

"Yes we have no bananas"  
 was what they sang  
 on the Lower East Side.  
 "Apple pie & coffee" was all the English he knew.  
 "Apple pie & coffee" he said  
 & others they laugh, these Americans,  
 they call him a "greenhorn"  
 & they sing "Yes  
 we have no bananas,"  
 as he wanders the garment district  
 looking for work  
 eating apple pie & coffee  
 day after day in the automat.

#### HERE I AM, A JEW FROM BROOKLYN

Alone I watch the fat green Klamath slide down the banks.  
 I throw the book about Treblinka concentration camp uprising down.  
 It's well known: Jews flowed into ovens & died.  
 I sob & my head gushes through rocks & that isolated beach.  
 My heart flings Treblinka down.  
 I'd like to hide with salmon and seal, in the trunks of acorn trees.  
 It's well known: The Klamath is Indian land, Yurok land.  
 Here I am, a Jew from Brooklyn, wailing over  
 my own dead at a wall of water in California.  
 The Klamath remembers its own blood.  
 Without this river, how could there be Yuroks?  
 What the hell is a Jew doing here anyway, by what bond?

Suddenly from out of the brush  
 a deer steps gingerly on the pebbles.  
 Hid among the rocks, he peeps out to see what's going on.  
 He watches, alert, but strangely not suspicious.  
 I stop crying. The deer steps forward, approaching me,  
 slowly walks, pauses, spies me, pauses  
 & walks again.  
 He nears the river, bends to drink  
 his lapping explodes the silent river.  
 I move towards him, reach out, palm forward to stroke him.  
 Those soft antler nubs, still furry, please him the most.  
 I tug & stroke those nubs  
 & he wags his head around till he's had enough.  
 My heart eases.  
 My companion paces back into the woods.

## EPILOGUE: A PREDICTION THE REEMERGENCE OF SOCIALISM AMONG JEWS

*Arthur Liebman*

At this point I would like to offer a prediction about the future of socialism among Jews in America. Socialism, I contend, contrary to popular impressions, will be on the future agenda of the American-Jewish community. The conditions, the situations, and the circumstances that led many Jews, particularly the best and the brightest, to socialism in the past will in various forms reemerge to play a similar role for Jews in the future. I believe that, in America in the forthcoming decades, the Jewish community's harsh confrontation with capitalism will result in a renewed Jewish commitment to socialism.

Yet if one were to take a snapshot of the present-day Jewish and American communities, a superficial reading of the film would not indicate the imminent presence of a revived socialist movement, particularly with respect to the Jews. For the society as a whole, despite several years of high unemployment and a decline in real income, there are not many indicators to suggest a rise in the level of working-class, much less socialist, militancy. The poor, the colored minorities, and the working class—those who primarily bear the brunt of the twin scourges of joblessness and inflation—occasionally do strike out in ways that can be interpreted as quasi-socialist forms. But more typically they either stoically accept their fate, turn to religion, or seek out other nonpolitical outlets for the expression of their plight and frustration.

In the political realm, conservatives and conservatism are on the

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ascendancy. The 1976 presidential election, the defeat of Democratic congressional candidates in Democratic strongholds in Washington and Minnesota in 1977, and Daniel P. Moynihan's defeat of Bella Abzug in the New York senatorial primaries attest to this rightward drift in the nation. The national debate on the issue of the Panama Canal treaties and the lack of such a debate on even a watered down version of the Humphrey-Hawkins full-employment bill are other indications of the growing strength of the Right and the weakness of the Left as well as the vacuity of American politics.

A glance at the political spectrum to the left of the Democratic Party reveals some wide, nearly empty spaces. The student movement is dead. The women liberationists are on the defensive. Pockets of Leftists and New Leftists exist in and around the Democratic Party, some unions, universities, poverty programs, and small publications, but there is no Left or New Left party or organization of any consequence that still functions.

Socialism's fate in the Jewish community seems even more dire. The economic and occupational bases that once sustained a meaningful Jewish Left are now largely a thing of the past. In terms of income and occupations Jews appear to be among the most favored of the nation's ethnic and religious groups. The organs and organizations that are dominant in the Jewish community reflect the predominance of its bourgeois base. Power and influence among American Jews are concentrated in its wealthier strata and in the rabbis, administrators, and bureaucrats of community organizations, and the intelligentsia allied with and attuned to it.

Jewish radicals, whether of the Old Left, New Left, or Jewish New Left varieties, are few in number. The organizations that constituted the sinews of the Jewish Left subculture, if in existence, either serve only a handful or are now politically blander and more moderate than was true in past decades. Jewish radical newspapers and periodicals tend to be in financial difficulty and on the verge of extinction or bankruptcy. Their readership can be counted in the hundreds or low thousands, while their more conservative ideological competitors are read by the tens of thousands.

The status of Jewish radicals in the Jewish community today is a far cry from what it was prior to World War I. Now they have little influence in community affairs. Now, as opposed to the earlier period, they are viewed by a large segment of American Jewry with suspicion, even with hostility. Leftists, whether Jewish or non-

Jewish, Old or New, are regarded by many Jews as being opposed to basic Jewish economic and political interests, that, is, Israel's security, a militarily strong United States, and a seemingly bountiful capitalist system. The only socialist honored by this community are those who have been embalmed in nostalgia.

The prospects for a revival of socialism in the American Jewish community, however, is not as bleak as these facts may at first appear to suggest. There are two factors that will promote this revival. The first is the existence of organized Jewish radicalism. The second is the peculiar location of the Jews in a maturing monopolistic capitalist society.

Jewish radical organizations, although few in number and in potency at this time, can serve important political functions with respect to any future resurgence of leftism among Jews. The Jewish Socialist Youth Bund, Habonim, Hashomer Hatzair, the Jewish Socialist Community, the Radical Jewish Union, the *Jewish Currents*, the *Morgen Freiheit*, the Bund, and Camp Kinderland all help to keep alive the historical tradition and legitimacy of Jewish socialism. The importance of the availability of radical traditions to groups or nations concerned with dramatic social change should not be underestimated. Such a tradition reduces the time and energy spent in groping for meaningful political alternatives and also serves as a rallying force for those concerned with the radical transformation of their societies. Indeed, this was a fact of which the early fathers [sic] of the Zionist movement were well aware.

This is not the only real or potential contribution that such Jewish radical organizations have to make to a future revival of Jewish socialism. In addition to tradition, they keep radical political people alive. In these explicitly leftist Jewish contexts (as well as in leftist contexts in which Jews do not participate specifically as Jews, such as *In These Times*), a small but not insignificant number are being politically educated. Also, a small but not insignificant number are gaining experience in radical politics. Thus, when a thrust for meaningful change arises among Jews in the future there will be, directly or indirectly available to those generations, men and women who can provide a socialist direction. Sociologists and historians of social movements have often noted that key persons and groups in the rise of new social movements many times are those with experience in the involvement with old ones. And, a handful of astute and experienced individuals can make a difference. Indeed, was it not a handful who made an important difference in the initial successes

of the Bund and the Bolsheviks?

A few individuals and organizations by themselves, however, cannot produce a radical movement. Their potency is circumscribed by larger structural considerations. It is to these structural considerations, namely the occupational and economic structure of American Jewry within this monopolistic capitalist society, to which we now turn our attention.

### Jewish Occupations and Industries

Jews, though largely middle class, are not dispersed at random throughout the labor force. Values, traditions, historical experiences, previous successes, and anti-Semitism have all come together to produce a Jewish occupational structure today that is unique. I contend that this special pattern of Jewish location in the occupational and industrial world will play a major part in placing Jews once again in that vanguard of a socialist movement.

To understand this point, it is necessary to look beyond income levels and the glitter of the gilded ghettos. Once this is done it becomes clearer that the occupational roles that Jews currently occupy do not give them access to the levers of societal power. Basically Jews are located in peripheral and dependent positions and stand outside of the politico-economic core where real power is vested. It is this concentration of Jews in these types of economic arenas and the consequential political and economic vulnerability that will revive socialism in the American Jewish community.

Let us commence this brief analysis by sketching a map of the occupational and industrial locations of Jews in the United States today. Industrially, as social analyst Allon Gal has noted, "... the center of gravity of American Jewry's economic life is the *field of trade and finance*," a field in which nearly half of all economically active Jews are employed.<sup>1</sup> This proportion is approximately two times larger than that for non-Jews in the same field. In manufacturing, Jews are disproportionately located in light manufacturing or the consumer-goods industries. Jews in business also differ from their Christian counterparts in terms of the type of enterprise with which they are associated. Jews are more likely to be found in proprietorships and partnerships, while Christians are more likely to be located in corporations.<sup>2</sup>

Occupationally, Jews are distinct from the rest of the population.

Whereas approximately one-tenth of the national labor force is self-employed, the percentage for Jews is about 50 percent, or nearly five times greater. A similar but not as sharp a disparity also obtains with respect to representation in specific occupational categories. Seventy percent of Jews in the labor force are either professionals (29%) or managers and administrators (41%). The comparable percentage for non-Jews in both these categories is close to 30 percent, or proportionately less than half of that of Jews.<sup>3</sup>

These current occupational and industrial concentrations of Jews are a product of a combination of various historic and contemporary factors. The positions of Jews today in the economy are in many cases extensions of the types of field and activities that they entered and in which they were successful in earlier decades. These contemporary concentrations also reflect the considerable educational and economic mobility of the Jews as a group. But, most important for our present concern, the nonrandom location of Jews in the economy also indicates the existence of a pattern of exclusion from the central position of economic power.

Jews are virtually absent from the executive suites of the large corporations situated at the core of politico-economic power in this society. (Irving Shapiro, board chairman of DuPont, is a singularly notable exception.) As William Domhoff, a sociological student of the power elite, described the wealthy Jews (and their Cowboy or South-western allies): "The Jewish-Cowboy group is the major fringe group in an overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon power elite rooted in commercial banking, insurance, public utilities, railroads and [heavy] manufacturing—precisely the areas from which people of Jewish background are almost completely excluded. Even where the Jews and the Cowboys are highly visible as in investment banking, oil and real estate, they are decidedly minor leaguers compared to the even wealthier gentiles."<sup>4</sup> The statistics of Jewish exclusion from the corporate power elite are quite jarring. In the field of commercial banking the percentage of Jews in executive positions at the larger banks is approximately 1 percent. In 1973 the American Jewish Committee found that of the 176 senior executives in the 15 largest commercial banks not one was Jewish. The pattern is almost identical in the auto industry. Not one of the top officers of General Motors, Chrysler, and Ford is Jewish. Those Jews who are highly paid in the auto industry are primarily technicians, engineers, and scientists; and even they are relatively few in number. Again, the

same pattern is found in the oil industry, where Jews constitute from about 1 to 4 percent of all high-level officials. In public utilities, the percentage is less than 1 percent. In the insurance industry, the picture for Jews is only slightly better.<sup>5</sup>

The fact of Jewish exclusion from positions of corporate power is more salient than the reasons behind it. But some brief attention should also be paid to the underlying reasons. Jews in the past (as noted earlier in the volume) were excluded from these industries and consequently sought out other economic arenas more hospitable to them and the talents. After a while a pattern tends to be established, and it is possible that Jews may overlook new opportunities within sectors that were previously regarded as hostile to them. However, the major difficulty with this line of reasoning is that many if not most of the doors closed to Jews in the past remain firmly closed in the present owing to the current locks installed by the contemporary gate keepers. These major corporations apparently do not actively recruit on campuses with large proportions of Jews. For example, one recent study found that the number of visits to campuses by bank recruiters searching out future executives varies *inversely* with the percentage of Jews in the student body. Even when the Jewish students, such as those graduating from the Harvard Business School, appear to be eminently qualified for the trek to the high-level executive suites, they tend not to be chosen. The objectively anti-Semitic policies of the corporate power elite are also reflected in the social clubs that they dominate. More than half of these clubs — in which many of the big business decisions are made—actively discriminate against Jews.<sup>6</sup>

The exclusion of Jews from the corporate power structure means that Jews are in a vulnerable position. Decisions that non-Jews make about the economy and decisions in which Jews do not participate determine in essence the Jewish economic fate. The expansive nature of the American economy in the several decades following World War II up until approximately 1970 and the need then for talents in fields where Jews did have access masked the impact of this power distortion. Income and status success in a variety of economic arenas made the exclusion from a few easier to bear. The anti-Semitic policies and practices of the economic power elite was treated by Jewish defense organizations as more a status irritant than as a major blockage to Jewish economic mobility or a significant threat to the fundamental position of Jews in the economy or society.

These *judenrein* corporations, particularly the oligopolies, constitute an actual threat in the present and an even greater one in the future to the economic and social attainments and security of American Jewry. The simultaneous growth of monopoly capitalism and the contraction of the economy that we are currently experiencing underscore the gravity of the situation for American Jewry. The economic giants will block Jewish mobility and invade traditional Jewish economic arenas, while the competition from other sectors and strata in the society for the relatively few economic plums that exist beyond the sphere or concern of the corporate magnates become more intense. This is the scenario for the economic, political, and status decline of Jews in America of the future. It is also the scenario that will lead American Jewry back to a renewed and vigorous commitment to socialism.

#### THE ECONOMIC THREAT

Let us now examine the various ways in which the predominantly Jewish economic and occupational arenas and mobility channels are being and will continue to be eroded. First, we will turn our attention to small business—the traditional Jewish economic metier. The economic data clearly reveal that small businesses in America in the last several decades have declined, using virtually any indicator of economic performance. At the same time, the wealth and influence of the large corporations, the conglomerates, and the oligopolies have grown considerably. Between 1950 and 1962, for example, the 20 largest corporations' share of all corporate assets increased from 21 to 25 percent. By 1962 the net profits of the five largest manufacturing corporations were approximately 200 percent greater than those of the 178,000 smallest manufacturing corporations.<sup>7</sup> Or, to use another example, “. . . The 100 largest firms in 1968 held a larger share of manufacturing assets than the 200 largest in 1950; the 200 largest in 1968 controlled as large a share as the 1000 largest in 1941.”<sup>8</sup> By 1966 the concentration of economic power had grown to the point where the top four firms in aerospace, motor vehicles, computers, tires, cigarettes, soap detergent, and photographic equipment accounted for approximately two-thirds or more of the total output in each of these industrial groupings. This phenomenon was not only restricted to manufacturing. The same pattern also applied in the banking and insurance worlds as well. Small

businesses' share of assets, output, and profits could not keep up with that of the giants.<sup>9</sup>

It was not only the sheer growth of large businesses that proved injurious to the interests of small firms. It was also the nature of that growth. Prior to the 1960s corporations had tended to expand within narrow limits, generally within the boundaries of their industries or in related sectors. But in the 1960s and 1970s, aggressive corporations moved up and out in various directions ingesting firms in diverse industries.<sup>10</sup> And again where large corporations ruled the roost, Jews were generally not welcome.

It should also be noted that despite the flurry of corporate growth and mergers there was a considerable degree of stability among the owners and influentials who controlled big business. The same or similar family groupings such as the Rockefellers, the Mellons, the Fords, and the Hannas that controlled much of the banking and industrial worlds 50 years ago generally still control them now.<sup>11</sup> Jews are generally not to be found in these kinds of family circles. Thus, not even via marriage can Jews get into the charmed circle of the corporate elite.

The decline of small businesses in the 1960s and the 1970s proved especially injurious to the interests of Jews. It was the trade and light manufacturing sectors of the small business world—areas in which Jews were heavily concentrated—that suffered the most economic misfortune.<sup>12</sup> The growing power of the large corporations on the one hand and the increased competition from abroad placed the type of enterprises and occupations in which Jews were disproportionately concentrated in the grips of an ever tightening vise.

A cruel paradox in this situation was that success or relative success provided not [sic] guarantees that the interests of the Jewish community would be protected. If small- or medium-sized Jewish businesses were too profitable, they ran the risk of being bought or taken over by a large and avaricious non-Jewish corporation. Even the growth of a Jewish firm that was not absorbed by outsiders did not necessarily insure its remaining within a Jewish sphere. Both Sears Roebuck and the Radio Corporation of America, for example, commenced life and flourished for many years under the aegis of Jews. As large concerns, however, they have followed, according to sociologist E. Digby Baltzell, the pattern of Jewish exclusion common to large industries in America.<sup>13</sup> There is also a similar sort

of dynamic at work at the pinnacle of the Jewish business world, the prestigious investment houses. Here Jewish houses will for purposes of business, hire or appoint Christian partners, but Christian investment firms do not tend to acquire Jewish partners.<sup>14</sup> And there is also the problem of the highly successful Jew who, in the process of achieving upward mobility and interacting with Christian peers, either converts or intermarries, or has children who do. A significant percentage of the progeny and spouses of upper-status Jewish families considered by Stephen Birmingham in his book *Our Crowd*, for example, are not part of "their crowd."<sup>15</sup>

The general point here, however, is that small- and medium-size businesses are increasingly less able to perform the positive economic functions for Jews that they did in the past. This sector of the economy, which was once a major route of upward mobility and a source of a relatively comfortable middle-class existence for this ethnic group, is suffering in absolute and relative terms. These types of enterprises are evolving, for the most part, into dead-end propositions or fragile economic bases that cannot or will not be able to sustain bourgeois life-styles. As such economic realities intrude into the consciousness of Jews, they will begin to realize that their interests and those of the capitalist system are no longer parallel.

These doubts and feelings of discontent will not be limited to Jewish businessmen. The expansion of large corporations carrying their policies of Jewish exclusion with them into increasingly larger areas of business life and the decline of small businesses within the context of a contracting economy will produce a negative "multiplier effect" upon middle-class Jews who are not the owners and managers of the small- and medium-size firms under attack. The Jewish economy is a highly integrated one, as is the national economy, and both are very much interrelated at this time. It is therefore not possible for one important sector of the Jewish economy to experience assaults without having other parts of it suffer as well.

One of the other Jewish economic arenas that is feeling and will continue to feel the impact of the blows raining down upon small businesses is the professions—an important basis of Jewish middle-class existence. Consider, for example, the case of Jewish lawyers. At the present time, with some exceptions, Jews are generally not found in the higher echelons of major corporate law firms, especially at the level of senior partners. This stems from a variety of sources. Historically, lawyers associated with such prestigious firms have had

a long and not very noble history of animosity toward Jews and other minority groups in the profession.<sup>16</sup> More important for our present concerns, however, is the structural source. The personnel of the large corporate law firms usually are mirror images of their clientele, and the clientele for these law corporations are typically the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants from the world of corporate business. Conversely, Jewish firms, again with some notable exceptions, especially when government contracts and specific expertise are needed, do the legal work of small- to medium-size businesses. (The non-Jews that Jewish lawyers are most likely to serve are those in need of nonmainstream legal services such as those relating to criminal, matrimonial, or personal injury. These Christian clients, needless to say, are not likely to be in the upper or upper-middle classes.) It follows, then, that the fewer the number of profitable Jewish businesses in existence, the fewer the number of clients Jewish law firms will have.<sup>17</sup> This will eventually mean a decline in the number of Jewish lawyers or a decline in the income of Jewish attorneys. There is no reason to believe that the same process will not affect Jews in other middle-class service occupations.

The Jewish professional bastion has also come under attack from another quarter. The growth of big business, the decline of small firms, and the general contraction of the economy have increased the competition among the professions. Blacks, Puerto Ricans, non-Jewish women, and Catholics have become increasingly less willing to concede these positions to Jews either for merit or other reasons. An important focal point in the struggle for these positions has been at the level of admissions to the professional schools. Jewish defense organizations have actively fought against quota systems and other devices designed to increase the enrollments of underrepresented minorities in the professions. Their struggle is informed by a history of anti-Semitic quota systems. But it is also informed by the present-day fact that the more seats in professional schools that go to non-Jews, the fewer there will be available for Jewish students. The briefs submitted by Jewish organizations on behalf of the law school applicant De Funis and the medical school applicant Bakke — alleged victims of reverse discrimination — represent concrete attempts by the Jewish community to protect and preserve admission by merits so that the enclaves that Jews have fought long and hard to establish will not be diminished.

The struggle for professional and middle-class positions between

Jews and non-Jews has not been limited to professional school admissions. In New York City, Jews and blacks continue to fight each other for jobs in the school system. Similarly, Jews are waging struggles to preserve their faculty positions in the nation's colleges and universities, which are being threatened by minority groups backed by affirmative action guidelines and policies.

This competition in the educational sector between Jews and non-Jews is occurring during a period in which the number of teachers at all levels has either reached a plateau or is beginning to decline. For Jews, who are so concentrated in the teaching profession—about 50 percent of New York City's school teachers and approximately 9 percent of the nation's professors<sup>18</sup>—this contraction by itself has to be a troublesome development. But the contraction, together with the vigorous competition endorsed and supported by government, means that in the future Jews will lack this important institutional bulwark to their middle-class status that was there in the past.

This same pattern of present and future erosion of the overall position of Jews in American Society is apparent in the sphere of politics as well. Jewish political power is overrated. The prominence and visibility of Israel as the premier Jewish interest in the last three decades has distorted the reality of Jewish capabilities. Support for Israel by American politicians, until very recently, has been, in domestic political terms, a relatively cost-free endeavor. Presidents and congressmen have much to gain in terms of votes and campaign contributions by providing aid to Israel and little to lose except from fringe groups. Political and economic assistance to Israel, furthermore, does not in any way challenge or disturb the socioeconomic status quo on the homefront.

The vaunted political clout of the Jewish community seems to have produced relatively little payoff in Jewish interest areas other than Israel. For example, Jewish political muscle was unable to stem the decline of the domestic garment industry, particularly in geographical locations like New York in which Jews were the strongest.<sup>19</sup> Jewish political strength was also unable to prevent the implementation of affirmative action policies in disproportionately Jewish occupational and institutional arenas. Even in New York City and even during the administration of the first Jewish mayor in that city's history, Jews were unable to prevent blacks and other groups from encroaching on Jewish enclaves in the civil service and educational bureaucracies.<sup>20</sup>

Politically, organized Jewry has not had much success in its dealings with the corporate elite. Jewish organizations have made no effort to stem the encroachment of big business upon the disproportionately Jewish small-business sector. It is almost as if Jewish political leaders regard this development as an "act of nature" that man cannot stop. Jewish political efforts vis-a-vis the Gentile giants have focused largely upon forcing them to open their executive suites to Jews. This campaign has generally not reaped huge dividends as our previous accounting of Jews in top-level positions in the banking, oil, and automobile industries has made clear. Irving R. Shapiro may have recently become chairman of the board of DuPont, but it is extremely doubtful whether he represents a wave of the future.

Ironically, if Jewish political power has made any significant impact upon the corporate elite, it has been to bolster rather than weaken corporate economic power. This irony stems from the effectiveness of the Jewish lobbying on behalf of Israel. The concern for Israel's security has inclined Jews and Jewish organizations toward a more favorable stance on an ever-increasing United States defense budget. The logic is straightforward. If the American military is to be the ultimate defender of Israel, then the United States armed forces have to be strong. Such strength requires a huge expenditure of funds. Therefore, it follows that Jews should push for bigger defense budgets. *And they are.*<sup>21</sup>

Defense spending may or may not help Israel in the long run, but it most certainly is injurious to Jewish domestic interests in the short, or long, run. This is because these military dollars go largely to a few corporate giants with interests in economic sectors beyond military hardware. In 1968, for example, about 60 percent of these dollars went to 50 such firms.<sup>22</sup> This defense money significantly strengthens the overall economic position of those businesses most dangerous to Jewish economic concerns. The Jewish clout exercised on behalf of Israel turns out to be deleterious to other important Jewish interests and to the economic base upon which the clout rests.

Thus, when the major economic and political tendencies pertaining to American Jewry are assessed, the picture for the Jewish middle class in the future is bleak. After several generations and decades of upward socioeconomic mobility, the mobility that will occur among Jews in the decades to come will be downward. The continued multifaceted growth of *judenrein* corporate giants into the

"Jewish" sectors of the business world will have a substantial negative impact upon the economic fate of Jewish businessmen and upon the Jewish professionals who service them. The economic decline of American Jewry cannot but be paralleled by a decline in its political power as well. And as the political clout of American Jewry is diminished so is its ability to protect its economic and occupational interests. What we have then is an intertwined downward spiral.

This bleak future will not be averted by the logic and values that now guide the political strategy of Jewish leaders and defense agencies. In the face of a powerful threat to Jewish interest by the Gentile corporate magnates, the heavy Jewish artillery has been trained against blacks and other minority groups, politically and economically weak strata that are not very capable of severely injuring basic Jewish interests. Jewish spokesmen will loudly and vociferously protest the morality and legality of affirmative action programs in universities and government designed to redress in some small degree a shameful heritage of racial and sexist discrimination. But there is no equivalent campaign conducted against the major financial, legal, and manufacturing corporations that are serious threats to Jewish interests.<sup>23</sup> The Gentile corporate and financial elite are subjected to quiet studies and gentle entreaties to open their doors while the blacks and other minority groups sniping at the heels of the bourgeois Jewish community are subjected to massive and bitter public relations and legal salvos. In a recent study of anti-Semitism done by two eminent and long-time leaders of the Anti-Defamation League, one of the most effective Jewish defense agencies in the country, the authors barely mention corporate anti-Semitism. Instead, the dominant focus is placed almost totally on weak political groups, such as blacks, the radical Left, and the extremist right with some nod also given to the Arabs.<sup>24</sup>

The problem, however, is more significant than a poor choice of targets and the differential level and intensity of campaigns. When banks, corporations, law firms, public utilities, and insurance companies are targeted by Jewish defense agencies, the nature of their attacks is woefully lacking. The entire emphasis is usually placed upon employment practices and scarcely any attention is paid to the business and economic policies of these shapers of the American economy.

It will do the American Jewish community and the non-Jewish poor, working and middle classes little good if Jewish hands at the

helm of the nation's economy lead in the same disastrous directions as elite Gentile hands. The admission of a small number of bourgeois Jews into the nation's economic elite will not stem the downslide in the more Jewish areas of the economy. It may have been prestigious for American Jewry to have Arthur Burns serve as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board but the conservative fiscal policies pursued by him have not helped Jewish economic interests. Jews, like other people, cannot eat prestige. The entrance of a Jewish bourgeoisie into the ruling economic class will not change the basic policies that have led to high rates of unemployment, inflation, and small-business failures. A Judeo-Christian corporate elite, should one come into existence, will be no more capable than a WASP elite in dealing with the basic contradictions and internal weaknesses of capitalism.

The drive for acceptance into the Gentile corporation suites and clubs is shortsighted in another manner as well. It is based on the premise that the exclusion of Jews stems from personal or individual predilections. If these could be overcome, according to this perspective, then Jews could demonstrate how well they perform as executives and senior partners and thus lower the barriers for other Jews to enter the corporate sanctuaries. But the barring of Jews is not due to individual or personal tastes or prejudices. It is due to economic and institutional considerations. Corporate anti-Semitism protects the vested interests of the strata that occupy the seat of economic power in American society. There is no rational reason why they would have any self-interest in sharing their lucrative and powerful positions with any group of outsiders, except perhaps for a token few, no matter how talented they are. Ethnic and religious distinctions between the corporate elite and potential challengers provide the former with a convenient and popular rationale for protecting the socioeconomic status quo.

The shortsighted and narrow politicoeconomic policies of the American Jewish leadership stem from their bourgeois socioeconomic status and political socialization. It is these leaders' identification of their community's interest with that of the status quo and capitalism that makes them so ineffective in stemming the economic and political decline of American Jewry that is currently under way. This identification and their socialization experiences in America also blind them to the real nature and function of corporate anti-Semitism.

## THE REVIVAL OF SOCIALISM

This ongoing deterioration of the economic and political position of the American Jewish community in the context of a society rent by ethnic and class divisions will eventually cause socialism to rise once again as a force in the Jewish community. As in czarist Russia, the Jews' harsh confrontation with the realities of capitalism linked with anti-Semitism will again turn them toward socialism.

There are differences, to be sure, between nineteenth and early twentieth century czarist Russia and contemporary America as there are between the position of the Jewish communities within each. But these differences as they apply to the relationship between Jews and socialism do not overshadow the similarities. In czarist Russia and in contemporary and future America, capitalism confronted, confronts, and will confront Jews in vulnerable economic positions outside the core of the economy. In Russia, the government and the businessmen combined to block the access of Jews to legitimate channels of upward mobility. In America, the powerful corporate and financial elite, as their power increases, will be more effective in denying Jews entry into a declining number of meaningful routes of upward mobility. In Russia, developing capitalism forced Jews from their middle-class or middle-strata positions of artisans and small shopkeepers downward into the ranks of the proletariat or nearly impoverished petty bourgeoisie. In America, maturing monopoly capitalism will force Jews from their small- and medium-size businesses while at the same time creating the conditions for a "squeezing" of the Jewish professional strata. The end results will be, as in Russia, downward mobility, frustrated aspirations, and a turn to socialism.

The contours and social physiognomy of the American Jewish community will come to resemble in some that of the Russian Jewish community in late nineteenth and early twentieth century czarist Russia. Jews in their downward drift will find themselves concentrated in positions as objectively or relatively low-paid wage workers and petty merchants scratching out a living. In their ranks there will be large numbers of frustrated intellectuals and professionals. Thus, once again Jews will be amassed in large numbers, sharing the same or similar occupational plight and economic misfortune, and containing among themselves many intellectuals ready to lead and articulate the demands and aspirations of the masses. These facts

plus their common ethnic origins and experiences will facilitate intraclass communication, the development of class solidarity, as well as hostility toward their common exploiters and oppressors. Finally, this will culminate, I contend, in a revivification of socialism among Jews.

Such a development will not be rapid or smooth. Some Jews will try to seek out alliances with their oppressors. But the institutional and objective anti-Semitism present among the corporate elite and its satellites will frustrate such endeavors. If they barred Jews from their doors when Jews were relatively prosperous and politically influential, why would the corporate magnates be willing to change their policy when Jews were in so weak a position? After much floundering and resisting, increasing numbers of Jews will come to see that their interests as Jews, as downwardly mobile persons, as members of an exploited working class, and as an impoverished, or nearly impoverished, strata of petty traders and merchants are antithetical to the powerful American bourgeoisie. The American Jews of the future will also be confronted by a situation that their kinsmen in czarist Russia did not have to face—the absence of a sanctuary. The world capitalist economy of the future will ensure that American Jews have no supportive and economically expansive capitalist enclave—including Israel—in which to seek refuge.

Thus, at some time in the not too distant future, the elements necessary to produce a new and reinvigorated Jewish commitment to socialism will fall into place. A relative or objective decline in socioeconomic circumstances and the narrowing if not closing of channels of mobility in combination with a living radical tradition and cadre will constitute those necessary elements.

The Jewish socialist movement of the future will hopefully not be an isolated phenomenon. Ideally it will be a centerpiece of an ethnically heterogeneous socialist movement capable of converting the United States into a humane, democratic socialist society.

### Notes

1. Allon Gal, *Socialist-Zionism: Theory and Issues in Contemporary Jewish Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Shenkman Publishing Co., 1973), p. 22.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23, 63, 64.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 29; and Will Maslow, *The Structure and Functioning of the American Jewish Community* (New York: American Jewish Congress, 1974), 8.

4. G. William Domhoff, *Fat Cats and Democrats: The Role of the Big Rich in the Party of the Common Man* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 54.
5. Stephen L. Slavin and Mary A. Pradt, "Corporate Anti-Semitism," *Jewish Currents*, 32:2 (February 1978), 29-32.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30 and Irving Howe, *The World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), pp. 611-612.
7. U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1976* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. 507-526; and Willard F. Mueller, "The Measurement of Industrial concentration," in *Superconcentration/Supercorporation*, Ralph L. Andreano, Ed. (Andover, Mass.: Warner Modular Publications, 1973), reprint 324, pp. 1-19.
8. Edward S. Greenberg, *Serving the Few: Corporate Capitalism and the bias of Government Policy* (New York, John Wiley, 1974), pp. 38-39.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
10. W.F. Mueller, "Measurement of Industrial Concentration," pp. 13-19; and John M. Blair, *Economic Concentration; Structure, Behavior, and Public Policy* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), pp. 41-81.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19; and Maurice Zeitlin, "Corporate Ownership and control: The Large Corporation and the Capitalist Class," in *American Society, Inc.*, Maurice Zeitlin, Ed. (Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1977), pp. 246-249, 256-265.
12. See *Statistical Abstract, 1976*, p. 526, for listings of commercial and industrial failures by industry and occupation of debtor.
13. E. Digby Baltzell, *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 321.
14. G. W. Domhoff, *Fat Cats and Democrats*, p. 48.
15. Stephen Birmingham, *Our Crowd: The Great Jewish Families of New York* (New York: Dell Books, 1967).
16. See Jerold S. Auerback, *Unequal Justice: Lawyers and Social Change in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), especially pp. 102-130.
17. Jerome E. Carlin *Lawyers' Ethics: A Survey of the New York City Bar* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1966), pp. 27-40, 125-129.
18. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), p. 146; and Seymour Martin Lipset and E.C. Ladd, Jr., "Jewish Academics In the United States: Their Achievements, Culture and Politics," *American Jewish Yearbook, 1971*, 72 (New York and Philadelphia: American Jewish Committee and Jewish Publication society, 1971), p. 92.
19. "Capital's Flight: The Apparel Industry Moves South," *NACLA's Latin America and Empire Report*, XI: 3 (March 1977), 5-12.
20. *New York Times*, January 9, 1978.
21. *New York Times*, January 11, 1977, Saul Bellow, Norman Podhoretz, and Eugene V. Rostow joined together with such military luminaries as

- Admiral Zumwalt and General Maxwell Taylor to push for increased defense spending to meet the Soviet menace.
22. Michael Reich and David Finkelhor, "Capitalism and the Military Industrial Complex," in *The Capitalist System*, Richard C. Edwards, Michael Reich and Thomas Weisskopf, Eds. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall) 1972) pp. 392-401.
  23. For example, the American Jewish Committee chose not to publicize the fact that the major public utilities between 1963 and 1971 had not changed their exclusionary policies towards Jews. S.I. Slavin and M.A. Pradt, "Corporate Anti-Semitism," p. 12.
  24. Arnold Foster and Benjamin R. Epstein, *The New Anti-Semitism*, (New York; McGraw-Hill, 1974).

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### WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

*Hannah Davis*

David was blinded in the war  
in 1948,  
Israel's war of independence.  
He doesn't walk very well.  
His thin legs shake.

At dinner his wife and children sit around him  
planning his movements for him  
like generals planning battle strategy  
quietly moving chairs aside,  
whispering instructions.  
It's slice of lamb  
and broccoli  
his wife says  
as his hands grope on the plate.  
She cuts him his meat.  
He touches my arm  
thinking its a chair arm.  
It's me, I say.  
His hands drop.

## WASKOWRESTLING

*David Forbes*

**Arthur I. Waskow, *Godwrestling*. New York: Schocken Books, 1978; 199 pp., \$9.95**

Socialism, Nietzsche somewhere remarks, is merely a humanitarian religion devoid of superior justification. This characterization implies that although socialism is considered to be non-religious, it is in fact just another belief system—and an inferior one at that. The view that socialism is a kind of "religion," or at least requires a fundamental axiomatic belief to be acceptable, is commonly held by many religious thinkers. Yet this view is flawed and its adoption often leads to futile attempts at an untenable synthesis, religious socialism. According to religious socialists, most forms of socialism aim to abolish spiritual homage to anything other than the highest qualities of humanity itself. They see socialism, especially in its Marxist form, as a method for social change devoid of any transcendent imperative, and for this reason feel it must invariably lapse into narcissism and failure. Consequently, they feel that socialism requires an ultimate symbol of goodness and a guarantor of personal salvation. Thus, in this 'godless' century, some religious believers sympathetic to socialism have felt it necessary to save socialism's soul, or at least to provide it with one.

There are, of course, various forms of religious socialism. One such form seeks to develop socialist proposals from religious texts, and subordinates the Marxist dialectic to a religious worldview. This

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