world to underdevelopment; (f) build underdeveloped societies into nations, and nations into common markets, and common markets into a world economy in which capital, labor, and talent can move freely, and economic growth on a global scale can be permanently secured; (g) halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons, exploit the peaceful potential of the atom, and steadily diminish the need for national military establishments as nation-state rivalries are sublimated into vigorous but peaceful economic competition; (h) apply to China the techniques so successfully applied to the Soviet Union, enabling thereby a global humanity to channel all its growing resources to a final onslaught against poverty, ignorance, disease, and despair, and to the exploration of outer space.'

' The following references to statements by high-level U. S. decision makers, though by no means exhaustive, are supportive of the generalizations affirmed in 5: Lyndon Johnson, "State of the Union; A Time of Testing and Transition," *Vital Speeches*, XXXIII (February 1, 1967), pp. 226-34, especially pp. 230-34;

Hubert Humphrey, "New Engagement: The Open Door," *ibid.*, (April 15, 1967), pp. 386-89; Dean Rusk, "Organizing the Peace: International Cooperation," *ibid.*, (November 15, 1966), pp. 67-71; Robert S. McNamara, "Voluntary Service for all Youth Civic Action," *ibid.*, XXXII (June 1, 1966), pp. 484-88, especially his re-iterated stress on security as ultimately grounded in development; also his "The Three Gaps, Economic, Technological and Educational," *ibid.*, XXXIII (April 1, 1967), pp. 357-61; George W. Ball, "The Larger Meaning of the NATO Crisis: A Fragmented Europe," *ibid.*, XXXII (June 1, 1966), pp. 492-95, *idem.*, "Trade with the USSR," *ibid.*, XXXIII, pp. 536-50, *idem.*, "Multinational Corporations and Nation States," *The Atlantic Community Quarterly*, 5 (Summer, 1967), pp. 247-53; note especially p. 247: "I know of few things more hopeful for the future than the growing determination of American business to regard national boundaries as no longer fixing the horizons of their corporate activity... In the last 20 years the multinational company has come fully into its own. Today the lines between domestic and overseas business are no longer distinct in many corporations. This is a development of major importance: for the first time we are beginning to use the world's resources with maximum efficiency.... While the structure of the multinational corporation is a modern concept, designed to meet modern requirements, the nation state is very old-fashioned idea and badly adapted to our present complex world. Most nation states are totally inadequate as economic units.... The business and political structures of the world are, therefore, out of phase, and this faces us with formidable problems for the future. For unless we can make faster progress in modernizing the world's political structure, the multinational corporation may find itself increasingly harassed by obstacles and restrictions that will seriously reduce its potential."

President Johnson's affirmation in his State of the Union address that "We are in the midst of a great transition, a transition from narrow nationalism to

6. The steady fashioning of a state that serves as the catalyst for developing capitalism by (a) formulating problems for it to solve; (b) utilizing the advanced technologies stimulated by the demands for optimal military strength; (c) advocating tax and fiscal policies that stimulate economic growth and foreclose economic stagnation, i. e., that offset the law of diminishing returns and the fall of the rate of profit; (d) allocating capital funds to the growth sectors of the economy, to research and development, to the technological frontiers, to educating and training a work force with the needed skills and knowledge, and to social security; (e) creating a legal framework that spurs and sustains economic growth, enlarges the range of options and stretches to the limit the borders of individual freedom; (f) liquidating as quickly as possible the tragic heritage of human waste of those earlier phases of capitalism that looked upon poverty either as the wages of indolence, or the operation of the law of survival of the fittest; (g) eliminating the grosser consequences of unplanned capitalism: air pollution, minimal concern for the safety of products, irresponsible and misleading advertising and labeling, pricing policies injurious to the system as a whole; (h) pulling the South out of its stagnant rut by breaking down its obsolescent agricultural system built on semi-servile, semi-literate black labor, introducing into the South the most advanced forms of capitalism and technology via defense and aerospace projects, and integrating the region into the national economy and eradicating its colonial status.

Since World War II, then, we have been witnessing the gestation of global capitalism under U. S. leadership, which is waging a steady and ever more effective struggle against the remnants of nation-state capitalism and imperialism, both at home and abroad and against the communist alternatives. Resistance to global capitalism manifests itself not only in the obsolescent forms in Europe of West and East, but also in the dying forms of American capitalism clinging to laws, concepts, ideologies, and prejudices spawned by the laissez-faire, free-wheeling, and often ruthless capitalism of an earlier day.

international partnership; from the harsh spirit of the cold war to the hopeful spirit of common humanity on a trouble and threatened planet," as well as his re-iteration of regionalism for the underdeveloped world, clearly commits the administration to the liquidation of the anomaly stressed by Ball. Henry H. Fowler, "A World Monetary System: New Political Decisions Needed," *Vital Speeches*, XXXIII (May 15, 1967), pp. 455-62; Nicholas D. Katzenbach, "America and Africa: The New World and the Newer World," *ibid.*, (August 1, 1967), pp. 622-25 on anti-colonialism and regionalism. As for Communist China, President Johnson's cryptic statement: "We maintain our dialogue with the authorities in Peking in preparation for the day when they will be ready to live at peace with the rest of the world" (*Vital Speeches*, XXXIII, July 15, 1967, p. 579), is not without profound implications.

Those dying forms do not represent the capitalism of David Rockefeller, of R. A. Peterson, of Henry Ford II, of Robert McNamara; nor of IBM or Xerox or Chrysler; nor of John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. The capitalism of these business and political leaders is solidly grounded in the new flexible corporate form with its remarkable capacity for growth and with its need for a global system that can generate infinite markets. It therefore must be not only revolutionary, but *social* revolutionary. It must wage a ceaseless struggle against all traditional societies that strangle economic growth. It must regard the nation-state system of Europe as anachronistic, and push vigorously for a common market. Finding imperialism an obstacle to modernization in underdeveloped lands, it encourages its liquidation. Finding wasted human resources in this country, it supports legislation to redeem them. Finding polluted air, wretched slums, ugly cities, it applauds the President's efforts to make headway against them. Finding bigotry, racial discrimination, anti-Semitism and narrow nationalism, it takes satisfaction in a religious leadership doing God's work by weeding out the poisons stunting the growth of His vines. Finding cynicism and apathy among the youth, it welcomes the awakening idealism of the Peace Corps. Finding stultifying conformity, it recognizes the invigorating role of dissent. Finding knowledge the key to the future, it encourages radical thinking. Finding the grey flannel suit a symbol of de-personalization, it replaces it with the rolled-up sleeve of the eccentric genius. Finding economic abundance both possible and profitable, it ponders the place of man and searches for values that will nourish him when he is sated with food.<sup>2</sup>

## VII

Since this new global capitalism is on the march, we would do well to assess its likely consequences for Jews and Judaism. Thus the structure of Jewry in American society today is the handiwork of the development of American capitalism. The sociological profile reveals that Jews have fared phenomenally well; for they, more than any other ethnic or reli-

<sup>2</sup> For the thinking of the global capitalists, see, e. g., David Rockefeller, "Culture and the Corporation," *Vital Speeches*, XXXIII (October 15, 1966), pp. 14-18; *idem.*, XXXII (April 1, 1966), pp. 367-69; *idem.*, "What Private Enterprise Means to Latin America," *Foreign Affairs*, XXXIV (April, 1966), pp. 403-16; R. A. Peterson, "New Dynamics in U. S. Foreign Trade," *ibid.*, (December 15, 1966), pp. 149-52; *idem.* "Our Evolving International Strategy," *ibid.*, (May 1, 1957), pp. 429-34; Henry Ford II, "The Common Thread," *ibid.*, (June 1, 1966), pp. 495-98; R. C. Williams (President, Youngstown Sheet and Tube), "Anatomy of the Creative Decision," *ibid.*, pp. 508-12; Arthur K. Watson of IBM: "I am firmly committed to an international outlook... we need not *be* mercantilists, it isn't sensible or profitable. To the degree that we drag our feet on ridding the world of obstacles to freer exchange of goods and services and people, to the extent that we restrict the growth of free international corporate enterprise by self-defeating nationalist demands or by pursuing a fetishistic and out-moded

gious group, grasped the options spawned by capitalism to pull themselves up to the higher rungs. Jews responded to the full range of opportunity that it opened to them. This comprehends, of course, the intellectual and artistic freedom to recoil, with radical criticism and aesthetic displeasure, from its abundant evils, and to have the Judaism of one's choice and the ethnic loyalties of one's heart. If developing capitalism undermined either traditional Judaism or Jewishness, it did so by exposing them as anachronistic and not by legislating them away. Reform Judaism was a creative response to this process.

The contemporary profile, however, was not etched painlessly. Jews had been threatened with dislodgement, or worse, by stagnating and disintegrating capitalism. The Depression seemed to signal approaching disaster, and, in response, Jews were drawn to ethnic and nationalist ideologies that offered a Jewish way out. Ethnicism was given a new lease on life by Hitler's adroit manipulation of anti-Semitism to hoist himself to power in Germany, and by the growing popularity of fascist ideologies in France, England, and the United States. A Jewish identity might not be an impregnable fortress against annihilation, but it was a shield for one's self-esteem. As rampant racist nationalism girded for war, and as economic stagnation stamped progress as an illusion, Jews in the United States held on dearly to their ethnic loyalties and to their Judaism. The assimilatory process of the twenties was brought to a halt.

World War II swept away the Depression and delivered a crushing blow to anti-Semitic ideologies. Jews were the beneficiaries of this twofold development. The upswing of the economy during the War and after was marked by technological breakthroughs that placed a premium on the very talents and skills that Jews had in large measure by virtue of their flight from proletarianization. The new capitalism thrives on brain, not brawn. Cheap, unskilled labor is a liability, not a resource. The new machines yield profits only when yoked to intelligence; the expanding corporate form needs managerial and entrepreneurial talent of a high

attachment to gold, to that degree are we poorer and more prone to conflict." *Columbia Journal of World Business*, II (July-August, 1967), p. 21, cf. also pp. 18-21; Lynn A. Townsend (President of Chrysler), "Idealism Without Illusions," *Vital Speeches*, XXXII (August 1, 1966), pp. 626-29, especially pp. 627-29;

William Blackie (President, Caterpillar Tractor Co.), "Trade and Investment in an Interdependent World," *The Atlantic Community Quarterly*, 3 (Winter, 1965-66), pp. 499-512; Aurelio Peccei (Vice Chairman, Board of Olivetti Co.), *ibid.*, 5 (Spring, 1967), pp. 71-86; Lyie M. Spencer (President, Science Research Associates, Inc.), "The New Social and Industrial Complex," *Vital Speeches*, XXXII (September 15, 1966), pp. 721-25; Sol M. Linowitz, "Public Affairs:

The Demanding Seventies," *ibid.*, pp. 477-80, especially pp. 478-80; "Interface: Business and Beauty: An interview with Armand G. Erpf (investment banker with Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades & Co.)," *Columbia Journal of World Business*, II (May-June, 1967), pp. 85-90; W. Willard Wirtz, "Christian Social Relations: the Great Society," *Vital Speeches*, XXXII (July 1, 1966), pp. 546-60.

order; growing affluence and education spurs professionalization; the new and demanding tasks of government require capacities in short supply. Steadily, Jews climbed higher, rung by rung, on the ladder of upward-reaching capitalism, quickening their pace as the dread of Depression diminished and as barriers to achievement were first lowered, then removed altogether. The well-being of the Jew clearly became more and more dependent on the capacity of capitalism to grow.

The first phase of the resurrection of capitalism after World War II, let us say between 1946 and 1960, took place in an international framework of strain and uncertainty. For many years, it was uncertain whether a global order would emerge under U. S. leadership, for western Europe was in a shambles, and the iron curtain cast shadows of impending disaster. Economic prosperity went hand in hand with spiritual gloom. Had man's knowledge simply come to this: an awesome awareness of his helplessness? Was man's journey on earth an adventure in absurdity; his vision of the good life a mocking dream? Was God's awesome power and omnipotence to reveal itself in man's crushed and broken pride? Had the Psalmist tricked him in the noble fantasy that he was but little lower than the angels?

These uncertain years were appropriately designated the Age of Anxiety. And man, overwhelmed with objective anxiety, turned to religion to allay it. If there was no future rimmed with hope, there had been a lustrous past. If God's face was turned from contemporary man, he had shown it to Moses on Sinai's mount. Tradition was searched for answers, as terror-stricken minds stared aghast at what their vaunted intelligence had wrought. Judaism and Christianity lived again in the hearts and minds of sinful men.

The headlong rush to church and synagogue was abetted by the state. Faced with seemingly insurmountable problems, there was need, above all, for a unified people to meet the challenges of the Cold War. Any internal weakness could be capitalized upon by the enemy, whose only real strength lay in dangling a deceptive ideology before the anxious and the troubled. To forge such a unity, the conservative potential that lay within both Judaism and Christianity was exploited. There could be no true American identity without a religious identity. These were the McCarthy years when to defend oneself against charges of disloyalty was to prove the allegation. To be a synagogue and a church member was an outer sign of inner loyalty. The alliance of developing capitalism and radicalism, religious or otherwise, of an earlier age was either forgotten or shrugged off as anomalous. Capitalism was identified with conservatism; Communism, though brutal and totalitarian, was fantasied as the heir of the radical principle.

Those anxious years of the hovering mushroom cloud wedded Jews to Judaism and Judaism to Jews. The ethnic feelings of the Jews were stirred to the depths as they experienced the pangs of Israel's birth. These now mingled with the re-assuring warmth of revived rituals, the hallowed memories of saints and martyrs, of a traditional mode of life

that had wrested inner security from a harsh and crude reality. A glow within was kindled by the luminous light lustering forth from Bible and Midrash, Talmud and Zohar, the Kuzari and the tales of the Hasidic masters. And all the while, Jews were being swept by the tides of affluence into the suburbs, and into the colleges and the universities; and they were linking themselves up more and more securely to those growth sectors of the economy that were driving towards globalism. They had little awareness that there would come a day when global capitalism would shed its conservative facade and unleash a revolutionary radicalism that would shake every traditional system to its roots.

Yet this is precisely what happened. As the growing military might of the United States assured the mitigation of the Cold War, as the experiment in the economic reconstruction of Europe and Japan proved to be overwhelmingly successful, and as the threat of a restoration of nation-state rivalries receded, the grip of objective anxiety began to diminish and the state began to relax the constraints on individual freedom and to dissolve its alliance with conservatism. Traditionally oriented religious attitudes likewise were more a hindrance than a help. Americans were encouraged to be outward-looking, to abandon their provincial notions, to take notice that there was a world desperately in need of rescue. Poverty afflicted the southern hemisphere; famine loomed on the horizon of billions of lives; disease ravaged the underprivileged; ignorance was the stuff on which most of mankind fed its mind. Underdevelopment was the word used to sum up all these problems; and a major obstacle to development was the traditional structure of societies geared to the exploitation of cheap human labor and committed to low agricultural yield. Everyone began to become aware that the world was exploding with problems and possibilities. We could not simply sit back and surrender the future to untamed irrational forces. Man's reason could build a world as easily as it could destroy it. If he put his mind to the problem, he would come forth with a solution. God's universe might be problem-laden, but it was not absurd. The pioneering spirit was not dead; adventure was exhilarating; joy might be man's reward if he built a beautiful habitation. Youth especially was enkindled with the glow of the future rather than with the embers of the past.

The religious response is only too well known to you. The extreme break with tradition is formulated as the death of God. But this development, as significant as it is, pales before the decision of the Catholic Church to embrace *aggiornamento*. We have witnessed a phenomenon that can truly be proclaimed as an authenticated miracle. A world-wide institution structured to weather corrosive change, and the rock of conservatism if not reaction, took the lead in dismantling some of its most cherished symbols of tradition and in giving its blessing to progressive and even revolutionary movements throughout the world. And for good reason. The era of global, permanent revolution is on hand. Traditional societies are lurching through their last days, and the torrent of released humanity will hear nothing of a religion that would dam them up again.

If the Church is to survive as a world institution it must commit itself to globalism and its radical and revolutionary consequences. The new global order will not interfere with religion, but it will not artificially keep it alive. The Church will have to look after its own harvesting, and the yield will be meager if it abandons the peasant for the landowner, the hungry for the sated.<sup>3</sup>

The gospel of *aggiornamento* has not gone unheeded by the Protestants. Many a clergyman has thrown himself into the forefront of the struggle for Civil Rights, held Jesus up as the model for social concern, pointed to a path of salvation obstructed by poverty, disease, ignorance, human debris, and war. No longer is Christianity the voice of resignation, the solicitous minister of the *status quo*.

### VIII

But what of Jews and Judaism? The special relationship of Jews to capitalism in the United States has thrust them into the most advanced sectors of global capitalism with all of the hazards and hopes that mark an exposed frontier. Unlike the non-Jew, the Jew has no buffers in a working class, or a farming class, or even a lower middle class. Whatever buffers still exist will be liquidated within a generation or so as the new generation is exposed almost *in toto* to a college environment, the seedbed of globalism. An ethnic identity can maintain only a precarious existence when intellectual leadership is committed to complete racial integration and when nationalism in developed countries is viewed as a throwback. It will also be subject to severe strains as the new thinking and the new knowledge knit an intellectual community whose stock in trade is scientific thinking and whose mind is sharpened on such world-wide problems as the population explosion and the modernization of underdeveloped lands. For such a community, the nation is simply a stage through which underdeveloped nations must go to marshal their resources for ultimate integration into regional units. It will be concerned with the utilization of national feeling, even as it will seek means to prevent its transformation into destructive nationalism. The global outlook will be the only one appropriate for *the functional* role that most Jewish youth will be destined to play in their mature years.

<sup>3</sup> The advanced economic and social thinking of the Church and its astute appreciation of emerging globalism is set forth in the Encyclical Letter of Pope Paul VI "On the Development of the Peoples," *New York Times*, March 29, 1967, pp. 23-25. Not only does the Pope recognize the crucial role of economic and social development ("the new name for peace is development," echoing McNamara's "Security is Development"), but he contemplates the emergence of a global society: "Some would consider such hopes Utopian. It may be that these persons are not realistic enough, and that they have not perceived the dynamism of a world which desires to live more fraternally — a world which, in spite of ignorance, its mistakes, and even its sins, its relapses into barbarism and its wanderings far from the road to salvation, is, even unawares, taking slow but sure steps towards its Creator." *Ibid*; p. 25.



The ethnic tie will likewise slacken as anti-Semitism withers, and the monstrous extermination policies of the Nazis will fade as a transient experiment with barbarism. Rare is the Jewish college student today who has experienced anti-Semitism or whose chosen career is blocked because of discrimination. The few such obstacles that still remain are not likely to be around in a decade or two. The talents of gifted Jews have been pressed into the service of the state on the highest levels and with an utter disregard of the Jewishness of their names. Even a Jewish President is no longer beyond the realm of possibility, now that Arthur J. Goldberg has won the respect of his fellow Americans as their skillful Ambassador to the United Nations.

Israel's future likewise may soon be confirmed by a durable under-girding of her right to be; and her role as the beachhead of modernization in the Middle East will tie her destiny to the welding of a regional common market. Should Israel's economy spin off into self-sustained economic growth, her economic dependence on America will diminish. And with this separation, the likelihood that Israel will stoke the ethnic fires of Jewishness is remote.

And then there is intermarriage. The free reign that globalism gives to the individual tends to place a premium on values that cherish the individual as a person. Who one is will less and less be determined by what one was. The ethical and moral codes hammered out in pragmatic experimentation will have a universal appeal; they will tend to be problem-oriented rather than tradition-oriented, with good and evil losing their absolute character and shifting in response to the situational dilemma. Freedom to experiment, even at the risk of danger to oneself, will be taken as a human birthright. The attitude toward authority will be flexible and tentative. In a world exploding with novelty and wracked with problems, the individual cannot survive if he is hemmed in by standards that do not bend and traditional maxims that do not teach. A Jewish youth is thus not likely to be deterred from marrying the individual who shares his value system. Let it not be forgotten that Jewish nationalism was born in time, and could pass away in time. The fate of Yiddish culture only too painfully reminds us that the struggle for survival is by no means always crowned with success.

If the durability of a Jewish ethnic identity will be sorely tried in the years ahead, Judaism will not have easy going either. The props of objective anxiety, of anti-Semitism, of a state smiling approvingly on religious affiliation, will be removed one by one. Traditionalism will tend to become more and more a liability as the new rationalism exposes its inconsistencies and flaws. The new will be too exciting to barter for the old. Moses, the burning bush, revelation at Sinai, will be appreciated for its historical and anthropological interest, but not for any light it might shed on containing the population explosion, increasing the yield per acre in underdeveloped lands, shaping viable nations out of the chaos of underdevelopment, calculating the optimum rate of economic growth. There is little need for the Talmud or the Zohar in the Think Tanks. Not that there will be hostility. As long as traditional learning or tradi-

tional religion does not obstruct the functioning of a global society, it will be treated with respect. Indeed, the computer will be pressed into use to preserve every iota of Jewish knowledge, and universities will establish chairs for scientific research into all the recesses of the Jewish past.

But clearly here is not where the action will be. The future will more and more be man's concern as he becomes ever more confident that he has at long last fashioned tools that can shape his destiny. The past will be primarily a vast treasure house of man's strivings to attain the good life, and of his persistent failures. It will less and less beckon as an alternative to the treasures that await him.

Judaism will have no choice but to react. It can turn its back on globalism and reassure itself that the new capitalism will leave the Jews untouched and their spiritual needs unchanged. It can take comfort in the re-assuring thought that it has not happened yet and that the thrusts of these powerful forces are reversible. Indeed, it may take comfort in the illusion that no qualitative breakthrough is involved, and that the pattern of nation-state-capitalism will repeat itself and the Jews will not long be free of discrimination.

Those who take the analysis of this paper seriously can have no such illusions. The age of the nation state is nearing its end, and the era of permanent and sustained economic growth is being ushered in. There will be no return of the objective anxieties of a planet plagued by hunger, fear, and scarcity. The new science of economics is the science of abundance, not of scarcity. There is infinite work to be done before its task is accomplished, but all the purpose and all the power of the United States is committed to it, so I would not gamble on failure. Traditional Judaism, be it Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform, will either have to embrace *aggiornamento* or slowly wither away. You will recall how the generation of the twenties wreaked vengeance on the *heder* system and the Orthodox Judaism of Eastern Europe. But this time, there will be no Depressions or Hitlers to reverse the process.

Reform Judaism, however, cannot but greet the emerging global society as the confirmation of its faith that history was development and that Judaism was spiritualization of this process. The founding fathers of our movement were radicals who welcomed the sweeping away of a medievalism that had wracked and despoiled the Jews, hounded them as pariahs, ground down their self-esteem by humiliating and degrading legislation, and turned their Judaism into the caricature of what it might have been. They were excited by the dawn of a new age of human equality and the vistas that science, philosophy, and literature opened for them. Traditional Judaism had no nostalgic or romantic glow for them. They bore the scars of a *halakhic* yoke that had crushed intellectual curiosity with the ban, and that had strained to hold them back from the beckoning call of western civilization. They cast off the yoke, even as they sought to capture Judaism's essence.

And they discovered that this essence was change and development. Judaism was its history, and its history was an adventure with God. Not

the anthropomorphic God of Israel's childhood, but that force and power fulfilling itself in the history of mankind in general and the history of Israel in particular. To carry through its mission, Judaism had dared to change. Western civilization was an opportunity for religious creativity, not the death knell of Judaism.

These radicals of yesteryear had faith that in the end of time God's purpose in history would become clear, however vain might seem our finite strivings. They believed in progress. They opened their minds to new knowledge and fresh ideas. They had faith that man was good and that his reason could master his baser passions.

Their faith has been sorely tried during these past few decades. Progress was, so it seemed, the crudest illusion of all. But Reform Judaism did survive. And now the future that unrolls before us may yet vindicate its faith. We need no longer be on the defensive. We can man the spiritual frontiers of the global society that is being born. Free to draw on the riches of our past, we need no longer be slaves to it. Judaism, for us, is not only a past, but a future. This was and is the message of Reform Judaism.

Let us then welcome the challenge of man's transition from scarcity to abundance, from nation states to global community. In the turmoil of the years of transit, our steadfast faith, secured by the knowledge that the economic and technological prerequisites for an age of humanity are at hand, and that wise able statesmen are determined to shape societies congenial to the aspirations of man,<sup>4</sup> will be a source of inspiration. And when man freed of hunger and despair will ask of us:

"What is man? And what does God require of  
him?"

we will be ready, as were the prophets of old, with answers.

<sup>4</sup> David Rockefeller, *Vital Speeches*, XXXII (April 1, 1966), p. 369; cf. Robert S. McNamara, *ibid.*, (June 1, 1966), p. 488: "I, for one, would not count a global free society out."