

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE
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ISRAELIS IN LOS ANGELES

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PREFACE

The increasing number of Israelis in Los Angeles has created a serious problem for the Jewish community. Since Israel considers immigration a serious violation of its values and a threat to its existence, the immigrant has become a deviant person labeled "Yored" (a person who goes down) - a traitor, "the lowest of the low" "the weakest of the weak" a person who deserts his country in its time of need. The American Jewish community is inevitably affected by this attitude. The community does not know, understand or accept Israeli emigres.

As a result, Israelis who leave Israel experience isolation, guilt, a sense of personal devaluation, and a feeling of being part of an unwanted minority. They tend to distance themselves from the local Jewish community.

Israelis, on the other hand, also came to the United States with many of the stereotypes held by anti-semites about Jews in the diaspora, and this deepens the gap between the Jewish community and the Israelis in Los Angeles.

This study explores the experiences and the factors which make up "yeridah" in Los Angeles. After a review of literature about Israelis in the United States, twenty Israeli emigres were interviewed. They shared their experiences in Israel, their motivations for coming to the

United States, their adjustment to life in Los Angeles and their feelings about the Jewish and non-Jewish community.

The Israelis interviewed generally had difficulties in one or more aspects of life in Israel, particularly educationally or economically. This served as a motivation for coming to Los Angeles. Those who had good relations with their families appear more likely to return to Israel. Most Israelis have not felt comfortable with the American Jewish community. The few who had positive feelings did so as a result of a positive initial contact.

Recommendations envisaged by the researcher include:

1. Programs to promote greater understanding of Israeli emigres as part of the American Jewish community.
2. Efforts by Jewish social agencies to find ways to bridge the gap by addressing the problems of Israeli emigres.
3. A change in Israel's attitude towards the people who leave so as to encourage them to return or at least retain a sense of solidarity with the state.
4. The strengthening of families through necessary services in Israel as a device to diminish yeridah.

INTRODUCTION

It was in 1975 that I met Yael, her two children and her husband. She, like many other Israelis, had come to the United States with the hope that she would find a better life here. In Israel, she had not been happy. The financial situation had been a burden to her and her family on a daily basis and she had not been happy socially. She felt that she had insufficient time for herself. She had not been happy with her husband and she envisioned the United States as the solution to many problems she had had in Israel. However, when she came to the United States she encountered new crises, new struggles, new instabilities, while many of the old problems still remained.

It was quite an experience to meet her. She represented for me a larger community of Israelis who live here silently, needing help desperately, but who have no address to turn to. She represented a serious social problem with which the Jewish community appears not ready to deal.

When I met her she asked me for help, for support, and for direction. First, she talked about her going through a crisis that immigrants go through in general, such as culture shock, feelings of being lost in the new surroundings, financial problems, lack of familiarity with the language and the social system. Once she felt secure

with me, she told me about her major crisis -- how her husband abused her and how he once threatened to kill her. Her marital problems had worsened when the family came to the United States. After that, Yael called me constantly. She seemed miserable, lost, frustrated. I tried to help her as much as possible, but I felt that I would be more helpful if I did not assume all therapeutic responsibility and I suggested that she call the Jewish Family Service for help. She was not ready to do this; it was too threatening a step for her. She finally changed her mind and agreed to go to the Jewish Family Service if I set up an appointment for her. When I called, the social worker's response was that Jewish Family Service could not do anything unless Yael phoned herself. They felt "she was old enough to take the responsibility" and the phone was hung up.

In the Israeli culture, calling a social worker for help is an immense embarrassment. Many people have a lot of anxiety about asking for social work help because Israel is a very small place and everybody in the neighborhood knows everything about everybody. As soon as one person knows something, the whole neighborhood would know it since socializing is an important part of Israeli culture. I think if the social worker who talked with me on

the phone knew where the client came from, knew Yael's culture, she would have responded differently because, "If we are to meet the needs of all clients, we cannot fit them to the 'procrustian bed' of the agency in terms of a specific treatment technique."⁽¹⁾

The social worker's refusal to help raised a very important issue for me. Why did the social worker not relate to Yael's background? Why had she turned her back? Was she the only one who had turned her back on Yael? As I checked further, I found that the same attitude is quite prevalent in all the Jewish community services. This then became the issue that I decided to explore in my thesis: The apparent rejection of the Israelis resident here, the refusal to recognize them, to understand what motivates them to come here, and the community's unwillingness to help those of them who need help desperately.

Since 1973, Israelis have been coming to the United States. No one knows how many live in Los Angeles because many of them enter illegally, but it is hard to ignore the fact that they are all here in numbers. One meets Israelis everywhere one goes and the Hebrew language is heard quite often. There is a big Israeli community, numbering

(1) Professor Rosa Felsenburg, Some Considerations in the Use of Socio-Cultural Concepts in Social Work Practice (Indiana University)

thousands in Los Angeles. How can they continue to be ignored?

I am an Israeli myself and I would like to speak for this community to which I belong. I became familiar with the needs of the Israelis and with the Jewish community -- its agencies, structure, attitudes, and relationship to Israel -- as a result of the opportunity of being a student at Hebrew Union College. I found a whole new world that I would never have gotten to know unless I attended a Jewish school. Before I became a student at Hebrew Union College, my knowledge about the American Jewish community was minimal. I did not have any contact with people or with the communal agencies. I probably would not have known about Hebrew Union College either and become a student there had I not heard Professor Gerald B. Bubis, the Director of the School of Jewish Communal Service at Hebrew Union College in a lecture at the University of Southern California, where I studied for my Bachelor's degree.

When I first became a student at Hebrew Union College, I experienced a great deal of culture shock, being the only Israeli within this Jewish school. Fortunately, the staff members and the students really helped me to become part of the school environment and accepted me so well that I wish every Israeli who comes to the United States

could have the same experience: Attending school in Hebrew Union College helped me to feel, in a way, more Israeli. Here I could explore my own background, develop a special sensitivity to other Israelis, and confirm my intentions of returning to Israel.

As I became more involved in my work, I found that the Jewish community ignores the Israelis. The attitude is, "Why did they leave Israel? We, the Jewish community, are sending the biggest portion of the budget to Israel for its existence and here the Jews are leaving Israel." The Jewish community also derives a great deal of security from the fact that a Jewish state exists and that the Zionist dream came true. By leaving Israel, Israelis, the American Jewish community feels, kill the Zionist dream. Moreover, the Israeli government and Israeli society has a very negative attitude toward Israelis who leave Israel and this has a tremendous influence on the Jewish community here. The Israelis who leave Israel are called 'yor-dim', which means "those who descend." In other words, they are labeled as deviant for taking such a step. They are seen as traitors and therefore, they deserve to be scorned or humiliated publically. Since the Jewish community has picked up this attitude, it is no wonder that the Israelis are staying away from the Jewish community as

much as possible. The Israelis do not see the Jewish community as a source of help in most cases and therefore, do not become involved in the various Jewish organizations. The gap between the two communities which are both made up of Jews is tremendous.

However, when one asks an agency, such as Jewish Family Services or Jewish Vocational Services why they don't help, the answer is, "They are illegal in the United States. They do not have 'green cards' (a card that indicates that one is eligible to work and benefit from citizen rights)." If one asks an agency such as the Jewish Community Center why there is no program for Israelis, the answer is that the budget is already very limited and the agency has a hard time keeping up with the programs that already exist. "We just can't afford to have programs for Israelis." Many well-known people in the Jewish community comment, "If we had more money we would not spend it on Israelis who live here because they are on the bottom of the list." The Jewish community has much resistance toward accepting those Israelis.

During the last six months I have been contacting Jewish Family Services and Jewish community Centers to

deal with this issue. I have written a proposal for the West Side Jewish Center to provide a program for Israelis. I have never heard from those agencies. Such a response appears to me a reflection of the attitude, "We are not ready to recognize Israeli immigrants or to know them."

Many Israelis who come here, it appears to me, are unhappy, lonely people in need of support from the Jewish community. Many of them are people who suffered social and economic failure in Israel and have tried a different alternative to solve their problems. If the Jewish community were ready to bridge the gap and adjust itself to these attitudes, things would be different. Since I have been exposed to both communities, I feel an obligation to raise this issue so as to help bring the Jewish community to an awareness that the Israelis here exist and need help, recognition and acceptance. They are the Jews who have been in Israel during the wars, who helped in building the State, who sacrificed for the country. Why are they different from the many Jews who came here from Europe or countries other than Israel?

Obviously, it would be ideal if all Israelis stayed in Israel, but every society has some people who are not happy or satisfied and who leave if they can. In Israel, where life is very hard and danger of war is continuous,

naturally some people have a hard time taking it. Is the Jewish community justified in punishing them for that?

This study explores the situation of this group in some depth so as to enable the American Jewish community to achieve enough understanding to be of help to it.

I would like to thank the School for Jewish Communal Service for the real opportunity it offered me, an opportunity for growth, both intellectually and emotionally. I came to know and explore the Jews of the Diaspora -- not only through history books but also through real contact. I had the opportunity to examine what I had learned in the many hours of history classes in Israel; the Jews and their struggles, conflicts, mentality, identity, strengths, weaknesses, religion, their various agencies and their structures -- and what Israel means to them. It was a real opportunity to gain real deep insight, an opportunity to satisfy my curiosity about the Jewish community in America.

I would like to thank Professor Gerald B. Babis for creating this setting, of providing me with so much knowledge about the Jewish community and for his support and the warmth that helped me to feel a part of the community. And most of all, for the opportunity to know a person with real dedication as the director of a school, as a leader, as a teacher, as a person.

I would like to thank Dr. Rosa Kaplan, my friend, my counselor, my teacher and the chairperson of the thesis committee, who helped me in the struggle of being an Israeli in a foreign land. She gave me much insight into social theory and practice, for the profound understanding of the infinite number of factors which affect Israelis and Americans and Jews. I would not have been able to do this study without her help.

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CHAPTER II - TRIALS OF MIGRATION AND THE ISRAELI

Migration, the physical transition of an individual or a group from one geographic location to another, is associated with a psychological and sociological shift from one social setting to another. According to the Israeli sociologist Eisenstadt's book The Absorption of Immigrants⁽¹⁾ the motivation to move from one place to another, tends to be a result of some kind of feeling of insecurity, inadequacy, and/or frustration with one's original socio-economic reality and the immigrant comes to the new country with certain definite expectations in regard to what life will be and the roles to be fulfilled in the new country. Thus, the migrant expects to resolve some of his frustration with his native country through migration. In his book, The Uprooted⁽²⁾, Oscar Handlin suggests that the motivation to move is a conflict situation in the country of origin. Handlin classifies the motives as follows: (1) physical reasons, such as war or natural calamities like earthquakes, droughts, floods, climate, etc., (2) economic reasons, such as unemployment or underemployment, low mat-

(1) Samuel N. Eisenstadt, The Absorption of New Immigrants (Illinois: The Free Press, 1955)

(2) Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston, Little, Brown, and Co., 1952)

erial living standards, absence of social security, etc., (3) other reasons, such as family troubles, housing and occupational difficulties, the hope of the future, opportunities for children, or encouragement by relatives or friends who have already moved. Other motives are psychological: personal conflict, escapism, restlessness, difficulties of adjustment to existing social patterns, fear of persecution or of war, transcultural interest or a sense of adventure, social discrimination and political ambition, or professional reasons, such as a need for adequate research facilities.

The ability to resolve conflicts by moving depends on the individual's personal stability, age, the stability of family life, material resources, the information available at the time of the move, the kind of migratory experience and the possibilities of resettlement in the new environment for individual and family.

(3)
In The Outsiders,⁽³⁾ Becker applies the concept of "career" not only to the sequence of events that lead a person to establish a profession or occupation, but any sequence of events leading to a particular life pattern by choice or otherwise. Thus an Israeli who comes to the

(3) Howard S. Becker, Outsiders (New York, 1966)

United States goes through a sequence of events till he becomes a "yored." An Israeli does not become a "yored" immediately on leaving Israel; he goes through a long process of disengagement from Israel, of options which foreclose return. Even after having lived in the United States for twenty years, many Israelis still do not see themselves as yordim.

An article in the New York Post speaks to this idea.

A young woman will arrive to spend six months with an aunt, stay to study; a young man curious to see the world finds part-time employment and stays too. The months slip easily into years. Most of the Israelis insist they are here only temporarily, but most have probably left Israel for good. (4)

Many factors influence a person to take the first step toward yerida leaving of Israel. There are internal and external factors, but it is hard to judge how much these factors actually influence an individual to take that first step.

Not every Israeli is permitted to come to the United States. Even when he decides to do so, the Israeli still needs the resources to do so. Once he has them, he must apply to the United States Embassy for a visa, which is not given easily. Many do not declare it their intention to come as immigrants, but claim to come as tourists or

(4) Joyce Pannick, The City's Unsettled Israelis
(Post Daily Magazine - December 21, 1976)

students. This affects their opportunities in the United States, since persons with tourist or student visas are not legally allowed to work. Those who declare it their intention to work and stay in the United States face the quota system, which accords admission based on profession or the presence of relatives in the United States.

The influence of friends and relatives is another factor in one's decision to leave Israel. Those with friends or relatives who have already migrated are more likely to try their luck in the United States and feel safe in relying on friends or relatives to help them get established.

However, the main external reason that brings Israelis to the United States, and to Los Angeles in particular, is the strained economic situation in Israel. According to the limited literature that has been published on emigration from Israel, the main motive claimed by Israelis is economic. Here are some of the comments of Israelis:

We work hard six days a week, but you work to get something. In Israel if you have one dollar today you have one dollar all your life. (5)

If the money was better in Israel I'd go back tomorrow...Most Israelis don't like this country; they like the money. (6)

(5) Joyce Pannick, "The City's Unsettled Israelis" Post Daily Magazine (December 21, 1976)

(6) ibid

When we bought a condominium it cost \$70,000 and that is what you can spend for an apartment in Jerusalem. Here you have to put down only 20%; there you must put down at least 70% - That's the difference. (7)

Moshe Azoulaz, an owner of a Middle Eastern night club, says, "You know how they call Israel the land of milk and honey? Well I'd rather be near the cow. Israel is a nice place when you have money; when you are young and trying to develop a future, it's tough." (8)

Yitzchak Dekel who works at the United Jewish Welfare Fund admits that, "to return to Israel to any of the jobs he has been offered, all good jobs would be economically suicidal. He classes himself among the category of Israelis who own no real estate." (9)

On the basis of such sources, the main external factor in the Israeli emigration seems to be the difficult economic situation in Israel. Unfortunately, Israel is a small country that has faced four wars and continuous tension on its borders. At the same time, it is a country of immigrants which relies on the State for financial support. Many immigrants from the Soviet Union, North Africa and the Middle East were not allowed to take their possessions to Israel. This has made it necessary for the Israelis to pay for their settlement and support. According to the statistics in various Israeli newspapers, about fifty per

(7) James Feron "The Israelis of New York"
New York Times Magazine, (January 16, 1977)

(8) ibid

(9) Yitzchak Dekel "Israelis in America: Are they here to stay?" Baltimore Jewish Times (August 13, 1976)

cent of the Israeli budget goes for security and Israelis pay more taxes than any other people in the world. Thus it is quite likely that some people have a harder time making ends meet in Israel and few are successful in accumulating any sums of money since most of it is likely to go back to the state in the form of taxes.

American jobs offer a solution for some Israelis whose opportunities in Israel are limited. The American dream attracts the Israelis now just as it attracted the Irish or the Germans earlier. As James Feron said in his New York Times Magazine article of January 16, 1977:

In Israel, salary does not go as far; a lot of Israelis earn \$150 a week here and with that you can live. In Israel it is nothing...Here there is less of a limited environment, less of a financial burden. (10)

However, there are internal factors involved in the choice to leave Israel, factors which result from a variety of personal considerations. Leaving Israel is considered a deviant act; those who leave are regarded almost as traitors. They are called "yordim," which means "those who descend." What leads a person to take such a dramatic step which is considered deviant? What makes a person ig-

(10) James Feron "The Israelis of New York"
New York Times Magazine (January 16, 1977)

nore the existence of this attitude?

Since, as stated before, so many Israelis who leave Israel leave for economic reasons, what makes a person leave his country, his family, his friends in order to solve his economic problems? What makes others feel that they would not live anywhere but Israel regardless of their economic status?

According to Becker in The Outsiders, the first step in a deviant career is a non-conformist act, an act that is not socially accepted. In the case of the Israelis, leaving Israel is such an act. Becker says:

Many theories have been propounded to explain why some people have deviant motivation and others do not. Psychological theories find the cause of deviant motivation and acts in the individual's early experience which produce unconscious needs that must be satisfied if the individual is to maintain his equilibrium. Sociological theories look for socially structured sources of strain in the society, social positions which have conflicting demands placed upon them, such that the individual seeks an illegitimate way of solving the problems his position presents him with. (11)

A person whose life in Israel is deviant in some respects (for example, who has "problems with the law" or does not pay his taxes) is more likely to feel alienated from society. Such a person may develop "external reasons" that will motivate him to leave Israel, reasons such

(11) Howard S. Becker "The Outsiders" (pg. 26)
New York: The Free Press (1973)

as "nobody really pays taxes as one should and if you do, you can't live as a decent person." No sentence is more common in Israeli Hebrew than: "They're all cheats, no one pays taxes, and if you try to pay, you'll get screwed and won't be able to live."

A person who has no reputation to maintain, no conventional job, or no stable life style, is more likely to follow his impulses. Such a person is also more likely to believe that the American dream is meant for him, even though his qualifications might possibly not make his dreams come true.

Anxiety is constantly present in the life of the Israeli as a result of the national security problem and the personal sacrifices the country requires. These sacrifices include a lower standard of living, a lengthy military service, and frequent calls back into the army reserve. Most anxiety is created by the knowledge that one might oneself have to go to the front or have to send one's sons to the battlefield where they might be wounded or from which they might not return at all. Many deal with this concern by leaving Israel and coming to the United States, but those who opt for this solution may suffer other problems, for instance guilt or shame.

Uri Ben Ari, who works in the Israeli Consulate, says,

"Some fear the security situation at home. They can't take the pressure, the thought of fighting another war. (12)
They won't tell you that openly."

He also comments, "They know what they ran away from. They know what it is to sit on a tank and to have to hold an area that should be defended by 13 tanks and to defend it with only three because you have to, because the other ten tanks were knocked out. So you leave your family and friends and run away from it." (13)

Dr. Lachaim Naggen, an epidemiologist who returned to Israel and teaches at Ben Gurion University, wondered whether such people ever really integrate here any more successfully than they did in Israel. He notes their tendency to cluster together and settle in little Hebrew-speaking colonies. They did not make it in Israel, he implies, and when they get here, they are still burdened with what they ran away from there, themselves. (14)

As has been discussed, the factors that cause an Israeli to leave Israel and come to the United States are internal and external. However, the extent to which ex-

(12) James Feron "The Israelis of New York"
New York Times Magazine (January 16, 1977)

(13) Joyce Pannick, "The City's Unsettled Israelis"
Post Daily Magazine (December 21, 1976)

(14) Yitzchak Dekel "Israelis in America: Are they here to stay?" Baltimore Jewish Times (August 13, 1976)

ternal or internal factors predominate varies from one individual to another. For some, coming to the United States is a form of running away; for some an opportunity for economic or academic advancement in Israel, following a period of training in the United States. It is important to emphasize that going through a process of "yerida" would not apply to every Israeli who left Israel. Since, however, according to the literature and common knowledge from various newspapers, most of the Israelis do stay, I have dealt exclusively with this population.

One of the most crucial steps in the process of building a stable pattern of deviance is the experience of being publicly labeled as a deviant defector; yordim are considered by the standards both of Israeli society and of the Jewish community here. They are regarded as traitors and weak. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1977, referred to the "yordim" as "napolet shel nemoshot" (the droppings of an idiot). He amended this later to "hahalashim shebahalashim" (the weakest of the weak) and he added, "I see no justification, come what may, for anyone born in this country, or living here, to get up and say, 'I'm deserting the battlefield.'" (15)

(15) James Feron "The Israelis of New York"
New York Times Magazine (January 16, 1977)

The American Jewish community has the same feeling toward the Israelis here. For example, in the Solidarity Walk of 1977, the Jews of Los Angeles came by the thousands to celebrate Israel's 29th year of independence and among the crowd of over 25,000 strong were thousands of Jews from Israel. Many of them had fought in Israeli wars and suffered the loss of relatives and friends, but not one of the leaders of the Jewish community mentioned them or acknowledged the fact that these Israelis were war veterans. (16)

Gerald Bubis, professor of Jewish Communal Studies at Hebrew Union College, says, "The Israeli is urged, cajoled, enticed, cursed, bribed, excoriated, pleaded with, made to feel guilty, all in an attempt to be helped to return so as to regain the favored status of an Israeli in Israel, rather than the yored from Israel." (17)

Israelis who do not return internalize those negative attitudes toward themselves and see themselves as deviants. The society holds them in contempt, and eventually they come to despise themselves and project that feeling onto others.

(16) Ira Handleman and Moshe Jesse Kushman "The New Immigrants - Israelis and the L. A. Jewish Community" Devka (November 19, 1977) (5738)

(17) Gerald B. Bubis "Some issues and Response of the Profession" (New York - May 28, 1978)

Yitzchak Dekel, an Israeli who works for the United Jewish Welfare Fund, comments:

It is impossible that a quarter of a million Israelis or ex-Israelis now living in North America are all traitors, all cowards. They include many Sabras, graduates of all schools and youth movements, past members of Kibbutzim and moshavim, veterans of all pre-1949 underground organizations, veterans of all wars from World War II through the 1973 Yom Kippur war. Scores of thousands of them are academicians in every conceivable field. What is being done with this population? How do we relate to this 13th tribe? (18)

This attitude of Israeli society and the Jewish community has a great impact on the self-esteem of the expatriates. As a result, Israelis tend to cluster in groups and, of course, have one thing in common: their "yerida" from Israel. It gives them a sense of common fate, of being in the same boat as a result of having to face the same problems.

Although many Israelis came to the United States to solve some problems at home, they did not leave Israel with a clear conscience. Many of them carry a tremendous amount of guilt and are torn between two worlds, 'my heart is in the East though I dwell in the West.'

For example, Yaakob Schechter, a 42 year old professor of Genetics at Lehman Collge, says, "I will always

(18) Yitzchak Dekel "The Thirteenth Tribe - Israelis in America" (Los Angeles, June, 1977)

feel guilty about being here. It's something I will carry with me like another cross." Here are some other examples from the same article:

You don't have second parents and you don't have a second country. I'll go home someday. Not now, but someday...we live here, but our hearts are there.
(25 year old cab driver from Tel Aviv)

They are isolated, they live among themselves, they remain more interested in what Rabin says than what their local congressman says. They are living here physically but their soul is in Israel. (Uri Ben Ari)

Once in a while I get an Israeli intern at the other end of the phone, but neither of us acknowledges it because we don't want to answer the inevitable question. 'How long have you been here? When will you go back?' (a woman doctor) (19)

Israelis, like other immigrants, go through a series of crises. Once the Israeli arrives in the United States, he experiences culture shock. Handlin says of culture shock:

Emigration took these people out of traditional accustomed environments and replanted them in strange ground, among strangers, where strange manners prevailed, the customary modes of behavior were no longer adequate, for the problems of life were now different with old ties snapped, men faced the enormous compulsion of working out new relationships, new meanings to their lives...The immigrants lived in crisis because they were uprooted, in transportation, while the old roots were sundered, before new ones were established, the immigrants existed in an extreme situation. The shock and the effects of the

(19) Joyce Pannick, "The City's Unsettled Israelis"
Post Daily Magazine, (December 21, 1976)

shock persisted for many years...(20)

However, the degree of culture shock varies from one immigrant to another. It depends on his personality, his life experience, and his exposure to the new country. In the case of the Israelis, culture shock seems more intense because they have to deal with that additional critical factor, the negative attitude toward them.

Furthermore, culture shock is also due to the loss of experience which the immigrant goes through in the process of his immigration.

The records show that the immigration process of adjustment to the new demands may be a long and painful one since he has lost many of his old social relationships and stable rewarding situations which are inherent in them, and a new set of rewarding, coherent, and understandable social relationships has not yet evolved...(21)

Eisenstadt identifies three typical manifestations of culture shock:

1. General apathy to the major values and symbols of the new society.
2. Rebelliousness against values and symbols of the new society and an inadequate development of solidarity with the new system.
3. Verbal identification with the new country without

(20) Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted, pp. 68
(Boston, Little, Brown, and Co. 1952)

(21) John Clausen Socialization and Society, pp. 218
(Boston, Little, Brown, and Co. 1968)

acceptance of the institutional premises of such identification. (22)

George Foster also deals with the different manifestations of culture shock and suggests that immigrants may exhibit obsessive compulsive behaviors, paranoias, over-reactions to minor frustrations, denial of the language of the new country and finally a "feeling of helplessness and a desire for the company of people of one's own nationality...a terrible longing to be back home...to talk to people who really make sense." (23)

Generally, the next step that immigrants go through is acculturation and assimilation. Acculturation has been defined as "the process of becoming adapted to new cultural patterns." Assimilation has been defined as "the taking up or making part of itself or oneself: absorption and incorporation, digestion." (24)

A review of literature confirms the notion that acculturation is concerned with the immigrant's acceptance of and comfort with the various roles, norms and values of the new society, is a process which takes a lot of time

(22) Eisenstadt Absorption of Immigrants, pp. 64

(23) George Foster Traditional Cultures and the Impact of Technological Change (New York: Harper and Brother, 1962), pp. 187-188

(24) Webster's New World Dictionary, rev. ed. (1966)
S. V. "Acculturation and assimilation."

and patience.

However, in order to assimilate fully, the individual must identify completely with each and every aspect of the new country. Gordon defines assimilation as follows:

The adoption by a person or group of the culture of another social group to such a complete extent that the person or group no longer has any characteristics identifying him with his former culture and no longer has any particular loyalties to his former culture.(25)

Is that true with the Israelis? Do they assimilate and acculturate in the American context? The answer, suggested by the literature, is no. The Israelis are in a continuous crisis of culture shock, they are torn between two worlds with little assimilation to American life. There are Israelis who, after twenty years in the United States, still see themselves as Israelis. They are not ready to commit themselves to staying in Los Angeles. They are continually uprooted.

In addition to the guilt that they suffer, they are shamed and continuously confronted with rejection by the Jewish community. This adds to their guilt and blocks their chances of assimilation. Thus, although they remain here in Los Angeles or elsewhere in America, they still are paying lip service to living out of their suitcase. There is no end to their crisis.

(25) Milton Gordon, Assimilation in American Life
(New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) pp. 68

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory study of the experiences of twenty Israelis in Los Angeles. It compares and contrasts the attitudes of two groups, (1) individuals who, at this point, expect to return to Israel, and (2) individuals who, at this point, are ambivalent about staying in the United States.

Factors which affect these two groups fall into three categories: (1) the opportunity structure in Israel and the Israelis' satisfaction with it, (2) the options offered them in the United States, and (3) their relationship to their family and to other significant individuals in Israel.

The study is designed to explore the Israelis' adjustment to and satisfaction with Israel before they came to the United States, the nature of their plans with regard to staying in the United States or returning to Israel, the range of the opportunity structure for and careers of Israelis in the United States, and, finally, the relationship between the expatriate Israeli community and the established American-Jewish community in Los Angeles.

The Interview Guide

The data for the study were collected through inter-

views with an interview guide. The interview guide included both structured and open-ended questions.

All individuals were asked the same open-ended questions. In order to obtain comparable data, further probing questions were asked. The interviews were held in Hebrew. The questions were originally composed in English. After reading the questions, the researcher translated them into Hebrew.

In order to maximize spontaneous expressions, the questions were first presented in a general manner. Then more specific questions were asked. The basic questions related to (1) the interviewees' experiences in Israel and what motivated them to come to the United States; (2) their adjustments to life in the United States and the opportunities they had here; (3) their future plans; and (4) their attitude toward the Jewish community in Los Angeles. (See Interview Guide in the appendix)

Sample Selection

The accidental research sample was drawn from Israelis who came to Los Angeles since 1973 and have lived here since then; one came to the United States ten years ago. Since some Israelis who have come recently to the United States are not legal immigrants, there are no exact fig-

ures on the size of the Israeli "colony" here, although it is estimated that some 73,000 Israelis are residents of Los Angeles. The researcher developed the sample by contacting individuals and families she knew and they in turn, suggested others. A total of twenty interviews took place; included in the main were individuals from the student population within the 25-35 age range.

Interview Process

The interviews were held in the homes of those interviewed. The interview with individuals known to the researcher personally, took from two to six hours. The interviews were considerably shorter - half an hour to one hour with individuals who were not as intimately known.

The group which the researcher knew was quite agreeable about being interviewed, and the need to build trust and a sense of confidentiality was minimal. During the interview with these individuals, the atmosphere was friendly, close and cooperative. The interviewees were relaxed and ready to share as much as possible of themselves. In some cases, the interview seemed to be a therapeutic experience since the interviewee had an opportunity to explore aspects of life he or she had not examined before. The answers tended to be very long and many times went off

on a tangent. These interviewees appeared to feel safe talking about their concerns, frustrations, conflicts and opportunities in the United States or in Israel. As a result, the researcher felt the same closeness and felt safe asking for more details, clarification or depth when necessary.

With some of the interviewees whom the researcher knew, the atmosphere was a more social one. Humor, food, and getting off the track were characteristic of these interviews; a repetition of "Let's go back to the interview" was often necessary. These interviews did not start immediately. The first fifteen minutes were filled with friendly talk. There was less depth in the answers of this group than with the afore-mentioned group which was more serious about the interview.

Individuals who had been referred to the researcher by previously known subjects generally related to the interview in a more suspicious way and had some anxiety about sharing information. The need to build trust and reassurance that confidentiality would be respected was present to a much greater extent than with those whom the researcher already knew.

The initial contact with these individuals was made by telephone. Then the researcher went to their homes.

In the beginning, some of the interviewees experienced a degree of anxiety, were very concerned about confidentiality, and feared that the researcher would reveal information which the interviewee would not wish exposed. In some cases, the researcher had to assure the interviewee repeatedly that their names would not be revealed and that all information would be sufficiently disguised so as to maintain anonymity. Once some trust was developed, the interviewees appeared more open about sharing of information. Most of the initial answers were quite short, but once those interviewed felt more comfortable, they went into more depth with subsequent questions.

The researcher had some question regarding the reliability of some answers given by one individual. They were very short, one or two words each, and the researcher got the impression that the interviewee was trying to say things just to get over with the interview or to state wrong answers to test the interviewer's skills or judgment.

On the other hand, some individuals, whether the researcher had known them before the interview or not, apparently felt no great need for confidentiality and said, "You can mention my name and quote me." Their answers appeared the most reliable.

In one case, the atmosphere during the interview was

very tense. The interviewee was very negative about his whole experience in Los Angeles; answering the questions of the interviewer was a way to express his aggression. His voice was very loud, and the researcher felt that the interviewee was behaving as though giving a speech before a large audience. He got off the subject many times and the researcher felt as if she were kept at a distance.

Limitations

The nature of this study presents several possible limitations.

1. The number interviewed was small, and it is therefore, inappropriate to infer large implications.
2. The sample is accidental. The researcher included the most conveniently located individuals in the sample and excluded the "inconvenient" prospects - who might possibly have held another point of view.
3. The researcher preferred to interview mainly students or individuals who had just finished school and were already known to her. The occupations of the population for the study is not characteristic of the large Israeli population in Los Angeles.
4. The age range of the interviewees is between 25 and 35, a limit which may not be characteristic of this

group's age distribution.

5. Since the population from which the sample is drawn includes Israelis who have arrived in Los Angeles since 1973, their responses are not representative of Israelis who have lived in Los Angeles or the United States for more than five years.

However, since this is an exploratory study and there is very little information about the Israeli colony in Los Angeles, the study has a potentially suggestive value since its structure may constitute a start towards studies of more comprehensive research efforts with larger and more representative sample groups.

CHAPTER IV

THE ISRAELIS TELL THEIR STORY

In order to gain a better understanding of the Israelis in Los Angeles, their background in Israel and their current situation, the researcher interviewed twenty Israelis (nine women and eleven men). All have come to the United States since 1973 -- that is, after the Yom Kippur War, and all range in age from twenty-five to thirty-five. Three-quarters have an Ashkenazi background; the remainder, a Sephardic background.

Two interviewees are third generation Israelis; two came to Israel in 1956; the others were born in Israel or came to Israel at a very young age.

Among the interviewees were five Israeli couples; one from the Middle East with an Ashkenazi background, two interviewees were married to American spouses, three interviewees were divorced, and two were single.

As far as education is concerned, all but two of the interviewees finished high school in Israel and all came to the United States in order to study. Three-quarters of the interviewees are at present students; the remaining ones have either just finished school or have not yet started.

Economic Background: Three-quarters of the sample

said that they had had financial problems in Israel and had a hard time maintaining an adequate standard of living. Four interviewees said that they had not had economic problems and had been more or less satisfied financially in Israel; one individual described his financial situation in Israel as very good.

Three interviewees came from large families with eight to ten children; three from a family with four; two-thirds came from the model family size which included two children; only one was an only child.

Exploring family background and relationships in Israel was difficult. Many of the interviewees did not give complete answers. A few did take the time to talk very openly about their relationship and background in Israel. Some touched on some areas and some said very briefly the "relationship with my parents was good," or "I have a lot of friends in Israel and I had a very good social life," or "I do not have an answer." The researcher felt that some of the interviewees had difficulty in relating to this issue and, therefore, they had disclosed themselves to different degrees. Of those who were open, two described their childhood as unhappy; they felt that their parents had neglected them and that many of their needs had not been fulfilled. These two expressed anger toward

their family, as well as dissatisfaction with life in Israel. For example, one person commented, "My mother never gave me any attention; she never knew that I needed more than just to be fed..." With regard to the people in Israel, the same interviewee said, "I don't like the people in Israel; all they are interested in is what is going on in the neighborhood. In Israel you can't do anything without everybody knowing...One lives on top of each other... The life there is very limited; everything is very small." Another interviewee said, "I never felt close to my family; I always had to carry on my own life outside the home. Nobody in the family was really interested in what I was doing; therefore, it was not hard for me to leave them or to leave Israel."

The interviewees who grew up in the kibbutz all expressed dissatisfaction with their life there. They all had left the kibbutz even before they came to the United States. They felt that they had not had freedom nor the opportunity to be themselves; they had had to conform to the norms and the rules of the kibbutz and had not had space for themselves.

One interviewee said, "I felt helpless in the kibbutz, was very dependent, had to live under constant criticism... People were always around me. I felt that I had to escape

from the kibbutz."

Another said, "The society in the kibbutz is closed; the life there is very narrow. The individual does not have any freedom. When you visit the kibbutz, it seems beautiful, but you can't see the inside...The people there have concerns about such small things that I see it as a waste of time: For example, the bed-time of the children is such a small issue, yet the whole kibbutz was involved and the issue was on the front page of their newspaper... I can't understand how people continue living such a narrow life."

Although two interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with life on the kibbutz, they also highlighted some positive aspects of the life there. "The people there have values and they are more idealistic than the people in the town."

All the interviewees who grew up on a kibbutz expressed satisfaction with their relationships with their parents and two described very warm feelings and closeness to their families. Only one interviewee who grew up on a kibbutz said that he did not like the kibbutz but could not describe his feelings or thoughts as to why he had left the kibbutz.

Three interviewees who did not know the interviewer

previously indicated that they had not had a close relationship with their parents but did not go into much detail, nor show much affect as they described their experiences. For example, "My parents did not know how to express their feelings, but a lot of things bothered me and I blamed them for that." One said, abruptly, "I am not close to my family. The ties among the members of the family are not close." Another commented, "I am very different from my sister. She doesn't know what she wants out of life and I am more independent." Some interviewees expressed themselves noncommittally about other relationships in Israel. "There is good and bad in Israel and there is good and bad here."

Five interviewees expressed closeness with their family and with many friends, but had felt a lot of dissatisfaction with the life in Israel in general. They felt relief in many ways about being here. Examples of responses: "Israelis are very tense and it is very hard to live with them...Life there is very disorganized and very hard to cope with." Or: "I do not like the behavior of the Israelis; they are too aggressive; the people there are very tense and so very competitive that they become slaves..." Or: "The atmosphere in Israel is sickening and creates a lot of tension. I am sure that everybody feels this way."

Another response: "I would suggest that all the Israelis should come for two years to the United States to learn how to behave."

Four interviewees described their relationship with their families as close ones. They said they have a lot of close friends in Israel and feel homesick: "I feel very close to my family. This is what we miss here -- family." Another response: "Me and my husband are going back because our family is there; everybody is there..."

The Effect of Threat of War

All the women in the sample spoke of a fear of war, a fear of seeing people killed. "I hate the army and I hate killing!" was a frequent exclamation among them. All talked about relatives and friends who had been killed in one war or another.

Three of the interviewees had been officers in the army; those three expressed a strong sense of identity with Israel, and felt that Israel was the only place to live. They all had definite plans to return. They also expressed a lot of anger toward Israelis who stay in the United States. One expressed his frustration with his compatriots as well as with America thus: "Those Israelis who are leaving Israel ought to be 'killed'...I do not

agree with what they are doing. I can't understand them: They do not have money and so they came to the United States. They are looking for material opportunities. However, the question is, 'What are they giving up for that?' But I am angry at them because our country should not permit so many people to leave. Those Israelis are stupid and psychotic and their logic is distorted. They came to make money; then they realize how much they miss Israel. They feel emptiness, but when they realize that it is too late because they are stuck here, they can't leave their business and the opportunities they found here. Also, after several years, they find that they are not accepted here. They do not belong. They are not Americans, and they cannot change themselves into Americans. So now they are in trouble."

About the security situation, the same interviewees said, "The security situation is not a reason to leave or to stay. You learn to live with it; you do not feel the danger the way the people here think. Life in Israel is much more interesting and exciting than it is here."

Another former officer comments: "When you fight, you don't think about yourself much; there is a tremendous amount of pressure to fulfill your obligations. The security situation is bad but you learn to live with it like

other crises in life."

The remaining eight male interviewees had served in the army as regular soldiers. Some had a lot of ambition to go up in the career ladder in the army and had attempted to become officers, while others felt that it was sufficient to fulfill their obligation and not develop a career in the army. Those interviewees are opposed to killing. However, all except one said, "We are here but in a case of a war, we will go back to fight." All eight expressed dissatisfaction with the yearly Army Reserve requirement. Examples of comments: "We will have another war; this is our fate, like the fate of being in the Diaspora 2000 years. The thought that this is our fate is frightening, but there is no way to escape from the situation in Israel."

Another interviewee said, "It is a waste for both sides, ours and the Arabs. If there is a war, I will go back because I am a Jew... but I would not do what the government did; I do not agree with the government about many things." Another comment, "If there is a war, I will go back to fight. The yearly Army Reserves brought me here because it cuts into your life every year and disrupts everything you are doing."

Only one person said, "I hate war, I hate the army."

Coming here was a way to escape from the war."

The security situation in Israel and one's military background is a very sensitive issue for most of the Israelis in the United States. Most of the interviewees appeared to feel guilty or ashamed to be here, at least for this reason. There seemed to be a defensiveness which was reflected in the first thing that all the male interviewees said about this issue: "If there is another war, I will go back."

Reasons for coming to the U.S.

Thirteen interviewees stated that their main purpose for coming to Los Angeles was educational. Four had been technicians in Israel. It would only take them two years of study to complete their education in order to become an engineer in America. In Israel, they would have to go to school for four years if they are lucky enough to be accepted by the Technion. If they are not accepted, they cannot get the engineering education in Israel. One man said, "There is no B.A. in Public Administration in Israel, so I came to L.A." while his wife said, "I have a B.A. in Psychotherapy and wanted to get an M.A., which is not offered in Israel."

Financial limitations were almost of equal importance

with the wish for further education for four individuals. They found it difficult to maintain what they considered a decent standard of living. Typical comments included "We did not have a car; transportation was always a problem. We always had financial pressures!"

One person stated, "We came for educational reasons, but also I was not happy in Israel. I was looking for happiness so I came here. I am still searching. I am still questioning what I want out of life."

Another interviewee who had said, "I came to study here," added, "I just got married. For a couple to begin life in Israel is very difficult financially. It is impossible to buy housing or a car. The other reason is that there is nothing to keep me in Israel. I did not have any contact with my family; I was totally independent."

Some came for different reasons. Two said, "I came because I hated the yearly Service in the Army. I wanted something else in life and more adventures." One interviewee said, "I wanted to escape from the kibbutz. Coming here was an escape from the kibbutz, not from Israel. I wanted to escape because I felt that I was dependent. Also, I was twenty-five and not married, which put a lot of pressure on me socially."

Financial reasons were also combined with social ones.

Two stated they could not "cope with the cost of living" and did not like the social life in Israel. "I wanted to escape from my family, from the people. I did not have space for myself there. Here, there is so much room; everything is so big."

Although ostensibly the dominant reason for coming to Los Angeles for Israelis who were interviewed was educational, when a person decides to exchange his country and familiar society, his family, friends and home, and the world with which he has been familiar for all or most of his life, for a world that is not familiar at all, for at least several years, there must be also some other, more internal reasons. However, it was difficult to explore the internal reasons in depth. As indicated in the Methodology chapter, those interviewees whom the researcher knew personally were able to talk about internal reasons to a certain degree, while the interviewees who did not know the researcher talked almost exclusively about external reasons.

Several individuals had not themselves determined to come to the U. S. One individual said, "My uncle in America paid for my education as a wedding present. This is the only reason I came to study here."

Another had been sent by a company in Israel to study

electrical engineering for which the company paid the tuition.

Another stated, "I came to study because I had been sent by the Soschnut (Jewish Agency), which made it possible for me and my wife to come."

The fact that they did not make their own decision to come to the United States, did not appear to affect their plans about returning. One will definitely return, while another will probably stay, and a third is vacillating.

Life in the U.S.

Six interviewees expressed some negative reaction to life in the U.S. One said, "It is bearable; we have a student life; we did not come to settle, after all...It is not bad living here for a short time."

Another said, "It is a short adventure. I can't see myself living here." Yet another commented, "I am not satisfied with life here because I did not find the social life I had in Israel."

Two interviewees were neutral about life here. "Not everything is beautiful; there are things here that I like very much and some that I don't; there is bad and good."

Half the interviewees showed mild satisfaction with life here. Examples of reactions: "This is a good place

to live; it is a good place to make money." Another said, "The standard of living is higher here; the life is good; I am accomplishing my educational goals that brought me here."

Four interviewees were very satisfied with their lives here. One said, "Here I am so peaceful and it is much easier to live. Here you have a car and heat in the winter. Every place has air conditioning. In Israel, the weather is terrible and makes a person feel tired and tense. The everyday life in Israel is terrible. The manipulation and the unethical behavior are so common in Israel. Those cause one to withdraw. The competition in Israel is enormous. I do not like the Israelis' behavior. They tell you whatever they have on their mind; as bad as it is, you hear it. However, here, people are polite and nice. When a person says, 'Have a nice day' or 'Thank you very much' that makes me feel good. In Israel, you do not hear this said. I really found that here I am much more relaxed and peaceful; I like life here very much."

Another interviewee said, "The streets here are clean; people do not bother you. Here you have more freedom to do what you want to do and to be the way you want to be... Here everything is bigger and more beautiful."

Those interviewees who have definite plans to return

to Israel seem to see more negative aspects about life in the U.S. They see the U.S. as an experience that had a beginning and will have an end; therefore, they did not try to become established and get into the habit of enjoying the material things that are more easily available here. This group seems to have a strong sense of belonging to Israel: They miss their friends, family and Israel itself. One interviewee said, "It is more important to me to participate in building a country than to build a house in L.A."

The group with neutral feelings seems to include those who are still testing life here and themselves in the new surroundings. This is the group of individuals who live here, but feel some degree of closeness to their families and to Israel in general. This group plans to go back to Israel, but has no definite date in mind. Those satisfied with life in the U.S. have more doubts as to when they will return to Israel. People in this group try to obtain the material things that are available and are quite motivated to make money and enjoy life here.

Those very satisfied with life here, whether or not they said that they are going to stay in the U.S. made it appear quite obvious that they are putting down roots here and see life here as a viable alternative. The reaction

from this group was, "I would not swear that I am going back to Israel!" Or, "I have eighty years to live and I want to live where I would be the happiest - here I am happy." Or another reaction: "Ideology is important to me, but I would not let ideology dictate my life. I gave my share to Israel -- I had lived there for twenty-eight years. Now I am living for myself; here life is easy and I am glad to be here."

Most of the interviewees who have doubts regarding their plans to stay here as well as those who are definitely planning to stay, appear to have some uncomfortable feelings about having left Israel. This is reflected in their initial assertions that they plan to return.

However, the group with definite plans to return to Israel does not show this behavior. They appear to see the American experience as a potential trap. The group which sees America as ideal admits to no guilt feelings about being here. There are subtle suggestions that they might be "protesting too much."

Social Life

Four interviewees stated that they have only Israeli friends and feel comfortable only with Israelis. Some of them commented: "We are Israelis and we naturally look

for each other." One interviewee said, "We do not have contact with Goyim; they are so different; it is like they came from another world." It is interesting to note that this group expressed satisfaction with their social life here.

Ten of the interviewees expressed some hate or anger for other Israelis. These interviewees are dissatisfied with social life here; most of them emphasized that they do not have close friendships as they did in Israel. For example: "Here I do not find the Israelis that I met in Israel. Some Israelis leave Israel, but they do not know what they are looking for; they have a tendency to go around the world without a definite goal...Some Israelis I understand, because for some, the opportunities in Israel are limited, but I scorn the Israelis who came to make money and do it in not a nice way. They are representing themselves, but also, they represent Israel and that is very sad. Those are Israelis who did not succeed in Israel and are not succeeding here and do not know what they want."

Another comment from an interviewee who grew up on a kibbutz: "The Israelis here are not like the Israelis in Israel. They do not have the moral values -- they lie, they are impolite, they gossip a lot and they are manipu-

lative."

Another response: "In Israel I had closer relationships; here the Israelis we met are Israelis whose main interest is money and a diploma...Here there is no social life, there is just individualism."

Another: "Here I do not have close relationships like in Israel. The Israelis here are not open; they are narrow-minded. You can see it in every aspect of their lives."

Yet another: "I do not like the Israelis here and find it very hard to get used to them. Here you have limited choices of who your friends are. Many Israelis here do not have long-term plans and are very extreme in their views."

This group expressed quite a lot of anger and hate towards Israelis. Some of the hate and anger may be self-hate that had been projected onto other Israelis. Many of the interviewees see Israelis in Israel as all good, whereas they feel the Israelis here are all bad. It is possible that this group feels guilty and ashamed about not being there; this feeling of rejection leads them to project their guilt and shame onto other Israelis. The Israelis here, as stated before, are devalued by the Jewish community which ignores them, does not help them, or has a nega-

tive attitude toward them. Israelis also have a very negative attitude toward them in Israel where they are labeled deviants and called "yordim." Once an Israeli leaves Israel and comes to the U.S., he is confronted with this negative attitude, and he puts down other Israelis as a result of what he is going through in addition to the initial problems he had in Israel in one or more areas in his life there and is projecting onto other Israelis here. The whole attitude is black or white -- "The Israelis in Israel are good, the Israelis here are bad."

Six interviewees gave such a mildly positive response that it appeared neutral. For instance, "I feel O.K. about the Israelis here; my main contact is with Israelis." The brevity of their answer gave the impression that they had not taken the time -- or did not wish -- to think much about the answer in more detail. These interviewees were mainly those whom the researcher did not know before the interview.

Opportunities in the U.S.

Five interviewees came to Los Angeles without specific goals. They came to the United States because they felt that they wanted to try different experiences or different opportunities, be away from Israel, and have more

advantages in life. Some of them said: "When I came I did not know what I was going to do or in which field I was going to work!" "I came because I hated life in Israel and I hated the environment where I lived!" "I wanted to escape from the kibbutz and I wanted to be as far away as possible from it, so I came to the U.S."

These five went through many changes during the period of their stay here. The opportunities here structured their life in a way that the interviewees had not anticipated. For example, one individual who grew up on a kibbutz said, "I came to the U.S. without any skills, and when I came to L.A., first I worked in a cafeteria. After working for a while, I met my wife (she is not Jewish)... Then I met an Israeli who helped me to get a job in a plumbing store. I worked there for a while and now I am working as a plumber and I am happy with what I am doing because the money is good."

This group of interviewees has a definitely negative attitude toward their families and/or life in Israel, the army, the cost of living, the people, etc. They show dissatisfaction with life in Israel and see the United States as a solution in many ways; as one said, "My personal happiness is more important than ideology."

Four interviewees came with definite goals and also

have very strong ties to Israel. For them, career opportunities did not structure their lives, and they anticipated what they would do once they came to the United States. For example, one wife said, "We came so my husband could study here. We came four years ago and now my husband is close to graduation. We are planning to return within a year."

Another interviewee said, "Everything was planned when we came here -- our plans were to study. We are not planning to make money; therefore, the opportunities here did not affect our plans at all."

The interviewees with definite goals, have strong ties to Israel and their families and friends. It is notable that they have fewer material goods in their homes. One interviewee said, "We do not need fancy things because this is a very temporary home and we do not have the money for it anyway; most of the furniture is second, third or fourth hand..."

Several interviewees said the opportunities in the United States had structured their lives. They came with definite plans including a more or less definite time to return to Israel. However, the opportunities here changed their initial plans. The most common response was: "We came to study, to get a B.A. degree. But once we came, we

found out that it is easier to study, so we went on with our education toward the M.A. degree." Another common comment was: "Here it is easier to make money, and once you start working and making money, you see that you are accomplishing your goals and succeeding; then you start to like life here and you postpone the return to Israel." Another response was: "The money keeps the Israelis here. The job market here makes it possible for the Israelis to stay. Also, you can work and live comfortably while you are a student. It is impossible to carry on this kind of life in Israel while you are a student."

Another response: You get used to comfort -- when you have an interesting job and many, many things you did not have in Israel, such as two cars, one for you and one for your wife. It is so easy to fall in love with what the United States offers; it is so seductive, you keep on postponing the return to Israel."

As far as plans to go back to Israel are concerned, six interviewees said that they are planning to go back to Israel, but not now -- maybe in four or five years. Five interviewees said that they are going back, but they have not set a date yet. Those eleven interviewees expressed some dissatisfaction with life in Israel, but in a milder tone than the previous group who came to the United States

without knowing what career opportunities they would have in the United States. This group is less definite about the negative aspects of life in Israel.

The homes of this group are more attractive than those of the group planning to return to Israel within a short time. There are indications that the majority of the Israelis in the sample, have established themselves and sunk their roots here.

The relationship and attitude of the Israelis to the American Jewish community.

The response to this issue varies. Three interviewees said that they do not know anything about the American Jewish community. They do not have any relationship or contact with American Jews; therefore, they cannot judge them or have any feelings about them.

Three interviewees expressed positive attitudes to the Jewish community; they appreciate the community and its organizations and see a common bond between Israelis and American Jews. Examples of responses were: "I feel safe being among Jews; when I walk in a Jewish neighborhood, I feel safe because they know where I am coming from. Also, I feel that they like me because I am Israeli."

Another response: "The Jews like the Israelis very

much. They ask the Israelis about Israel as if we are the experts about what is happening in Israel...I feel at home when I am around Jews; I am the center of attention because I am Israeli."

A very positive attitude to the Jewish community in the United States is not correlated with any particular family background or attitude to Israel. One interviewee felt alienated from his family and had a very negative attitude toward many aspects of life in Israel. One interviewee said, "There is good and bad in life in Israel and the same is true here."

One interviewee has very close ties to Israel and to his family. The interviewees who had a positive attitude toward the American Jewish community appear to have formed their point of view through an initial positive contact.

The rest of the interviewees had some positive and some negative attitudes. Only three were extremely negative. Most of the interviewees were quite emotional when they talked about their relationship to the Jewish community and took more time to share their feelings. The positive attitude was mainly about the Jewish community as a whole, its structure, its organizations and its help to Israel. The negative feelings were more about American Jews as people and as a result of personal experiences with

Jews -- stereotypes the interviewees had with regard to the Jews who are not in Israel. Some of the comments included:

"The Jews here remind me of the Jews in Europe, who like to manipulate the non-Jews in order to make money. The Jews here have psychological problems. They want to achieve and be like everybody else, but they are not like everybody else. The Jew here is not like the non-Jew because he doesn't have good manners or good behavior. He is too busy manipulating the non-Jews and finding ways to make money...However, there are two kinds of Jews -- the intellectual Jews who like culture, values, art, music, motives and to whom the family is important, and the Jews who are materialistic. I am proud of the first group but ashamed of the other one."

Another interviewee said, "I appreciate the Jewish support for Israel. They have tremendous political pull, which is important to Israel. However, I think that some Jews here do not know why they are Jews...It seems to me that there is not much hope for the Jewish community, except for the Orthodox movement. Within two or three generations, the Jewish community will turn into a "reservation" because they do not know and don't want to keep their Judaism. Judaism is less important than money and

this is the dangerous part. Judaism doesn't have the chance to exist because the success of Jews and the success of Catholics are measured by the same things -- money. His status is not according to his Judaism but how much money he has, and for the Jews it is important that American society recognizes that his success and status is because of his money. It is not important whether or not he is Jewish or Italian. Once you accept American values, you stop fighting for your Judaism."

Another response which reflected a mixture of positive and negative feelings was: "They are a very organized community and know how to take care of their own people such as the elderly...They are very organized. However, I resent the mixed marriages and I resent the fact that you have to pay a lot of money in order to be a member of a temple. It is a crime that you are not allowed to pray unless you pay. Before Yom Kippur, I called a temple and asked when Kol Nidre would start. The woman who answered the phone did not answer the question, but she asked, 'Do you have a ticket?' and when I said, 'no,' she hung up. That was only one experience and I should not make generalizations because I know that some temples would respond differently. But it is obvious that the temples have turned Judaism into a business; that is very hard to ac-

cept."

Another response: I do not have contact with the Jewish community and I do not make any attempt to see anyone there. I can't stand the Jews in the Diaspora. They represent to me what my parents tried to escape from. They are fearful of anti-Semitism; they're not proud or strong. They are a minority that is assimilated. The Jews who come here are Jews who are tired of being Jews. In America, people do not ask you if you are a Jew or not. The Jews are comfortable with that...The Jews are running after the gold, but they do not think that others want it just like they do."

Another negative comment: "I hate the word 'Jews.' When I think about a Jew, I picture a Jew who runs after the dollar on Fairfax Street and would do all kinds of manipulation to get it."

Another response: "It is easier for me to relate to foreign students than to Jewish students, because at least with the foreign students, I feel I have something in common -- we are foreigners. Whereas with the Jewish students, I do not have any contact and Judaism doesn't make any basis for a relationship."

Another quite extreme comment was: "If you need help, go to the non-Jew; he is much more helpful and understand-

ing than the Jews here...Stay away from them..."

The most extreme feeling about the Jewish community was from an officer in "a special duty division" of the army who is planning to return to Israel within a year after his graduation. Most emotional and most hurt by the experience he had with his contact with the Jewish community, he said: "I want you to write word for word what I am saying now and you can mention my name. All the Jews have to be 'killed.' They are anti-Semitic. They are anti-Israeli. We are working very hard in Israel; we are sweating to build up the country; and they are sitting here safely. When Israelis come here, they (the American Jews) hit you in your face. In the Federation, they are not ready to talk with you even if you have a problem. We are giving too much to Israel, and when they have to give, their heart is in pain...We do not need their money or any of their help...When we came here, no Jewish family invited us to celebrate the holidays with them...I do not need them and not their money...There is no family who would invite us to light the Shabbat candles. My wife was pregnant and I called the Federation to ask if she could get financial help. An old woman answered the phone and said, 'there is no help! Your wife should have an abortion if you don't have money for delivery.' I called and asked

for job possibilities, but they hung up the phone without an answer. I am a student here and I am here legally. I am more legal than the Jewish elderly women who get all the help they want. I hate them! This is the worst experience I've had in the U.S."

From the responses, it seems that the feelings toward the Jewish community are related to several aspects of the Israeli stereotype about Jews in the Diaspora. Sometimes one or two experiences are sufficient to form a generalization about the Jewish community. Some responses reflect frustrated expectations or longings. These Israelis wanted the contact, but when they were refused, they went to the other extreme: "We do not need them or their money." In most of the cases of a negative attitude, the interviewee felt he had been rejected by the Jewish community when the phone was hung up without answer or attempt to offer help. For the Israeli the message was, "What are you doing here? Go back to Israel! This is no place for you!" This kind of message makes the Israeli who already feels guilty and ashamed, feel even more inadequate, weak and vulnerable to the destructive label of "Yored." It seems that the interviewees who were negative and had angry feelings toward the Jewish community, were returning in a way to the Jewish community what had been "dumped on

them." "The Jews are manipulative, run after the money, are dirty, etc."

Relationship with non-Jews:

Six interviewees have had contact with non-Jews and all have positive attitudes to them. The general attitude is that the Americans are polite, helpful, and it is easy to live in their midst. Many interviewees said that since they work, study and live among non-Jews, they started to build contacts with them and developed friendships. Eight interviewees said that one of their closest friends was a non-Jew. For example, one interviewee who is divorced, said that her best friend is also a divorced woman; they share a very painful experience. "She is very helpful and understanding." Or another: "My best friend is a non-Jew. I met him in school and it was very interesting to me to learn about his background. I enjoy being with him and his girlfriend because they are very polite and honest."

All but two of the twenty interviewees, have no contact with the organized Jewish community and have negative attitudes to it. The bulk also has negative attitudes to Israelis who live in Los Angeles. For many Israelis, being with non-Jews may be an escape from the trap of self-hate or of seeing oneself reflected in Israeli Jews or of

feeling rejected by American Jews.

Four interviewees said that their main contact was with Israelis and that they hardly know any non-Jews on a personal level. These four have a generally positive attitude to the Jewish community and have some contact with it. All four interviewees are staying in the U.S. without a definite time for returning to Israel. The typical response was: "I would not promise that I would go back to Israel. I am too weak to give up all I have here." Or: "I like life here. I do not have much in Israel." Or: "I do not feel guilty about staying here." And: "I do not know when I am going back to Israel."

Most of the interviewees have close ties with non-Jews. However, it seems that there are different reasons why they have such contact. For some it is due to the personal conflict they have in relating to Israeli or American Jews. Some do not like yordim and feel that they have more in common with settled people. Some may have contact with non-Jews because of subtle personality factors.

In summary, there appears to be some relationship between an Israeli's relationship with his family of origin and his decision to return to Israel. Interviewees who have a close relationship with their families are more eager to go back than those who feel distant from their fam-

ilies to any degree. Those who emphasized that they had a close relationship with their families also stated that one of the reasons for going back is to be close to their family. This group of interviewees also tends to have positive attitudes toward Israel and to see life in the United States more negatively. Those who did not have a good relationship with their family are negative about life in Israel and tend to glorify life in the United States. Those who did not reveal much about their relationship with their families, tend to have negative attitudes toward one aspect or another of life in Israel. This group also sees many positive aspects and only a few negative ones about life in the United States.

With regard to personal adjustment in other areas, most of the interviewees had difficulties in some aspect of their life in Israel. The most common areas of difficulty were educational and economic. However, most interviewees have made a reasonably good adjustment to the United States and are quite happy with their present circumstances.

As far as opportunities are concerned, most interviewees find they have more available to them in the United States than they had in Israel, especially economically and educationally. However, those who felt most negative

about life in Israel were most likely to be seduced by the opportunities to be had in America. Those who displayed a mixture of positive and negative feelings about Israel were also seduced by opportunities in the United States, but do not feel quite comfortable about the fact that they are here. Those who felt generally positive about their life in Israel were not seduced at all, and the available opportunities did not change their decision about returning to Israel. In other words, the stronger the ties to Israel and to the family there, the weaker the ties to the United States and the less seductive its opportunities.

With regard to social life, most of the interviewees had been more satisfied with the social life they had in Israel than in the United States. Many of them indicate that they do not have a good social life in the United States because they do not have time. They also find that they have less in common with other Israelis. On the other hand, most of the interviewees indicate that they have a close relationship with non-Jews because of what they find in common with them.

As far as the relationship of Israelis to the local Jewish community is concerned, it is hard to put the interviewees into categories. Some have positive attitudes and some have very negative ones to the Jews in the United

States, but their attitude is not related to any specific background. Negative or positive feelings about the Jewish community might be related to the initial contact of the Israeli with Jews in Los Angeles. This contact serves as the opportunity for the Israeli to test the negative stereotypes he acquired about Diaspora Jews in general and the American Jewish community in particular. One whose first contact is not a satisfying experience is more likely to generalize and put the entire Jewish community into the same attitude category. Such a person is more likely to be influenced by the stereotypes he brought with him from Israel.

CHAPTER V

Israeli Groups in Los Angeles

During the time the researcher was working on her thesis, she continued to get to know the Israeli community. A change of residence from student quarters enabled her to learn about three other major groups of Israelis.

One group consists of Israelis who are involved with the Church of Scientology. According to a staff member of the church, Scientology is a religion. Its definition is "the study of knowledge, or knowing how to know." It was started in 1951 by Aaron Hubbard. It basically came from discoveries he made while researching dynametics, which is a science of the mind, that man is a spirit and not an animal. The purpose of it is to improve oneself and the conditions in the world. However, various social agencies consider it a cult.

Over two hundred Israelis have joined the organization, and the number is increasing rapidly. An Israeli member of the organization asked me to join, providing me with an opportunity for some informal observation. The Israelis who are involved, find the Church of Scientology offers a haven. They say, "People there care about you, accept and try to understand you." Moreover, the Scientology people help newcomers to overcome obstacles and

supply guidance when it is needed. It is a place where one meets friends, a place where one can feel himself "an okay person" and have a sense of belonging. The Los Angeles Scientology organization has attracted so many Israelis that Scientology classes are offered in Hebrew and special meetings are provided for new Israeli members. The Israelis who join the organization take classes and spend from ten to thirty hours a week learning to "know how to know." Their class fees depend on how many recruits a member brings in -- the more recruits one brings in, the less one pays for the classes. The class is conducted mainly through the use of records and books.

The researcher has found the Israeli Scientology members friendly and ready to help new people feel accepted. The members describe themselves as feeling that they are in a very safe place, and that Scientology promises success in every aspect of their life. In other words, everything is good in Scientology, everything bad outside of it. Scientology teaches to "know how to know who they are and what they are all about" whereas the world outside is cruel, dangerous and hostile. Some members described the improvements since they joined the organization, in such aspects of their life as their financial situation, social life, marriage and self-esteem. The organization offers

many activities to Israelis around the Jewish holidays. For example, on Sukkot there was a very big succah, and over three hundred Israelis participated. The food, dancing and singing was strictly Israeli. For Passover, the Scientology group organized a big seder and encouraged Israelis who are not members to join.

The researcher happened to talk with an Israeli woman who had moved to Los Angeles a few months before Passover and complained about not having any friends and feeling very lonely. When the researcher talked with the woman shortly before Passover, she repeated that she had been invited to a very big seder and the people there were very nice and friendly, "real Israelis." She added that recently she had begun to attend weekly meetings. When the researcher inquired whether she was talking about Scientology, she said, "Yes" and repeated how great it was to be there. When I later asked about her experience at the seder, she said it was terrible and that she would never go ever again. She would not go into any details, but said it was very different from any seder she had ever experienced. Apparently, others are not so "turned off."

The researcher also learned about a group of Israelis who contribute to a social welfare organization in Israel. At present, the number of members is under thirty. How-

ever, this group is very active and some Israelis consider it a place to go for special events. For example, at a New Year's Eve party, the members organized over four hundred Israelis who participated; they raised \$1500. A big party was to be organized for Israel's Independence Day. The preparations were very carefully thought out.

For Purim, the party was small and very intimate as it was mainly for members. For the researcher, the atmosphere was reminiscent of parties held in Israel during her -- and the participants' childhood. Everybody came in costume, talked in Israeli slang, and partook of strictly Israeli food. People sang and danced Israeli dances. Once everybody was involved, children's songs and dances from the 1960's (when most of the members were still children) were sung and danced. The nostalgia of the Israelis and the importance of Israeli culture to their identity was striking. The participants appeared to be ready to go back to their roots.

The members of this group are Israelis who are well-established and have the means to contribute some money. They are Israelis who feel comfortable about life in Los Angeles and have no specific date to return to Israel.

A third major group of Israelis the researcher learned about are Israelis who came between 1976-1979. These

Israelis brought a lot of money with them from Israel and have big successful businesses. The group includes over three hundred Israelis who live in very large, exclusive homes, wear expensive clothing and carry on a "Savyon" type of life. Some claim that life in Israel is too easy; they reached the top, money-wise, so they came to the United States to climb higher. Many of them did not declare all their earnings to the income tax office in Israel and became tired of being cautious about their money. This group does not have any contact with the Jewish community in America and is not interested at all in seeking any contact. "We do not need them" is their attitude. Further, this group declares that they are yordim without apparent feelings of shame. A member of this group emphasized that the group is very exclusive and if one wants to become a part of it, one has to be "good material" in order to be accepted into it.

CHAPTER VI

NEW APPROACH TOWARD ISRAELIS

Migration results from some kind of insecurity, inadequacy or frustration with one's original society. The migrant expects to resolve this frustration with his native country through a move to a more promising location.

However, migration involves a series of crises. First is the shock of becoming uprooted -- the sundering of old roots before new ones are established. The immigrant goes through a series of losses when he leaves the country of origin: loss of familiar things, places, values, loss of many old social relationships and of the stability of situations, patterns of life, before new ones are established. The replacements are new and strange. The degree of culture shock varies from one immigrant to another. It depends on the individual's personality, life experience and exposure to the new country.

In the case of the Israelis, culture shock seems more intense because they have to deal with an additional critical factor -- the negative attitude to them. Once the Israeli leaves Israel, he is labeled a deviant person, a yored, "one who descended." In other words, he is seen as a traitor, as weak and inadequate. The Israeli also goes through more intense culture shock, because outside of his

country, he becomes a minority that has been devalued and rejected by Israel and the diaspora Jewish community.

The next step an immigrant goes through is acculturation and assimilation, an attempt at adapting to the new cultural pattern, identification with it so that the culture becomes part of the person's identity. The Israelis do not allow themselves to reach this step; in limbo, they are in a continual culture shock.

Twenty Israelis who were interviewed came from various backgrounds; some from kibbutzim, some from the city; some were upper middle class, others middle or lower class. The majority of the interviewees had experienced some dissatisfaction in the relationship with their family or with Israeli society. However, the main reason for coming to Los Angeles was educational. For many, educational opportunities were limited in Israel, and the United States provided an alternative. For the majority, the financial situation in Israel was a burden, and economic opportunities were a factor in their decision to leave Israel for the United States. Once Israelis come to Los Angeles, they find that opportunities are great, and often so seductive, that many Israelis stay. The majority of the Israelis claim that they intend to go back, but actually their style of living expands materially and they are establish-

ing themselves in Los Angeles. These Israelis seem to live in two worlds -- physically, in the United States, but psychically still in Israel. Most Israelis feel guilty and ashamed of being here. Most would be ready to go and fight in case a war broke out but would not be willing to live there. The majority is not assimilated to American life. The majority are Israelis in America without a feeling of belonging to America. Only a few of the Israelis interviewed felt positively about life in Israel and their families there. These few also have a definite date of return.

As far as relationship with the local Jewish community is concerned, most of the Israelis feel negatively towards the Jewish community, mainly because of what they perceive as the negative attitude of the Jewish community towards them. The majority of the Israelis experienced a feeling of rejection and inadequacy in their contact with Jewish social agencies and sometimes with individuals. To Israelis who already feel guilt and shame, such an attitude is like salt on a wound. As a result, the Israelis feel more distant from and rather negative to the Jewish community. The negative effect of American Jewish attitudes towards Israelis is compounded by negative stereotypes they bring with them so that the initial contact

sets the stage for a continuing sense of alienation.

In order to bridge the gap between the Jewish community and the Israelis in Los Angeles, several steps must be taken. The most important one is to make an effort to understand where they have come from, (both physically and psychically) to understand that Israelis who have come here are likely to be people who were not happy in Israel and came to the United States to look for a solution to problems they had in Israel; it is important to understand that those Israelis made a choice which was not an easy one.

It is important, moreover, to understand that the basis of the Zionist ideology is freedom. A person must have the freedom of choice to do what he wants to do with his life. The rejection of the Israelis who come here is like killing the most basic tenet of Zionist ideology. The concept which preserved the Jews for 2000 years while they were wandering in the diaspora is the concept of "freedom" which American Jews need to understand. To reject Israeli emigres, to regard them as traitors is to ignore Jewish myth, Jewish religion, Jewish philosophy, Jewish history.

The Jewish community must make an effort to accept and to welcome them and to invite the Israeli community to

be as much a part of the Jewish community as possible. Israelis must be accepted as people with a different culture, a different mentality, different manners. They should be accepted as people who grew up in Israel, struggled to build the country for the Jewish people who lived through wars and had been burdened in one way or another with their experiences. They came to the United States with scars which have to be dealt with. For some, the scars result from frustration with their families. For others, they result from their life in Israel and its social structure. Some were frustrated with both family and society. As it accepts other Jews, the Jewish community here should accept the Israelis who come to Los Angeles at a time of need. Most Israelis who leave Israel feel guilt and shame as they go through severe culture shock, including many psychic losses. They need help -- emotional and practical.

Education is a basic instrument in helping them. Agency staff must be educated to recognize - and empathize - with the Israelis' needs, to accept the Israelis as part of the Jewish community, and to provide the services that are needed in a manner that is truly helpful. The Jewish community has many social service agencies. Each agency should make an effort to make provisions for Israeli emig-

res and to serve them. The most important step that has to be taken is to "shake" the Federation from its attitude. The Federation has the money. The people who run it decide how to spend the money; therefore, the Federation's sensitivity to the emigre Israeli's need is most crucial.

Examples of services that could be provided:

Jewish Family Services

Special attention to the intake process has to be given so that the initial contact which the Israeli has with a treatment agency would be constructive. The policy that the client must show motivation by initiating the contact, should be reexamined. Home visiting must also be considered in some cases.

Concrete services have to be provided. The Israelis have come from a different social system and do not know how the system works in Los Angeles or what the resources are in the community. Helping them to become familiar with the system and adapt themselves to it is very important.

Counseling is very important. Israelis who come to Los Angeles are in a state of crisis; they have suffered major disruptions in their life; they are in a state of culture shock. Counseling has to be provided to deal with those difficulties.

Centers

The researcher's findings and observations suggest that the Israelis who have come since 1973 are mainly families with young children. The Jewish community center can be an important aid in the acculturation and integration of Israelis into the Jewish community. This can be done by providing Israeli children with a place to gather, a place where they can meet other Israeli children, a place where they can have a definite social and ethnic framework with which they can identify and be guided by. This can be done by providing activities familiar to Israeli children -- Israeli games, dancing, singing, trips ("tiyulim") whose purpose is to explore the museums and the environment, the mountains, beaches, parks and deserts. In addition, programs American in nature should be provided in order to help the Israeli children adjust to the American social system. In other words, Israelis would be helped to reduce their culture shock by starting with familiar things and gradually exposing themselves to new and unfamiliar activities. There should also be a place for the parents to gather for the purpose of Americanization. This can be accomplished by providing parents with groups ("hugim") offering them opportunities to learn about the American system, American culture, and American expecta-

tions.

Congregations

It is very important that synagogues and temples be sensitive to the Israeli who shows an interest in attending services, especially during the High Holidays. Successfully making the Israeli comfortable when he comes to services is crucial. The congregation is a social and cultural, as well as a religious place. When an Israeli feels comfortable in such a setting, he goes right to the heart of both Jewish and American culture and has an opportunity to acculturate rather than remain in a state of culture shock and uprootedness. During the High Holidays, Israelis look for a place to pray. How the congregation deals with Israelis who, though not members, do come to services is very crucial because for many, this is the first initial contact the Israeli has with the Jewish community. Yom Kippur is an important holiday for many Israelis.

It is important to help Israel emigres to become integrated into the Jewish community. This would serve several purposes: First, it would help the Israeli feel a sense of belonging, it would help him overcome the inevitable culture shock. Second, once the Israeli has overcome the culture shock and is somewhat acculturated, he might

have the opportunity to explore himself and his identity and even be encouraged to go back to his roots -- and to Israel -- voluntarily! Moreover, the children of such an emigre could be a good source for Aliyah to Israel since they are likely to have absorbed so much Jewish content from Israel at an early age and from their parents in America. Third, the American Jewish community would be enriched by the Jews who bring to the Diaspora the culture of the Jewish State, where Jewish history and tradition is a large part of Jewish identity. Israeli integration into the Jewish community might very well help the local Jews to feel more Jewish; being in contact with Israelis is the core of the Zionist and Jewish achievement in the world today.

In order to bridge the gap between the Jewish community and Israeli emigres in America, the following recommendations are made to press for changes in the Israeli system itself:

First, changes are needed in Israeli education. At present Israeli children learn all through elementary school and high school about anti-Semitism and its causes; how the Jews in the Diaspora are seen by non-Jews as ugly, manipulative, competitive, very materialistic, and lacking in dignity. Furthermore, Jewish literature is full of ex-

amples of Jews who do not have any self-respect and are manipulative and assimilate because they are too weak to continue as Jews. As a consequence, the picture that the Israeli student develops about Diaspora Jews is quite ugly. The Israeli who has come to the United States has brought with him many stereotypes about Diaspora Jews, and when the initial contact is negative, the Israeli automatically pictures the local Jews as he learned about them in school. Israeli education in this sense is self-defeating because the Israeli student does not have a realistic picture. It must also be pointed out that shlichim, recruiting for aliyah or fundraisers, may be handicapped by these perceptions in the crucial activity of "starting where the America is."

The second recommendation concerned changes in the social welfare system in Israel. Many of the interviewees are not happy people; they did not have close relationships with their families. The social welfare agencies have to show more concern for, pay more attention to the family as a system in its own right and deal with family problems not only on a concrete level, but on an emotional or psychic level as well.

Third, the researcher would recommend the elimination of the word "veridah" from the dictionary. Labeling the

Israeli who leaves Israel as a yored is cruel and destructive. Calling him a yored excludes him from the community and justifies his rejection of the community and its values.

When one thinks about the Jewish faith, one must not stop thinking about freedom. Freedom is the concept that kept the Jews for many generations from calling the Israelis who leave Israel as yordin. To label emigres with the term "yored" is to confine them in a prison where the message is: You are not wanted; you are weak; you are a traitor; you are the "weakest of the weak" (as Rabin put it). One who knows Jewish history must remember that what Israel and the Diaspora Jewish community are doing to Israeli emigres is similar to what non-Jews often did to Jews in the course of history - but why must this be tolerated? Can the Jewish community afford to perpetuate the rejection of any group of Jews? Is not the rejection of the Israelis another way of weakening the world Jewish community which already has lost too many? If we remember every Passover that we are strangers in Egypt ourselves, can we make our own people strangers among us?

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APPENDIX "A" - INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How is your life in general?
2. What have you been doing here: Work? School?
Social life?
3. Are you married? Divorced? Do you have children?
Ages?
4. How have the opportunities here structured your life?
5. Did you know any people here before you came? What
are they doing here now?
6. Who are your closest friends?
7. How is your relationship with your children as far as
living here? Are your children going to school?
Which school? Why?
8. What language do you speak with the children? Why?
9. What is the reaction to the Jewish community in the
U. S.?
10. What is your religious background?
11. Are you affiliated with the Jewish community? Syna-
gogue? Organizations? Have you received any service
from anyone? Are the children involved?
12. Do you have contact with the non-Jewish community?
13. Were you born in Israel? What is the country of
origin?
14. How was your life in Israel in general? Leaving
Israel -- Reasons?
15. Life in Israel - education, organizations, relation-
ships with family, etc. How much contact did you have
with your family? What does your family in Israel
expect of you?
16. How often have you visited in Israel? For how long?
How often do you phone there? How often do you write?
How often do you receive Israeli publications?

Interview Guide (continued)

17. What were your visits to Israel like? How do you feel during those visits? Do you feel comfortable living here after the visits, or worse, and why? Did it create more conflict for you?
18. What is your personal reaction to your wars? How have they affected your plans? What is your military background?
19. What are your future plans?
20. Do you have anything else that you would like to share with me that we have not mentioned yet?
21. Do you have any questions?

APPENDIX "B" - PROPOSAL
to

Westside Jewish Community Center - by: Sara Genstil, 1978

I. The Problem

Since 1973, Israelis have been coming to the United States in large numbers. Los Angeles is one of the main locations in which Israelis have been settling. According to the study I conducted for my master's thesis, I have found that many of the Israelis who come here are young families who were not doing well in Israel, financially, academically, or socially, and they have come to the United States hoping to find a better situation for themselves. However, once they arrive here at this "promised land," they face a major crisis: they experience isolation, guilt, and feelings of being lost in their new surroundings. Further, they experience rejection by the Jewish community. The most common questions asked of Israelis by the Jewish community here are, "Why did you come, Israel needs you?" and "When are you going back?" Moreover, some Israelis feel that the Jewish community looks at them as weak, especially after the comments made by Prime Minister Rabin. Further, they are called "Yordim," which is a Hebrew word which means "those who go down." Therefore, many Israelis who come to Los Angeles, because of the guilt

they feel about leaving Israel and the rejection by the Jewish community, do not have high self-esteem. They do not try to get to know members of the Jewish community. They see the Jewish community as a threat, and therefore, they are more likely to assimilate into a non-Jewish community or remain isolated.

Traditionally, the Jewish community of Los Angeles has helped every group of Jews that arrived here from anywhere in the world. The glaring exception to this policy has been with the Israelis. I think that now is the time to begin helping them, too. In terms of adjustment and assimilation problems, Israelis are certainly in great need of such help.

11. The Proposed Program to Solve the Problem

Since the problems the Israelis are having are basically social problems, it makes sense to turn to a social agency as Westside Jewish Community Center for the solution.

Several existing programs at the Center could include Israelis via outreach work into the Israeli community. Further, new programs geared toward meeting those needs specific to Israelis could be implemented.

A. Inclusion of Israelis in Existing Programs via Outreach

1. "Baby and Me"
2. "Mommy and Me"

3. The Center Nursery School
4. Programs for school-aged children
5. Singles groups
6. Men's groups
7. Women's groups

B. New Programs Geared to Israelis

1. A parent group in conjunction with the nursery school. Israeli and American parents would have the opportunity for interaction and sharing experiences about the children. Finding a good nursery school is a major problem for Israeli families. I would like to see the parents contribute to the school by teaching songs, talking about Israel, and introducing their customs, food, and culture to the children.

2. Special programs for school-aged children. Since Israeli children come from an environment where socializing and moving about freely is an important part of the culture, I would suggest the Center provide "tyulim" for both Israeli and American children. The purpose would be to explore the environment in Los Angeles and the surrounding area. Trips could be taken to the mountains, beaches, parks, desert, and museums. The children could, for example, visit the tide pools and museum at Cabrillo beach, the Arroyo canyon at Pasadena, the beaches and bay in Long Beach, the San Gabriel Mountains, and the desert out towards Palm Springs. This would give all the children new

and fascinating exposures to their world and an opportunity to socialize. Such "tyulin" would focus on singing, getting to know one another, sharing experiences, preparing food together, and/or sitting at night around a small fire (a "medora").

Giving such an opportunity to both groups, Israeli and American children, would be a big service. The Israeli children would have an opportunity of continuing to appreciate and accept their Israeli culture and at the same time they would have more interaction with American children without feeling that they must forget their own culture to do so. The American children would have the opportunity to learn more about Israel, its culture, and to provide a positive way to strengthen their Jewish identity. Since the climate in California is similar to the Israeli climate, it lends itself to such an outdoor program for the children.

3. A parent group for the above children's group. In addition to providing formal support and guidance to the activities of the children, I would suggest "Hugim" where the Israeli parents and American parents of the above children would also have the opportunity to get to know one another and be familiar with one another's cultures. In such "Hugim," I would suggest that every parent would

prepare a project, such as showing the group how to prepare a certain dish, or discussing a special experience from their different cultures. Having such a project time would allow everyone the opportunity to be a leader. Also, I would suggest that the "Hugim" would provide an opportunity for the adults to talk about their problems and give support to one another.

In such Hugim, the American parents and the Israelis would become familiar with one another's background and ultimately this would decrease their differences and the gap between the two cultures.

4. An EnglishUlpan to help Israeli adults learn English and to include the teaching of other aspects basic to American culture to give them additional skills and to become more familiar with the system here. Possibilities for future development could include a teen group, rap groups, a boost to the Israeli Student Organization, etc.

III. Program Evaluation

Evaluation of the success of such programs would be simply a function of numbers of Israelis who became involved. Involvement automatically would contribute greatly toward Israelis' adjustment to and assimilation into the Jewish community here.

IV. Proposed Budget

Nearly all of the above proposed programs would require an Israeli Programs Coordinator plus the involvement of the existing Center staff. The Coordinator's position would demand, at least initially, about twenty-five hours per week.

Thus, the following would need to be budgeted for:

Israeli Programs Coordinator
Office supplies, printing, postage, etc.
Transportation costs

V. Conclusion

There is a great need in Los Angeles to help the recently-arrived Israelis to adjust and become assimilated into the Jewish community. Programs for them at Westside Jewish Community Center are probably the best starting point.