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THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF BUENOS AIRES*

BY IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ

With a population of approximately a quarter of a million, Greater Buenos Aires and its adjacent provinces unquestionably has the largest concentration of Jewish people in the Western Hemisphere outside of the United States. Further, in absorbing over one half of all twentieth-century Jewish immigration to Latin America, Argentina ranks second only to the United States as a haven for the Diaspora Jew.¹ Given this impressive fact, it comes as something of a surprise to the investigator that serious sociological and demographic analysis of the Jews of Buenos Aires has not yet been undertaken.²

The reasons for this are many and variegated. We might here mention the following. First, the generally late development of empirical sociology in Latin America and the particular blight of social science research in Argentina during the rule of Juan D. Peron (1945-1953)—years which coincide with a widespread growth of interest in community life and the study of complex organization.³ Second, the extremely powerful nationalistic ideologies which have tended to emphasize the homogeneity of Argentina

* This project is essentially the result of personal contact with the Jewish community of Buenos Aires, many members of which I was able to know as a result of three different stays in Argentina as visiting professor at the Instituto de Sociología, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Buenos Aires. For the assistance rendered to me by the Instituto, I acknowledge my gratitude.

¹ Statistical Office of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social affairs, *Demographic Yearbook/Annuaire Demographique. Special Topic: Ethnic and Economic Characteristics* (New York 1956) pp. 272-274. The most recent estimate is that the Argentine-Jewish population stands at 420,000 people. See Kostzer, Moisés, "Problemas propios de la Estadística Relativa a los judíos en la Argentina," *Primera Conferencia de Investigadores y Estudiosos Judeo-Argentinos en el Campo de las Ciencias Sociales y la Historia* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalém-Comunidad Israelita de Buenos Aires 1961). Cf. also Rosenswawe, Ira, "The Jewish Population of Argentina," *JEWISH SOCIAL STUDIES*, xxii (October 1960), no. 4, pp. 195-214.

² The first concerted effort to develop a sociological account of the Jews in Argentina took place in October 1961. Called the *Primera Conferencia de Investigadores y Estudiosos Judeo-Argentinos en el Campo de las Ciencias Sociales y la Historia*, the conference interestingly was jointly sponsored by the Majon Leiahadut and the Comunidad de Buenos Aires (*Kehillah*). Cf. *Boletín de la Asociación Amigos de la Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalém en la Argentina*, no. 21 (May 1960), p. 15.

³ Cf. Bustamante, Norberto Rodriguez, "Un Esquema Sociológico de la Argentina," in *La Revista de la Universidad de Buenos Aires*, i (1958), no. 3, pp. 402-410; also Germani, Gino, "The Development and Present State of Sociology in Latin America," *Transactions of the Fourth World Congress of Sociology* (1960), pp. 117-138.

in terms of Roman Catholicism as a social institution.⁴ Third, the tendency of Jewish community leaders in Buenos Aires to accept the ground rules set forth by competing nationalist and statist ideologies, and thus to carry on their activities outside the glare of any sort of publicity which might adversely effect Jewish occupational or cultural advances.⁵ Fourth, the widespread "assimilationist" Jewish intelligentsia, which has traditionally identified with *positivismo* as against *espiritualismo*; taking the position that being Jewish, like gentile, is an accident of birth, an ethico-religious credo having no real utility in the post-feudal world, where a new enlightenment and new humanism ought to prevail (if it does not exist in fact).⁶

The sociological study of the Jewish community of Buenos Aires is, therefore, a virgin field. Within the confines of this study, I shall attempt a general framework for the study of the Jewish community by taking inventory of relevant information now available on immigration, organization, and occupation. Further elaboration and refinement of our subject is another undertaking, one which can be conducted only in connection with a wider investigation—the function of ethnicity in an economically underdeveloped country having a politically overdeveloped sense of national destiny.

A canvassing of opinion from leading "decision makers" in the Jewish community of Buenos Aires yielded little consensus. Five issues in particular seemed to find informants equally distributed on both sides of the issue:

- (1) How well organized is the Jewish community?
- (2) What role does antisemitism play in Jewish-Gentile relations?
- (3) Does the Jewish community of Buenos Aires exhibit more rapid, less rapid, or the same sort of social mobility as the populace in general?

⁴ Despite the century-old battle between *espiritualismo* and *positivismo* in Argentina, the politics of nationalism, from the Argentine Constitution of 1853 which provided for the support of the Catholic Church by the government, to the formation of a Christian Democratic Party a century later, has never abandoned the theme of Argentina as a nation living under a state of Christian grace. A good index of this is contained in the various census reports which give the Catholic population of Argentina as 99.1% in 1895, and 93.6% in 1947. In essence, anyone not explicitly declaring in favor of another religious option is listed as Catholic. See Presidencia de la Nación, Ministerio de Asuntos Técnicos, *IV Censo General de la Nación: Censo de Población* (Buenos Aires: Dirección Nacional del Servicio Estadístico 1951). For contrasting attitudes on the role of Catholicism in Argentine national life, see Romero, Jose Luis, *Las Ideas Políticas en Argentina* (Mexico-Buenos Aires, Fondo del Cultura Economica, 1956); and Johnson, John J., *Political Change in Latin America* (Stanford, Cal., 1958). This does not imply that Catholic sentiment is uniformly hostile to the Jew. It does imply that the identification of nationalism with Catholicism often carries with it criticism of other religions. See the collection of statements from Church officials, *La Iglesia Católica se define* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Judío Argentino de Cultura e Información 1961).

⁵ It should be kept in mind that not until 1860 were such elementary civil liberties as marriage services extended to "those who hope for the arrival of the Messiah," i.e., those who do not subscribe to Christianity. Cf. Lewin, Boleslao, *Los Judíos bajo la Inquisición en Hispanoamerica* (Buenos Aires 1960), pp. 99-100.

⁶ A forceful presentation of this assimilationist trend can be found in Etkin, Carlos Estaban, *Abraham Leon y el pueblo judío* (Buenos Aires, Editorial Indoamerica, 1954), esp. pp. 71-86. Despite its basis in a *vulgar marxismus*, there is little doubt that the views taken by Etkin represent a sizable sector of Jewish opinion.

- (4) When is the political orientation of the Jewish community different or the same as that of the population in general?
- (e) Does the occupational-economic ranking of Jews show approximately the same distribution as the rest of the city's population?

To provide useful answers to these questions requires more than public opinion surveys, since involved are matters of fact rather than statements of sentiment. It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that factual data are in short supply. Hence, the hypotheses and conclusions which follow must be considered as tentative, to be modified in the light of changing circumstances and new evidence.

Immigration: Adaptation without Integration

The first stage in our analysis is to set forth Jewish immigration patterns to Argentina. Clearly, Jewish economic, political and even ideological forms have resulted from the interaction of the group identities which the Jews brought to the "new world" (what we shall call "ethnicity") with the social, political and psychological complex they found in Argentina (what we shall call "nationality").

The sociological significance of immigration patterns for questions of ethnicity is clear from the connection, either real or alleged, between immigration and economy ("depressions are caused by cheap immigrant labor"; "immigrants prevent the native population from advancing"), between immigration and psychology ("immigrants lower the general cultural level of the old populace"; "immigrants reveal high levels of mental illness and insanity"), and between immigration and sociality ("immigrants bring about a lowering of social morals"; "they create the seeds of higher rates of crime and alcoholism"). These false canards were evident in Maciel's concern about the "Italianization" of Argentina during the twenties,⁷ and were used a decade later by Julio Alsogaray to trace the growth of prostitution and white slavery in Buenos Aires to the Jews.⁸ While such allegations have in general been laid aside by serious scholars, the popular consciousness clearly lags behind the scientific consciousness.⁹ Therefore, the position of the Jewish immigrant in Argentina is heavily laden with conflicting psychological drives and ideological loyalties. Broadly speaking, the Jews insist upon ethnic singularity, while Argentines incline toward national unity. An exploration of these contrasting loyalties sheds a good deal of light, not solely on problems

⁷ Maciel, Carlos Nestor, *La italianización de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires 1924).

⁸ Alsogaray, Julio L., *Trilogía de la Trata de Blancas: Rufianes, Policía, Municipalidad* (Buenos Aires 1933).

⁹ See in this connection Handlin, Oscar, *Race and Nationality in American Life* (Garden City, N.Y., 1957), and "Ethnic Groups in American Life" (ed. by Oscar Handlin), *Daedalus*, xc (1961), no. 2. Also *American Jews: Their Story* (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1958).

of immigration, but also on basic organizational traits of the Argentine Jewish community.

Our first specific task is to survey the demographic and immigration features of the Argentine Jew. The most striking trait of Table I is the twentieth-century character of Jewish migration to Argentina. Also noteworthy is the relative stability of Jewish population increase from 1905 until 1950, although the qualitative composition of this rise shifts radically from immigration to internal population increases due to a climbing birthrate.

TABLE I
*Jewish Population in the Argentine Republic**

Years	Established Population	Immigration	Births in excess of deaths	Total Increase	Composite Total
1890-94	2,595	7,159	365	7,524	10,119
1895-99	10,119	4,536	941	5,477	15,596
1900-05	15,596	8,370	1,437	9,807	25,403
1905-09 ^a	25,403	40,006	3,267	43,273	68,676
1910-14	68,676	41,027	6,573	47,600	116,276
1915-19 ^b	116,276	1,607	9,044	10,651	126,927
1920-24 ^c	126,927	33,963	10,513	44,476	171,043
1925-29 ^c	171,403	32,836	14,284	47,120	218,523
1930-34	218,523	17,336	17,612	34,948	253,471
1935-39 ^d	253,471	26,159	25,357	51,516	304,987
1940-44	304,987	8,210	27,212	35,422	340,409
1945-49	340,409	7,505	30,407	37,912	378,321
1950-60 ^e	378,321	41,679	420,000

* Data drawn from information contained in Simon Weill, *Población Israelita en la Republica Argentina* (Buenos Aires 1936); and Jacob Shatzky, *Comunidades Judias en Latinoamerica* (Buenos Aires 1952).

a. Immigration of Russian Jews in the wake of pogroms following the 1905 revolution.

b. Immigration decline due to World War I.

c. Second wave of Polish and Slavic immigration.

d. German-Jewish migration following the rise of nazism

e. Estimate of current population in Moises Kostzer, "Problemas propios de la estadística relativa a los Judíos en la Argentina," *loc. cit.* p. 2.

The data show not only the extent of Jewish immigration patterns but also the twentieth-century burst in Jewish immigration to Argentina and the continued worsening of the economic and political situation in the "old country." Startlingly new developments in Argentine life have not had an appreciable effect on conditioning Jewish immigration either in upward or downward directions. The most singular aspect of Table I is that Jewish population expansion is increasingly explainable by the Jewish situation in Argentina, and decreasingly by new immigration waves.

As a second and third generation of Argentine Jews emerges, problems tend to shift. A movement takes place within the Jewish community from occupational and linguistic issues to mobility and educational problems. The

new generation of Argentine Jews is essentially adapted to the new home country—and is indistinguishable by mode of dress, habit or speech.¹⁰ The question thus becomes the nature of Jewish identity, while the older (and perhaps more basic) theme of Jewish survival tends to become a minor motif. This generational shift from considerations of survival to those of identity has become particularly pronounced with the liquidation of the Nazi Leviathan in Germany. Although the spectre of a Nazi resurgence has been revived in the postwar world by outbursts of antisemitism in parts of Europe and the Near East, and perhaps equally by the exposure of the monumental scale of the fascist effort to annihilate European Jewry, the elimination of mass genocide as a current factor has had definite social consequences. The ideological shift from survival (*who* is a Jew) to identity (*what* is a Jew) can hardly be said to be complete. Nonetheless, the essays which appear in Argentine Jewish publications—from *Commentario* to *Davar*—do indicate that a generational shift has been affected.

The concentration of the Jew in the Buenos Aires area is somewhat obscured by the geographical distribution of provinces in Argentina. The census reports of 1934/35 (which closely approximate the 1935 figures given in Table I) shows that out of 253,242 Jews living in Argentina at the time, 131,000 (or slightly more than half) live in the city of Buenos Aires proper. But to this total must be added the Jewish population of the Litoral region in general—including the three main provinces; Buenos Aires (29,408); Santa Fe (29,946); and Entre Ríos (28,231).¹¹ The additional 87,585 living in these provinces, which are geographically, economically and politically connected to Buenos Aires proper, must be added to the totals. Thus nearly 80 per cent of the Jewish population are concentrated in the most urbanized portion of the country. The Jewish question in Argentina must therefore be discussed in the context of general urbanization and the tendency of immigrants generally to congregate in the cities.¹² Efforts at the turn of the century by wealthy Jewish philanthropists to relocate the Jews in Argentine farmlands and reconstitute the myth of the Jew as a man of the soil as a *prima facie* retort to antisemitic charges of the “commercial Jew,” essentially have failed. Jewish colonists came upon a combination of poor soil, strenuous

¹⁰ The evidence of the Buenos Aires Jewish community does not substantiate Wirth's position that “the Jews owe their survival . . . to their social isolation.” Adaptation does not imply assimilation, nor does isolation guarantee survival. Cf. Wirth, Louis, *The Ghetto* (Chicago 1928), p. 288.

¹¹ Dirección General de Estadística de la Nación, *Estadística de la Municipalidad de la Capital—IV C.G.C.B.A.* (Buenos Aires 1936). Information summarized in Weill, p. 30 See Table II.

¹² It is estimated that approximately 83% of foreign born residents of Argentina are to be found in Greater Buenos Aires and the Litoral region. Cf. Germani, Gino, *Estructura Social de la Argentina: Analisis estadístico* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Raigal 1955), p. 63. Thus Jewish figures are in no way disproportionate to general tendencies.

competition, and the general impulse of the Argentine to move from the interior to the capital city.¹³

TABLE II
*Population by Provinces in Argentina as of 1935**

Province	Total Population	Jewish Population Totals			Percentage of Jews
		Ashkenazim	Sephardim	Total Combined	
Capital Federal (Buenos Aires)	2,228,440	107,000	24,000	131,000	5.87
Province of:					
Buenos Aires	3,282,869	25,151	4,257	29,408	0.89
Santa Fe	1,439,245	25,557	4,389	29,946	2.09
Entre Rios	669,974	26,940	1,291	28,231	4.21
Cordoba	1,168,649	6,929	2,364	9,293	0.79
Mendoza	468,117	3,415	627	4,042	0.86
Tucuman	493,903	2,810	1,034	3,844	0.78
San Luis	179,778	185	227	412	0.22
La Rioja	104,147	115	132	247	0.23
San Juan	193,568	1,171	418	1,589	0.82
Catamarca	138,035	440	55	495	0.36
Sgo. del Estero	433,174	1,410	1,133	2,543	0.59
Corrientes	473,742	1,677	682	2,359	0.49
Jujuy	103,901	203	176	379	0.36
Salta	192,105	605	693	1,298	0.67
Regions of:					
Chaco	205,000	1,820	470	2,290	1.11
La Pampa	199,162	2,584	359	2,943	1.42
Misiones	150,683	366	277	643	0.42
Neuquen	42,241	219	38	257	0.61
Rio Negro	115,000	576	253	829	0.72
Santa Cruz	23,352	33	18	51	0.22
Formosa	30,000	242	143	385	1.28
Chubut	55,644	561	170	731	1.31
De Los Andes	6,000	5	22	27	0.45
Tierra del Fuego	3,296				0.00
TOTALS	12,400,025	210,014	43,228	253,242	2.04

* A note on the totals is in order. The size of the Jewish population has been subject to wide speculation. The census figures of 1934-35 and that of 1947 report roughly the same number of Jews living in Argentina. Despite the large-scale immigration of German Jews to Argentina, and the normal population increase in Argentina (from 12,400,000 in 1935 to 20,000,000 in 1960), the later census reports roughly 4000 Jews less in Argentina as compared to the earlier figures. It is clear that given a normal curve with the rest of the population, the number of Jews in Argentina should range from between 400,000 to 4,000 Jews less in Argentina as compared to the earlier figures. It is clear that given a normal curve pelled a large segment of the Jewish populace to answer "without religion" on the 1947 census. Another factor, of course, is the falling away from Judaism of a sizable Jewish intelligentsia of Argentina. It is not without interest to speculate on the number of those with Jewish parentage answering "without religion" (239,949); particularly in the light of the fact that by combining the Jewish population totals (249,330) with the "non-religionists," the total (487,279) is only slightly higher than the normal expectancy of Jewish population in Argentina—given the population explosion between the years 1935 and 1947. The most recent estimate places the Jewish population at around 500,000; cf. Silvert, K.H., "The Annual Political Cycle in Argentina," *American Universities Field Staff Reports Service* (East Coast South America Series), viii, (1961), no. 6.

¹³ On the relative failure of Jewish agricultural colonization of the Argentine *Pampas* regions see Elbogen, Ismar, *A Century of Jewish Life* (Philadelphia 1953), p. 342; on the failure of agricultural colonization to "absolve" the Jew of antisemitic outburst see Reich, Nathan, "The Economic Structure of Modern Jewry" in *The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion* (New York 1949) ii, pp. 1261-1262. See also "Colonización por la 'Jewish Colonization Association' de Familias Originarias de Alemania," *Diez Años de obra constructiva en America del Sud: 1933-1943* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Filantrópica Israelita, 1943), pp. 113-117.

It is clear from Table II and the previous explanation of the provincial structure that the Argentine Jew is primarily rooted in Greater Buenos Aires.¹⁴ He is, indeed, an "economic man" rooted in *Gesellschaft* relations. But what too frequently has been overlooked by those working in the Sombart tradition is that the Jew is also a "community man," having powerful social roots in *Gemeinschaft* relations. This functional duality makes the Jew of Buenos Aires an adaptive rather than an integrative person. We will examine in more detail this associational complex in the next section.

Undoubtedly the commercial and cultural greatness of Buenos Aires was profoundly affected by Jewish immigration. The Jew added a special dimension to the "enlightenment" strain in the city's educational and cultural life. Along with this, he had his greatest opportunity for upward social mobility in the city's compelling commercial and industrial activities. He thus accentuated economic and cultural forces already operative in the city, contributing much needed skilled labor and management techniques to an urbanization process. The philanthropic effort to solve the "Jewish question" by turning back to the land was simply misanthropic. The European Jewish bourgeois failed to take into account traditional Jewish social aspirations: educational achievement, economic security, occupational mobility and cosmopolitan orientation—aspirations which can far more readily be realized in an urban and suburban environment than in a rural life style.¹⁵

The structure of Jewish voluntary associations follows closely the characteristic types of migration waves. For some idea of the natural history of Jewish life in Argentina, we may divide immigration patterns of the Ashkenazi Jews into five stages, involving three distinct national or regional types of European Jews.¹⁶ The first type was the western European Jew, Alsatian and French. Migrating between 1860-1885, after the liberalization of the Argentine constitution, they came in search of religious freedom and found it. Occupationally this first Jewish wave was linked to professional and small banking enterprises. The second (1889-1905), third (1905-1921) and fourth (1921-1930) waves emigrated from eastern Europe to form the

¹⁴ This is not to imply that study of the Jews outside the Buenos Aires area is without importance. Indeed, the pioneering efforts of two Israeli social scientists, Tejjel Harari and Itzjak Lewin, deserve far more attention than they have thus far received. See their "Resultado de la Encuesta Sobre Profesiones, Idiomas y Crecimiento" (Cordoba, Mendoza, San Juan provinces) in *Neuva Sion*, February-July (1950).

¹⁵ The differential in educational standards and illiteracy rates between the Buenos Aires region and the rest of Argentina is in itself a sufficient magnet for Jews reared to gain occupational mobility through professional education. Cf. Germani, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-234.

¹⁶ *Ashkenazim* are that portion of Diaspora Jewry formerly residing in Germany, western Poland (which had become part of Prussia), eastern Poland, Ukraine, and other areas of the Slavic countries and the Austro-Hungarian empire. A basic bond of the *Ashkenazim* was (and in certain areas remains) the Yiddish language. This ethnic-linguistic formation is usually contrasted to the *Sephardim*, that portion of Diaspora Jewry formerly residing in Spain, Portugal, and certain centers in northern Africa and the Middle East. The basic language of the *Sephardim*, the former "aristocracy of Jewry," was Spanish.

largest bulk of Jews in Argentina. The reasons for their coming are profoundly linked to the alternating currents of revolution and counter-revolution that shook eastern Europe during this period. The brutal oppression at the hands of Polish and Ukrainian landlords, exclusion from educational opportunities as a result of Tsar Nicholas' scientific quota system; political impotence and cultural starvation as a result of "pale settlements" in Rumania, Poland, Hungary and Russia, which limited the number of Jews living in metropolitan areas, these are the well-known but nonetheless distressing reasons for the outward migration.

The Jew of eastern Europe came without funds, but with a wealth of domestic, handicraft, factory and commercial skills—all of which were more readily absorbed in Latin America than in Europe. It was the search for economic opportunity and, concomitantly, political freedoms, rather than any particularly deep religious sentiment that accounted for the bulk of these middle waves of immigration. The last type of migrant to Argentina was the German Jew—and the reasons for his change of homeland require no elaboration. It might, nonetheless, be noted that the German Jew came with his "high culture" intact.¹⁷ Generally, this type of immigrant had some adequate means of financial subsistence, or had those professional and business qualifications that soon restored his financial position to its *status-quo ante*. Further, the German Jew had a conservative rather than radical orientation politically—and tended to identify with authority and order rather than "meddle in affairs of state."¹⁸

Of these five distinct migratory waves, only the first failed to survive with its "Jewishness" intact. The reasons for this failure offers valuable clues as to the nature of Jewish ethnicity. Leaving aside the imbalance of males to females, something characteristic of all population migrations, the western European Jews who came to Argentina arrived with their *Gesellschaft* orientation intact. Other than setting up a house of religious worship, they tended to improve their occupational roles by consolidating their social prestige within the larger gentile society. The process of absorption was enhanced by the relatively high life-chances of early Jewish settlers, their rapid linguistic adaptation from one Romance language to another, and by a highly "Protestantized" self-vision of fulfilling providential will through commercial and business enterprise. In brief, and to paraphrase Dubnow, this kind of Jew had a religious conscience without having also a national conscience. As such,

¹⁷ A disconcerting illustration of German-Jewish alienation from the larger society is revealed by the near-total absence of news or information on the Jewish condition in Argentina or Latin America. In the weekly, *Jüdische Wochenschau*, the only mention found of Argentina is a column on musical events in Buenos Aires—and this because the performers are generally European.

¹⁸ For this typology of Jewish immigration to Argentina I am very grateful to Prof. Boleslao Lewin of the University of Buenos Aires, who placed his knowledge as well as his personal library at my disposal. See his *El Judío en la Epoca Colonial* (Buenos Aires 1939) for information on the earliest immigration patterns of Jews to Argentina.

when the Alsatian-French Jew lost his religious beliefs in the general fervor of the enlightenment-positivist revolt against traditionalism, he lost even the traces of Judaism.¹⁹

The east-European Ashkenazic Jew represented an altogether different specimen. First, this Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Jew was born and reared in ghetto life and tended to see himself as part of a solid phalanx against the outside (hostile) world. Second, linguistically, he was far removed from the Romance language tradition—with Yiddish as his first language and the particular national languages of his mother country, Russian, Polish or Hungarian, as his second language. Third, the new immigrant was organized on a *Gemeinschaft* basis in Europe and, therefore, upon arriving in Argentina, thought of the re-establishment of his “total community” patterns—with voluntary associations for every form of social activity from banking to baking. Jewish credit agencies, hospitals, schools, welfare centers and orphanages were established around the *Kehillah* as the central institution.²⁰ Thus, the Jew was identified as such, not simply by his special place of worship, but by a reference-set brought with him from the old world.²¹ Without a powerful counter-active culture or ideology to inhibit ethnic centralization (such as the “melting-pot” ideology in the United States), Jewish national ideals and ideas flourished.²² The importance of the *Kehillah* as an organizational counterpart of the “community of fate” ideology can hardly be overstated. Precisely the totality of Jewishness rather than any single aspect united the Jewish immigrant to Argentine society and served to focus antisemitic feelings against this special cultural and social sub-structure. Typically enough, hostility to Jewish feelings of separateness only served to reinforce the intimacy of Jewish social bonds.

We might here note that Slavic, Polish and Russian immigrants came with strongly felt separatist ideological moorings. The Jewish sub-structure tended to conflict with the dominant culture. While the ideologies of the French enlightenment and continental liberalism were outside the normal reference set of the east-European Jew, he could accommodate to them. Far more difficult was his adjustment to the military-economic coalition or political *caudillaje*. Conversely, such powerful ideological factors in Jewish life as Zionism, agrarian socialism and trade unionism etc., while revealing super-

¹⁹ Cf. Dubnow, Simon, “The Doctrine of Jewish Nationalism” and “The Sociological View of Jewish History” in Pinson, Koppel S., ed., *Nationalism and History* (New York 1961). Dubnow’s views have been particularly well received by the Jewish *intelligentsia* of Argentina.

²⁰ The Hebrew word *Kehillah* can best be defined as a total Jewish institution, integrating and organizing all civic, cultural and religious aspects of Jewish life. See *Comunidad Israelita de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires 1960).

²¹ Cf. Resnick, Rosa Perla, “Problemas Relativos al Bienestar Social de la Comunidad Judía de la Argentina,” *Primera Conferencia de Investigadores y Estudiosos Judeo-Argentinos*, *loc. cit.*, 3-11

²² Cf. Roback, Abraham A. *The Story of Yiddish Literature* (New York 1949), and Mark, Yudel, “Yiddish Literature,” Finkelstein, ed., *op. cit.*, 1949), ii, pp. 859-894.

ficial points of contact with the humanistic tradition in Argentine culture were too sectarian and too ethnocentric to be either serviceable or welcome to Argentine versions of the *Führerprinzip*. Traditionalist and nationalist alike saw in Judaism an uncomfortable kind of radicalism that would only deepen the socio-cultural schisms extant in the country.

In this connection, we may add that even the Jewish view of socialism revealed ethnic strivings, as is made plain in the Jewish *Bund* movement of tsarist times, and now in the *Hashomer Hatzair* groupings. This relative disinterest in the nationalistic strivings of either the Argentine Right or the Left, and the contrary identification of socialism with specifically Jewish goals, remains a dividing line between Jewish "interests" and Argentine "national" interests in general. Socialism, like Zionism, was thought of by the Jewish community as valuable insofar as it was a guarantor—and not the gravedigger—of Jewish interests. In this fashion the east-European Jewish immigrant developed over a period of years an ideological superstructure which operated as a functional reinforcement of the *Gemeinschaft* structure against the first furies of Argentine industrialism, nationalism and urbanism. Political detachment was thus a form of resistance—a strategy of survival through disengagement.

A paramount difference must be noted between immigration to an underdeveloped country and one to a highly advanced industrial complex—a distinction not in the type of Jew (since he was essentially uniform in ethnic stock and cultural background—Ashkenazim, east-European, Slavic, ghettoized, etc.) but in the society to which he came. The Jews entering an advanced industrial society are self-conscious and very concerned over any undue delays in blending into the new nation. Their peer group immediately preceding them in time to the new country tends to reinforce this need for belongingness as a means of getting along. The urge to be "accepted" is pronounced.²³ This observation, made in reference to immigration to France, applies with equal if not greater force to the United States where the market-orientation attitude contributes greatly in defining social mobility. For the east-European Jew in the United States "this might mean that he could adjust his 'artificial self' to the outside world by leaving his internal 'idiosyncrasy'—a part of his heritage, his sympathies and his group attachments—for his 'home consumption.'"²⁴

Precisely the absence of such affective relations and drives characterizes Jewish immigration to Argentina. For the geographic relocation of a rela-

²³ Mauco, Georges, "The Assimilation of Foreigners in France," *Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants* (Supplements to *Population Studies* March 1950), p. 15.

²⁴ Riesman, David, as cited by Weinryb, Bernard D., "Jewish Immigration and Accommodation to America," in Sklare, Marshall, ed., *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group*, (Glencoe, Ill. 1958), p. 21.

tively high state of "cultural achievement"—herein signifying everything from hygienic habits to educational perspectives—into a culture which at the least cannot claim to be either higher in the above senses of culture, or able to offset this cultural differential in material production, creates the condition for a clash which is mutually difficult, painful and, perhaps most important, tends to disallow the establishment of a consensual apparatus. In short, ethnicity does not simply become self-liquidating in the face of a new cultural milieu—unless or until the national culture holds out very substantial advantages that cannot be guaranteed in any other form. Nor is this a specifically Jewish "neurosis," since a similar pattern can be observed for English, French and German communities living in Buenos Aires over a span of several generations.

We should pause for some further accounting of this non-political predilection of Jewish transactions with the larger nation-state. The middle-class character of the Argentine Jews, places them (along with members of the middle sector in general) in an anomalous position; namely that of men of relative economic security who at the same time have no significant voice at the political level. With the possible exception of Hipolito Irigoyen's regime (1916-1930), twentieth-century Argentina has been ruled by the conservative landed oligarchy, by an alliance of this oligarchy with the armed forces, by the military sector alone, by the military sector in conjunction with labor federations, and now obliquely by the military wearing a constitutional mask and civilian clothing. In so far as the decisive political mainsprings have been military blocs, large-scale landowners, labor syndicates and what there is of large-scale industry, the Jews have not been able to exercise an influence *qua Jews*.²⁵ Such a phenomenon as exists in the United States of ethnic *en bloc* voting plays little part in Argentina where power is neither a consequence nor a derivative of this middle class tradition of *vox populi*.²⁶

The middle-class concern for education, health, welfare, insurance and loan facilities displayed by Jewish voluntary associations is nonetheless indicative of high social (if not political) involvement in Argentine currents. While no exact statistics now exist for the Jews of Buenos Aires, we can take the figures in Table III as indicative.

²⁵ For a general discussion of this problem see Gino, Germany and Silvert, Kalman, *Politics, Social Structure and Military Intervention in Latin America* (mimeographed and distributed privately by the Instituto de Sociología, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1961); and Horowitz, Irving L., "Modern Argentina: The Politics of Power," *The Political Quarterly*, xxx (October-December 1959), no. 4, pp. 400-410.

²⁶ An example of how severely circumscribed the upper limits of Jewish social mobility are in Argentina is shown by an analysis of the nearly one hundred members of the Argentine-Israeli Chamber of Commerce. For the most part, the leading positions held by Jews are in import-export trade, subsidiary distributions for foreign commodities and small-scale chemical and industrial production. Only two members of this group have any banking or stock-exchange operations and one of these is a manager of a "Jewish Bank." Cf. *Revista de la Camara de Comercio Argentino-Israeli*, v. ii (April-May 1961), no. 55.

TABLE III

*Occupational Distribution of the Jewish and Total Population of All Origins in Argentina (in per cent)**

	Total Population	Jewish Population		
	1947	1942	1950	1954
Primary Activities	26.4	13.0	21.0‡	10.7
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, etc.				
Secondary Activities	28.6	19.5	10.0	22.1
Construction, power sources, printing, metal, chemical, textile trades, etc.				
Tertiary Activities	41.8	67.5	67.0	67.2
Business, banking, securities, state bureaucracy, service activities, teaching, etc.				
Indeterminate	3.2		2.0	
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Information compiled from the following sources: Germani, Gino, *Estructura Social de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Raigal 1955); *ORT Economic Review*, iii (New York: April, 1942) no. 2; Shatsky, Jacob, *Comunidades Judías en Latinoamérica* (Buenos Aires 1952); and Kostzer, Moises "Problemas propios de la Estadística Relativa a los Judíos en la Argentina," *Primera Conferencia de Investigadores y Estudiosos Judeo-Argentinos en el campo de las Ciencias Sociales y la Historia* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalem-Comunidad Israelita de Buenos Aires 1961).

‡ The disproportionate percentage of Jews placed in the field of agriculture by Shatsky reflected his penchant for considering all Jews not living in the Litoral region as agriculturally employed. In part, the shift registered between the 1942 and 1950 figures reflects the temporary post-war boom in Jewish colonization activities. Indeed, if the findings of Harari and Lewin (see Table IV) are considered, even the figures of 13.0% and 10.7% are probably too high.

What this table reveals is a preponderance of Jewish occupation in "tertiary activities." Even though Argentina has an extremely high percentage of its population in the middle sectors (in Latin American terms), Jewish concentration, like the foreign-born population as a whole, is considerably larger than the norm. If we also take account of the 86 "banks" and 37 "loan offices" ministering primarily to Jewish needs, it is clear that a high premium on economic security is connected to a high concentration of Jewish membership in the middle classes. Since these economic associations are no less "voluntary" in character than hospitals and schools, it is correct to conclude that Jewish voluntary associations are strongly linked to middle-class social attitudes and ambitions.

More specific information, verifying the middle-sector base of Jewish life in Argentina is forthcoming from the 1950 report of Harari and Lewin.

TABLE IV
Economic Structure of Jewish Communities in Argentina

City	Unclassified	Self-Employed Artisans	Industrial Workers	Small Business	White-Collar Employees	Professionals	Rentiers	Agricultural Colonizers	Totals
City									
Santa Fe	41	43	17	208	25	44	9	11	398
Cordoba	120	191	10	215	2	242	37	16	833
Lanus	11	18	15	125	65	15	3	...	252
Mendoza	9	27	2	93	16	12	1	...	160
San Juan	3	2	9	57	6	15	92
	184	281	53	698	114	328	50	27	1735

Elsewhere they report that as of 1946 over 52% of adult male Jews living in the *smaller urban centers* of Argentina earned their livelihood through commercial and small-business activities. Add to this the self-employed artisans (15%) and professionals such as teachers, physicians and lawyers (11.5%), and you have more than 75% in some sector of the middle class. As is typical of middle-sector activities, a heavy premium is placed on education as the path to higher social mobility. Thus, in contrast to the national norm of 7.7% of Argentine students in university attendance, the Jewish population shows a percentage of 22.5%.²⁷ Therefore, given the general isolation of these sectors of the Argentine population from political power, and the specific trepidations of the Jewish settlers to "assimilate" even to the point of participation in the political mainstream, the relative failure of Jewish voluntary associations to perform a political pressure-group role becomes manifestly clear.

Voluntary Organization: From Survival to Identity

The most striking characteristic of Jewish group life in Buenos Aires is its completeness. The range of services is total, covering the entire spectrum of human necessities in a complex, highly mobile, urban environment. The motto might well be: take nothing for granted in the way of governmental assistance. One is greeted not so much by a Jewish community as by a Jewish "little society." The relative lack of involvement in political or military affairs is well explained by this near total absorption (especially by the first and second generation) in private, voluntary association as the basis of survival. While shifts in the national political scene are keenly observed and scrutinized, little participation in political party life at any level was observed. Rather, what is observable is that *within* the structure of Jewish organizational life one can find the entire political spectrum mimeti-

²⁷ Compare Gino and Silvert, *op. cit.*, p. 12 with Jejiel Harari and Itzjak Lewin, "Resultado de la Encuesta Sobre Profesiones, Idiomas y Crecimiento de la Colectividad Judia," *Nueva Sion*, July 14 (1950), p. 6. See also *The American Jewish Year Book*, 1946-47 (Philadelphia 1948), pp. 610-616.

cally reproduced. There will be conservative, liberal and radical shades of opinion as an outgrowth of policies formulated within the organizations of Jews as such.

A second prominent feature of these voluntary associations is their highly centralized and bureaucratic structure. The number of paid high echelon functionaries are few in number, since most of the leadership have as their main source of wealth independent businesses, small factories or professional positions. However, a large staff of educators, religious counselors, social service workers and lower-echelon staff are paid and work on a full-time basis. Thus, the philanthropic character of these organizations is essentially intact—with the decision-making leadership also providing a large portion of the organizational funds. In this connection it must be noted that there is considerable duplication and multiplication of organizational efforts which tend to lessen the effectiveness of these associations. This duplication has nothing in common with the “national pastime” of wasting energies in fruitless directions and unprofitable undertakings. It is simply an outgrowth of Jewish stratification along older national lines (German Jews vs. Russian Jews); religio-ethnic lines (Ashkenazim vs. Sephardim); and regional lines (Galician Jews vs. Lithuanian Jews). This internal fragmentation of Jewish life has been considerably modified with the maturation of a third-generation Argentine Jew. The organizational apparatus nonetheless remains operative.

A third significant feature of Jewish associations, in contrast to specifically Catholic associations, for example, is the nearly complete domination of these associations by a laic body having either little or no substantive connection to the rabbinical councils. Indeed, the rabbi's authority is weaker in Argentina than in the United States, where the Protestantization of rabbinic functions has led to a view of the rabbi as spiritual leader and psychological counselor in contrast to the traditional function of the rabbi as teacher.²⁸ These associations are able to involve a broad representation of Jewish sentiment, from the orthodox to the non-believer without placing in the forefront those theological problems dividing Jews into conservative, orthodox and reform camps. If intense social stratification is reflected in organizational multiplicity, this situation is somewhat alleviated by the fundamentally non-clerical character of these voluntary associations.

A fourth main feature is the tendency toward non-involvement and insularity—not only from the broader society at large but, no less, from each other. While this fact is alluded to above, it deserves some special consideration, since the tendency is to think of Jews *en masse*. This does not mean that an anarchic situation prevails—the welter of interconnecting organizational

²⁸ Contrast, e.g., Marshall Sklare's *Conservative Judaism: An American Religious Movement* (Glencoe, Ill., 1955) and Jerome E. Carlin and Saul H. Mendelovitz, “The American Rabbi: A Religious Specialist Responds to Loss of Authority,” *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group*, pp. 377-414 with Shalom Rosenberg and Daniel B. Rubenstein-Novick, “El Rol de la Tradición Religiosa en la Comunidad Judía en la Argentina,” *Primera Conferencia de Investigadores y Estudiosos Judeo-Argentinos*, esp. pp. 15-17.

links from international to local levels is powerful evidence that a consensual basis does prevail.²⁹ Nonetheless, the task of analysis is more complicated than it appears to be at first sight. Since we are dealing with a "little society" and not simply a "little community," the ends of organization tend to become diversified if not diffuse. It is interesting to note that "rebellious" Jewish youths are sufficiently inclined to organizational duplication to manifest their demands not so much by working in established associations as by setting up yet new organizations—often of paperweight strength.

Some indications of the intra-group divisions within Judaism are supplied by the state of Jewish parochial education. The "battle" between Hebraists and Yiddishists continues unabated. Unlike Jewish communities in North America, a rapprochement or an amalgam between the various ethnic branches of Judaism has not yet been achieved. A reflection of its non-integrative character is the persistence of old-world cultural values which receive special attention in the Yiddish language. A reorientation towards Hebrew, while gaining momentum, continues in some quarters to be viewed as an acceptance of maximalist Judaism and/or Zionism. Hebraists, for their part, view Yiddish as a mark of the Diaspora and the ghetto and hence a permanent self-inflicted stamp of inferiority. The following Table gives some indication of the split involved:

TABLE V
Linguistic Orientation of Jewish Education in Buenos Aires

Central School Agency	Sponsorship	Languages Taught
Vaad Ha-Hinnukh Ha-Rosh	German Jews	Hebrew and Yiddish
Adat Yerushalaim	Sephardic Jews	Hebrew
Yesod Hadat	Arabic Jews	Hebrew
Hafetz Hayyim	Eastern European Jews	Yiddish
La Organización Central de Escuelas Judías Laicas	Labor Zionists	Yiddish
Asociación de Escuelas Laicas ICUF	Socialists (Bundists)	Yiddish
Mendele Mocher Sefarim*	Communist	Yiddish

* Closed after two years in operation

Perhaps the most pointed commentary on this educational-organizational proliferation is that the Jews of Buenos Aires, after the initial immigrant generation, tend uniformly to adopt Spanish as their primary language and not either Yiddish or Hebrew. As a matter of fact, Yiddish-speaking parents tend to speak Spanish in addressing their children.³⁰ To this degree, ethnicity has disintegrated under the pressures of the necessities of economic existence.

Turning now to a consideration of Jewish voluntary associations in Buenos Aires, we find that the single most powerful agency of Jewish life is

²⁹ See Tables VI and VII of this study.

³⁰ Cf. Harari and Lewin, "Resultados de la Encuesta Sobre Profesiones, Idiomas y Crecimiento de la Colectividad Judía de Mendoza," *Neuva Sion*, February 24, 1950, p. 7. The authors note that the only instances found where Jewish children do not speak Castellano as their primary language are if they were born in Europe.

the *Kehillah* of Buenos Aires. Organized in 1894 with 85 member families, as of 1959 it serviced no fewer than 50,000 households. In point of authority and of membership composition, it is of Russian and Polish origin. Although it has various tenuous and amorphous connections with the German-Jewish community, its ethnic character remains basically intact (see Table VI). With an annual budget of about sixty million pesos (roughly 800,000 dollars), this is clearly the most potent organizational force. Nearly one half of its budget is allocated to education of the young. Subventions for social welfare services, publishing, building additional centers throughout the city and country, colonization, religious activities, absorb the remainder of the funds. The funds themselves are administered by a council of ninety members who are drawn from the specific organizations connected to the Buenos Aires *Kehillah*. These "parliamentary representatives" are elected every three years by the membership on the basis of proportional representation.³¹

Increasingly, the funds of the *Kehillah* are being used for educational purposes. Schools are in operation on all levels, from *Kindergarten* to Seminary. The struggle to create an *intelligentsia* out of a generation formed solely in Argentina has led to a heavy investment of funds and energies toward this end. However, the actual increase in numbers of students at *Kehillah* sponsored schools has increased only slightly over the years. It must be surmised that the "challenge" from Argentine society as a whole is growing particularly in the relatively unimpeded post-Peron intellectual atmosphere. With the generational changeover, the "crisis" in Jewish associational life can be expected to show a marked increase.³²

A sound index to the complexities of Jewish associational life in Buenos Aires is revealed by the German Jews who settled in Argentina during the nazi period. Here we can observe in action some of the associational properties referred to above: organizational totality, multiplication and bureaucracy. The powerful *Gemeinschaft* nature of German-Jewish life does little to support the conventional notions of the rootless, cosmopolitan Jew. It must be observed that their choice of *Gemeinde* is not synonymous with ghetto existence. A ghetto, at least as a segregated geographical area of Jewish housing, does not exist in Buenos Aires. There are no equivalents to the New York East Side of yesteryear.³³ Even Corrientes Avenue and its surrounding environs, where a higher proportion of Jews live than elsewhere in the city, does not

³² An acute reflection of this "crisis" other than in the sphere of education, is the virtual absence of growth either in membership or in number of Temples and synagogues for the past twenty-five years. Only five new synagogues have been established between 1939-1961—mainly for the orthodox sector of German Jewry. This compares to eighteen synagogues built in the period between 1918-1939. See Rosenberg and Rubenstein-Novick, "El Rol de la Tradición Religiosa en la Comunidad Judía en la Argentina," *Primera Conferencia de Investigadores y Estudiosos Judeo-Argentinos*, p. 5.

³¹ *Comunidad Israelita de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires 1960).

³³ This ghetto-less existence casts some doubt on the "universality" claimed for the ghetto as a Jewish social institution. See Wirth, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

show any decisive area characteristics. The Jews, in short, do not “flavor” the culture of Buenos Aires so much as they simply inhabit it.

This is particularly true of German Jewry, reared as this group was in the cultural and psychological traditions of *Aufklärung* and assimilation. Nonetheless, *Gemeinschaft* feelings, that Community of Fate in which hardships, sorrows as well as joys and achievements are shared in common, typifies the German-Jewish community of Buenos Aires. That fragmentation and condition of *Entfremdung*, which *Gesellschaft* life supposedly carries within itself, tend to be offset by common cultural factors of language, culture, education—as well as more substantial identities of middle-class occupational roles, and the cohesive effect of miraculous survival from the Hitlerian holocaust. The “hostile world” of Christian Argentina has its fanatical counterpart in total organization along *Gemeinschaft* lines. The most revealing aspect of Table VI is the completeness of organization implied.³⁴ It is a defense against “outsiders” as such, which may be defined by some German Jews as Christianity, by others as generated by the material inadequacies of Argentine society, and by still others as made inevitable by the encroachments and prestige-seeking of “lower” types of Jews—especially those from eastern Europe. The high level of organization achieved by German Jews often at the expense of larger-scale homogeneity within Judaism, is a minute reproduction of “East-West” tensions. These reflect inherited animosities harbored by Germans against Russians (and *vice versa*) throughout recent history. That the Jew should be the symbolic bearer of these East-West differences, may appear ironic in the light of his treatment at the hands of nazism and to a lesser extent Great Russian chauvinism. Even more ironic is the fact that the Jew reflects the same functional separations as does the Christian. In short, national and ethnic allegiances rather than religious credos have come to define modern social types in Argentine city life.

A difficulty with Table VI is that it produces a mirage effect of perfect equilibrium of local associations with regional and national groups that is at variance with the facts. The powerful and long-standing divisions between Sephardi and Ashkenazic Jews along the religious axis, between German and Slavic Jews along the national axis, and between professional and lower class Jewish economic interests, show little abatement—except possibly the last, and this is a consequence of the “deproletarianization” of the Argentine Jew. Table VI nonetheless does highlight the *absence* of what Handlin has recently termed “competition for loyalty” between ethnic values and the larger values of the nation-state.³⁵ Although the well developed Argentine educational apparatus has advanced professionalization and, in some measure,

³⁴ On centralization of Jewish community life see Lerner, Natan, “La vida Comunitaria Judía en Buenos Aires,” *Primera Conferencia de Investigadores y Estudiosos Judeo-Argentinos*, pp. 10-14.

³⁵ Handlin, Oscar, “Historical Perspectives on the American Ethnic Group” in *Daedalus*, xc (Spring 1960), no. 2, p. 227.

has disaffiliated the Jews from their community ties, this has been resisted with relative success by the firmness of their associational loyalties. Thus even among informants from second and third-generation Russian Jews there remains a powerful residue of "anti-German-Jewish" feeling. Sephardi Jews, for their part, retain a distinctive associational apparatus (*see* Table VII); and the most recent survey showing that "intermarriage" between Sephardi and Ashkenazic Jews is still somewhat of a rarity is an index of these intra-Jewish separatist traits.³⁶ The rise of a new postwar Jewish generation may alter the statistics somewhat, but the continued strength of old particularistic organizations makes the effect of such statistical shifts minimal in size and marginal in regard to the specific reference groups involved.

What can be observed is large-scale duplication and multiplication of effort in every sphere of Jewish voluntary associational life and a consequent weakening of the Jewish community as a whole. The Jewish collectivity of Buenos Aires tends to appear stronger than it actually is by virtue of its tendency to proliferate organizations and periodicals—each geared to preserve particularist trends in Judaism rather than preserve Jewish life as a whole.³⁷ Functional specialization is indeed an integral part of community life. However, such "specialized" agencies as exist within Jewish community life may often be dysfunctional in relation to the social solidarity of the Jews as such.

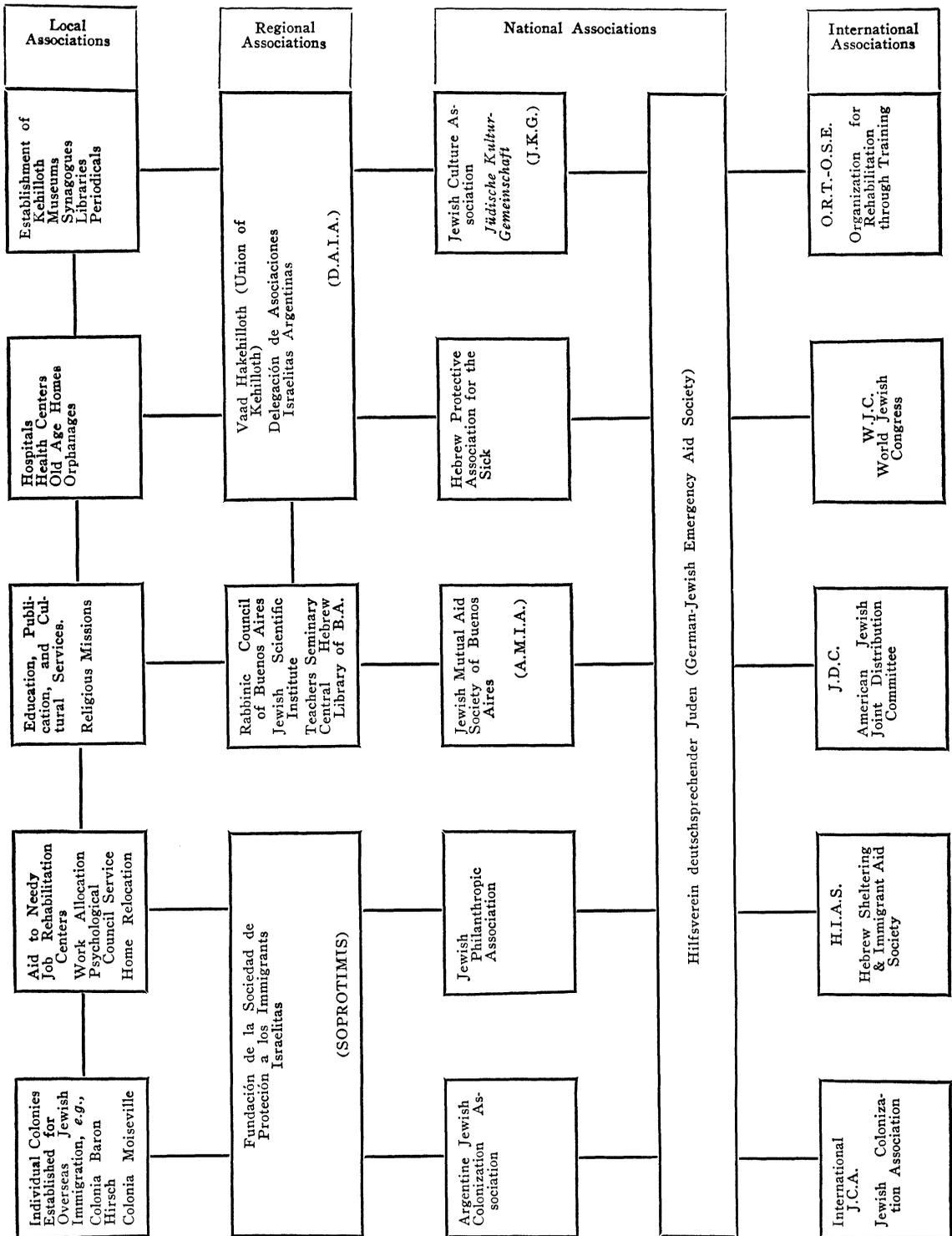
A unique by-product of overspecialization has been a reinforcement of the fragmentation and atomization in present-day Jewish life. The generational changeover from the search for survival to the search for identity has tended to operate within a structural apparatus which is not necessarily prepared to cope with changing patterns. Organizations formed in the "age of survival" are not likely to be much concerned with those issues genuinely agitating the young Jew. As such, the new generation faces alternatives of *conforming* to the old institutional mores and folkways, *agitating* for increased power in Jewish agencies, or *abandoning* Jewish organizational life altogether. The fourth possibility, new organizational forms, has the effect of further fracturing Jewish life. Segments of the young intelligentsia have decided to pursue either this last or have followed a policy of disaffiliation. The younger professional and business strata tend to identify more markedly with established organizational norms—either as conformists or as critics of the "old guard." It is fascinating to observe the degree to which Jewish associational life parallels developments in Argentine polity as such; the multiplication of organizational forms beyond their functional value, the rise of an entrenched

³⁶ Cf. Harari and Lewin, "Resultados del Censo Sobre Profesiones, Idiomas y Crecimiento de la Colectividad Judía de Santa Fe," *Nueva Sion*, July 28, 1950, p. 7.

³⁷ This proliferating tendency is observed even in the ethnic separatism of the synagogues. In both origin and present realities the Jewish congregations divide as follows: Russian (12), Rumanian (5), Polish (14), Galician (2), German (5). *See* Rosenberg, Shalom and Rubenstein-Novick, Daniel B., "El Rol de la tradición religiosa en la comunidad Judía en la Argentina," *Primera Conferencia de Investigadores y Estudiosos Judeo-Argentinos*, pp. 5-6.

TABLE VI

Structure of German-Jewish Voluntary Associations in Argentina*



* Chart based on information derived from *Zehn Jahre Aufbauarbeit in Südamerika—Diez Años de Obra Constructiva en America del Sud* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Filantrópica Israelita, December 1943).

bureaucratic stratum in policy-making positions, and a narrowing middle class tendency to identify truth with wealth, learning with power.³⁸

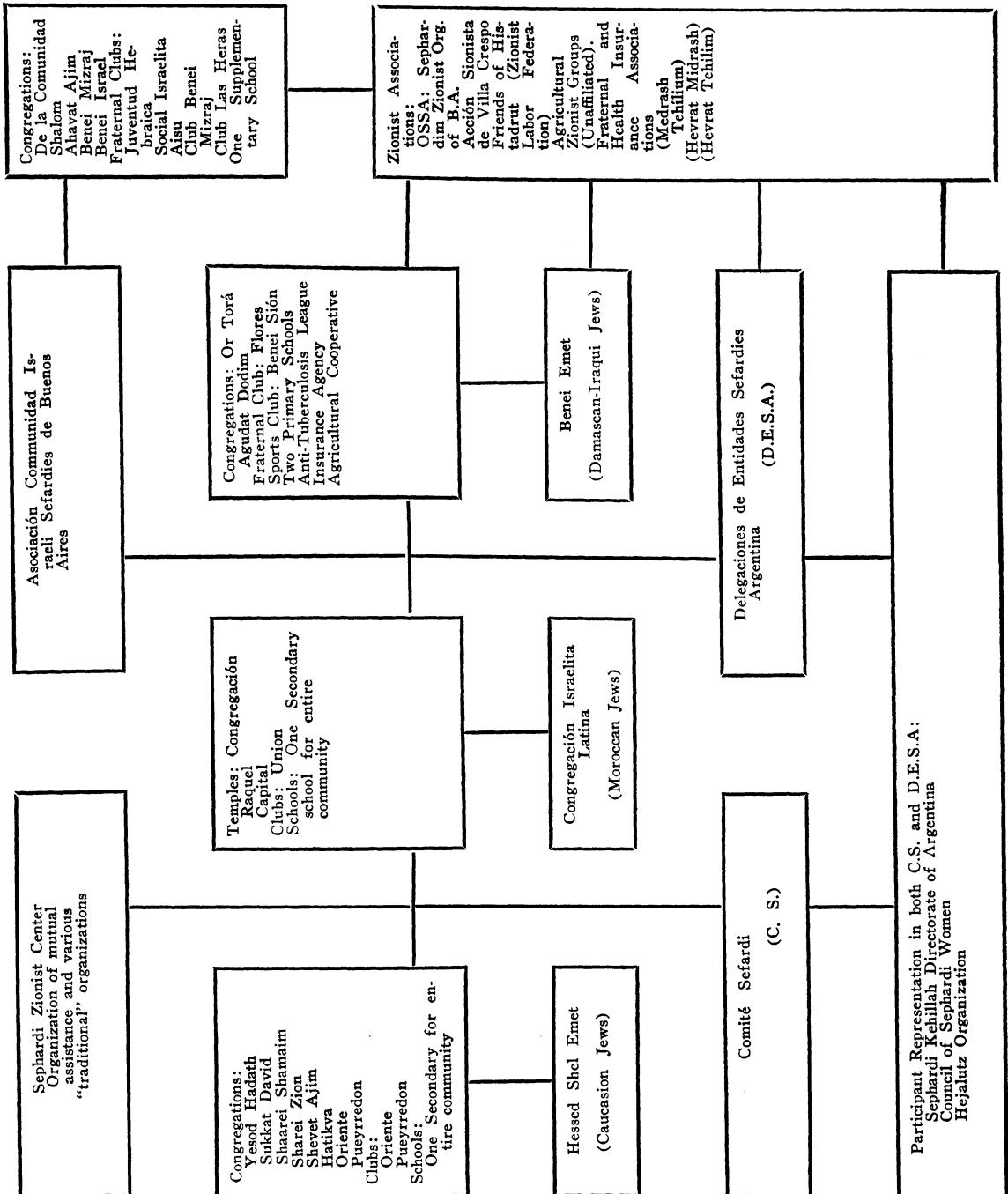
There are nonetheless powerful features which tend to establish a consensual base in Jewish life. There is first the unifying force of Israel, which has given Argentine Jews a rallying symbol in a form not subject to the fissures of internal criticism. This is not to say that they, any more than Jews in the United States, have any intention of leaving Argentina for Israel *en bloc* (although the most militant Zionist elements do have such ambitions). The maturation of Israel has, however, given them a sense of pride and achievement. The image of courage and constructive accomplishment projected by Israel has had a significant effect on broad sectors of the Jewish population. It has further given a *raison d'être* to many voluntary associations which were able to transfer activities from immigration from Europe to aid for Israel without undue organizational upheaval.

Subsidiary but potent as a unifying agency has been the re-telling in the form of the Nürnberg and Eichmann trials, in novels and essays, of the contemporary martyrdom of one third of all Jewry—irrespective of particularistic affiliations or occupational ranking. This has reinforced the older survival ethos at a critical juncture. The unity of Argentine Jew is seen as bound up with the lot of world Jewry—Morroccan and Ukrainian, Sephardi and Ashkenazic. This has served as a cohesive agency forestalling any mass disaffections or apostasies.

The largest unifying element in Jewish community life is what it has been traditionally: antisemitism. To discuss antisemitism in the same context with Jewish associational life is axiomatic. We have seen that from a physical, linguistic and even psychological frame of reference the Jew is now well adapted to the life of Buenos Aires. And it must be said that this adaptation has been aided in no small part by the basic liberality and cosmopolitan spirit of the city populace. Most Catholic men, for example, have no idea who among them is Jewish. The chauvinistic stereotype is to identify the Jew as a "Russian," but this is a stereotype with little operative value beyond the immigrant generation. The Buenos Aires resident or the *Porteño*, especially the man, has a typically "Latin" attitude toward his Catholicism. He sees his church as a political agency, performing certain beneficial social rites—"particularly for womenfolk." The lack of church attendance on the part of the Buenos Aires male population is a fact of life observable on any given Sunday morning. The core membership of the church is, outside of the hierarchy of the church itself, composed nearly entirely of women parishioners. To use Fichter's pithy phrase, the *Porteño* is a marginal Catholic. What this

³⁸ The most reliable guide and reflection of the younger elements is the newspaper *Renacimiento de Israel*. Here the various strands coalesce: "liberalism" as a national posture, support for Zionism as consonant with Argentine loyalties, a forthright attitude towards antisemitism, stronger organizational responsibilities for young Jews, a common alliance with Jews of other Latin American nations. See especially, "Resolución del Comité Central de la Organización Sionista Liberal en la Argentina," *Renacimiento de Israel* (July 1961), p. 8.

TABLE VII
The Structure of the Sephardi Community of Buenos Aires*



* Chart based on information derived from B. Issaev, "Los sefardites de Buenos Aires" in *Vida Comunitaria Judía*—Anuario 5715 (1954-1955) (Buenos Aires: Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina Comunidad de Buenos Aires 1954), pp. 11-18.

means is that role definitions and reference sets are basically defined by the "profane world," by one or a number of non-religious institutions.³⁹ The absence of expressions of religious superiority, or of a missionary attitude toward the non-Catholic population, accounts for the sizable body of public opinion, both Christian and Jewish, which maintains that antisemitism is not manifest in Argentina.

If antisemitism were merely a matter of contrasting religious impulses or degrees of marginality or nuclearity, it would be true to say that relations between Catholics and Jews are harmonious. However, other types of anti-semitic syndromes are known to exist.⁴⁰ There is the psychological variant, in which stereotyping and negative attitudes towards Jews stem from feelings of frustration often connected with downward social mobility. Such manifestations are usually reserved for highly mobile societies heavily stressing pecuniary values.⁴¹ Then there is the more strictly psycho-sociological variety known as the "authoritarian personality" which, given a general proclivity to an over-sensitized "in-group"—"out-group" approach, sees the Jews as a menacing out-group. While there are undoubtedly some variations on these patterns in Buenos Aires, the fundamental nature of antisemitism has not been found to be of such a type. The ordinary citizen of Buenos Aires, the *Porteño*, makes few distinctions between Jews and Gentiles. Indeed, like the small-town citizen of the United States, he tends to have negative stereotypes of the Jew, but of such a weak and amorphous variety that he neither wishes nor is able to act in response to them. Particularly is this the case with the linguistic identification of the second-generation Jew with the Spanish language and the Argentine cultural-historical traditions.⁴² Perhaps the most succinct expression of *Porteño* feeling was the comment of a bookseller in reply to a query on whether he carried books on the Argentine Jew. The reply, although factually inaccurate, is significant: "No, there are no books on the Jews of Argentina, since the Jews here do not present any special problem." And as we have already observed, the church does not present that sort of reference group which could "key" non-Jewish reactions.

Antisemitism as a posture tends to be very sharply an upper-class

³⁹ Fichter, Joseph H., "The Marginal Catholic: An Institutional Approach," *Social Forces*, xxxi (December 1953) no. 2, pp. 167-173. In this connection it might be noted that studies of Argentine Catholicism from a sociological viewpoint have yet to be undertaken, and until courses in the sociology of religion are given in the universities, prospects for such badly needed studies are grim indeed.

⁴⁰ See Adorno, T.W., Frenkel-Brunswick, Else, Levinson, Daniel J., and Sanford, Nevitt, R., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York 1950); and Bettelheim, Bruno and Janowitz, Morris, *Dynamics of Prejudice* (New York 1950). In Spanish see "Psicología Social del Prejuicio," *Cuadernos del Instituto de Sociología—La Universidad de Buenos Aires*, no. 23 (1960), pp. 215-343.

⁴¹ Bettelheim, Bruno and Janowitz, Morris, "Ethnic Tolerance: A Function of Social and Personal Control," *The American Journal of Sociology*, lv (1949), pp. 137-145.

⁴² Particularly is this the case with those Jewish *pensadores* who have tended to substitute Argentine democratic symbols for Jewish symbols of identification. There is now a fairly evident schism between the Jewish *intelligentsia* and an *intelligentsia* which is of Jewish origin.

phenomena. Neither blue-collar nor white-collar employees, nor the professional or business stratum as such, tend to include the Jewish community as a major source of irritation. These upper-class strata, recruited from wealthy landowners, professional militarists, and sectors of domestically-controlled industry, are precisely the feeding grounds of extreme right-wing nationalism as such. The Jew is an object of attack in that he cannot be counted on as a celebrator of the national myth of an Argentine imperial orbit in Latin America. Where physical violence against Jews occurs, it is most often directed against those having strong Zionist feelings and some projected identification with Israel. A sector of the *Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas (Hajshara del Ijud Habonim)*, which conducts workshops in the theory and practice of labor agriculture, simulating *Kibbutz* conditions in Israel and aiming at emigration to Israel, was on several occasions subject to antisemitic violence at the hands of a group known as *Tacuara*—a loosely-knit organization of youths from upper class Buenos Aires sections.⁴³ Their political slogan, “patriotism yes, Jews no,” echoes most forcefully the fusion of this social sector to ultra-nationalistic aims of “moral” purification.⁴⁴

Organizationally, antisemitism is quite weak, despite (or because) of its upper class exclusivity. Fringe groups exist in various spheres of public life for the purpose of disseminating antisemitic literature. None, however, are particularly potent. Since the educational system is a primary agency for the conduct of popular politics and is an area of intensive interaction of the Jew and non-Jew, some of the most vehement forms of antisemitism take place in the fringe areas of the school system. At the secondary school level, there is U.N.E.S. (*Union Nacionalista de Estudiantes Secundarios*) and at the university level there is the S.U.A. (*Sindicato Universitario Argentino*). A large proportion of these student activities bear on the Jewish question only indirectly. The continuing struggle is between *Libre* and *Laica*, between Catholic and secular views of the correct relation of church and state. Antisemitism becomes a viable adjunct for parading the ideological necessity for having a “morally sound educational system.” The secularization of Argentine education is deemed wicked. The Jews are firm advocates of this separation. Therefore the division between the world of learning and the

⁴³ *Tacuara* has a long record of antisemitic violence. It was formed in 1930 by Juan Queraltá, a high school student, and took its name from the bamboo pikes that were carried more than a century ago by supporters of the tyrant Manuel Rosas. *Tacuara* became a branch of the Peronist youth movement, and went underground when the former leader was overthrown in 1955. Since 1960 it has been vigorously led by two students, Alberto Ezcurra Uriburu, and Jose Baxter. Their political position is avowedly Falangist, with a strong emphasis on corporate fascism as the best form of government for Argentina. *Tacuara* distinguishes itself from Peronism by a strong pro-Church attitude. Cf. Sokolowicz, Joaquin, “Antisemitismo Criollo: La verdad sobre ‘Tacuara’” in *Renacimiento de Israel* (July 1961), pp. 3 et passim; also *The New York Times* (January 28, 1962), p. 39.

⁴⁴ Cf. *La Prensa* August 16, 1961 and August 26, 1961. See also “Vandalico atentado antisemita contra la Hajshara de Ijud,” *La Luz; La revista Israelita para toda Sud America*, xxx (Aug. 25, 1961), no. 782.

world of theology is a Jewish plot to destroy the national integrity of Argentina. Such is the logic of antisemitism in this social sector. While this "logic" is basically an attempt to transform the basis of the Argentine educational system, it has had certain particular side effects on Jews. Complaints of discrimination, denial of entrance to particular university faculties, favoritism in grants awarded, while clearly exaggerated, nonetheless are too numerous to be discounted.

The overt political manifestations of antisemitic patterns generally derive from the same material sources and have a clear *Falangist* character. Slogans of national liberation, national honor, anti-*Yanquism*, anti-capitalism, anti-socialism, tend to fuse in the myth of *patria*—and the cement for this myth is often the Jew. There is first the U.C.N. (*Union Cívica Nacionalista*) composed of old-style corporativists. They hold that the Jew stands in the path of national redemption, in much the same way as did such *fin-de-siècle* extremists as Drumont in *La France juive* and Toussenel in *Les Juifs rois de l'époque*.⁴⁵ The Jews are held the chief sinners in commerce and merchandising, destroyers of the soil, corrupters of Christian virtue and, above all, alien by self-definition. And like the French antisemitism of the Dreyfus era, the U.C.N. presents an admixture of national redemption with utopian programs for an Argentine *Goliath*. The newest entrant to this fertile field is the G.R.N. (*Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista*), which displays a parental affection for the *Tacuara* movement, and which differs from the U.C.N. by its belief that redemption will come through the land rather than through industrialization. While it cannot be emphasized too strongly that these "political parties" are often of a paperweight variety, more a matter of journalistic proclamation than numerical or organizational consequence, it would be incorrect to overlook that they do reflect a sizable body of upper class Argentine opinion.

Overt hostility for the Jew is a manifest reaction to more profound, if more latent, sentiments. The population explosion in the Litoral region, Buenos Aires and its surrounding environs, has led to a shift from ruralism to urbanism as the fundamental trait of Argentina. This phenomenon of the massification of society, coming as it does after one hundred years of intense struggle between inland financial interests and Buenos Aires commercial interests, marks a decisive conclusion to the conflict at the level of material culture. Ideologically, resistance to "mass society" remains.⁴⁶ The Jew, as a

⁴⁵ For an acute historical analysis of antisemitism, conservative and radical, see Byrnes, Robert F., *Antisemitism in Modern France*, i, *The Prologue to the Dreyfus Affair* (New Brunswick 1950), esp. chapters iii, iv, and v. See also Halasz, Nicholas, *Captain Dreyfus: The Story of a Mass Hysteria* (New York 1955), esp. pp. 161-201.

⁴⁶ Germani, "Comparación Típico-Ideal Entre La Sociedad Preindustrial Rural y la Sociedad Industrial Urbana," *De la Sociedad Tradicional a la Sociedad de Masas*, edited by Germani and Jorge Graciarena (Buenos Aires: Departamento de Sociología, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Buenos Aires 1961), pp. 349-362.

thoroughly urbanized creature, is seen as somehow accelerating, if not initiating the demise of inland traditional agrarian interests. Related to this, the real wealth created by agricultural and livestock products tends to be translated into the purchase of secondary consumer goods. The pecuniary instincts of the *latifundists* are seemingly boundless, and the rationalization for these pecuniary traits is the Jewish businessman who “robs” the innocent inlander of his wealth. The fact that many Jewish families are engaged in secondary sales and distribution of consumer items, adds some note of credulity to an otherwise bereft claim. Argentine landowners are not renowned for interest in either technological advancement or social reforms. The seller of goods absorbs the guilt for the buyer of the goods. As a recipient of sinful goods, the virtuous buyer becomes a fallen angel; as a seller of material goods, the artful Jew becomes the devil’s advocate. The canon of pecuniary emulation becomes transformed into the canon of super-nationalism.

For the youthful, and generally more radical socio-political element, the Jew is pictured as the transmission agent for imperialist produce. Newspapers will refer to smugglers of contraband goods as “Jews” or as having “Jewish names.” The Jew is linked in this way not only to a cosmopolitan plot against nationhood but, no less, against the urge to social reform felt by the younger generation of the Argentine. In the realm of ideology similar stereotyping is found. The myth of the land as the only true basis of national wealth has as its counterpart *folklorismo*. The ultra-nationalists, of both right and left, see themselves as threatened by foreign music, foreign painting, foreign languages—and the Jew again seems to be the chief culprit. His cosmopolitan socio-cultural role permits scape-goating to go unimpeded and often uncontradicted. The possibilities of antisemitic exploitation of the Jew as being of an alien culture and unbound by allegiances of any political variety, tend to increase, not decrease, as the middle sectors of society continue to lose ground politically to the “orienters” of policy—the military, and the “formulators” of policy—large-scale business and banking concerns.

There is a range of organizational reactions by the Jewish community to these variegated phenomena. First, a disbelief that antisemitism exists at all (characteristic of the intellectual and profession Jewish sectors). Second, *alienation*—a realization that antisemitism exists, and that little else could be expected from such an underdeveloped Latin culture (characteristic of the German-Jewish community). Third, some efforts at combatting antisemitic outrages (typical of the *Kehillah* and the parent DAIA). The character of these efforts at restoring a more parsimonious view of the Jews are, however, rarely directed at the specific phenomena of ethnicity and nationalism, cosmopolitanism and insularity, adaptation and integration, etc. Attacks of *Tacuara* upon Jewish institutions—theatres, agricultural cooperatives, synagogues, etc.—bring forth a flock of proclamations from church dignitaries opposing any manifestation of antisemitism, while Jewish organizational reaction is limited to consultations with police and articles on the

"Christian Problem."⁴⁷ The conversion of these outbursts into a religious issue tends to obscure the realities of either the Argentine Jew (fundamentally affectively neutral with respect to the synagogue) or the Argentine Catholic (who likewise, shows no signs of mass conversion to a nuclear role in the church).

The political questions are, of course, particularly sensitive in a context approximating falangism. And the Jewish community has every right to be suspicious of "symbolic relations between socialism and nationalism." The last fusion of the words national and socialism produced nazism, while the guarantee of "self-determination for all nations" has been a slogan more observed in the breach than in the execution by the Soviets. If the Argentine Jew is a political outsider, it is just as much a consequence of the general orientation of super-nationalist politics in Argentina, as it is a positive effort to guarantee some niche for the separate national flowering of the Jewish spirit.⁴⁸ But that the Jew is politically "deviant" in the context of Argentine nationalist "norms" is undoubtedly true. The exact composition of elements, positive and negative, remains a task for future research.

If these final pages have touched upon issues which are beyond the confines of organizational analysis of Jewish voluntary associations in Buenos Aires, it is because these larger social forces have been and remain significant in defining the content and roles of these associations. No sociologically sound definition of Jewish associational life in Buenos Aires can proceed without accounting for antisemitism since, in fact, the disequilibriated development of ethnicity and nationality has for its central core the rights of separate cultural forms and the obligations of sovereign power to see to it that organizational expression of these cultural forms are not tampered with. On a broadening of the social content and moral fibre of democracy in Argentina hinges a more effective participation of the Jewish community as such. The policy failures thus far—of Jewish *anti-politique* no less than of Argentine *pro-patria*—should not obscure the over-riding fact that Argentina (and Buenos Aires in particular) has allowed for the settlement of Jews amidst generally favorable conditions. The question of increasing moment for the Jewish collectivity of Buenos Aires is thus no longer survival and shame, but identity and interaction. This transition period can be materially assisted by a firm policy decision by the Argentine government that ethnicity is not the mortal foe of nationality, and that the paths of ethnic groups will be respected, honored, and defended.

⁴⁷ Cf. "El crucifijo y la libertad de cultos," *La Luz: la revista Israelita para toda Sud America*, xxxi (June 2, 1961), no. 776.

⁴⁸ Cf. Horowitz, Irving L., "Storm over Argentina: Revolt against Political Mythology," *The Nation*, cxv (March 31, 1962), no. 13.

Summary and Conclusions

1. Jewish voluntary associations were formed in the wake of various relatively independent and socially different immigration waves. As such, a duplication of institutions and agencies performing similar roles and fulfilling similar needs for the different sectors of the Jewish collectivity was created and maintained.

2. These voluntary associations have not dissolved, despite the dissolution of distinctions between Jews of the second and third generation who have continued to live in Buenos Aires. The continued existence of such duplication leads to a situation in which numbers of associations are dysfunctional in the light of the total needs of the Jewish community as such. Duplication, reinforced by a bureaucratic apathy, perpetuates distinctions which are no longer important or valid and, latterly, prevent re-organizations required to meet current, more vital challenges to the Jews of the city and the country.

3. The concentration of the Jews of Argentina in the capital city and its environs has made possible a rapid adjustment to urbanism as a Jewish way of life. Buenos Aires as the "most Europeanized" city in South America and as the city with the largest cluster of middle class inhabitants, has contributed to shaping both the cosmopolitanism and commercialism of Jewish institutional life.

4. The urban character of Jewish life in Argentina and the poorly developed social services offered by the city, are major factors in turning *Gemeinschaft* organization into voluntary associations. This totality, while it enables the Jewish community to maintain its compactness, nonetheless tends toward insularity, toward a minimum of participation in the larger affairs of polity.

5. Jewish voluntary associations in Buenos Aires are primarily social in character, with religious worship and instruction functioning as a sub-culture (often an insignificant part) within the total Jewish "community of fate." The Jew as a national minority or as an ethnic sub-society thus specifies the Jewish collectivity as such.

6. The generational shift, the changeover from a transient Jew in search of a haven of rest to a birthright Argentine Jew, has changed his ideological moorings. While associational power continues to reside in the hands of the old world Jewish immigrant sector, the numerical and economic shift of power to the younger generation has created a disequilibrium between organization and ideology. The main issue has become the nature and value of Judaism rather than the organizational forms required to secure the continued survival of the Jewish community. Thus the chasm between generations is no less a conflict in social and intellectual aspirations.

7. The *place* of antisemitism in Buenos Aires is slight, of little organizational force, and remains mainly of an upper-class variety. The *character* of antisemitism is basically nationalistic, and represents a demand for orthodoxy in matters of Argentine patriotism and manifest destiny. This accounts for the stress on the intrinsic "outsider" quality of the Jew, which is employed to rationalize the negative or non-participatory qualities found to exist in the Jewish community of the city.

8. Jewish organizational life, in so far as it offers positive responses to antisemitic patterns, attempts to show the anti-Christian as well as anti-human content of such attacks on the Jews which appear in print and in practice. However, for those generally disengaged from Jewish voluntary associations the response to antisemitism is one of detachment; whereas for those with powerful separatist inclinations in the Judaic fold, there is a strong tendency to withdraw from Argentine realities altogether. In general, community *integration* is highest among the Slavic and Russian Jews, *isolation* is typical of the German and Austrian Jews, and *alienation* characterizes a wide sector of the Jewish *intelligentsia*.