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THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE  
IN THE AMERICAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY:

The factors making for acceptability of Jews in  
American colleges and universities from the close  
of the Civil War to the end of World War II

Gary T. Greenebaum

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requirements for Ordination

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Referee, Professor Jacob Rader Marcus

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## Thesis Digest:

### THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN THE AMERICAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

A history of the relationship of the Jew with the American college and university tells an integral part of the story of Jews in America. As Jews arrived in the United States, seeking a life in freedom, they saw before them opportunities for economic and social stability. As succeeding generations of new American Jews sought success, higher education figured increasingly into their plans.

While Jews looked for opportunities, the colleges and universities in America were changing to meet the demands of an industrializing society. Jewish preparedness for college and university study coincided with the institutions' growing interest in and ability to offer practical education for viable careers.

Anti-Semitism in America developed in the last decades of the 19th century and peaked in the 1920's and 1930's. Anti-Semitism on campuses was strong, manifesting first in social discrimination and by the 1920's in active programs designed to check the flow of Jews into colleges and universities in the U.S. Quota systems were established to limit the number of Jews in undergraduate and professional programs. This systematic exclusion of Jews not only affected their ability to receive the education they desired, but was designed for, and often succeeded in, limiting their access to the more prestigious middle class occupations.

By the turn of the century, the Jewish population on many college campuses was large enough to support Jewish student organizations. Many of these organizations were begun in reaction to Jewish exclusion from fraternities, societies and clubs. Other Jewish groups began out of more positive desires to discuss Jewish issues, conduct religious services, to work for Jewish causes, or to seek the society of other Jews.

Between 1865 and 1945 Jews attended colleges and universities in increasing numbers. Though discrimination caused painful incidents and in many cases denied career opportunities to Jews, most Jews who desired higher education were able to receive it, and most who sought professional training made their way into professional schools. Though the stance of schools toward Jews was decidedly negative, particularly after 1900, Jews were able to make the best possible use of the American colleges and universities.

Gary T. Greenebaum

1978

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### Introduction

A history of the relationship of the Jew with the American college and university tells an integral part of the story of Jews in America. The Jews who immigrated to this country from Western and Eastern Europe brought with them exaggerated accounts of life in the Golden Land. But their dreams of gold--of economic and social security--were shattered upon their arrival in the United States. What most found instead were the common substances of poverty with which they had long been familiar. Though many found security, some even wealth, through business, it was not until Jews began attending college that the formula for economic and social success was found: the colleges and universities of this free society would provide the necessary alchemy to turn America into a Golden Land for the Jews.

But as Jews began attending colleges and universities in pursuit of professions, they found barriers of discrimination thrown up to limit them. As anti-Semitism rose in the twentieth century in the United States, particularly following World War I, Jewish quotas were established. Schools which had at one time granted admission to anyone who could meet minimum academic standards and could pay the expenses of tuition and books, became selective in admissions, particularly where Jews were concerned. It would not be until the 1960's when the last quotas for Jews would finally fall.

Nonetheless, the vast majority of Jews who desired a

college degree were able to find admission to a college or university, though often not to the school of their first choice. Professional schools were in most cases more difficult for Jews to enter. Those professional schools with limited enrollments, particularly medical colleges, restricted their acceptance of Jewish students drastically. And yet, the number of Jews that received professional degrees was far greater than their representation in the general United States population.

When Jews went to college, and why, the difficulties colleges presented and the successes they helped to provide, constitute this history and presage the present condition wherein over 75 percent of all college-age Jews are currently in college.<sup>1</sup>

The period under consideration spans the years from the end of the Civil War to the end of World War II. Within this frame are found the major components of the relationship between Jews and the colleges and universities of this country: the adaptation of the college and university to an industrializing society; the Jewish desire to enter the "free" professions; the fear on the part of the "Old Guard" of American society that the Jews would destroy one of their last and surely their most effective instrument of elitism; the democratization of the college and university; the development of campus society and the Jewish response to it; and the success made by Jews because of their tenacity in seeking higher education, and the good uses to which they were able to apply it.

Footnote  
Introduction

<sup>1</sup>Fred Massarik, National Jewish Population Study  
(Los Angeles: Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, 1971).

## Chapter One

### COLLEGE INROADS: 1865-1900

#### German Jews and Their College Beginnings

It has been estimated that the number of Jews in America stood at only 15,000 in the year 1840, had increased to 50,000 by 1850, and was leveling off just prior to the Civil War at 150,000.<sup>1</sup> Though the earliest Jewish immigrants to America were Sephardic Jews, hailing originally from Spain and Portugal, after the year 1735 they were outnumbered by Ashkenazic Jews who traveled to the New World from Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup>

The first mass immigration of Jews to the United States began in 1836 and lasted until the Civil War intervened. These immigrants were mostly from Central Europe, though they included in their numbers a sizeable portion of Eastern European Jews. Those who arrived before 1848 were poor when they reached the American shore. But they possessed the skills and knowledge of the merchant training which they had brought with them from their former homes. The Jewish immigrant of this period has been described as, "a plucky, hard-working, honest, frugal, illiterate individual."<sup>3</sup> The immigrants who came from Germany after the Revolution of 1848 included in their ranks intellectuals, and many others who had pursued more lucrative occupations in Europe.<sup>4</sup> For these individuals, acculturation and economic stability came more quickly.

In the years following the Civil War, America was industrializing. Opportunities for the Jewish immigrants, which

before the War had been good, if rigorous, now seemed nearly limitless. Immigration did not pick up again in the decades after the Civil War since full-emancipation had been granted in all of Germany.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the prospering Ashkenazic Jews became fully Americanized by 1880. By this time the great majority of them were in middle class occupations. Of this period, Nathan Glazer notes:

German Jews were not only peddlers and merchants, but also manufacturers, intellectuals, politicians, and even workers, active in every sphere of American life. For the first time one finds American Jewish professors, judges, congressmen, doctors, lawyers.<sup>6</sup>

And Professor Jacob Rader Marcus states:

As the industrial age moved into high gear in the days after the Civil War, Jews turned in ever increasing numbers to manufacturing. Their presence was most evident in the apparel industry. Some of the children of the German immigrants went to the better colleges and universities and entered the fields of law and medicine and science.<sup>7</sup>

Having been unable to even consider a profession for themselves due to the hardships they experienced during their first years in the United States, or possessing aspirations for their sons which they had never had for themselves, German Jews began sending their children to college after 1880. This tendency by Jews to begin attending college coincided with the liberalizing of the American college and university, its turn toward offering more practical programs of study. In joining the burgeoning middle class in America, the Jew also joined the rush for college education which between 1890 and 1925 would cause college enrollments to increase at nearly five times the rate of the increase in population.<sup>8</sup> In 1890, a government census of Jews which

consisted of interviews with ten thousand Jewish families mostly of German origin, showed that five percent (or 500) of the men surveyed were in the professions.<sup>9</sup>

The number of German Jews entering college at this time was significant but not large. Most sons of immigrants followed their fathers into business. A son, himself seeking mostly economic success, might choose for a short time a fee school which offered business courses. But a college education was simply unnecessary at this time for one interested in a business career. And the sooner one entered the business world, whether alone or with the family, the earlier he would reach financial solvency, and begin to realize his goals for success.

German Jews who attended college between 1865 and 1900 were usually the sons of men who had found more than the usual measure of success since coming to America. That small percentage of businessmen who quickly rose to a wealthy middle class station, or those who had come to America with money or European education sent their children to college.

The newly wealthy among the German-Jewish immigrants were, in fact, joining with other Americans of new prosperity in sending their children to college. Near the end of the century, college was being

...recognized as an agency of social and economic mobility. By 1897 one observer remarked that 'if it is at all noteworthy that many of the very rich men of the United States, who have made their riches by their own energy and foresight, are not college-bred, it is certainly most significant that the sons of these men are receiving a college education.'<sup>10</sup>

### Transformation of the American College

During the period when the German-Jewish immigrants were growing accustomed to their new country, great changes were being wrought in the sacred halls of American colleges. The years following the Civil War would mark the most significant alterations in the entire history of American higher education. These changes occurred as responses to a variety to criticisms. The effect was to transform colleges into popular institutions, offering vocational, professional and scientific training. By the 1880's, when German Jews and even some newly arrived Russian Jewish youth began matriculating at colleges and universities in significant numbers, most of the transformation of colleges to a practical emphasis had been set in motion.

Though early calls for change had been made by some professors and administrators, colleges were serving the same old ideals and the same old constituencies until the Civil War. The old schools of the Northeast and the Old South served "as standard bearers of traditional knowledge, as centers of cultural adornment, and as finishing schools for political and social leaders drawn from a very small segment of the population."<sup>11</sup> As such, they were elitist institutions, denominational, self-perpetuating and anything but democratic. They were unpretentious when it came to scholarship, preferring to mold young men of good character through the inspired teaching of classical subjects. These subjects, such as Greek and Latin, ethics and metaphysics were taught to develop the higher faculties in the students.

These courses were not intended to prepare the student for any special career, but were supposed to ready the young man of good breeding to live as he properly should.

The old college was coming to be seen by many as an anachronism, needing to be either redefined or forced into a marginal existence. Several new models and new ideals had begun to threaten its viability. And as American industrialization was stepped up after the Civil War, transforming the cities and farms alike, many were asking what possible purposes the old college would serve in this new age.

Beginning in 1862, the federal government provided the means for every state to form at least one land-grant college. These land-grant colleges were Jacksonian in design, meant to offer a practical education to anyone who desired it. Initially they were intended to be agricultural schools applying science to farming. But they also successfully promoted the idea that practical education was a legitimate purpose of a college. The land-grant schools began receiving financial allotments from the states, monies which had formerly gone in support of the old private and denominational colleges. Now without state support, the old schools found themselves in a position where they had to make some changes in order to increase enrollments, and thereby increase tuition money and endowments.

The question of whether science would be allowed to stand side by side with the traditional curriculum posed another challenge to the old colleges. The simple fact is that, "the fundamental movement that destroyed the old unity

[of the definition of college] was unquestionably the persistent rise of science...."<sup>12</sup> This challenge to the old order by the advocates of science did not only put pressure on the established schools, but caused new schools to be formed as well, which soon began competing with the older schools for students of academic potential. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology was opened in 1867, and by 1897 had an enrollment of 1200 students. Here was an independent institution reaching for success, which had as its purpose the study of applied and pure science.<sup>13</sup>

But perhaps more threatening to the supporters of the old college was the establishment of Cornell, which opened in 1869, and Johns Hopkins, which began teaching in 1876.

Cornell was partly endowed by private contributors and partly funded by the land-grant. Its leaders were determined to mesh the practical and vocational with the classical. Where the land-grant colleges began primarily as vocational schools, and M.I.T. undertook to teach only science, the launching of Cornell showed the possibility of integrating the two curricula.

The establishment of Johns Hopkins was not only a response to science, but also an attempt to transplant the German model of the university to America. Johns Hopkins was dedicated to its graduate programs, to scholarship, research and teaching.

The first American Ph.D. had been awarded at Yale in 1861. The old colleges, at the time Johns Hopkins was

established, had hardly begun the business of offering graduate programs. Most graduate programs were not begun until the 1870's, 1880's, or even the 1890's. In 1884, Harvard had only 19 Ph.D.'s on its faculty, which totaled 189 professors.<sup>14</sup> And though the old schools were slow in making changes, the emerging state universities were able to take their cue from Hopkins. "Eventually,... the state universities became the repository of the spirit of science and scholarly inquiry across the land."<sup>15</sup>

The state universities are responsible for a development which aided in the democratization of colleges and universities. Since their funds were provided principally by the state, the state universities felt required to provide higher education for the youth of the state. But by 1870, most local school systems were offering low quality education. High school graduates were usually unable to begin a college-level curriculum. The state universities would either have to open preparatory departments similar to those in the old colleges, or find another solution. As an arm of the state, the universities were able to set up a program of certification. Under the certification program, representatives of a state university would travel annually to evaluate the quality of high school education being offered in various communities. Those schools which qualified were given certification, and any student who graduated from a certified high school could be accepted at the university. Begun in Michigan in 1870, the system of certification was quickly

adopted by other states. "Before 1900, 42 state universities and land-grant colleges and at least 150 of the private institutions had adopted some form of certification, or accrediting as the system was also known."<sup>16</sup> With the rise of good quality, free, secondary education, colleges and universities were for the first time approached by students other than those possessing established wealth. And these newly arrived students had little interest in subjects which would refine their minds and uplift their souls. Rather, they sought coursework which would prepare them for careers. By 1909, the percentage of students who entered college after graduating from a public high school rather than from a private preparatory school, a preparatory department of a college, or began college after extensive (and often expensive) tutoring reflected the democratizing effect upon colleges by the high school certification program:

Princeton	22%
Yale	35%
Harvard	53%
M.I.T.	71%
Univ. of Wisconsin	92%
Univ. of Minnesota	95% <sup>17</sup>

By 1880, the old Northeastern schools, and the other, less well-known denominational schools were coming to face the realities of their positions. They would have to adjust to curriculum changes and democratization or lose all relevancy in this industrial age. "It was generally conceded [by 1880] that training students for careers in business, engineering, scientific farming and the arts was compatible with the ideals of a college, and a variety of new professions,

such as accounting and pharmacy, made their appearance in American colleges for the first time."<sup>18</sup> The remodeled university also did away with the apprentice system for careers such as law, converted medical studies into more responsible programs and created and developed advanced study in education as a discipline, as well as journalism, forestry, social work and veterinary medicine.

German Jews who had entered the middle class through hard work and often perilous financial situations began seeing a college education, preparation for a career, as a preferable alternative for their children to the pathway to success which they had followed. And, though there was still opportunity for success in business, a career requiring a college education could provide prestige and high-status social contacts as well as success. No matter how much the years since the Civil War had made colleges and universities into schools for the masses, at least the idea of a college or university education maintained its patina of the old upper-class prestige.

#### The College Experience for German Jews

Not surprisingly, German Jews who began attending college in the 1880's often chose, when possible, schools that offered high status, preparation for a professional career, or both. Johns Hopkins, which opened in 1876, graduated its first Jewish undergraduate student in 1884. Out of nine graduating seniors in 1885, two were Jews. And in the years that followed, the number of Jews at Johns Hopkins increased

as the school enlarged. Most of these students were in pre-law or pre-medicine programs. Four Jews received Ph.D.'s from Hopkins by 1889. Of these four, three were hired as Johns Hopkins faculty members.<sup>19</sup>

An article in the American Jews Annual of 1889 had this to say about the Jews attending Johns Hopkins:

The few Jewish graduates during the first years of the University, and the steady number of them in recent years indicate that our people [the Jews in Baltimore] have awakened to the richness of the blessing so near to them.<sup>20</sup>

And Jews in other parts of the country too had "awakened to the blessing" of college degrees. Jews in small but growing numbers were appearing at Harvard, Yale, and most of the other old prestige schools of the Northeast, at Columbia and New York University, and at public institutions such as the College of the City of New York.

It is not possible to accurately determine the number of Jews, either of German or Russian background, who went to college before 1900. No surveys of colleges as to ethnic or religious origins of their students were conducted before 1900. And studies of Jewish occupations at this time, which include figures on the number of professionals, do not include Jews who had some college education or even received degrees but did not pursue courses which were in preparation for specific careers. Statements made by individuals about Jews in college at that time strongly suggest that a growing percentage of Jews were attending college after 1880, and as the years moved toward the twentieth century, the number of Jews in college increases.

In his history, Three Centuries of Harvard, Samuel Eliot Morison had this to say concerning the small number of Jewish students at his campus:

The first German Jews who came were easily absorbed into the social pattern; but at the turn of the century the bright Russian Jewish lads from the Boston Public Schools began to arrive. There were enough of them in 1906 to form the Menorah Society, and in another fifteen years Harvard had her 'Jewish Problem.'<sup>21</sup>

As early as 1872, General Alexander Webb, president of the College of the City of New York, denied the request of Jewish students to be excused from classes on religious holidays, unless the students were willing to forfeit their grades for those days. Since such forfeiture would jeopardize these students' chances of receiving scholarship honors, the Jewish students protested to the Executive Committee of the College.<sup>22</sup> The Executive Committee granted exemption from class without penalty to the Jewish students, thereby recognizing "the importance of this new element."<sup>23</sup>

Isaac Markens, in his volume, The Hebrews in America, published in 1888, listed only nine men as Jewish college professors in the United States. In his chapter of biographies of prominent American Jews, over half are doctors or lawyers educated in America. A few others are listed as professors or writers. Of those who became doctors or lawyers, almost all were educated in the 1860's and later studied in a professional school rather than through apprenticeships. A few, however, had no undergraduate training but entered a medical or law college right out of high school or its equivalent. Only two or three in the entire listing of over

one hundred individuals received an undergraduate degree without seeking a profession of any sort. Of the few women listed, two had attended a Normal College. Several individuals, though raised in the United States, were sent to Europe to study. Most of the professionals listed, but not all, came from already prominent backgrounds. A few immigrated in their teens or early twenties and sought professional training.<sup>24</sup>

From Markens' biographical sketches one sees that the free professions of medicine and law were much preferred by Jews at this time over any others. These professions were unrestricted to Jews since after completion of studies one was free to enter practice alone or with colleagues. This tendency for Jews to seek the free professions over any other professional career would continue through much of the present century.

The college experience for most of the German Jews who attended college at this time was positive and fulfilling. Numbering less than three or four percent of the student body except at free, public institutions, they were subject to little discrimination. Since they were at college to acquire the needed education to pursue specific career goals, they were for the most part serious and successful students.

Cyrus Adler, in his autobiography, I Have Considered the Days,<sup>25</sup> describes the atmosphere at the University of Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins. His experience may be seen as rather typical of German Jews who attended college in his generation. He came from a fairly cultured, solidly middle-

class background as did many of the other German Jews who went to college in the 1880's and 1890's. Adler speaks with great affection toward his years as an undergraduate student at the University of Pennsylvania and as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins. He relates episodes of his undergraduate days that include pranks and fights between the Freshman and Sophomore class, but no discrimination:

I remember only two experiences with University of Pennsylvania Provost Dr. Charles J. Stillé. Chapel was compulsory. As a Jew, I did not feel that I ought to be compelled to go to a Christian chapel, so after a few weeks at college, I marched myself to the provost's office and asked to be excused from Chapel. When he inquired my reason I gave it, and he said I was excused. Being satisfied that I was not compelled to go, I used to go to chapel about three times a week...<sup>26</sup>

The years Adler spent as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins were filled with long hours of study and congenial companionship with his fellow students. At this time, Johns Hopkins was still in its infancy. When it came time for Adler to graduate and seek a teaching position, he received treatment which would later be denied Jews at most colleges and universities in the country:

On looking back over this chain of events, I cannot help but feel that the faculty and trustees of Johns Hopkins were extraordinarily kind to me and did everything in their power, waiving many rules, to make it possible for me to become a member of the teaching staff. It was true that there was not much competition, because I was the first person to receive the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Semitics from an American University.<sup>27</sup>

When he wrote his autobiography which was published in 1941, Adler was aware of how many difficulties he had been able to avoid by receiving his education then, before 1900,

rather than at a later time:

Whether as a boy at school or a student at the University of Pennsylvania or Johns Hopkins, I always mingled freely with all friends and students without regard to their creed or origin, or their color, and as I look back upon that period I feel sure that our America was much broader, much more liberal, much freer from prejudice than it is today.<sup>28</sup>

Walter S. Hilborn, who entered Harvard in 1898, had a college experience similar to that of Adler. Also from a comfortable middle class family, Hilborn graduated magna cum laude from Harvard and immediately entered Harvard Law School. He has described his experience at Harvard positively. During his years there he felt comfortable with Jewish as well as non-Jewish students and believed that no professor ever attempted to impede his progress.<sup>29</sup>

In his history of the College of the City of New York, E. Willis Rudy describes the ethnic makeup of the student body:

Before the twentieth century...the majority of students continued to represent the "older" population strains. There were many German-Americans, and some of Anglo-Saxon or Dutch ancestry. The Jewish students of this period were almost exclusively of German derivation. Very few of these boys came from wealthy families. Most of them were "new men", without names, wealth, or family tradition; in moderate bourgeois circumstances, they simply could not afford to go to out of town colleges.<sup>30</sup>

This beginning of Jewish attendance at CCNY represents the first stages of a trend that would develop further at the turn of the century and the years beyond. Those Jews with wealth or position sent their sons off to schools where prestige, if not the quality of education, was higher. But for those Jews, dwelling in the major cities, who did not have the means to pay tuitions, traveling expenses and

the costs of maintaining an acceptable social life, tuition-free schools like CCNY, located perhaps only a subway ride away from home, were able to offer education which prepared the student to enter a graduate program which in turn prepared him for a professional career.

The College of the City of New York witnessed this trend in growing Jewish enrollment earlier and more strongly than other public institutions. Yet the German Jews did not attend CCNY in truly large numbers. They still figured in as only a fraction of the CCNY student body in the late 1880's and early 1890's. And CCNY during these years was graduating only 30 to 50 students annually.<sup>31</sup>

The profound changes in the student makeup of CCNY came in the 1890's. These changes were in large part brought about by the influx of Jews and other recent immigrants from Eastern Europe into the CCNY system. By now the quality of high school education had risen, particularly in the urban centers such as New York, so that a graduate from a city high school could readily qualify for college admission. Rudy chronicles this change at CCNY:

In the last decade of the nineteenth century a new element began to come into the City College student body...In the nineties more and more students came from the working class, and from Central and Eastern Europe. Many of these students were Jews.<sup>32</sup>

By the late 1890's Jews began constituting over half of the student body at CCNY.<sup>33</sup>

#### Russian-Jewish Entrance into the College System

Eastern European Jewish immigration to America had begun

in 1870, but picked up momentum after the social conditions in Russia deteriorated into a combination of pogroms and anti-Jewish legislation after 1880. By 1900 over a half million Eastern European Jews had come to America.<sup>34</sup> The Eastern European Jews who arrived before 1900 have been described as "mostly artisans, unskilled laborers and economically déclassé."<sup>35</sup> These Jews became workers, living principally in the larger cities, especially in New York City. Nearly seventy percent were workers in manufacturing, twenty percent were in trade either as proprietors or peddlers. Only ten percent had clerical work or were professionals.<sup>36</sup> Rather than becoming mostly peddlers as their German brethren had before them, the Russian Jews found steady, if unsavory employment in light industry. In the time since the German Jews had immigrated to the United States, industrialization had made larger cities into manufacturing centers. And manufacturers were in need of cheap labor to turn out their goods. Many Jews who came to America already had experience in manufacturing. A Russian census of 1897 shows nearly twenty percent of Russian Jews located in industrialized Russian cities working in the clothing industry.<sup>37</sup>

The terrible working conditions for those laboring in the clothing industry and similar manufacturing concerns are well known. But Jews managed somehow to not only make a living wage at the work, but enough to save some money as well. Their aspirations went far beyond a seat before a sewing machine. Many saved until they could open a small business. Few desired their children to follow them into

the labor force to toil as they had.

Jewish parents sought a way out for their children. Many determined that a college education would be their children's ticket out of the city ghetto. They were not mistaken. Colleges and universities were moving toward specialization and attempting to fill the growing need for professionals in a variety of industries. "It was fortuitous that the tide of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe coincided with a period of unprecedented expansion in American higher education."<sup>38</sup>

Throughout the 1890's and into the 1900's Jews were attending college in ever increasing numbers. In places like CCNY they soon became a majority of students enrolled. They began knocking at the doors of private schools as well, such as New York University and Columbia, which, though they charged tuition, could be attended without the added expenses of living away from home. Soon the working class Jews of New Haven would begin entering Yale for the same reasons. These city Jews availed themselves of night school programs offered by many colleges located in large cities. Working days, these students attended class and studied long into the night.

Morris Raphael Cohen describes the atmosphere at CCNY in the late 1890's in his autobiography, A Dreamer's Journey:

City College then, as in later years, offered a frugal though nourishing intellectual diet. Since the college was free, attendance brought no social prestige. Since admission was not limited by race, class, creed, or social status, it had to be limited by rigorous scholastic standards. Social life, sports, social

polish and the other superficial attractions of American college life were neglected. The consequence was that those to whom these extracurricular goals mattered found their way to other more congenial colleges and universities.<sup>39</sup>

Jewish students at City College, and at other colleges and universities, attended primarily in pursuit of success in a career. As the number of Jews on campuses increased, the competitive nature of the Jews, their intention of using their college education as a vehicle to success, was to be one of the causes of the growth of anti-Semitism and discrimination against Jews in colleges and universities throughout the country.

#### Early Campus Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism in the United States before 1900 took the form of specific incidents rather than any mass movements of Judeophobia. Oscar Handlin, who has written extensively on anti-Semitism in America, points out that anti-Semitism was not widespread before 1913. Though there were anti-Semitic actions on the part of individuals in the nineteenth century, Handlin shows that they were isolated events, and were systematically repudiated in the press and by most of American society. "...The prevailing temper of the nineteenth century," writes Handlin, "was overwhelmingly tolerant."<sup>40</sup> But Handlin, writing with Mary Handlin, also describes the rise in anti-Semitism in America after 1880, attributing its cause, in part, to the rising sense of exclusivity, noting that this sense existed also among wealthier German Jews, who in the 1870's, 1880's and 1890's joined with other wealthy Americans

as founders of exclusive clubs of high society.<sup>41</sup>

Ultimately, Handlin and others who write on the rise of anti-Semitism in the U.S. attribute the cause to a competition for (especially economic) place, pointing out in particular how this trend develops into animosity and restrictions against the Russian-Jewish immigrants who poured into this country after 1880.

When Jews began attending college in ever increasing numbers near the close of the nineteenth century, they were viewed for the first time on campus as a threat to the social order and in competition for future economic station. The full significance of permitting Jews free access to colleges and universities was for the first time being perceived: where Jews had in some cases been able through business to reach the same economic place as established, wealthy families, allowing Jews to enter college freely would afford them similar status as the old families who had long sent their sons to college for finishing. An early sign of the recognition of this economic and status encroachment by Jews was reported in an 1877 issue of Harpers Magazine:

Recently in New York an estimable and accomplished gentleman was rejected as a member of the Bar Association 'for no reason that can be conceived,' indignantly said one of the leading members, 'except that he was a Jew.' Doubtless few votes would procure the rejection. But the association is not a social club, and presumably a man who is an honorable member of the bar is a fit member of the association.<sup>42</sup>

At the College of the City of New York, where by the early 1880's there was a noticeable percentage of Jews enrolled, two anti-Semitic incidents presaged the events

which would unfold on college campuses in the coming decades. In 1881, a college periodical, the Free Press, was crusading for administrative reforms. A rivalry grew between the Free Press, which was edited by two Jewish students, and the campus newspaper, the College Mercury. In the midst of this war, the editors of the Free Press were identified by the College Mercury as being "of the Semitic race."<sup>43</sup> In his history of CCNY, E. Willis Rudy tells of the events that followed:

The Free Press lashed back immediately by asking the Mercury: 'Why this particularization? It smacks strongly of the student persecution of Jews in Germany.' It was further pointed out that, according to the last published merit roll, the standing of the editor of the Free Press was fifth in his class, while that of E. J. Newell, editor of the Mercury was that of No. 235! This ended the incident, but it had meanwhile revealed some of the deep-seated religious tensions developing at City College along with the changes in its student body.<sup>44</sup>

In 1883, a CCNY faculty member had a public argument with a Jewish CCNY sophomore. In the course of the argument the professor used language 'alleged to be offensive to the Hebrew race and religion.' The Executive Committee heard the student's complaint and a statement from the professor. The incident was concluded when the Executive Committee granted the professor a two month leave of absence from which he never returned due to poor health.<sup>45</sup>

Discrimination in the medical profession developed early too, owing to the large percentage of college educated Jews who were already seeking careers as doctors. By the turn of the century,

there were already well-founded complaints that the medical societies and the hospitals were refusing to

admit qualified Jewish doctors. Although these societies were generally private associations, membership in them was often essential to successful practice.<sup>46</sup>

It is productive to conclude this chapter with a short article titled "The Jew at Harvard," which appeared in The American Jews Annual of 1894-1895. This article is implicitly anti-Semitic, showing the Jews at Harvard to be lacking in culture, social grace, and breeding, cliquish among themselves, willing to act as the socially acceptable Gentiles act, yet unacceptable for companionship by the non-Jews. Covering these anti-Semitic feelings is a thin veneer composed of gentilic deference and willingness to accede that many Jews at Harvard are academically capable.

Not many years ago there was scarcely a Jew at Harvard College, today there are more than a hundred, while each Freshman Class brings in a proportionately increasing number every year. The significance of this is not hard to discover, it is merely a proof of the increasing wealth and desire for culture on the part of the American Jew, ever desirous to improve his own condition and that of his children. At first, accordingly, the students sent to Cambridge were hard-working diligent scholars, who realized fully the purposes for which they were sent, and did their best to take advantage of the educational opportunities extended to them. Soon, however, the young Hebrew discovered that the curriculum of the average college man by no means consisted of study alone, but that such matters as amusements, college societies, dress, etc., etc., entered largely into student life.

Thanks to his rather extensive means finding himself able to dress as well and dissipate as much as other students, if such was his natural bent, he but too often followed it. The result is that the college Jew of today has nothing distinctive about him to mark him from other students, but may be classified like the man around him, as either a 'grind' or a 'sport,' seldom, however, very seldom as a society man. For at the entrance of college society life stands a Cerberus, who is not to be satisfied by a mere sop, but demands from the candidate high lineage, or great

athletic prominence, or good fortune in getting in with favored cliques, conditions which very few Jews have been able to answer. One or two, to be sure, have been fortunate enough to get into the exclusive sets at Cambridge, but these are exceptional cases scarcely likely to reoccur.

From what I have just said it might be inferred that prejudice exists at Cambridge against the Jew, but I scarcely think this the right word for the feeling. It is rather indifference than prejudice, an indifference which arises from the fact that there as elsewhere the Jews clique together, and consequently, the acquaintance of Jew and Gentile is generally a mere bowing one, very seldom an intimate acquaintance. This feeling, however, is a prevalent one throughout the whole college, a feeling of indifference to all outside one's own immediate circle of friends and a general disinclination to make new friends.

The Jew, therefore, seldom makes any friends save those he had on entrance, some fellow Jews, and now and then a stray Gentile acquaintance, with whom his friendship is a matter of nearness of locality rather than any decided sympathy between them.

The Jew, then, lives about the same life at college as do the other men, a trifle more secluded, perhaps, and less in touch with surrounding influences; but in all main essentials the same. There are many Jews, for instance, at college who waste their opportunities in dissipation and idleness, and many who study hard and achieve good results. On the whole probably the most important effect of college life upon the Jew is to assimilate his habits and ideas to those of the people around, to widen his sympathies, to awaken him from the sleep of the Middle Ages and bring him more in touch with the modern world.<sup>47</sup>

The tone of this article expresses well the method of discrimination against Jews, particularly at the exclusive schools, during the first several decades of the twentieth century. Credit is given to the Jew for his accomplishments, but there is an implication that he works too hard; when Jews are socially excluded, they are accused of being cliquish; Jews who imitate the attire and manners of the Gentile students are viewed as mawkish and fops. Thus

disguised, discrimination remains at times hard to perceive, and even more difficult to prove.

## Footnotes

## Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup>Nathan Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," in The Characteristics of American Jews, (New York: Jewish Education Committee, 1965), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Masserman and Max Baker, The Jews Come to America, (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1932), p. 139.

<sup>4</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Rufus Lears, The Jews in America: A History, (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1972), p. 131.

<sup>6</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," p. 16.

<sup>7</sup>Jacob Rader Marcus, Studies in American Jewish History, (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1969), p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Stephen Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," pp. 18-19.

<sup>10</sup>Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 485.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 395.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 284.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>18</sup>Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup>"Israelites at Johns Hopkins University," American Jews Annual (1889), pp. 48-50.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>21</sup>Samuel Eliot Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), p. 147.

<sup>22</sup>Heywood Broun and George Britt, Christians Only, (New York: Vanguard Press, Inc., 1931), p. 105.

<sup>23</sup>S. Willis Rudy, The College of the City of New York: A History, (New York: The City College Press, 1949), p. 178.

<sup>24</sup>Isaac Markens, The Hebrews in America, (New York: By the Author, No. 234 Broadway, 1888), pp. 196-274.

<sup>25</sup>Cyrus Adler, I Have Considered the Days, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1941).

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>29</sup>Walter S. Hilborn, in an interview with the author.

<sup>30</sup>Rudy, The College of the City of New York, pp. 173-4.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>33</sup>Broun and Britt, Christians Only, pp. 104-105.

<sup>34</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," p. 19.

<sup>35</sup>C. Bezalel Sherman, The Jew Within American Society, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1961), p. 98.

<sup>36</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," p. 20.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup>Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, p. 11.

<sup>39</sup>Morris Raphael Cohen, A Dreamer's Journey, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1949), p. 89.

<sup>40</sup>Oscar Handlin, "How U.S. Anti-Semitism Really Began," Commentary 11. (June 1951): p. 541.

<sup>41</sup>Oscar Handlin and Mary Handlin, "Acquisition of Political and Social Rights," in The Characteristics of American Jews, (New York: Jewish Education Committee, 1965), pp. 264-266.

<sup>42</sup>George William Curtis, Harpers Magazine, July 1877.

<sup>43</sup>Rudy, The College of the City of New York, p. 178.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>46</sup>Handlin and Handlin, "Acquisition of Political and Social Rights," p. 268.

## Chapter Two

### JEWS IN COLLEGE: 1900-1920

#### Rising Number of Jews in College

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Jews began attending college in numbers well beyond their proportion of the American population. By World War I there were 15,000 Jews in college.<sup>1</sup>

A 1908 Survey by the Immigration Commission of seventy-seven colleges and universities showed that 8.5 percent of the male student body was made up of first and second generation Jews. Jews comprised thirteen percent of law students, eighteen percent of those studying pharmacy, but as yet only six percent of students studying dentistry and three percent of the medical school student bodies. These lower figures for medical and dental colleges do not suggest that Jewish interest in these fields was less than interest in such areas of professional preparation as law or pharmacy, but that the greater costs for becoming dentists and physicians were still prohibitive to many Jews. Nonetheless, these figures for even the most expensive programs are high, as the Jewish population in 1908 has been set at two percent of the American population.<sup>2</sup>

Ten years later, the ability to pay for these more expensive programs had caught up with the Jewish student interest in pursuing them. In 1918-1919 the number of Jews studying dentistry had nearly equaled the number of Jews studying law, and the figures for Jews pursuing careers in medicine exceeded them both.<sup>3</sup>

By the middle teens, New York City, where masses of Jewish immigrants settled upon arrival in the United States, had more Jews in its local colleges than any city in the world. A private investigation of the number of Jews in New York City colleges and universities found that for the year 1904-1905, 73.7 percent of the students at the public and free College of the City of New York were Jews. At the private New York University College 20.5 percent of the student body was Jewish, and the downtown division of NYU, the Washington Square campus, had 19.6 percent Jews. At Columbia, 32.6 percent of the students enrolled in the Collegiate Division were Jewish. During these years Jews represented twenty percent of the New York City population.<sup>4</sup>

Maurice Fishberg, in his 1911 volume, The Jews, reports that this large number of Jews enrolled in college in New York City came primarily from the poorer and middle class Jews who were living in the lower and upper east side of New York City.<sup>5</sup>

Surveys taken in the first two decades of the twentieth century concerning the number of Jews in college report conflicting figures. A 1915 survey conducted by the Department of Synagogue and School Extension of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations contacted 534 schools, of which 180 reported the presence of some Jewish students. The total number of Jewish students was estimated at 7,300, putting the percentage of Jews at 3.1 percent of the full enrollment of that year, which totaled 237,000 students.<sup>6</sup>

But the following year, the Menorah Society published a report which stated that 11.9 percent of college students were Jews. The Menorah study surveyed fifty-seven "leading institutions" with a total student population of 147,352 students, of which 17,653 were Jews.<sup>7</sup>

A 1919 survey conducted by the Bureau of Jewish Social Research included 106 colleges which had a total enrollment of 153,000 students. 14,837 or 9.7 percent of these students were Jews.<sup>8</sup>

There are three major problems with these surveys which cause the discrepancies in the percentages of Jews in college:

- 1) The three surveys are composed of widely different samples. Both the number of institutions and the actual schools that were included are different in all three studies.
- 2) The methodology used in the three surveys was different. The UAHC survey was compiled from information received from local rabbis and is not necessarily accurate. The Menorah Society report does not give its methodology. The Bureau of Jewish Social Research statistics were compiled by looking for Jewish names on college rosters, a method which could either overestimate or underestimate the number of Jews in attendance.
- 3) In seeking the percentage of Jews in relation to non-Jews on campus, registrar figures for total enrollment had to be relied upon. But these figures were often poorly kept and inaccurate.<sup>9</sup>

Though the figures disagree with one another, they at least show that there was a growing trend among college-age Jews to attend college, and this trend was far stronger than

the tendency among the non-Jewish Eastern European first and second generation Americans, who attended college at a rate well below that of the general population.<sup>10</sup>

### Why Jewish Immigrants Went to College

The sudden rise in college attendance by Jews was an outgrowth of the Jewish Eastern European immigration which between 1881 and 1924 brought 2,350,000 Jews to the United States. While American Jews had measured only 0.6 percent of the total American population in 1880, it had increased to 3.5 percent by 1917.<sup>11</sup>

But the mere arrival of this new, large population of Jews in America does not account for the high percentage of young Jews who entered college at this time. Many writers have searched for the answer as to why so many attended college in the early years of this century, particularly in light of the fact that they went to college in proportions far exceeding those of their fellow, but non-Jewish Eastern European immigrants.

In her article, "The Strategy of the Jewish Mother," Zena Smith Blau offers a fascinating sociological account of how recent Russian Jewish immigrants learned the fine details of how to go to college:

The scholastic and occupational achievements of their children was, in fact, a major area of status competition among Jewish immigrant women, and there was no social activity which they carried on with more liveliness and zest than bragging about their children. Even relatively diffident, quiet, modest women felt constrained to engage in this pattern of berimen sich mit die kinder [bragging about one's children]...

This biquitous social pattern served two important functions in the Jewish immigrant community: It was a highly effective social mechanism first for reinforcing parental ambitions, and second for diffusing information and knowledge about paths of achievement and mobility open to Jewish youth. Immigrants had little knowledge initially about the American occupational structure and even those men who possessed extensive religious learning did not, as a rule, have the secular education necessary to enter professional and managerial positions. Fathers, therefore, could not draw on their own experience to prepare their children for occupational ascent. In this kind of context the gossip that Jewish mothers exchanged about the educational achievements and career plans of their children became an important informational resource in the Jewish immigrant community. Mothers with older children transmitted information about career lines to mothers with younger children, who, in turn, relayed it to their husbands and children. Every distinction that a Jewish child earned, every step that he traversed in his educational career, every career decision, and every advancement was duly reported by his mother to her circle of friends and acquaintances, and she in turn brought back their reports to her own family.<sup>12</sup>

This article gives the reader a sense of the great desire of Jewish parents to send their children to college. Parents and college-age children clearly saw a college education as a preferred choice to other alternatives. She does not account fully, however, for the source of positive value among Russian Jews of having educated, professional children. Another source notes that at this time in America there existed "an almost obsessive trust in education," which coincided with or was perhaps caused by "the technological revolution in American life."<sup>13</sup> But this faith in education was held for the most part by the solid middle class American population, not by recent immigrant groups who found themselves in the lower strata of American society.<sup>14</sup>

A rather romantic notion of the Jewish immigrant has

often been employed to explain why so many recent immigrants chose college. In this scenario, the Jews of Eastern Europe are shown to be People of the Book with a tradition of study and learning which dates back thousands of years. This propensity toward learning, then, found a new application in the halls of America's colleges and universities. The intricacies of pilpul are seen as excellent preparation for studies in science and the humanities.<sup>15</sup>

An extension of this view of the Jewish immigrant as prepared for college by the cheder and yeshivah suggests that this background of valuing education, plus the fact that Russian Jews were primarily urban dwellers combine to produce a Jewish immigrant population that was culturally middle class, even though they were impoverished.

Stephen Steinberg, attempting to explain the high rate of first and second generation college attendance among Jews, points out that social class is a composite of wealth, occupation, and education. Though Jewish immigrants were as poor upon arrival in the United States as other immigrant groups, Steinberg shows good evidence that occupationally they were more highly skilled upon their arrival than other immigrant groups, and better able to begin work at a higher level. Quoting figures from the Reports of the Immigration Commission, which evaluated immigrants who arrived between 1899 and 1910, he notes that sixty-seven percent of the Jewish immigrants were skilled workers upon their arrival in the United States, five percent were merchants or dealers, only

twelve percent were unskilled workers, and eleven percent servants. These figures compare favorably to the figures on all immigrants during this period, where only twenty percent were skilled workers, two percent were merchants or dealers, twenty-five percent were farmers (compared to two percent Jewish farmers), fourteen percent servants and thirty-six percent were common laborers. The skills with which the Jews arrived seemed to mesh almost perfectly with the needs of the American economy.<sup>16</sup> Steinberg maintains, then, "that although the economic position of Jewish immigrants was initially comparable to that of other groups, Jews possessed the prerequisites of mobility in the form of occupational skills and literacy."<sup>17</sup>

Concerning literacy, Jews were the most literate immigrants during this 1899-1910 period except for Western Europeans, whose illiteracy never climbed higher than five percent. Seventy-four percent of Jewish immigrants were literate when they arrived, as opposed to sixty-five percent of Poles and forty-six percent of Southern Italians, with whom Jewish immigrants have often been compared, both economically and socially.<sup>18</sup> Further, among the Jews, who departed extremely hostile conditions in Russia, few intended to return permanently to their former home. As a result, Russian Jewish immigrants learned English in larger numbers and in a shorter period of time than did most of the other immigrant groups during this period.<sup>19</sup>

Steinberg concludes his argument for why Jews went to college in such large numbers and so soon after arriving in

America, stating,

Jewish immigrants were not simply middle class in their values, as other writers have suggested. There was substance and reality behind these values. Jews did not simply have aspirations for economic mobility-- they also had experiences and skills in middle class occupations. Nor did Jews simply value education and revere learning. They were also literate as a group and had cognitive skills to pass on to their children.<sup>20</sup>

Though Russian Jewish immigrants did not have the wealth of the middle class, they possessed the skills and the prerequisites for education which gave them not only middle class values but also realistic middle class aspirations, which included mobility and higher education. Because free secondary education and free or inexpensive college education were readily available, these Russian Jewish immigrants were often as able as they were inclined to send their children to college.

#### Campus Life, the Jew on Campus and Social Discrimination

The influx of large numbers of recent Jewish immigrants into the milieu of the college and university created certain difficulties. Because they began college earlier than other immigrants, these Jewish students were enrolling in college with greater frequency than the youth of other immigrant groups, and consequently their arrival was readily evident. But what made this Jewish student more conspicuous and led to his being singled out for criticism, was his very "newness" to America. The Russian Jew on campus was seen as not being fully Americanized, and it showed in his manner and appearance. This tendency for Jews to begin college before they became accustomed to American ways was bluntly attested by an

unsympathetic observer who commented that the upwardly mobile Jew

...sends his children to college a generation or two sooner than other stocks and as a result there are in fact more dirty Jews and tactless Jews in college than dirty and tactless Italians, Armenians or Slovaks.<sup>21</sup>

A Jewish commentator, stressing the need for refinement among Jewish students, notes such problems as manners, personal appearance, gestures, and voice.<sup>22</sup>

Certainly a portion of this problem was real enough. Many of the Jewish students must have seemed quite different superficially from their classmates, who were often sons of men who had attended the Alma Mater. But these surface differences were only outward signals communicating that these Russian Jews were substantially different as well. Though unsophisticated in American ways, many of these boys were politically aware and in many cases more politically radical than the other students. A good number of the Russian Jewish immigrants who came to the United States before 1925 had been active in the revolutionary movement in Russia.

...they brought with them to America not only progressive social and political ideas, but also greater aspirations and a broader outlook. They were unafraid of life and people, and accustomed to getting along with others; they were also more daring and imaginative than the average immigrant.<sup>23</sup>

The children of these immigrants who went to college grew up in the socially and politically progressive environment which flavored the Jewish neighborhoods of the large cities. Ideas abounded, thought was encouraged. The Jewish critic of the immigrant Jewish students mentioned above, also criticized the tendency among these students toward the

intellectual to the exclusion of sports and "pleasures and sociability without an aim."<sup>24</sup>

These new, Russian Jewish students distinguished themselves most from their non-Jewish fellow students in their decidedly competitive nature in the academic realm. Often coming from a background full of intellectual stimulants, and determined to succeed in their chosen professional course, they were perfectly willing to violate the "taboo on scholarship"<sup>25</sup> which was a part of the current campus malaise known as being a "sport" rather than a "grind."

In the very early days of American colleges a young man received a higher education for the purpose of becoming either a clergyman or a properly finished gentleman. Some of these men were studious and reached high levels of academic achievement. But this situation was not destined to last. After the Civil War, with affluence and uncertainty of career goals among students, (or with a career in the family business assured), "as the decades passed, college going became for many a social habit..."<sup>26</sup> Frederick Rudolph, in The American College and University: A History notes that "By the turn of the century at Yale the valedictorian could count on not being elected to a senior society," and also that, "A member of the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1906 confessed 'The relative number of students who do not know just why they are at the University is increasing.'"<sup>27</sup>

The student who entered college around the turn of the century and later, who was uncertain or unconcerned about why he was in college, was aided in his confusion by the rise

of the elective principle at American colleges and universities. The elective principle espoused an open curriculum where the student could in many cases choose courses which interested him rather than take a fully prescribed set of courses required for graduation. This "opening up" of the curriculum was intended to allow the serious student a freedom which would foster his academic growth. But the elective principle had at least one negative aspect:

In this environment /of the elective principle being instituted/ a motivation problem was bound to develop as a significant percentage of the college population shifted from purposeful, professionally oriented, ambitious young men to somewhat aimless (to an extent indulged) young men with a vague notion of taking up some career for which the real preparation occurred outside the classroom.<sup>28</sup>

Instead of academic interests, college students began accentuating the social aspects of college life.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the extent to which honor societies, Greek-letter fraternities, eating clubs, and sports dominated undergraduate life... the prevailing attitude toward scholarship was at best one of indifference.<sup>29</sup>

With the rise of football, the entrenchment of fraternities, and the pervasiveness of clubs and societies, distinctions were drawn among students which went well beyond identifying someone as studious or social. Membership in one of the "best" fraternities or clubs, or star status on an important athletic team often meant one was qualified to hold important campus positions such as a class or school office or editorship of a campus newspaper or journal. Without the status of belonging to the right organization, one could in many cases not hope to attain a position of power on campus. By the turn of the century such organizations were frequently

denying membership to Jews in an attempt to promote an exclusive image for the group.<sup>30</sup> Some German Jews, who came from similar backgrounds as the gentiles, were occasionally granted entrance to the societies and fraternities. But they became increasingly uncomfortable in these non-Jewish organizations, particularly when their friendships with other Jewish students met with the disapproval of their Gentile fraters. Russian Jewish students were seldom offered membership in these groups.

Though Jews who were going to college usually met with academic success, often receiving honors bestowed by the schools, they existed on the periphery of campus life. Many were uninterested in this social whirl, but others were never given an opportunity to decide whether or not they cared to join in campus society and politics.

The national leadership of Alpha Delta Phi fraternity withdrew the fraternity charter from the CCNY campus, not simply because it had allowed a few Jews as members,<sup>31</sup> but because CCNY had become well-known for having a high percentage of Jewish students enrolled.<sup>32</sup> At Yale, between 1900 and 1916, out of over two thousand students who were members of junior societies (fraternities), only nine were Jews. At this time Jews at Yale were never taken as members in glee clubs or dramatic clubs, and seldom were allowed on the staff of a college periodical.<sup>33</sup> The percentage of Jews accepted into clubs at Princeton was reported to be as small as the percentage at Yale.<sup>34</sup> Though restrictions on Jews existed at Harvard, they were at this time, at least, less stringent

than at other schools. This was probably due in part to Harvard's tradition of liberalism, which, even if not applied directly insofar as Jews were concerned, it had a militating effect up to the time that Harvard's "Jewish Problem" was recognized as such in the early 1920's.<sup>35</sup> Fraternities, which had long been forbidden at Harvard, were not as strong politically as they were on other campuses; consequently exclusion from them did not necessarily preclude social intercourse or political attainment.<sup>36</sup>

Norman Hapgood, editor of Harper's Weekly, reported in 1916 that at Columbia "President Butler has the reputation of being anti-Semitic....,"<sup>37</sup> and this attitude seems to have been held among many Columbia faculty members and in the campus societies.

Prior to the 1920's, Western schools were less prejudiced against Jews. Administration and students alike seemed willing to give Jewish students opportunities to succeed both academically and socially.<sup>38</sup> Part of the growing exclusion of Jews resulted directly from the rise in the number of Jews at individual campuses. The New York colleges and universities and the prestigious Ivy League schools had higher percentages of Jews enrolled than Western campuses, either because of proximity or because they offered a prestige education. The colleges and universities to the West would not see the full-scale development of anti-Jewish sentiment until quotas on the number of Jews admitted to the Eastern schools caused an overflow of Jewish applications to the institutions to the West.

Beneath this clearly drawn exterior of growing social exclusiveness on the college campus resides a more sinister core. What may at first appear to be simply the whim of misguided youth, or a convenient dividing line needed to establish the aristocratic nature of an organization, was actually early manifestations of a dormant conflict between social classes which was growing volatile, and expanding anti-Semitism.

Certainly the profound changes in the college and university which occurred after the Civil War had an effect upon how Jews were received on campus during the first two decades of this century. The struggle between the progressives, who promoted democratization of higher education, and the conservatives, who preferred the classical subjects and the traditional upper-class student, had not played itself out fully by the turn of the century. And a growing nostalgia for the old days, even among faculty and students who never knew the old days, took form in a desire to reclaim the intimacy, the exclusivity and traditionalism of an earlier time. Alumni most particularly were not pleased to see the changes which had been wrought at the place where fond memories of their halcyon days had been lived.

Part of the strong movement toward exclusive fraternities and societies in the early twentieth century was a result of the desire to return to the time when college itself was exclusive. The old Anglo-Saxon Protestant element led the way in fortressing against the onslaught of the lower classes who were entering college. The newer middle class groups

rushed to join them. The Jews, along with other recent immigrants, would be excluded. The Jewish immigrants who came to college in the largest numbers were readily known -- by manner, speech, dress, attitude or rumor, and thus were easily targeted. It was quite evident that the Jews should be excluded, for they attended college aggressively, seeking professions, and were entering the middle class at a startling pace, both educationally, and as a result, economically. The last bastion of the Old Guard was social status; their final means to halt the Jewish advancement into their ranks lay in its preservation. By the mid 1920's, this attempt to stop the invasion of the rising bourgeois in the form of the Jew from reaching equal position with the Old Class would take the more drastic form of the quota system, which was first instituted to deny Jewish access to the prestigious schools of the East.<sup>39</sup>

By 1916 discrimination against Jews had progressed past social exclusion to include an early form of the quota system at many schools. This method of exclusion was based on a waiting list. Whether the school was filled to capacity, or even in danger of falling short of its desired enrollment figures, all but a few of the Jews who applied were notified that they had been placed on a waiting list. Of course, the students on this list were never admitted.<sup>40</sup> But by utilizing the waiting list, the school could, in effect, say to the Jewish student that he was acceptable to the school, but not accepted for admission. The subtlety of the form allowed these schools, which included preparatory schools as well as

colleges, to keep the fact of their discrimination quiet and virtually unproveable.

The fear on the part of the old stocks that Jews would join them in the upper classes was only a part of the cause of discrimination against Jews on campus, and tended to compound the difficulties which Jews encountered.

In his classic 1925 study, The Causes of Anti-Semitism in the United States, Lee J. Levinger cites five basic reasons for the growth of American anti-Semitism:

The most obvious condition of its rise is the increase of the Jewish community of America, that is, the extension of the frontier line, the contact of more Americans with this "alien," which means different, people. Add to that the hatred of certain foreign groups aroused during the War, the suspicion of certain radical groups directly after it, the general unsettled condition of world opinion, and the vast increase of European anti-Semitism as the parties of reaction were thrown on the defensive--and the exact<sup>41</sup> form of American anti-Semitism begins to show itself.

All of these factors joined with the specific desire on the part of the old-stock groups to preserve the exclusive qualities of the university, to form the broadening and deepening discrimination of Jews on campus.

Horace M. Kallen, among others, has suggested that the deepest seat of anti-Semitism is two thousand years old, a product of the New Testament which was formulated with an anti-Semitic element.<sup>42</sup> When Jews come in contact with Christians, even liberal Christians, the response to the Jews is in the beginning an unconscious negative emotion. This response is then bolstered when further contact is made with Jews, because such a notion of the Jews as "the villians of the drama of salvation" cannot be negated for it was learned

and internalized at a young age, promulgated by the most significant individuals in a child's world. Since a negative reaction to Jews cannot be easily given up, it is instead rationalized when a Christian meets Jews, so that the Christian finds the Jews to be as evil as he expected them to be.<sup>43</sup>

When this underlying hatred of Jews is melded with the changes occurring in American society which Levinger notes, and are in turn fused with the upper class fears of innundation by the rising middle class, the full range of causes of discrimination at colleges and universities can be grasped. As it developed in the decades after 1920, the discrimination against Jews on campuses would be more pervasive, more effective and more debilitating to Jews than in any other sphere of American society.

## Chapter 2

<sup>1</sup>Oscar Handlin, Adventures in Freedom: Three Hundred Years of Jewish Life in America, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956), p. 117.

<sup>2</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Maurice Fishberg, The Jews, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 376.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Lee J. Levinger, The Jewish Student in America, (Cincinnati: B'nai B'rith, 1937), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>10</sup>Fishberg, The Jews, p. 376.

<sup>11</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," p. 19.

<sup>12</sup>Zena Smith Blau, "The Strategy of the Jewish Mother," in The Jew in American Society, Marshall Sklare, ed., (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1974), pp. 173-174.

<sup>13</sup>Rudolph, The American College and University, p. 485.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>An example of the basis of this notion can be seen in a March 3, 1901 editorial in the New York Times on the taste in literature of the Russian Jew. The editorial concluded: "He brings to the study of English Literature a brain sharpened by his ancestors' centuries of learned Talmudic toil." Quoted in Irving Leonard Slade, An Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations in American Higher Education, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1973), Doctoral Thesis, Columbia University, Ed.D., 1966.

<sup>16</sup>Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, pp. 80-81.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 84-85.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

- 21 Ibid., p. 11.
- 22 Norman Hapgood, "Schools, Colleges and Jews," Harper's Weekly, January 22, 1916, p. 79.
- 23 Jacob Lestschinsky, "The Economic Development of the Jews in the United States," The Jewish People Past and Present, (New York: Jewish Encyclopedia Handbook, Central Yiddish Cultural Organization, 1946), vol. 1, p. 392.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, pp. 80-81.
- 26 Rudolph, The American College and University, p. 289.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid., p. 290.
- 29 Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, p. 14.
- 30 Broun and Britt, Christians Only, pp. 78-79.
- 31 Norman Hapgood, "Jews and College Life," Harper's Weekly, January 15, 1916, p. 54.
- 32 Broun and Britt, Christians Only, p. 82.
- 33 Hapgood, "Jews and College Life," p. 53.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Hapgood, "Jews and College Life," p. 55, and Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, p. 147.
- 36 Hapgood, "Jews and College Life," p. 54.
- 37 Ibid., p. 55.
- 38 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
- 39 Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, p. 12.
- 40 Hapgood, "Schools, Colleges and Jews," p. 79.
- 41 Lee J. Levinger, The Causes of Anti-Semitism in the United States, (Philadelphia: Ph.D. Thesis in Philosophy, University of Pennsylvania, 1925), p. 51.
- 42 Horace M. Kallen, "The Roots of Anti-Semitism," The Nation, vol. 116, February 28, 1923, pp. 240-242.
- 43 Ibid., pp. 240-241.

### Chapter Three

#### JEWISH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Beginning just prior to the turn of the century, a variety of Jewish student organizations were initiated. This chapter will trace the development and influence of these groups on Jewish student life through 1945. A consideration of these groups--how and why they were formed, what the organizations held as their purposes, what students the organizations served, and in what ways they served the students--is helpful in understanding the range of the Jewish students' experience during their college years.

Most Jews who attended college between 1900 and 1945 found at least some degree of academic success. Large percentages of these students entered graduate professional programs after completing undergraduate school, while others took their bachelors degrees and entered business or other vocations better prepared to succeed, and more cultured, better rounded as individuals than their parents had been.

The psyche of the Jewish college student was worked upon by a complex of conflicting factors: academic pursuits, in both the humanities and the sciences; the irrepressible American culture which was espoused with particular ardor at colleges and universities; the discrimination against Jews on campus which rose steadily through the first forty-five years of this century; and the fact that much of the self-image of many Jewish students was part and parcel of an Eastern European Jewish culture which they wished to discard. All of these

elements merged to produce several generations of Jewish college students who possessed for the most part weakening Jewish identities. This condition was partly caused and further compounded by the fact that regardless of denomination, the Jewish education of children tended to be poor. Certainly the understanding of Judaism which most students brought with them to college could not stand up to the intellectual scrutiny engendered by college instruction and values.

Most Jews who went to college were seeking a career through education. But many also found college to be their best means of assimilation. Often, when discrimination prevented Jews from proceeding in their choice to assimilate, their bitterness and criticism was leveled not against the anti-Semitic majority culture, but against Judaism or other Jews for standing as an impediment to their acculturation. Horace M. Kallen described his youthful view of Judaism, which can be seen as a precise statement of the sentiments of thousands of other Jews who attended college:

I regarded the term 'Jew' as a name for a fear-nurtured error called religion, and also as a name for an invidious error called race. Together they automatically imposed a gratuitous penalty upon anyone called 'Jew.' Why then endure the label?<sup>1</sup>

Whether or not Jews wanted to associate with other Jews, they seldom had a choice in the matter. Fraternities, sororities, societies, and other clubs were so much a part of the general campus life that Jews, being excluded from the organizations, could only turn inward, to the development of relationships with other Jews. Though this comradeship with other Jews may not have seemed desirable at least in the

beginning, many Jews did find that they had more in common with other Jews than with Gentiles. But many possessed aspirations for something more than a "common" Jewish culture.

Out of this milieu, the first Jewish organizations at colleges and universities were formed. Two basic reasons for the establishment of Jewish student organizations are evident. First, Jewish fraternities, sororities and social clubs were founded to provide social outlets for Jewish students who desired these types of associations. These groups were intended to parallel by imitation the Gentile groups.

Second, there was a desire on the part of some students to engage in the study of Jewish history and culture, to find a support group for the practice of Judaism, or to organize a partisan or activist group favoring a Jewish cause. These students formed groups out of a more positive rationale than the purely social organizations.<sup>2</sup>

In the order of their appearance on campuses, and in the order in which they will be discussed, the major Jewish student organizations are: fraternities and sororities, Zionist groups, the Intercollegiate Menorah Association, and B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations and Counselorships. Before these principal groups are considered, the earliest attempts at Jewish campus organization by adult groups should be examined.

#### Adult Attempts at Jewish Campus Organization

Although most of the early Jewish student groups were formed by students themselves, a few attempts were made by preexistent adult groups.

Perhaps the first public suggestion that Jewish students at colleges and universities would benefit from some sort of services and programs came in 1896. In that year, at the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (the Reform rabbinical body), rabbis Louis Grossman, Samuel Schulman and Emil G. Hirsch brought before the assembly the suggestion that Jewish college students needed to be served. Their statement to the Central Conference read as follows:

Gentlemen:

In view of the fact that there are colonies of Jewish students at many of our great universities throughout the country, the undersigned beg leave to suggest that this conference appoint a committee to devise ways and means by which these students may be given that attention through lectures, and if possible through occasional services, which this very promising nucleus of new Judaism amply deserves. This committee shall supply to each contingent of Jewish students at the various institutions, lectures on Jewish history and Jewish literature, either in form of extension courses or by occasional assignments to capable and representative Jewish scholars.<sup>3</sup>

The Conference appointed a committee to look into the issue and report back to the general body. But the subject of college students was not discussed again at a CCAR convention until 1905. At the 1905 rabbinical meeting a Standing Committee on Religious Work in Universities was appointed.<sup>4</sup>

At the 1906 CCAR convention the Committee gave its first report. It suggested that rabbis in pulpits close to campuses

....be appointed to represent the conference at these institutions and be charged with the duty to assist in this work and to take up the supervision and guidance of such classes and literary organizations of

the Jewish students as already exist and to organize them where they are needed.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the major lay body of the Reform movement, had investigated the possibility of organizing a lecture series on Jewish history and culture, religious services, or both, to be conducted initially at Harvard and potentially at other campuses as well. At first the organization work was to be done by the UAHC and the costs defrayed by B'nai B'rith.<sup>6</sup> Soon B'nai B'rith dropped out of the negotiations. Rabbi George Zepin, representing the UAHC, made two visits to Cambridge in 1906. Between his visits the Harvard Menorah Society was formed. On his second visit it was decided that the proposed lecture series would be provided by the UAHC through the now existing Menorah Society.<sup>7</sup>

In 1909 the CCAR Committee report on Jewish college students noted that:

At most colleges the Jewish students denied their Judaism. The committee felt that although this made the task of organizing Jewish students more difficult, the exercise of the function was made that much more important.<sup>8</sup>

Many adult bodies considered the needs for Jewish religious and cultural activity on campuses, but seldom were any programs actually initiated. Yet the early concern for the Jewish welfare of Jewish college students by organizations such as B'nai B'rith, the CCAR, UAHC and the Rabbinical Assembly of America shows at least an awareness on the part of these groups that Jews were beginning to attend college in large numbers, and that some sort of Jewish-content

programming was needed. But in the early days of Jewish campus organizations, most of the groups initiated were begun by students themselves, borne out of their own needs, desires and interests.

Peculiar among the early organizations, both in its scope and intent as well as its organization is the Jewish Chautauqua Society, founded in 1893. At its inception, the Chautauqua Society's purpose was the Jewish education of adult Jews. To carry out this work the Society developed study circles and devised correspondence courses. In 1909 the Society was requested to provide Jewish teachers for courses in Judaism designed for non-Jews at the Peabody School for Teachers. The program was successful and was repeated the following year. In 1910 Dr. P. P. Claxton, president of Peabody School, was appointed U. S. Commissioner on Education. As Commissioner, Dr. Claxton asked the Jewish Chautauqua Society to provide lecturers to colleges and universities to educate non-Jews concerning Judaism. By 1930, thirty-five colleges and universities were being served. Sending lecturers to campuses became the primary emphasis of the Jewish Chautauqua Society as soon as the program began in 1910.<sup>9</sup> Though the work of the Jewish Chautauqua Society had not been directed to the Jewish college student, "the prestige that these lectures brought to Jews on the college campus played an important role in encouraging the Jewish students to organize cultural, social and study groups of their own."<sup>10</sup>

The earliest student organized groups were Jewish fraternities, Zionist societies at CCNY in 1902 and in 1905 at Harvard and Columbia, the University Jewish Literary Society at University of Minnesota in 1903, the Harvard Menorah Society in 1906 and the Ivrim at the University of Illinois in 1907.

### Jewish Fraternities

The first fraternity composed mostly of Jewish students, but with a strong non-sectarian clause in its charter, was Pi Lambda Phi, founded at Yale in 1895. Pi Lambda Phi was established "in part as a protest against the formation of college groups which excluded Jewish men, and in part as a protest against the further establishment of exclusively Jewish groups."<sup>11</sup>

Zeta Beta Tau, formed at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1898, was begun as a student Zionist group, to study Jewish history and culture. Originally, the fraternity was called  $\text{נ"אצ}$ , an acronym for Tzion B'mishpat Tifadeh-- "Zion in justice will be redeemed" (Isaiah 1:27). The original goal of the fraternity was a Jewish nation. The group's emblem was a Star of David on a field of blue and white. The officers of the fraternity were addressed by their Hebrew names, and meetings were held to discuss Jewish issues.<sup>12</sup>

In 1901, the purpose of the fraternity was changed from the promotion of Zionism to basically social aims. The Hebrew letters of the fraternity were translated to Greek.

In commemorating the 25th anniversary of Zeta Beta Tau,

one of its alumni stated why the fraternity's emphasis was social:

We have banded together because we have recognized that a fraternity is a necessity. The Jewish student today is inferior to his colleagues in his social training. It is the purpose of our fraternity to train its members in a social way.<sup>13</sup>

The first actual ZBT chapter was formed in 1902 at CCNY. By 1923 the fraternity was maintaining thirty chapters on campuses across the country.<sup>14</sup> Four years later, Zeta Beta Tau was the largest Jewish fraternity in the United States, with 3500 members in thirty-two chapters.<sup>15</sup>

Between 1904 and 1913 six more Jewish or predominantly Jewish undergraduate fraternities were formed. They are: Phi Epsilon Pi, begun at CCNY in 1904; Phi Sigma Delta, established at Columbia in 1909; Sigma Alpha Mu, founded in 1909 at CCNY; Tau Delta Phi, started in 1910 at CCNY; Beta Sigma Rho, chartered in 1910 at Cornell; and Alpha Epsilon Pi, founded at New York University in 1913.

Of these six fraternities, only one, Alpha Epsilon Pi, was strongly Jewish in its activities. It intended to nurture future leaders in the American Jewish community.<sup>16</sup> The remaining five were begun for social purposes, most often as non-sectarian fraternities for Jews and others who desired fraternity life, but were unable or unwilling to join fraternities that excluded according to race or religion.

Early professional fraternities include Sigma Epsilon Delta made up of dental students, founded in 1901; Phi Delta Epsilon, a medical fraternity, begun in 1904; and Tau Epsilon

Phi, started in 1910 for pharmacy students.

The first Jewish sorority was Iota Alpha Pi, begun in 1903 at the Normal College of New York City (now Hunter College). The women who started Iota Alpha Pi knew some of the men in ZBT at CCNY, saw how the fraternity fulfilled many of their needs, and launched the sorority in the hope that it would provide as well for themselves.<sup>17</sup>

The second Jewish sorority was not begun until 1909. Non-sectarian, but predominantly Jewish, Alpha Epsilon Phi was formed by Jewish women at Barnard who could not gain access to existing sororities. By 1927, Alpha Epsilon Phi was the largest Jewish sorority, with twenty-one chapters and 1,275 members.<sup>18</sup>

Phi Sigma Sigma was established in 1913 at the Normal College of New York City. One of this sorority's primary goals was the advancement of women.<sup>19</sup>

During the early years, Jewish fraternities and sororities led a precarious existence. Many which began as local units never developed other chapters, and often failed. Those that finally did achieve prominence were dependent, in the early years at least, on the quality of student leadership. Without alumni support, and with limited finances, the students were for the most part left to their own devices.<sup>20</sup>

The CCAR maintained a long-time disdain for Jewish fraternities and sororities, stating that by imitating Gentile organizations, they were aiding in the assimilation of Jewish students rather than promoting Jewish interest among them.<sup>21</sup>

The years in which World Wars I and II were fought were difficult for the Jewish fraternities, for most of their membership left the campus to join the patriotic struggles. But between the Wars Jewish fraternities as well as sororities flourished.

In the academic year 1935-1936, there were reportedly 289 national and twenty-nine local social fraternity chapters, eighty-four national and forty local sorority chapters, and 155 chapters of professional fraternities.<sup>22</sup> During that year there were sixteen national social fraternities, five national sororities, and seventeen professional fraternities. It was estimated that these fraternities and sororities had a total membership of between 15,000 and 18,000 Jewish students, or 14-17 percent of all Jewish college students in the United States.<sup>23</sup>

The Jewish social fraternities and sororities were the single most popular Jewish student organizations on college and university campuses. In part they offered their members the same advantages as Gentile fraternities and sororities: living accommodations, a pre-formed social circle of friends, social activities, etc. But the Jewish counterparts of the Greek system also offered a familiar atmosphere in an often alien environment. In some ways they promoted Jewish consciousness among the students. Many of these fraternities and sororities gave annual service awards to prominent Jews, offered monetary relief in times of international Jewish difficulty and awarded scholarships to Jewish students. Some of the groups had definite Jewish aspects to their

rituals. In the main, however, the Jewish content of these fraternities and sororities was not strong.

There are certainly important Jewish values to be served by a Jewish fraternity or sorority groups, inasmuch as it brings together a considerable number of Jewish men or women, and is the chief influence in their social life for a period of years. These Jewish values however are largely implicit in the general situation, and seldom express themselves in any direct or concrete way.<sup>24</sup>

Carey McWilliams in A Mask For Privilege, a book written on anti-Semitism in America, expresses the primary reason why Jewish fraternities and sororities came into existence:

An examination of the dates on which most of the present day Jewish fraternities and sororities were established indicates that they came into existence between 1906 and 1920. The years when the second generation immigrant group was just beginning to reach college age. There can be no doubt that the Jewish fraternities and sororities came into existence as a reaction against the exclusionist policies of the non-Jewish organizations--as a defense mechanism.<sup>25</sup>

By forming fraternities and sororities on their own, Jewish students were able to maintain an almost "separate but equal" status with the Gentile Greeks. The degree to which these students were acquiescent to the non-Jews, fearful of their disdain, will be seen in the reaction of the Jewish fraternities and sororities to the arrival on campus of other Jewish groups which identified more closely with Judaism.

#### Zionist Organizations on Campus

The organization of Zionist groups on campus reflected in the Jewish student bodies a student counterpart to the general Zionist movement in the United States. Most student

Zionists expressed the Jewish yearning for a homeland in Palestine; few actually followed through to the point of going there to live. As among Zionists in the adult Jewish community, student Zionists gave funds to Palestine Jews, supported the idea of a Jewish homeland, and discussed, not always amicably, the various Zionist philosophies. Certainly Zionism gave the students enough projects to make student Zionist organizations functional and involving--their programs included discussion groups and study circles, inviting prominent Zionists to speak, and fund raising efforts. But most students who were willing to maintain a high Jewish profile were interested in organizations which were not so narrow in their interests and concerns, which dealt with a fuller range of Jewish ideas, issues and activities. Campus Zionist groups have always been small organizations made up of singularly dedicated students.<sup>26</sup> One observer describes the nature of these organizations:

The collegiate Zionist groups developed more along the lines of a special interest group rather than a social or religious one. The Jewish students attracted to the Zionist cause were devoted workers. They composed a small percentage of the total Jewish student enrollment. Zionism was too controversial a subject during the first half of the twentieth century to be used as an organizational vehicle for all Jewish students.<sup>27</sup>

Because of the controversial nature of Zionism, neither the Intercollegiate Menorah Association nor B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations (and certainly not the Jewish fraternities and sororities) took a definite stand on the question of Zionism. Keeping a neutral pose, they were able in most

instances to avoid alienating either ardent Zionists or equally partisan anti-Zionists.

Though student Zionist groups did not have a major role in campus Jewish activities, they were able to involve a significant number of students, and Zionist philosophy influenced many students who were never active in a purely Zionist organization.

The first campus Zionist group was the Students' Zionist Society, formed at CCNY in 1902. The Society held weekly discussion meetings, offered Jewish history courses and classes in the Zionist Idea.

In 1905 this CCNY Society joined with other Zionist clubs which had been inaugurated at Harvard, Columbia, Western Reserve, Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins, and formed the Collegiate Zionist League. The League did not attract many students, and since many of the participating clubs were weak, the League failed.<sup>28</sup>

The following year, representatives from CCNY, Columbia, New York University, and the Normal School of New York City met in New York City and formed a new Collegiate Zionist League. The new League, which was more a merger of the New York clubs than the organization of a major intercollegiate society, promoted discussions and presented lectures for its own members, and provided speakers for other groups, as well as raising money for the Jewish National Fund. In 1910 the CZL published a volume of essays, The Collegiate Zionist.<sup>29</sup>

After the dissolution of the first CZL no campus outside New York City had an active Zionist group until a group of Zionists broke from the Harvard Menorah Society in 1914 to create a Zionist organization. This independent group left the Menorah Society because Menorah was unwilling to take a positive stand on Zionism.<sup>30</sup>

In 1915, this Harvard club joined with the CZL and began the Intercollegiate Zionist Association, which maintained headquarters at Harvard. By the following year the IZA had established seven new chapters, and by 1919 had thirty-three.

The Intercollegiate Zionist Association offered courses in Jewish history, study groups, debates, lectures, conferences and conventions. It published a monthly Bulletin, and published an annual called Kadimah in 1918 and again in 1920. For all its activity the IZA had at its height only 2500 members, drawn mostly from New York City, Boston, and Baltimore.<sup>31</sup>

In 1918, the Zionist Organization of America granted funds to the IZA which made its expansion possible. But in 1920 ZOA withdrew its funds from IZA in an effort to cut back on expenditures which did not directly aid the practical work going on in Palestine. Unable to raise funds, IZA ceased to exist as a national association. Yet some of the local groups continued to function.<sup>32</sup>

Five years after the demise of the IZA, Avukah, the American Student Zionist Federation, was created in Washington D.C. Not solely a student organization, Avukah began with an advisory council which included the likes of Henrietta Szold and Mordecai M. Kaplan. ZOA, having shifted

its goals once again, sponsored Avukah financially, and accorded it recognition as "the only national Zionist organization in the United States operating among colleges and universities." In 1927 Avukah had twenty-nine groups at different campuses. By 1939 that number had grown to fifty-six in the United States and Canada. Along with the classes, lectures and discussions which earlier groups had also offered, Avukah maintained a summer program for the training of young Zionist leaders. Early on it published the Avukah Bulletin, which was replaced in 1938 by a bi-weekly journal, Avukah Student Action. Avukah also published the Brandeis Avukah Annual in 1932.

Avukah had chronic problems which differed little from those of earlier organizations. Always pressed for funds, and affected by the rapid natural turnover of student leaders, Avukah failed to involve large numbers of students. In 1942, after Labor Zionist students had taken over Avukah, ZOA retracted its financial support and recognition. At that point, Avukah was dissolved.<sup>33</sup>

#### The Intercollegiate Menorah Association

Perhaps the most successful student-organized Jewish campus group was the Intercollegiate Menorah Association, which claimed to have 73 chapters in the United States and Canada during the academic year 1919-1920.<sup>34</sup>

The Menorah movement began at Harvard in 1906. Though there had been a substantial number of Jewish students at Harvard for several years, little effort had been exerted to

organize them into a group. A Zionist club was founded in the fall of 1905, but went out of existence at the end of the academic year in 1906. A group of students who believed that Zionism was too narrow a base for a Jewish organization met in October, 1906 to form a club devoted to Jewish culture and ideals.<sup>35</sup> As the German club fostered the study of all things German, and the French club French culture, so this new club would promote the study of Jewish history and culture.<sup>36</sup> Just as a student who joined the Spanish club did not need to be Spanish, so membership in the Menorah Society was open to all students, whether Jewish or not.<sup>37</sup> Toward the end of 1906 the group determined that the club's name would be the Harvard Menorah Society, a Society for Hebraic Culture and Ideals, and a constitution was adopted which defined the purpose and membership of the Society.

The specific nature of the Harvard Menorah Society was ingenious. Defining itself as another culture club such as the Deutscher Verein made it non-sectarian. It was to be construed as cultural and not religious or racial. Emphatically adding to this idea that Menorah was to be only intellectual in its approach enhanced its image as a purely cultural organization. Making the Menorah Society cultural and intellectual from the outset gave it two primary assets: Menorah would be seen by the Gentile community at Harvard not as an exclusively Jewish club, but as a humanistic study group of the type which Harvard had long sustained; and it would be acceptable to Jewish students who would not join a Zionist club or other Jewish organization which was strongly

identified as Jewish, promoting Judaism along religious, racial or partisan lines.

Almost from the beginning, the originators of the Society saw in it a movement of national proportions. Less than a year after it was formed, the Harvard group held a meeting with representatives of other schools in order to acquaint them with the Menorah Idea.<sup>38</sup> As members of the Harvard Menorah Society graduated and took faculty positions at other institutions they often worked to create new Menorah chapters in the image of the original.<sup>39</sup>

The cultural, intellectual, non-partisan approach to Judaism expoused by Menorah was right for its time. Small groups of intellectual, second generation American Jewish students existed on many campuses. Enamored of ideas, full of heady thoughts, they were searching for a philosophical and functional self-definition in an academic world which taught them reverence for high culture, yet ignored the Hebraic contribution to civilization. This elite among Jewish college students attached themselves to the Menorah Idea, seeing in it the missing link, now found, which connected them, by way of the Jewish cultural heritage, to the chain of culture which they so highly prized.

Around the time when the Harvard Menorah Society was forming small student groups at other universities were initiating programs similar to Menorah. The University of Minnesota Jewish Literary Society and the Ivrim at the University of Illinois had literary and intellectual concerns. These and other pre-established groups converted their clubs

to Menorah Societies. The Harvard Menorah Society succeeded in stimulating students at several other campuses, particularly in the Boston area, to create new Menorah Societies.<sup>40</sup> A few Menorah Societies were begun with the aid of local rabbis or faculty members.

The Menorah Idea spread. By 1912 there were eleven chapters.<sup>41</sup> In 1911, the newly elected president of the Harvard Menorah Society, at the urging of other Menorah Societies, undertook the task of working this group of like-minded Societies into an intercollegiate network.<sup>42</sup> Because the Menorah Societies were spread over such a wide area of the country, two regional conferences were called to consider the possibility of forming a national organization.<sup>43</sup>

The Eastern Conference was held at Columbia University in January 1912. Representatives from Societies at Harvard, CCNY, Columbia, Cornell and Johns Hopkins were present. They resolved unanimously to form a national organization, and elected a committee to write a constitution which would be ratified by any Menorah Society desiring membership in the intercollegiate organization. The small group of students meeting at Columbia was encouraged in their undertaking by Judah L. Magnes, Solomon Schechter, and Cyrus Adler, who lent their support.<sup>44</sup>

The Western Conference was held in April 1912 at the University of Chicago, with representation from the University of Illinois, University of Chicago, Michigan, Missouri, Wisconsin and Minnesota. They resolved to join with those

who had attended the Eastern Conference in creating the Intercollegiate Menorah Association.<sup>45</sup>

Consequently, a national conference was held at the University of Chicago in January 1913. Representatives came from the University of Chicago, CCNY, Boston University, the University of Illinois, the University of Michigan, Harvard University, the University of Minnesota, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, the University of Missouri, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Wisconsin. The constitution was formally adopted and the Intercollegiate Menorah Association was established. The constitution set forth the purpose of the IMA as:

...The promotion in American colleges and universities of the study of Jewish history, culture, and problems, and the advancement of Jewish ideals.<sup>46</sup>

The IMA's two functions were to be:

...first, it regulates the nature and the purposes of every constituent Menorah Society, and secondly, it endeavors to stimulate and to assist the Menorah Societies in carrying out their common purposes. As to the first, not only does the Association prescribe the nature and purposes of every Society that desires to become affiliated with it, but it keeps watch that every Menorah Society already within the organization shall not deviate in spirit or in practice from the fundamental principles of the Menorah Movement.<sup>47</sup>

This first national Menorah conference established a College of Lecturers, which provided speakers on Jewish subjects to the Societies. A portion of the Menorah Idea was that the establishment of intellectual societies could eventually lead to the inclusion of Jewish courses in the regular curriculum of many schools. Eventually it was hoped

that Jewish chairs could be established. The conference promoted these ideas for the future. Also decided upon at the Chicago convention was the establishment of small Menorah libraries at the constituent campuses. Many libraries were actually begun, mostly with books sent through the Intercollegiate office. The conference also called for the establishment of the Menorah Journal in order to provide a means of communication between individual chapters, and "to serve as an academic exponent of Jewish culture and ideas in America."<sup>48</sup>

The conference strictly laid down the sort of activities which were appropriate for a Society to sponsor. In particular, the representatives tried to put limits on the degree to which a Menorah Society could be a social club:

Local conditions might dictate the amount of socializing, but it was paramount that the Menorah be 'a sociable but not a social, body.'<sup>49</sup>

Henry Hurwitz, who had served as the first secretary of the Harvard Menorah Society, was elected president of the new Intercollegiate. The following year he was elected chancellor, a full-time position, and held that post as long as the Menorah Association existed. As early as the first national conference, Hurwitz's strong influence on the Association could be seen.<sup>50</sup> As time went on the name Henry Hurwitz increasingly became synonymous with the Menorah Association.

Leaders in the adult Jewish community began taking an interest in the Intercollegiate. Since adult attempts at organizing Jewish campus groups had mostly failed, the serious purpose and apparently good organization of the IMA suggested

that a new generation of Jewish leaders could grow out of the Menorah Societies.<sup>51</sup>

In 1912, the CCAR Committee on Religious Work in Universities reported to the Conference that:

The Menorah Society stimulates the Jewish consciousness and serves to increase the knowledge of Judaism along religious and historical lines; hence it should receive highest commendation. It also acts as a check to the organization of exclusively social organizations.<sup>52</sup>

Many in the Jewish community had great hopes for the IMA, not only for producing new Jewish leaders, but also that through the work of Menorah a generation of American Jewish scholars might be engendered. At the banquet celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Jewish Publication Society, Professor Israel Friedlaender spoke of the Menorah Society when talking on the future of Jewish scholarship in America:

It counts, at present, about one thousand members, but there is little doubt in my mind that in a very short time it will embrace the better part--both quantitatively and qualitatively--of our Jewish college youth. This college youth will, in my firm conviction, be the bearer of that spiritual light which shall ultimately radiate from the Jews of America to the Jews of other lands.<sup>53</sup>

One of the "fundamental principles" of the IMA was that before a new chapter could be admitted into the Association, approval was necessary from the administration of the school. Many colleges and universities were reluctant to allow exclusive, sectarian Jewish groups to exist on campus. They feared the politics involved as well as the visibility of a distinct minority group on campus.<sup>54</sup> But since Menorah was open to all interested parties on campus, it was not seen in the same light as a Zionist group or an exclusively Jewish

fraternity. Menorah was set up to appeal to the broad humanistic views which campus administrators held, or had to feign believing, as proponents of the new democratic college and university of the twentieth century.

Perhaps some of the early success of the Harvard Menorah Society can be attributed to the fact that social fraternities were discouraged at Harvard. Consequently, a Jewish fraternity was not an option for Harvard's Jewish students who were interested in a low-level Jewish commitment which would not make them stand out as strongly Jewish in religious matters or as racially distinct. Menorah, by the intellectual approach, accommodated these students at Harvard.<sup>55</sup>

However, the IMA was cautious in not alienating fraternity members when creating Societies on other campuses. The IMA and the leaders of the new Menorah chapters spelled out Menorah's purposes carefully. This was one of the main reasons Menorah stayed away from sponsoring purely social activities. Fraternity members, whose first allegiance was to their fraters, could join Menorah without feeling that they were undercutting either the purpose or the importance of the fraternity.<sup>56</sup> Yet in many instances the campus Menorah Society and its members were received only with contempt and disdain by the fraternity boys. They saw Menorah as a socially unacceptable organization. Not only did they refuse to join, but they believed the presence of such a Society on campus to be a threat to their own unstable social position. However, on campuses where Menorah was the only Jewish organization, the Society sponsored social activities to

stimulate Jewish social contacts and to promote membership.<sup>57</sup>

The Intercollegiate Menorah Association experienced its greatest growth between 1910 and 1915. It continued to expand into the early 1920's. But as time went on, the Jewish college student changed. Even the small percentages who had been interested in the Idea and the vision of Menorah turned to a less complicated, more social Jewish outlet such as a Jewish fraternity or sorority.<sup>58</sup> Unwilling to take a position on any Jewish issue (in the name of intellectual freedom), Menorah lost members to Zionist groups. Uninvolved as well in any social action movement, Menorah increasingly became the bastion of a small, intellectual elite who would discuss almost anything but refused to act.

At the same time, the IMA, which enjoyed pointing out the spontaneity of the organization of new Menorah chapters, became more and more a bureaucratic structure, with authority being dictated from the top. The IMA took an active role in the creation of several of the Societies and worked to keep them functioning.<sup>59</sup>

The reports submitted by many Societies to the national office between 1917 and 1921 show a slackening interest in the Menorah program.<sup>60</sup> Reports complain that membership is not higher because many students attend school at night while working during the day, or that most Jewish students live at home and do not become involved in extracurricular activities.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps most representative, however, is this statement from a student at the University of Chicago:

I have ascertained that we have about four hundred

Jewish students on campus. Most of the men are fraternity men, and do what I will, there is nothing that can be done to attract their attention.<sup>62</sup>

Active competition existed not only with fraternities, but also with Zionist and religious groups.

The Intercollegiate Menorah Association was a better Idea than it was a concrete ideology, a program of events, or services. Its one enduring achievement was the Menorah Journal, called for as early as the 1913 conference, and first published in 1915. What the Journal attempted to accomplish was published in its first issue, dated January 1915:

The Menorah Journal bids the favor of the public. Scholarship will be in order, but always endeavoring to be timely, vivacious, readable; keen in the pursuit of truth wherever its source and whatever the consequences; a Jewish forum open to all sides; devoted first and last to bringing out the values of Jewish culture and ideals of Hebraism and of Judaism, and striving for their advancement--The Menorah Journal hopes not merely to entertain, but to enlighten, in a time when knowledge, thought and vision are more than ever imperative in Jewish life.<sup>63</sup>

The Journal not only encouraged, but helped to develop the skills of such young Jewish writers as Elliot Cohen, Clifton Fadiman and Lionel Trilling.

Yet the Journal itself may have contributed to the demise of the IMA. Not only was the Journal highly intellectual, but it also alienated Jewish lay leaders whose support the Menorah Movement needed desperately. Henry Hurwitz never seemed to be able to collect sufficient funds to keep the IMA expanding or to adequately serve the Societies with lecturers, programs, etc. The pages of the Journal frequently satirized the efforts of Jewish leaders who worked for Jewish causes and the well-being of American Jews. Abram Sacher suggests why

Hurwitz's pleas to the community for financial support were usually ignored:

The Menorah Societies and the Journal succumbed because they failed to involve the sensitive, well disposed Jewish layman in their objectives. Henry Hurwitz was a gifted editor, but he was an unconscionable snob.<sup>64</sup>

As The Menorah Journal gained in influence, Hurwitz increasingly devoted less of his time and energy to the welfare of the Intercollegiate, and more to the Journal. He hired assistants to travel to Societies on campuses across the country, where in the early days he had gone himself, stimulating the interest of students with the force of his personality. Now he had lost intimate contact with the Societies.<sup>65</sup> As early as 1919-1920 an IMA field secretary "reported that most people thought Menorah Societies were religious organizations analogous to the YMCA's or Newman Clubs."<sup>66</sup>

By the late 1920's, membership in Menorah Societies was on the decline. Where its identity was not misunderstood, students rejected it for its narrow intellectual concerns. Funds for strong professional leadership were never obtained, and the student leadership turned over too fast to offer continuity to an individual Society. Most of all, among the Jewish college students of the late 1920's and the 1930's, there was no longer a minority of intellectual students interested in the Menorah Idea:

Menorah could not hold the loyalty of the small but vigorous band of committed student Zionists who rebelled against what they felt were its pale and uncommitted nonpartisanship and its lack of activism in matters of vital concern to the Jewish people. Neither did Menorah

appeal to many non-Zionist intellectuals of the 30s. Menorah's founders and early leaders had been the products of a vibrant East European Jewish environment, which they sought to project into the future. For many Jewish students of the 30s, however, the Jewish past was dead. They were in flight from it. It was an irrelevant anachronism to a generation which had witnessed the economic collapse of its society, rejected religion as the relic of a prerational past, and put its trust in new social systems that promised to cure the ills of mankind by the radical reorganization of the economy.<sup>67</sup>

The Menorah Societies had apparently disappeared completely by 1945.

#### B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations

Unlike the Intercollegiate Menorah Association or the inter-campus Zionist groups which, at least on the local level, were always led by students, Hillel was, from the beginning, professionally organized and directed.

Hillel began in 1923 at the University of Illinois. It was not the first attempt at organizing a Jewish student group at the Champaign campus. A small intellectual group called Ivrim was initiated in 1907, and converted to a Menorah Society in 1912, but never was able to serve the needs of more than a handful of the Jewish students at Illinois. In 1915, the small Jewish congregation at Champaign-Urbana appealed unsuccessfully for funds to hire a leader for the Jewish students on campus.<sup>68</sup>

In the years 1921-1923, Benjamin Frankel, a student rabbi, was assigned the congregation in Champaign-Urbana as his rabbinical placement. While serving the congregation, he became interested in the plight of the Jewish student on campus. In conversation with interested congregants he

discussed what could be done.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, Edward Chauncey Baldwin, a University of Illinois professor, though not Jewish himself, was lamenting to Jewish lay leaders that the Jewish college student knew little about his own history and culture, and as a result, lacked self-respect. Baldwin called upon lay and rabbinical leaders to find a way to provide Jewish leadership for college students.<sup>70</sup>

When Frankel was ordained at the Hebrew Union College in 1923, he passed up lucrative offers from established congregations in order to return to Champaign-Urbana to serve the congregation there, but with the express purpose of organizing some kind of group for the Jewish students. He coined the name Hillel Foundation, and with limited funds, opened a small office above a barber shop near the campus.<sup>71</sup> In the beginning, Hillel was loosely patterned on the Wesley Foundation, the Methodist student organization which had been started at the turn of the century. Frankel intended to make Hillel into a social, religious, recreational, communal and above all, religious organization, offering a full range of Jewish expression and experience.<sup>72</sup>

"Big Ben" Frankel stood six-foot two and weighed over 300 pounds. He was a gregarious man, a natural-born organizer who understood student needs and prerogatives. He saw the Menorah Societies for what they were--intellectual, elitist, and lacking wide appeal. In a 1973 interview, Abram L. Sacher, who in 1923 was a history instructor at the University of Illinois and shared an apartment with Frankel in the early

days of Hillel, described Rabbi Benjamin Frankel:

Ben was a great raconteur and enormously popular. He had an infectious laugh. He might have made a great politician. But there was no connivance about him. This was a wholesome man.

He was interested in the Jewish student no matter how marginal. But there was nothing missionary about him. He was not a driven man. He was a man with a committed attitude about Jewish pride. He was no great scholar. At Hebrew Union College he was looked down upon by the snooty austere people.<sup>73</sup>

Ben Frankel seems to have had equal facility for organizing students and appealing successfully for funds. In the first year of Hillel's operation the financial situation was becoming desperate. Frankel, through the intercession of Dr. Louis Mann, rabbi of Temple Sinai in Chicago, was able to convince twelve prominent men, including Julius Rosenwald, to contribute to Hillel. They gave \$12,000.<sup>74</sup> But it was clear that such ad hoc fund raising as an annual appeal would not establish Hillel for the future. Frankel appealed to the UAHC to take Hillel under its wing, but the UAHC refused.<sup>75</sup>

Frankel next took his proposition to B'nai B'rith, and spoke at the 1925 B'nai B'rith national convention so eloquently on the subject of Hillel's importance, that he not only upstaged the next speaker, Stephen S. Wise,<sup>76</sup> but his speech provoked the immediate approval by B'nai B'rith of the adoption of the Hillel Foundation.<sup>77</sup> That first year, B'nai B'rith, which was at the time looking for a new national project to support, voted \$25,000 for the coming academic year and pronounced itself prepared to assist in expanding Hillel to other campuses. The committee report which passed

at the convention changed the name of Hillel to B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, and called for the establishment of two new Foundations a year for the next five years.<sup>78</sup>

Even before B'nai B'rith took over the funding of Hillel, interested parties at the University of Wisconsin had asked Frankel to establish a Hillel Foundation there. Wisconsin, rather than having no Jewish campus groups, had an overabundance of organizations which were competing with one another. There was a Jewish student association, three Jewish fraternities and one sorority, Zionist groups and a Menorah Society. Frankel turned the Jewish student association into the Hillel Foundation. He then made it all-encompassing, organizing five major committees: religious, education (which included Menorah), social (which was formed so as not to conflict with the fraternities and sorority), social welfare (which could contain the Zionists) and publicity. A rabbi, Solomon Landman, was appointed director. Other inquiries about the establishment of new Foundations began coming in.<sup>79</sup>

Frankel's manner of organizing the Wisconsin Hillel was to become the pattern for future Foundations. Hillel would be the all-encompassing organization, offering assistance and direction to other groups beneath its umbrella. Frankel felt strongly that professional direction was necessary, and he much preferred rabbinic leadership to any other type. He had learned from the problems of Menorah and Zionist groups that student leadership could not sustain a program, nor could students offer the variety of outlets which a profes-

sional could. Rabbinic leadership would also enhance the likelihood of adequate, regular community support.<sup>80</sup>

Ben Frankel organized the first five Hillel chapters himself. As Hillel grew, it began receiving national recognition. The Hillel Foundation budget from B'nai B'rith had grown to \$93,000 by 1927-1928.<sup>81</sup> Hillel was being invited to create new Foundations on campuses across the country.<sup>82</sup>

Frankel recognized that most college students were not searching for knowledge or truth. "He sought to meet students at the students' level of interest, not the director's."<sup>83</sup> Frankel also perceived that each campus presented its own set of problems and had particular assets. He tried to form each Foundation in the tradition of the school, and mold it to accommodate the pattern of student life.<sup>84</sup> He promoted a college-level approach to Jewish life and experience.<sup>85</sup>

The plans Frankel had devised for nation-wide expansion were cut short by his sudden death of a cerebral hemorrhage in December 1927. Frankel left as his legacy all the elements necessary for the expansion of Hillel into a national organization, responsive to the needs of the college student of the time.

Upon Ben Frankel's death, Rabbi Louis Mann took over Hillel for four years. Mann's congregation in Chicago needed his services full-time, however, and in 1932 Abram Leon Sacher, Frankel's friend, colleague and confidant, became the national director of Hillel, the position Frankel held at his death.

Sacher held the post from 1932 to 1948. As Frankel had

been Hillel's architect, Sacher became its masterbuilder. During Sacher's first years as national director, America was in the midst of the Depression. Sacher realized that if the Hillel Foundations were to expand, even in the best of times, B'nai B'rith would be unable to carry the full financial burden. The Hillel Foundations, he submitted, were a part of the whole of the Jewish communities in which they were located. It seemed only natural, then, that local communities should help finance Hillels locally.<sup>86</sup> Some Foundations were formed solely with local money, with direction and leadership coming from the national office. By 1939, set Hillel policy stated that Hillel's purpose was to encourage and guide new Foundations. The financial structure of the newer Foundations was variable, depending upon the ability of a local community to support a Hillel.<sup>87</sup>

Throughout the first fifteen years, Hillel followed Frankel's directive, establishing new Foundations only when a competent full-time director could be secured to run it. But by 1938, now established as the premier campus Jewish organization, Hillel turned its attention to smaller schools, which would not warrant establishment of a Foundation with a full-time director. The Jewish students on these campuses needed to be served.<sup>88</sup>

In 1938 an extension program of Hillel was authorized. This program would provide limited Jewish services and programs to smaller schools. In cases where a small school was located near a Foundation on a large campus, the Hillel director would offer programs and services at the smaller

campus. Where this was not possible, congregational rabbis located near these smaller schools were given operating budgets to serve these students. Where neither a Foundation director nor a congregational rabbi was available, a faculty member or other individual, carefully screened, would be assigned.<sup>89</sup>

This extension program of Counselorships, as they were termed (rather than Foundations), greatly increased the number of campuses reached by Hillel. Though the Counselorships could not approach the effectiveness of Foundations, they succeeded in bringing Jewish life to many campuses which had had none.<sup>90</sup>

Between 1938 and 1945, Hillel grew from serving nine campuses to twenty-one Hillel Foundations and twenty-eight Counselorships. Over time, many Counselorships grew into Foundations.

From its inception, Hillel was determined to be the major exponent of Jewish values, religion, society, education and social welfare--of Jewish life--on the campuses it served. Part of its success emerged from maintaining professional leadership. But as much as adult leadership helped in the establishment of solid long-range programs, Hillel came to be seen by many students as too paternalistic, too much a home away from home for dependent types of students, who lacked the imagination and social adaptability to form or join student-led groups.

Nonetheless, Hillel has offered religious services, personal counseling, Jewish history, literature and culture

courses, and has helped to create innumerable Jewish community leaders. Because each Foundation or Counselorship is tied to the director or counselor, the quality of Hillel programming has been dependent primarily upon the abilities of the individual leaders.

Throughout the years since Hillel began, the arrival of Hillel to a new campus was met by at least a minority of students with disregard and even fear. Jewish fraternities and sororities often felt that Hillel tended to promote a Jewish clique, rather than unify the Jewish students. Even in Illinois in 1923,

...there was immediate protest from some of the Jewish fraternities that Hillel was conspicuously displaying a Jewish identity which others would interpret as clannishness.<sup>91</sup>

Hillel maintained that it was a supplement to other extra-curricular activities, that the Foundations would add to Jewish students' dignity. The argument was concluded by stating that where Foundations had been established, anti-Semitism had slackened.<sup>92</sup>

Hillel had its difficulties handling the thorny issue of Zionism as well. As a part of B'nai B'rith, a non-partisan organization, Hillel took no position on Zionism. In 1943, however, Abram Sacher suggested that Hillel directors organize Zionist groups (to be called Brandeis Clubs) within Hillel. Anti-Zionists on and off the campuses were infuriated that Hillel was taking an apparently favorable stand on Zionism. And Zionists felt that Hillel's position was not nearly supportive enough.<sup>93</sup> But by 1948, with the establishment

of the State of Israel, the anti-Zionist position had become moot. Hillel had managed to withstand the criticism leveled against it from all directions.

Hillel had become the most successful Jewish campus organization to exist at colleges and universities in America, and as college attendance by Jews continued to increase, Hillel reached more campuses and offered more diversified programs to more Jewish students than ever before.

## Footnotes

## Chapter 3

<sup>1</sup>Horace M. Kallen, "The Menorah Idea," The Menorah Journal, Autumn-Winter 1962, pp. 9-12, quoted in Alfred Jospe, "Jewish College Students in the United States," American Jewish Yearbook, 65:1964, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>Gotthard Deutsch, "Jewish Students' Societies," American Jewish Archives, Miscellaneous File, n.d.

<sup>3</sup>Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook, VI, 1895, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup>CCAR Yearbook, XV, 1905, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>CCAR Yearbook, XVI, 1906, p. 188.

<sup>6</sup>Correspondence between Adolph Kraus, George Zepin and Lipman Levy regarding religious services for college students. Cincinnati, Ohio and Chicago, Illinois, 1906, American Jewish Archives, Correspondence File, College Students, Jewish.

<sup>7</sup>Correspondence between George Zepin, Lipman Levy and Louis Krohn, Cincinnati, Ohio and Chicago, Illinois, 1906, American Jewish Archives, Records of the Union of the American Hebrew Congregations.

<sup>8</sup>CCAR Yearbook, XIX, 1909, p. 154.

<sup>9</sup>Slade, pp. 9-10.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>Steve Mason, The Jewish Fraternity as a Jewish Socializing Agent, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Rabbinic Thesis, 1976, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>13</sup>Clarence K. Weil, The First Twenty-Five Years, (New York: Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity, 1923), p. 25. Quoted in Slade, An Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup>Mason, The Jewish Fraternity as a Jewish Socializing Agent, p. 23.

<sup>15</sup>American Jewish Year Book, 28:1927, p. 243.

<sup>16</sup>Mason, The Jewish Fraternity as a Jewish Socializing Agent, p. 30.

<sup>17</sup>Slade, An Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup>American Jewish Year Book, 28:1927, p. 243.

<sup>19</sup>Mason, The Jewish Fraternity as a Jewish Socializing Agent, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup>Slade, An Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>22</sup>Levinger, The Jewish Student in America, p. 62.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 54-55.

<sup>25</sup>Carey McWilliams, A Mask For Privilege: Anti-Semitism in America, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), p. 128.

<sup>26</sup>It is my observation that campus Zionist groups today remain small and dedicated. These groups form a core for larger groups which materialize spontaneously when Israel's existence is threatened.

<sup>27</sup>Slade, An Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup>Jospe, "Jewish College Students in the U.S.," p. 137.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 137-138.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>34</sup>Elinor Grumet, unpublished manuscript, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup>Henry Hurwitz and I. Leo Sharfman, The Menorah Movement, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Intercollegiate Menorah Association, 1914), p. 5.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>37</sup>Slade, An Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 38.

<sup>38</sup>Hurwitz and Sharfman, The Menorah Movement, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., and Grumet, unpublished manuscript. p. 1.

<sup>40</sup>Grumet, unpublished manuscript. p. 1.

- <sup>41</sup>Hurwitz and Sharfman, The Menorah Movement, p. 8.
- <sup>42</sup>Grumet, unpublished manuscript, p. 9.
- <sup>43</sup>Hurwitz and Sharfman, The Menorah Movement, pp. 7-8.
- <sup>44</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 48.
- <sup>45</sup>Hurwitz and Sharfman, The Menorah Movement, p. 8.
- <sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 9.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.
- <sup>48</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 53.
- <sup>49</sup>Grumet, unpublished manuscript, p. 14, and Hurwitz and Sharfman, The Menorah Movement, p. 154.
- <sup>50</sup>Grumet, unpublished manuscript, p. 49.
- <sup>51</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 50.
- <sup>52</sup>CCAR Yearbook, XXII, 1912, pp. 185-186.
- <sup>53</sup>American Jewish Year Book, 15:1913-1914, pp. 185-186.
- <sup>54</sup>Grumet, unpublished manuscript, p. 14.
- <sup>55</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 36.
- <sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 43.
- <sup>57</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>58</sup>Grumet, unpublished manuscript, pp. 34-35.
- <sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5.
- <sup>60</sup>S. Howard Schwartz, "The Attitude of the American Jewish University Student to American Jewish Culture, as Reflected in the Papers of various University Menorah Societies," Term Paper, 1967, American Jewish Archives, box 2775, p. 5-6.
- <sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 13.
- <sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 11.
- <sup>63</sup>The Menorah Journal, January 1915, p. 2.

- <sup>64</sup>Abram L. Sacher, "A Turning Point in American Jewish History," The Test of Time, Alfred Jospe, ed., (Washington D.C.: B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, 1974), p. 91.
- <sup>65</sup>Grumet, unpublished manuscript, p. 17.
- <sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 18.
- <sup>67</sup>Jospe, "Jewish College Students in the U.S.," p. 136.
- <sup>68</sup>Ibid. p. 139.
- <sup>69</sup>Akiba Pincus, "How Hillel Began: An Interview with Abram L. Sacher," in Five Decades of Service, a pamphlet, (Washington D.C.: B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, 1973), p. 2.
- <sup>70</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>71</sup>Ibid..
- <sup>72</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 70.
- <sup>73</sup>Pincus, "How Hillel Began," p. 2.
- <sup>74</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 70-72.
- <sup>75</sup>B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations has always believed that the refusal of the Union was a blessing in disguise. Becoming an agency of B'nai B'rith instead of the Reform Movement has allowed Hillel to maintain a non-denominational position which would not have been possible under UAHC auspices.
- <sup>76</sup>Pincus, "How Hillel Began," p. 3.
- <sup>77</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 74.
- <sup>78</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>79</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-74.
- <sup>80</sup>Jospe, "Jewish College Students in the U.S.," p. 139.
- <sup>81</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 80.
- <sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 78.
- <sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>85</sup>Jospe, "Jewish College Students in the U.S.," p. 141.

<sup>86</sup>Alfred Jospe, A Guide to Hillel: Purposes, Program, Policies, (Washington D.C.: B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, n.d.) p. 11.

<sup>87</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 86.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Jospe, A Guide to Hillel, p. 11.

<sup>91</sup>Pincus, "How Hillel Began," p. 2.

<sup>92</sup>Slade, Introductory Survey of Jewish Student Organizations, p. 97.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-99.

## Chapter Four

### 1920-1945: THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF DISCRIMINATION

#### The Number and Distribution of Jews in College

Between 1920 and 1945 the rate of general college enrollment in the United States rose with incredible speed. During the academic year 1921-1922, college and university attendance stood, according to the federal Office of Education, at 437,800. In 1931-1932, the number had grown to 989,700, an increase of 125 percent in only ten years.<sup>1</sup> By 1946, 1,677,000 students were in college, a further growth of 59 percent.<sup>2</sup>

Reliable figures on the number of Jews in college are unavailable for years prior to 1935. However, the highest figure reported by a study conducted during the teens was cited in the Menorah Journal survey of 1915-1916, which set the number of Jewish college and university students at 17,653. If this figure is even approximately correct,<sup>3</sup> then the rate of college attendance by Jews increased by 500 percent (to 104,906) between 1916 and 1935, and by 90.6 percent (to 200,000) between 1935 and 1946.<sup>4</sup>

These remarkable rates of increase in Jewish college attendance conceal the wide-spread practice of discriminatory admissions policies aimed at Jews. The effects of discrimination do not show up in these figures because at the same time that more Jews were attending college, the Jewish population in America was growing rapidly, and economic conditions were improving at a relatively faster pace for Jews than for the general community.

The largest immigration of Jews to the United States came between 1900 and 1924. Consequently, the American Jewish population rose at a rate far exceeding that of the total American population.<sup>5</sup> The Jews also maintained, until the mid-1920's, the high birth rate typical of the lower classes, yet the low mortality rate (particularly among children) of the upper classes. As a result of both these factors, the proportion of college-age Jews grew faster than the percentages in the general population during the 1920's and 1930's.<sup>6</sup>

By the twenties and thirties, the desire among the immigrant Jews to send their children to college had become stronger, along with their ability to pay for higher education. Second generation American Jews were quickly entering the middle classes. They were better off economically than their parents had been, they had a greater tendency to work in white collar jobs, and had in many cases attended college themselves.<sup>7</sup>

Though the rate of college attendance rose faster for Jews than for non-Jews during the twenties, thirties and forties, it did not grow as quickly as could be expected if the strength of the desire for a college education among Jews, the Jewish population explosion, and the movement of Jews into the middle classes are taken into account.

Two comprehensive surveys on the number of Jews in college were conducted, the first in 1935 and the second in 1946. When compared, the two surveys reveal interesting data concerning the imposition of the quota system at exclusive private universities. Though the quota system of

restricting Jews was instituted in these schools during the 1920's, the number of Jews enrolled at men's schools and women's schools (which consisted primarily of the prestigious universities in the East) declined throughout the late thirties and early forties. The 1935 survey found that 10.2 percent of all male Jewish students and 11.8 percent of total female Jewish students attended men's and women's schools. The 1946 survey reported only 4.6 percent of Jewish male and 8.4 percent Jewish female students in these schools. Prior to 1920 Jewish enrollment at these exclusive schools had often numbered 20 percent or more. This decrease in the number of Jews attending men's and women's schools was offset by a commensurate rise in the percentage of Jews attending co-educational colleges or universities.<sup>8</sup> The decline in the percentage of Jews attending professional schools will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

In the 1935 B'nai B'rith study, comparison is drawn between the type of schools attended by Jews and non-Jews. Of the nearly 105,000 Jewish students seeking higher education in 1935, 67.2 percent were studying at universities, 22.1 percent were in colleges, 6.8 percent were in professional schools, only 2.3 percent attended teachers' colleges, and 1.6 percent were in junior colleges. Among all students seeking higher education in 1935, 42.7 percent were attending universities, 31.7 percent were in colleges, only 4.8 percent were enrolled in professional schools, 12.6 percent were going to teachers' colleges and 8.2 percent attended junior colleges.<sup>9</sup>

Both the 1935 and the 1946 surveys found that Jews attended larger schools than the general student population. The 1935 study reported that of the five classes of schools--from universities to junior colleges--the percentage of Jewish students increased as the schools in a given class became larger. The 824 smallest schools (with enrollment to 500) were attended by 16.9 percent of all college students, but by only 5.8 percent of all Jewish students. On the other end of the spectrum, the 37 institutions with enrollments over 5,000 were attended by only 30.1 percent of the total number of students, but by 69.7 percent of the Jewish students. Jews tended to go to the largest schools partly because of their propensity for attending universities, which were usually larger. Another factor is that Jews were less often excluded from public (and frequently large) schools run by cities or states.<sup>10</sup>

Fifty-one percent of the Jewish students were enrolled in publicly funded institutions in 1935. Yet 40.7 percent were attending privately endowed (but not church-related) schools. The private schools which Jews attended, in spite of the quotas on their admission, were for the most part the large Eastern private universities and the small, but fairly numerous private professional schools.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps it can be assumed that Jewish students preferred schools with full four-year curricula, higher quality and more diversified programs, and pre-professional and professional studies.

Demographically, Jews had a strong tendency to attend

college near home, usually in their home state. Most attended colleges or universities in the large industrial cities of the East, which corresponded to the largest concentration of Jews generally, and the prestige schools, also located in the East.<sup>12</sup> In 1935, 53 percent of the Jewish college students went to school in New York City.<sup>13</sup>

The 1946 B'nai B'rith survey shows only slight fluctuations in the percentages of Jewish students in the five types of schools studied. In this later survey, 62.2 percent of the total Jewish students attended universities, a decrease of five percent since 1935, 25.2 percent attended colleges, an increase of 3.1 percent over the earlier figure. The proportion of Jews who attended professional school programs was down only .3 percent, from 6.8 percent in 1935 to 6.5 percent in 1946. The percentages of Jews going to teachers' colleges fell to 1.4 percent in 1946 from an earlier figure of 2.3 percent. Four and one half percent of all Jewish college students attended junior colleges in 1946, whereas 1.6 percent had gone to junior colleges in 1935.<sup>14</sup>

#### The Development of the Quota System

As administrators of the prestigious institutions of the East had often led the way in scholastic innovation, so in the 1920's they became the trailblazers in devising methods for restricting the proportion of Jews allowed in their schools. By the teens and early twenties of this century, administrators at these Eastern universities were noting the high number of Jews attending their schools, and recognized

in these growing numbers the beginning stages of what they understood to be a "Jewish problem."

Jewish students had already discovered that the "problem" for them was being Jewish in a college environment that was Christian from the outset and fast becoming anti-Jewish in attitude. But in the early years of the twentieth century discrimination against a minority group of Jews on campus took the relatively benign forms of social ostracism, anti-Jewish jokes and slurs, and the near impossibility of a Jewish student holding an important school office. With the institutionalization of Jewish quotas many Jews would be denied admission to their first-choice colleges, and as a result, their opportunities for career success would be withheld.

The notion of exclusiveness had been spreading in the United States since the 1880's. Exclusiveness as a component of "privateness" began in social clubs and soon expanded to include summer resorts and camps for children. Before the turn of the century it had come onto the campus in the form of fraternities, eating clubs and societies. Jews were summarily excluded as a group from these organizations.

It was not until the early twenties, however, that the concept of exclusiveness became a part of the definition of "private" as it pertained to the great private Eastern universities. To be sure, these schools had for some time been elite in the sense that they had upheld rigorous entrance requirements. But until the early twenties these requirements were almost entirely scholastic.

The arguments in favor of imposing college entrance restrictions against Jews never suggested that a high number of Jews at a given college or university would threaten the institution's academic standards. To the contrary, the ability of large numbers of Jews to meet even the most stringent academic requirements accounts for the succeeding higher percentages of Jews entering the Eastern prestige colleges throughout the late teens and early twenties. Their growing numbers contributed to the rising sense among school administrators that a "Jewish problem" was developing. Jews who were admitted to these universities often averaged better scholastically than their Protestant peers. Rather than threatening the academic standards of these institutions, Jews were seen as a threat to the schools' respectability: they came primarily from the lower classes, they were competitive in a society which viewed too competitive a spirit as unsportsmanlike, and simply because they were Jews.<sup>15</sup> As important as academics were to the Eastern schools, those who favored restrictions on Jews "contended that the college stood for other things, and that social standards were as important and valid as intellectual ones."<sup>16</sup>

Anti-Semitism in the United States, which grew strong after World War I, helping to revive the Ku Klux Klan, and manifesting in such ugly episodes as Henry Ford's anti-Semitic articles in the Dearborn Independent, fortified the anti-Jewish prejudice on campus. The growing exclusion of Jews in American schools was bolstered by parallel discrimination in European universities. During the academic year

1922-1923, the same year that President Lowell of Harvard was publicly suggesting a cutback in the number of Jews admitted, students, faculty and school administrations in Austria, Poland, Lithuania, Rumania and Hungary called for the imposition of stricter quotas on Jews in their universities.<sup>17</sup>

Certainly many United States college administrators desired to restrict Jewish admissions before 1918. However, anti-Semitic feeling and fear of the Jews had not grown sufficiently until after World War I to create a climate in which they could seriously begin to introduce these restrictions. The method of imposing a Jewish quota in colleges and universities was devised and first implemented by Columbia University.

By 1910, Columbia found itself in an untenable position. Situated in New York City, it intended to serve the old-stock, upper class New Yorkers, training each new generation for roles of leadership. Instead, first and second generation American Jews, who were packed into the ghetto neighborhoods of New York City, sought a Columbia education in large numbers. Columbia appealed to these Jews because it had a reputation for providing a high quality education, it bestowed prestige upon its graduates, and offered a combined curriculum, whereby a student could enter a pre-professional course as a freshman and continue studies at Columbia until a professional degree was obtained. Furthermore, though Columbia charged tuition, a New York boy could live at home and commute to

school, perhaps even working his way through college.

Columbia's system of admissions served as an aid to Jews seeking entrance. The New York State Board of Regents required all students in New York State high schools to pass exams in all academic courses in order to receive course credit. In the 1890's, Columbia began granting exemptions from entrance examinations to students who had passed the Regents exams in the required subjects. In 1909, Columbia altered its regulations and began allowing students to present Regents certification for only partial exemption. Following this change in Columbia's admissions policy, the majority of its students were drawn from New York public schools rather than from private preparatory schools.<sup>18</sup> Columbia's use of the Regents exams was justified by the explanation that this policy would promote attendance by wealthy upstate New York students who were put off by the preparation needed to pass Columbia's own entrance examinations. And though Columbia's administration knew of the large number of Jews in the City high schools, they did not believe that Jews would be interested in attending Columbia. They could not conceive of these low class people having the sensibility to see Columbia as a better school, both academically and socially, than the local public colleges. The Jews not only recognized Columbia's finer qualities, but many no doubt applied to Columbia because admission was particularly open to students from New York high schools.

By 1910, Jews constituted over 40 percent of the graduates of the high schools in New York City. With this

change in Columbia's admissions standards, Jews began attending Columbia in ever-increasing numbers. Forty percent or more of Columbia's student body was Jewish by 1915.<sup>19</sup>

The worst fears of those who ran Columbia were being realized. As the proportion of first and second generation Jews grew, the number of students from old-stock Protestant families declined. The leaders of Columbia, who hoped to maintain or even raise the status of the school, evaluated the situation as disastrous.<sup>20</sup> The administrators and trustees of Columbia became preoccupied with the rising number of Jews on campus. The "Jewish question" was becoming one of Columbia's greatest problems.<sup>21</sup>

The "Problem" had long been recognized, and though the dean of the College, the admissions officer and President Butler had often discussed it among themselves and with the trustees, there at first seemed to be little that could be done to alleviate it. The continued admission of a large number of Jews was causing Columbia's prestige to suffer.<sup>22</sup> The solution seemed to be twofold. On the one hand, Columbia had to find the means to recruit "better" students, and on the other, to somehow manage to restrict the flow of Jews. To attract quality Gentile students, Columbia began offering scholarships to students from outside metropolitan New York City, where there was not such a concentration of Jews, and, staking its claim as a national institution, it stepped up the recruitment of students from outside New York State.

The first step toward accomplishing the goal of restrict-

ing Jews was the establishment of a limited enrollment at Columbia. In 1917, Columbia's President Nicholas Murray Butler spoke in favor of limiting the College's enrollment, noting that in the past, Columbia had accepted "anyone as student who is not shown to be unfit or unprepared." He advocated instead, in order to consolidate funds and personnel, and to improve the quality of the student body, a limited enrollment "in order to fortify and to hold the position that the University should itself, by an affirmative process of selection and not merely by a negative process of exclusion, choose those upon whom it wishes to expend its funds and its energies."

Butler intended to accomplish this fortification of Columbia by choosing students on "their record, their personality and their promise."<sup>23</sup>

In 1919, Butler announced that the Regents exams would no longer be accepted in lieu of entrance examinations, for they discriminated against out of state students who had to take the full battery of Columbia's exams. A maximum number of freshman students would henceforth be determined, and intelligence tests, comprehensive exams, and information provided by each applicant would determine who would be admitted. Part of the rationale for instituting IQ tests was that Jews as a race had been frequently characterized as over-achievers, not overly intelligent but exceedingly industrious. If so, many Jews could be eliminated from consideration by low IQ scores.<sup>24</sup> Also requiring that recommendation letters and extensive personal information be

provided by the student, a subjective aspect could be added to the admissions process. Finally, by basing admissions on three separate criteria, rejected applicants would not be able to determine precisely why they had not been accepted. Prejudice might be suspected, but it could not be proved.

By 1921, Columbia's quota system was in force. Throughout the twenties the number of Jews admitted was regulated with increasing care. Though in the first years of the quota Columbia's real concern for a student's academic potential kept the percentage of Jewish students higher than the administration desired, by 1934 the selective function had been refined to the point that only about one out of seven Jewish applicants was admitted. The percentage of Jews at Columbia College dropped to 17 percent. In addition, Columbia College protected the University's graduate programs from an over-abundance of Jews by admitting only a certain percentage of Jews to its undergraduate program who intended to enter a professional school after receiving an undergraduate degree.<sup>25</sup>

Columbia's eight-page application form became the model for numerous other schools. It included such questions as "Religious affiliation;" "Place of birth;" "Have you been known by another name or used any variations of your name?;" "Father's name, occupation, place of birth;" "Mother's maiden name in full, place of birth." A photograph was required with each application. Every one of these questions and the required photo were intended to make it possible for Columbia's admissions office to distinguish the Jews from

the Gentiles.<sup>26</sup>

In Christians Only, a book describing discrimination against Jews in America, Heywood Broun and George Britt follow their description of Columbia's quota system with this conclusion:

Columbia's machine for regulating the flow of Jewish students through its classroom is one of the most elaborate ever devised. Armed with its eight-page blank, its talk of scholarship standards, its personal interviews, psychological tests, physical examinations, and passport photograph requirement, Columbia can select exactly the applicant it desires, keep the Jewish quota down to the fractional percentage it may determine, and defy anyone to slip by unnoticed. With this minute sifting for good material and testing for young scholars of promise, if Columbia fails to produce the bulk of the nation's future leaders, it will be a discouraging blow to human foresight.<sup>27</sup>

A different approach to stemming the flow of Jews admitted to college was taken in 1922 by Harvard's President Abbott Lawrence Lowell. Rather than gradually constricting the enrollment of Jews year by year, quietly, and with subterfuge, as at Columbia, Lowell publicly stated that because of the rapid increase in the size of Harvard's student body, steps would have to be taken to set general enrollment limitations. When Columbia had decided to restrict the number of Jews admitted to its freshman classes, the admissions office began the subtle process by declaring that henceforth the enrollment at Columbia would be limited. But Lowell had determined not to evade the issue. His proposal for limiting enrollment at Harvard, which was printed in the New York Times, and caused considerable furor, elaborated:

Before a large general policy can be formulated on this great question, it must engage the attention

of the governing boards and the Faculty, and it is likely to be discussed by alumni and under-graduates. It is natural that with a widespread discussion of this sort going on there should be talked about the proportion of Jews at the college. At present the whole problem of limitation of enrollment is in the stage of general discussions, and it may remain in that stage for a considerable time.<sup>28</sup>

When Lowell's statement was criticized, he publicly defended his view that the twenty percent of the student body that was Jewish constituted too large a proportion for Harvard to assimilate. Furthermore, he claimed that the "Jewish problem" did not result primarily from undesirable traits which Jews possessed, but was caused by the clannishness among Jews. Such exclusiveness on the part of the Jews alienated others, and drove them away. When confronted with the possibility that Jews kept to themselves because they had been excluded by Gentiles, Lowell replied that seeking the source of the problem would not provide the solution. Only by limiting the number of Jewish students to a proportion found acceptable by Gentiles would the "Jewish problem" at Harvard be alleviated.<sup>29</sup>

Lowell desired a Jewish quota of 15 or 16 percent. He saw in such discrimination the maintenance of Harvard's character as a "democratic, national university; drawing from all classes of the community and promoting a sympathetic understanding among them." And Harvard's Jews, being limited in number, would be able to assimilate freely, losing their ethnicity and thereby becoming fully Americanized.<sup>30</sup>

Lowell was criticized for his proposal to limit Jewish enrollment for several reasons:

...his ironic use of the word "democratic" in defense of a discriminatory mechanism, his paternalistic attitude toward a people he did not understand, his unilateral decision about their destiny in America and his willingness to use Harvard to implement it, and his assertion that the establishment of a quota system would reduce rather than aggravate intergroup tensions.<sup>31</sup>

Lowell's predecessor, Charles W. Eliot, who had overseen the democratization of Harvard, believed that Lowell privately feared and hated Jews.<sup>32</sup>

Horace M. Kallen, himself a Harvard graduate, understood the attempt to limit Harvard's enrollment of Jews as a desire to return to an earlier time in Harvard's history. Lowell's "whole policy," wrote Kallen in 1923, "has been aimed at the restoration of social homogeneity, of something akin to intellectual uniformity."<sup>33</sup> Kallen offers further explanation of the motives of Lowell and his defenders:

...it is not the failure of Jews to be assimilated into undergraduate society which troubles them. They do not want the Jews to be assimilated into undergraduate society. What really troubles them is the completeness with which the Jews want to be and have been assimilated.<sup>34</sup>

Lowell's proposal evoked criticism in both the Jewish and general press. The American Hebrew was not alone in editorializing in favor of establishing a Jewish university to alleviate the problem.<sup>35</sup> The Board of Delegates on Civil Rights of the UAHC protested not only Lowell's proposal, but saw fit at this time to speak against admissions discrimination against Jews at other institutions as well.<sup>36</sup> At its annual convention, the American Federation of Labor unanimously adopted a resolution which called for investigation of the anti-Semitic movement at Harvard, and condemning attempts to

limit student admissions on racial or religious bases. The Boston City Council condemned the Harvard "affair." And the Massachusetts State Legislature produced two orders for an inquiry to determine whether or not discrimination was involved in selective admissions. A third order called for the organization of a committee to investigate whether Harvard's tax-exempt status should be continued if Harvard consummated its plan to become a private and restricted institution.<sup>37</sup>

Not all the responses to Lowell's proposal were negative, however. Letters to the editor of publications such as The Nation stated that restricting the number of Jews at Harvard was not only an important decision, but necessary if Harvard was to remain a leading institution.<sup>38</sup> In September 1922, The Nation printed the results of a survey of Harvard students, taken as part of a Social Ethics exam, on whether or not the number of Jews at Harvard should be restricted. The results, if disheartening, show a good degree of support for Lowell's proposal:

The bald facts of the lineup are these: of the eighty-three men examined, forty-one believed in the justice of a policy of race-limitation under certain circumstances. Thirty-four held that such a policy was never justified. Eight stayed on the fence. Of this last group one name was Jewish. Seven of those who opposed restriction had Jewish names. Those who favored it were all Gentiles.<sup>39</sup>

Because of the pressure applied to Harvard on account of Lowell's statement, a report of the Board of Overseers of Harvard, dated April 9, 1923, was published which reaffirmed the University's traditional policy of "freedom from

discrimination on grounds of race or religion," and "equal opportunity for all."<sup>40</sup> With the publication of this report, the controversy died down, and Harvard joined Columbia and other schools in employing subterfuge to restrict the number of Jews it admitted.

Throughout the 1920's, the other Eastern prestige schools followed Columbia and Harvard's lead in instituting Jewish enrollment quotas. In many cases, these schools were being barraged with large numbers of Jewish applicants, more than any other schools except those located in New York City. These institutions often introduced character tests and IQ tests (known at the time as psychological exams). Where scholastic potential had at one time been the only criterion for admissions, these schools began to closely examine the "outside interests" of students. High school principals were requested to rank students according to characteristics such as "public spirit," "fair play," "interest in fellows" and "leadership." Stephen Steinberg, in The Academic Melting Pot, describes how these characteristics were slanted to lead toward rejection of Jews:

These traits were exactly opposite those generally ascribed to Jews. According to the prevailing image, Jews did not use "fair play," but employed other methods to get ahead. "Public spirit" and "interest in fellows" were Christian virtues; Jews were outsiders who cared only for themselves. "Leadership" was seen as a prerogative of non-Jews; Jews exhibiting this quality would be regarded as "pushy." School principals who were invariably Protestant and middle class could be expected to reflect these stereotypes in evaluating their Jewish students.<sup>41</sup>

As Columbia had declared itself a national institution in order to justify seeking new students from areas where

there were few Jews, the other Eastern private schools enforced similar programs. Suddenly in the twenties most of these universities introduced regional quotas into their admissions policies. A student's geographical background became a relevant qualification for admission as a "regional balance" was sought.<sup>42</sup>

By the end of the twenties, exclusiveness had become an important component in the self-definition of the private Eastern schools. The possibility of reversing this trend seemed slim indeed, for the selective function itself was now considered private, of concern only to those who were able to manipulate it to their own benefit, and the benefit of others of social rank.<sup>43</sup>

#### The Spread of Quotas and Social Discrimination

With the adoption of the quota system by an increasing number of colleges and universities throughout the twenties and thirties, and into the forties, the percentages of Jews attending both private and public schools decreased. Instead of the high concentration of Jews attending a small number of institutions, the quota system forced the Jews to attend more schools in fewer numbers.

President Lowell's rationale for lowering the percentage of Jews at Harvard, that only a smaller percentage of Jews could be assimilated into the student body, proved to be as false an excuse for discrimination as the critics of his proposal had expected it to be. Discrimination against Jews was not caused by Jewish clannishness, but rather social

exclusion of Jews forced them to depend on one another.

The twenties, the age of jazz, of everything new, of stringent rules of conformity, of college life setting the social standards for a generation still in its formative years, had little place for the Jew in college.<sup>44</sup> The democratization process in colleges and universities, which had developed over the previous half-century, was being challenged by a combination of an ascendant youth culture and nostalgia:

After World War I and into the 1920's schools were modifying their wholehearted embrace of the German University idea, of the elective principle and of college as a purely democratic institution. The reaction included a sentimental return to the collegiate idea of congeniality, society, clubs, of making intimate and lifelone friendships... gold medals and silver trophies were being awarded each year to the roundest all-round men and women, to the renaissance ladies and gentlemen in the Stutz Bear Cats.<sup>45</sup>

Throughout the period from 1920-1945 college and university administrators most often left social discrimination against Jews to the societies and clubs which the students ran themselves. Yet restrictions on Jewish participation in sports seems to have been widespread. One incident, related by Broun and Britt in Christians Only, seems not to have been particularly unusual. A Jewish student attending a university which was considered to be less prejudiced against Jews than most, made the basketball team, but was never given an opportunity to play, though he was reported to have been a better player than many others on the team. When the team traveled to out of town games the coach took ten of the the eleven team members on the trip, leaving the Jewish player

at home. When the team was later expanded to 13 members, the coach took twelve to out of town games, again leaving the Jew at home.<sup>46</sup>

A survey was conducted in 1927 concerning prejudice against Jews in colleges and universities. Responses were received from 66 institutions. These 66 schools had a total student population of 236,395, of which Jews constituted 10.42 percent of the males and 9.25 percent of the females. Jews at these campuses made up only 7.75 percent of the athletic teams, but 22.46 percent of the debate teams. At only 15 of the 66 schools did any non-Jewish fraternities admit Jewish students. Nearly 20 percent of the managing editors of campus publications were Jewish. This survey also reported other common manifestations of anti-Jewish feeling:

slurring remarks, social aloofness, exclusion from honorary fraternities, from inter-fraternity boards; offensive jokes in student publications and student dramatics, general unfriendliness.<sup>47</sup>

A second survey was conducted in 1930 by the Jewish Daily Bulletin. In this survey, Jewish students were queried concerning discrimination. Students from 36 campuses replied. Over half the students responding said that except for exclusion from non-Jewish fraternities, there was no discrimination against them. But these students all attended colleges or universities which either had extremely high Jewish enrollments (such as Hunter College with 85 percent Jews) or very low percentages of Jews in the student body (mostly under ten percent, and often as low as two, three, or four percent).<sup>48</sup>

The University of Pennsylvania is offered by Broun and Britt as typical of most large Eastern universities. Jews at the University of Pennsylvania could make the baseball and basketball teams, were allowed to be in the dramatic club, could join the debating team and become involved in literary journals. Jews could not be on the football team, the campus newspaper staff or be in student musical productions.<sup>49</sup>

A notable incident occurred at Brown University in 1928. Dr. W.H.P. Faunce, President of Brown, denied permission to establish a Jewish fraternity on campus. Though Faunce recognized that only in exceptional cases were Jews allowed in non-Jewish fraternities, he stood firm in his position, stating, "Nothing worse could happen to our colleges than to have secret societies established along political or religious or racial lines." Louis Marshall intervened as president of the American Jewish Committee, and the situation was finally resolved because the fraternity had no clause in its constitution forbidding non-Jewish members.<sup>50</sup>

The demography of discrimination was such that throughout the twenty-five year period from 1920-1945, quotas on Jewish admissions were the strictest corresponding to the densest populations of Jews. Therefore, the private schools in New York City and the East in general imposed more stringent quotas than schools in any other area of the country. Yet, by 1930, few institutions of higher learning in the United States were accepting Jews in all respects on the student's personal merit. As the 1930's proceeded, the number became even smaller. State and city schools across the country

set up barriers to Jews by initiating quotas for students accepted from out of state. Since the great majority of Jews were living in a handful of metropolitan centers, the restrictions on out of state students affected mostly Jews. And where public schools did admit Jews, social restrictions were leveled against them.<sup>51</sup>

The more prestigious schools, the great "liberal" institutions of the East, never admitted to the fact of their Jewish quotas. Faculty and administrators alike tacitly supported the exclusions. Less prestigious schools were often more forthright about their quotas, sometimes going so far as to reply to Jewish applicants that they accept no Jews or that their Jewish quota for the incoming freshman class was already filled.<sup>52</sup>

The spread of the quota system to schools across the country, and the accompanying social discrimination, reads almost like a litany. From the east coast to California to the deep south, to the north central states and the midwest, quotas against Jews were instituted. A few examples of the most notable quotas follow:

By the 1930's, when Columbia's quota system was firmly entrenched, large numbers of Jewish students who had been rejected from Columbia attended Seth Low Junior College. Seth Low had ties with Columbia, and was 80 percent Jewish. After completing the two years at Seth Low, a student could transfer to Columbia, but not as a Columbia College student. These Seth Low transfers attended classes which were mostly offered in the afternoon, and received their degrees from the

University, not from the more prestigious College. Students who transferred from Seth Low were not eligible for the combined curriculum program. Thus, Columbia's professional programs as well as Columbia College were protected from an overabundance of Jews.<sup>53</sup>

Barnard, Columbia's sister school, maintained a Jewish quota of approximately 20 percent. Ironically, Barnard was begun largely through the efforts of Annie Nathan Meyer, a member of a prominent Jewish family in New York City. Jacob Schiff had served as Barnard's first treasurer.<sup>54</sup>

New York University allowed a majority of Jewish students into its urban, downtown Washington Square campus. But in 1919, NYU instituted selective admissions at its suburban, wooded University Heights campus which maintained a college atmosphere. In 1922, NYU had cut its University Heights Jewish enrollment to 30 percent, as compared to 40 percent Protestant and 30 percent Catholic. By the late twenties, the University Heights campus had only 10 to 15 percent Jews, and attempted to keep its quota within these percentage figures. Once the Jewish quota at University Heights was filled, no more Jews were admitted, regardless of a student's qualifications.<sup>55</sup>

Colgate University reputedly had a policy of admitting no more than six Jews at one time. The number was supposedly considered sufficient for defense if charges of anti-Semitism were raised, and small enough so that the equilibrium of the school would not be threatened.<sup>56</sup>

Charges of discrimination were brought against Rutgers

University in the early thirties. In March 1933, Judge Joseph Siegler of Newark, who headed a joint committee investigating Jewish discrimination at Rutgers, stated the committee's findings:

There had been no discrimination and there was no intention to discriminate against any class; and that there had been no limitation of, and there was no intention to limit any class to any fixed percentage that such class might bear to the total population of the State.<sup>57</sup>

Though the American Jewish Committee, which among other groups had challenged Rutgers' admissions policies, seems to have accepted Judge Siegler's statement, there is good reason to believe that Rutgers' policy was to admit Jews in proportion to their numbers in the state. During the late twenties and early thirties, Rutgers admitted only about 30 Jewish students per year.<sup>58</sup>

Yale had a policy of admitting two types of Jewish students, the "very wealthy and the socially ambitious," who were drawn to Yale by its prestige, and the "run-of-mine lad" who came from New Haven's large working-class population. The latter group comprised day students, who commuted to classes and were not a part of college life. These students presented Yale with a special problem, for the University felt itself to be somewhat obligated to the state and city to accept a certain number of local applicants. Jews numbered 10 to 15 percent of the student body. All of Yale's Jews were excluded from most of the social aspects of campus life.<sup>59</sup>

Princeton did not have Yale's dilemma of being situated

in a large Jewish population area. Princeton admitted fewer Jews than any of the other large Eastern universities. It managed to avoid the "Jewish question" by selecting 75 to 90 percent of its student body from fashionable private preparatory schools which either admitted no Jews or only a select few. Princeton also had historic ties to the Old South, still maintaining a strong Southern element at the University. This connection with the South (rather than an association with New York City, New Haven or Boston) insulated Princeton from Jews and other immigrant groups in the large cities. Princeton was said to have kept its Jewish quota to less than four percent, seeking to accept Jews in proportion to their percentage of the national population. It was said that Princeton accepted few Jews into its Graduate College, and then only Jews who had names which did not sound Jewish.<sup>60</sup>

A survey conducted in the mid-1940's by the Commission on Law and Social Action investigated current application forms used by liberal arts colleges throughout the country. The Commission's findings, reported in a 1947 article in Congress Weekly revealed that "135 colleges out of a total of 267 non-sectarian schools, either privately, publicly, state and/or city controlled or supported, having an enrollment of more than 500 persons asked one or more questions designed to ascertain the race, creed or national ancestry of a potential student. Only 36 of the schools included in this study issued blanks entirely free of such inquiries." Questions included on these forms included most of those

devised by Columbia during the twenties and more:

...questions...relating to the applicant's and parents' race, color, religion, church, descent or ancestry, nationality, birthplace, whether native or naturalized citizen, mother tongue, language spoken at home, mother's or wife's maiden name, date of parents' arrival in the United States.

The author of the article concludes wryly, noting that

The leading psychologists in the country agree that answers to questions concerning religion, racial origin, nationality or mother's maiden name are of no value in determining the qualifications of an applicant. By the same token, one cannot evaluate the qualifications or even the personality of an applicant by looking at a photograph.<sup>61</sup>

In a 1950 article in Commentary titled "Discrimination in the Colleges Dies Hard," Edward N. Saveth sums up the significance of the quota system, both to Jews and to American colleges and universities, and the ramifications of exclusive schools in a democratic society:

The basic fact is that the American college, public and private is as much a social and economic institution as it is an educational one. One of the prime functions of the American college--and they openly and gladly have assumed it--is to serve as an avenue of mobility in our open industrial society. It aims to train for leadership in a democracy...It is strange--even dangerous--that those private "name" universities that especially pride themselves of the leaders they train, seem often to have more in accord with the now defunct ideal of a hereditary elite than with the prevailing American ideal they orally profess. These private colleges do indeed train leaders: the dominant groups in America today--its social, economic and cultural hierarchy--are in large part made up of their graduates. But insofar as these universities practice discrimination, they are implicated in the conspiracy against the very values they protest they serve so well. They would form and preserve leadership for a democracy on a caste basis.<sup>62</sup>

#### Quotas and Professional Schools

Young Jews, looking for a promising career in this land

of promise, often turned to the professions. A profession offered the greatest possibility for economic and social mobility, for status and community respect. In the early 1930's, 80 percent of the Jews applying for admission to Columbia College expressed the intention to ultimately work toward a graduate degree.<sup>63</sup>

Particularly of interest to Jews were the professions which were considered "free." As early as the 1890's Jews were recognizing that some professions were more open to them than others. By the close of the nineteenth century, doctors, dentists, lawyers and teachers were more often receiving their training in schools rather than by apprenticeships and were more often appointed to positions by examination rather than by favor. These professions were free, meaning that they were open to those with ability and not so much to those with personal or family contacts. As early as 1905 there were nearly 500 Russian Jewish doctors practicing in New York City.<sup>64</sup>

To second and third generation American Jews, the free professions not only seemed desirable, but within their financial means as well. By 1930, half the lawyers and 35 percent of the doctors in New York City were Jews.<sup>65</sup> In the middle thirties, a slightly higher proportion of Jews than non-Jews were in the professions.<sup>66</sup> From one city to another (excluding New York City) the percentage of Jews in the professions varied from 8.5 percent to 13.7 percent.<sup>67</sup> However, Jewish professionals averaged somewhat smaller incomes during this period than their non-Jewish counterparts, at least

partly because few of the Jewish professionals had attended the best schools, many were foreign born, and few had the luxury of inheriting established practices of relatives.<sup>68</sup>

With the cessation of immigration between 1920-1924, economic expansion slackened. Some employment opportunities began to decline. Between 1920 and 1940, the number of professional practitioners in many fields remained almost stationery. Competition for professional placements became more severe than ever before. And this struggle for places was waged primarily in the graduate programs, and secondarily in the open market. In a stagnant medical profession, for example, every new Jewish doctor was depriving the son of a non-Jew of his place. Discriminatory practices in professional colleges and in professional placement, which had been going on for many years, came into the open.<sup>69</sup>

Gentiles in the professions were not only fearful of competition from Jews. Since Jewish discrimination had become de rigueur in many sectors of society by the 1920's, professionals worried that too many Jews in a given field would rob it of status and respectability. At various times throughout the period 1920-1945, different local or national organizations representing a given profession called for quotas on the number of Jews allowed to practice that vocation.

A survey conducted by the Bureau of Jewish Social Research reported in the American Jewish Year Book that during the academic year 1918-1919, 85 percent of Jews attending professional schools were enrolled in programs which trained them for one of five professions which at the time

were considered the most "free." Almost 25 percent were studying commerce and finance, 18.4 percent were in medical colleges, 16.3 percent were enrolled in engineering programs, 14.7 percent studied law and 12 percent dentistry.<sup>70</sup>

Figures from the 1935 B'nai B'rith study show only 71.1 percent of Jews in professional programs studying in these same five professions. The percentages for each of the five fields stood as follows: business administration, 21.9; medicine, 12.2; engineering, 8.9; law, 22.3; and dentistry, 5.8.<sup>71</sup> The 1946 B'nai B'rith study reported these percentages: business administration, 30.3; medicine, 5.3; engineering, 16.9; law, 6.1; and dentistry, 2.5.<sup>72</sup>

The steady decline of Jews entering the fields of medicine and dentistry was caused by a combination of Jewish quotas in medical and dental colleges and the static state of the professions. The rise in the percentage of Jews studying business came about in part because graduate business programs were less discriminatory toward Jews than most of the other professional schools, partly because graduate business programs developed later than these other professional areas and had to prove themselves worthwhile, and of course because business remained a free profession long after several of the others had become more difficult for Jews to enter. Law school attendance by Jews reached its peak in the mid-thirties, then declined, because many law firms would not hire Jewish attorneys, and also because the market was saturated with Jews. Thousands of Jewish lawyers found that they could not make a living practicing law in the thirties.

When Jewish quotas began to fall after 1946, increasing numbers of Jews entered the professions of medicine, pharmacy, engineering, education and law, and fewer studied dentistry, music and optometry.

Clearly the most rigorous quotas on Jews were in the field of medicine. Other factors, beside the willingness to discriminate against Jews, come to bear as well. American medical education in its entirety came under fire in 1910 with the release of the Flexner Report. Funded by a Carnegie grant, the Flexner Report noted that only 82 of the 155 medical colleges in the U.S. were associated with established colleges or universities. The remaining 73 were privately owned, usually operated at a profit, and lacked the necessary laboratories and equipment to properly train students. Many of the schools with ties to colleges and universities were indicted as well for offering poor education. Compared to the European medical colleges, the training offered in the U.S. was sub-standard. With the publication of the Flexner Report, medical education in the U.S. was reorganized. Higher standards were set and enforced, causing most of the weaker schools to close. In 1920, the current system of four intensive years of study was instituted. By 1927, only 79 medical schools had survived. In 1905, 5600 doctors graduated from American medical colleges; by 1923, only 3100 were graduated; in 1933, the figure stood at 4800. While the medical schools were consolidating, the price of medical education rose sharply as higher quality education demanded better faculties and well-equipped labs.<sup>73</sup>

During the depression the American Medical Association advised medical schools to cut their enrollments because doctors in the field were making less money since many patients were unable to pay for medical services. Between 1933 and 1936, medical colleges cut their enrollments by only five percent. Yet the natural process of re-expansion after consolidation was curtailed. Nonetheless, as the American population grew, an increasing number of students applied for admission to medical schools. Competition grew fierce. Jews were excluded more than before. Jewish quotas in medical schools took the familiar forms of restrictions on out of state students (in states where there were few Jews), and the determination to enroll a national cross-section (in states which had large Jewish populations). Between 1933 and 1936 the number of Jews entering freshman medical school classes dropped from 912 to 617. The total decrease in medical school enrollments during this three year period was only 240.<sup>74</sup>

The same AMA report which called for cutting back medical school enrollments during the depression also sought to limit the number of American students allowed to study medicine abroad. The great majority of these students were Jews who, excluded from American schools, had traveled to foreign countries to receive their medical education.<sup>75</sup>

The great desire on the part of Jews to enter medical colleges, and the inclination of medical schools to reject them produced difficulties for schools and applicants alike, particularly in New York City, where most Jewish applications

to medical schools originated. New York City had five medical colleges, all of them privately funded. Jewish applications to Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons grew so large that for a time the school denied application forms to Jews. New York University's University and Bellvue Hospital Medical College had 69.7 percent Jews in 1929-1930, at the time probably the largest number of Jewish medical students studying anywhere in the U.S. In New York State, the Medical College of Cornell University would accept only five medical students per year from any undergraduate school except Cornell, thus setting a limitation of five acceptances out of the tremendous number of Jewish applicants from CCNY.<sup>76</sup>

During the thirties, Long Island University Medical College cut its Jewish enrollment from 42.24 percent in 1932, to 14.14 percent in 1940. Syracuse University dropped its enrollment of Jews from 19.44 percent in 1936 to six percent in 1942. Cornell accepted 40 percent Jews into its Medical College in 1920, but by 1945 had only five percent enrolled.<sup>77</sup> In the late twenties, Harvard Medical School accepted nine percent Jews, Yale 19.5 percent, Johns Hopkins 10-15 percent and the University of Maryland about 50 percent.<sup>78</sup>

All of the medical colleges in New York City had application forms similar to those for undergraduate programs, which asked questions designed to ascertain which applicants were Jews.<sup>79</sup>

As Jews were denied access to New York and other Eastern medical schools, they looked to the west and south. State funded medical schools in many cases had no choice but to

set quotas on out of state students. Several administrators at state supported medical colleges complained that if all the qualified Jewish applicants were accepted there would be no space for in-state residents. And the Jews who were educated at these state institutions had a great tendency to return to New York to practice as soon as their studies were completed.

Jewish medical school applicants seem to have almost single-handedly created the concept of multiple applications. When Jewish restrictions were imposed, causing a wide discrepancy between the number of qualified Jewish applicants and the number of Jewish acceptances, individual applicants began applying to several medical colleges at once, with the hope that one among them would have a place for him. In the late twenties, the dean of the Indiana University School of Medicine took a typical group of 171 multiple applicants and found that 70 percent of the applications came from "within a radius of twenty-five miles of the strongly Jewish and Jewish rejecting City of New York."<sup>80</sup> At about the same time the dean of the St. Louis University School of Medicine found that "the scholarship in the School of Medicine of the multi-applicant differs, as far as we have been able to discover, in no essential manner from the scholarship of the uni-applicant."<sup>81</sup>

In 1931 the American Jewish Congress concluded that the only solution to the problem of medical school quotas would be to establish a medical school primarily for Jews. That same year the American Jewish Committee called for better vocational guidance for Jewish students in order to curtail

the inordinate number of Jews applying to medical school.<sup>82</sup>

Discrimination had become so acute, and pressure for admission to medical schools by Jews had become so strong, that drastic steps were sometimes taken. The following incident was reported in the American Jewish Year Book, 1935-1936:

...it is interesting to note that, in December 1934, two men were found guilty of fraud in New York City because they had taken payment of \$500 from a Jewish parent on the promise of gaining admission to a medical college for his son.<sup>83</sup>

Broun and Britt, in Christians Only, note:

...Meharry Medical College [a black school] in Nashville, Tennessee, in a state which prohibits by law any mixture in schools of the black and white races, reports that every year from fifteen to twenty-five Jewish students apply.<sup>84</sup>

Perhaps the strictest Jewish quotas were reserved for the world of academe. Only a tiny number of Jews was appointed to professorships before the end of World War II. These restrictions against Jews began early in this century.

In his 1922 autobiography, Ludwig Lewisohn writes convincingly concerning professorships in American colleges and universities:

In pre-war Germany...no Jew could be prevented from entering the academic profession. Unless he was very brilliant and productive his promotion was less rapid than that of his Gentile colleagues. He knew, too, that he could not become senior professor of German at Berlin...nor Kultusminister, but he could become a full professor of Latin or philosophy, and, of course, of all the sciences. I am not defending these restrictions and I think the argument for them--that the German state was based upon an ethnic homogeneity which corresponds to a spiritual oneness--quite specious. I am contrasting these conditions with our own. We boast our equality and freedom and call it Americanism and speak of other countries with disdain. And so one is unwarned, encouraged and flung into the street.

With exquisite courtesy, I admit. And the consciousness of that personal courtesy soothes the minds of our Gentile friends.... It will be replied that there are a number of Jewish scholars in American colleges and universities. There are. The older men got in because nativistic anti-Semitism was not nearly as strong twenty-five years ago as it is to-day...But in regard to the younger men I dare to assert that in each case they were appointed through personal friendship, family or financial prestige or some other abnormal relenting of the iron prejudice which is the rule. But that prejudice has not, to my knowledge, relented in a single instance in regard to the teaching of English. So that our guardianship of the native tongue is far fiercer than it is in an, after all, racially homogeneous state like Germany. Presidents, deans and departmental heads deny this fact or gloss over it in public. Among themselves it is admitted as a matter of course.<sup>85</sup>

Of the total number of college professors teaching in the twenties and thirties, between three and five percent of them were Jews. In the early forties the proportion of Jews had climbed to six or seven percent. Most of the Jews in college teaching positions were instructors or assistants. Few were associate professors (tenured) or full-professors.<sup>86</sup>

The discrimination against Jews in the academic profession was caused mostly by the fact that faculty and administrations saw colleges and universities as Protestant domains. This is attested to by the fact that there were nearly as few Roman Catholic professors during the years 1920-1945 as there were Jews.<sup>87</sup> Jews frequently were hired by Catholic universities, regularly being preferred to Protestant professors.

Because opportunities were limited for Jews in the academic job market, graduate departments often dissuaded Jews from entering graduate programs. "The old (vicious) circular reasoning legitimated the refusal to enlarge the body of Jewish graduate students on the grounds that to do

so would mean training people who would not get jobs.<sup>88</sup>

In a Report of Some Problems of Personnel in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University, discrimination against Jews in filling faculty appointments was considered. The committee which prepared the 1939 report recommended that the discriminative practice be discontinued because it betrayed the best traditions of the University, cut Harvard off from potential cultural and intellectual contributions, narrowed the field for recruitment, and made for a lack of diversity in scholarship. The report concluded:

Finally, it would deprive America's oldest university of the opportunity to set a high standard for its<sup>89</sup> sister institutions, in this and other countries.

## Footnotes

## Chapter 4

- <sup>1</sup>Levinger. The Jewish Student in America, p. 1.
- <sup>2</sup>Jospe, "Jewish College Students in the United States," p. 131.
- <sup>3</sup>Although the Menorah Journal survey took into account only 57 institutions, the figures are higher than either the 1915 or the 1918-1919 surveys reported. The Menorah Journal figures are high, and more nearly correct because they concentrated on schools where Jewish enrollments were high, including the New York colleges and universities, the Ivy League schools and most of the large state run institutions.
- <sup>4</sup>Levinger, The Jewish Student in America, pp. 3 and 16, and Robert Shosteck, "Jewish Students in American Universities," American Jewish Year Book, vol. 50, 1948-1949, p. 767.
- <sup>5</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," p. 23.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 26.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26.
- <sup>8</sup>Shosteck, "Jewish Students in American Universities," p. 768.
- <sup>9</sup>Levinger, The Jewish Student in America, p. 23A.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-25.
- <sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-27.
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29.
- <sup>13</sup>Jospe, "Jewish College Students in the United States," pp. 132-133.
- <sup>14</sup>Shosteck, "Jewish Students in American Universities," pp. 768-771.
- <sup>15</sup>Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, p. 15.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 16.
- <sup>17</sup>American Jewish Year Book, vol. 25, 1923-1924, pp. 89-94.
- <sup>18</sup>Harold S. Wechsler, The Qualified Student, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1977), p. 146.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 133 and 163.

- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 134.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 181, note 78.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 149.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 155-156.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 159.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 167.
- <sup>26</sup>Broun and Britt, Christians Only, p. 74.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 102.
- <sup>28</sup>The New York Times, June 1, 1922, p. 6.
- <sup>29</sup>Wechsler, The Qualified Student, p. 161.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup>David Gordon Lyon, Diary, January 1922, David Gordon Lyon Papers, Harvard University Archives, in Wechsler, The Qualified Student, p. 161.
- <sup>33</sup>Kallen, "The Roots of Anti-Semitism," p. 242.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup>Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, p. 2, note.
- <sup>36</sup>Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, vol. 40, 1922, p. 9181.
- <sup>37</sup>American Jewish Year Book, vol. 25, 1923-1924, pp. 85-94.
- <sup>38</sup>For example, see The Nation, September-November, 1922.
- <sup>39</sup>William T. Ham, "The Harvard Student Opinion Poll," The Nation, Sept. 6, 1922.
- <sup>40</sup>American Jewish Year Book, vol. 26, 1924-1925, pp. 95-96.
- <sup>41</sup>Steinberg, The Academic Melting Pot, p. 20.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 30.
- <sup>43</sup>Handlin and Handlin, "The Acquisition of Political and Social Rights," p. 235.
- <sup>44</sup>Paula S. Fass, The Damned and the Beautiful, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), chapter 3.

- <sup>45</sup>Rudolph, The American College and University, p. 461.
- <sup>46</sup>Broun and Britt, Christians Only, p. 94.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 89-94.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 94-95.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 76-77.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 122-123.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 83-84.
- <sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 86-87.
- <sup>53</sup>Ibid. pp. 103-104.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 74.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 106-111.
- <sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 87-88.
- <sup>57</sup>American Jewish Year Book, vol. 34, 1932-1933, pp. 44-45.
- <sup>58</sup>Broun and Britt, Christians Only, pp. 112-113.
- <sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 123-124.
- <sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp. 118-119.
- <sup>61</sup>Dian S. Levinson, "How Colleges Practice Prejudice," Congress Weekly, March 7, 1947, pp. 6-7.
- <sup>62</sup>Edward N. Saveth, "Discrimination in the Colleges Dies Hard," Commentary, vol. 9, February, 1950, pp. 117-118.
- <sup>63</sup>Wechsler, The Qualified Student, p. 167.
- <sup>64</sup>Handlin, Adventures in Freedom, p. 98.
- <sup>65</sup>Broun and Britt, Christians Only, p. 125.
- <sup>66</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," p. 34.
- <sup>67</sup>Lestschinsky, "The Economic Development of the Jews in the United States," p. 399.
- <sup>68</sup>Glazer, "Social Characteristics of American Jews," p. 34.
- <sup>69</sup>Handlin, Adventures in Freedom, pp. 204-205.

<sup>70</sup>American Jewish Year Book, vol. 22, 1920-1921, pp. 383-393.

<sup>71</sup>Levinger, The Jewish Student in America, p. 79ff.

<sup>72</sup>Shosteck, "Jewish Students in American Universities," pp. 773-774.

<sup>73</sup>Lawrence Bloomgarden, "Medical School Quotas and National Health," Commentary, vol. 15, January, 1953, p. 42.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-37.

<sup>76</sup>Broun and Britt, Christians Only, pp. 137-139.

<sup>77</sup>"Discrimination in Medical Colleges," American Mercury, October, 1945, p. 36.

<sup>78</sup>Broun and Britt, Christians Only, p. 142.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>82</sup>American Jewish Year Book, vol. 34, 1932-1933, pp. 44-45.

<sup>83</sup>American Jewish Year Book, vol. 37, 1935-1936, p. 158.

<sup>84</sup>Broun and Britt, Christians Only, p. 127.

<sup>85</sup>Ludwig Lewisohn, Upstream, (New York: Boni and Liveright, Inc., 1922), pp. 124-125.

<sup>86</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset and Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., "Jewish Academics in the United States," in The Jew in American Society, Marshall Sklare, ed., (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1974), p. 264.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>89</sup>Contemporary Jewish Record, May-June, 1939, p. 9.

### Conclusion

Between 1865 and 1900, American colleges and universities changed to meet the demands of an industrializing society. The university developed, graduate programs were formed, practical studies and science supplanted aesthetics and metaphysics. The modern man (and the even more modern woman) needed a college education in order to succeed in this modern world. Jews, in most cases new to America, took stock of this changing society, and soon realized that the surest way to succeed, both economically and socially, would be to pass through the college corridors, leaving the life of the ghetto behind. A college education was an unobtainable dream for most immigrants, and a harsh reality for many of their children.

In 1906, President Nicholas Murray Butler, in his Report to the Trustees of Columbia, stated, "Columbia University is a Christian institution..."<sup>1</sup> Nearly 40 years later, in 1945, President Ernest M. Hopkins of Dartmouth said, "Dartmouth is a Christian college founded for the Christianization of its students."<sup>2</sup> During the years that intervened, anti-Semitism rose on campus, Jews were excluded from social, intellectual and fraternal clubs. Strictures were placed on their entrance into colleges and universities, and even tighter quotas were set up to reduce their numbers in graduate schools. "Gentlemen's agreements" kept the number of Jewish faculty members low, especially among those who received tenure. Still Jews went to college, and despite restrictions, made their way into professions, particularly those which

were considered "free".

As generations of Jews reached college-age after World War II, they attended college in ever-increasing numbers. Meanwhile, the attitudes of college and university administrators, faculty and students began changing dramatically. Laws against discrimination in education, which directly affected Jews, were passed in 1948 and 1949 in New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts, three states where Jewish admissions quotas and other forms of discrimination had been strictly enforced since the 1920's.<sup>3</sup>

In 1950, two Supreme Court rulings in support of integration in education (*Sweatt v. Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma*), which helped pave the way for the landmark Supreme Court decision on segregation in 1954 (*Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka*), aided Jews as well as blacks.<sup>4</sup>

As Northern pressure mounted throughout the fifties to force integration on all levels of education in the South, a mood of tolerance and even acceptance of religious and racial minorities was growing in the North. University student councils moved to abolish discriminatory clauses in fraternity and society constitutions. Many local fraternity chapters willingly incurred the wrath of their national organizations by admitting blacks or Jews to their fraternities.<sup>5</sup> Regional conferences of college professors, administrators and students met in the North, calling for the elimination of discrimination based on religion, race or national origin.<sup>6</sup>

Northerners were responding to the more gross indignities

being perpetrated on minorities in the South. Those involved with colleges and universities, faculty, administrators, students and even alumni, who had long professed their dedication to the liberal tradition, found themselves in the position where they had no choice but to demonstrate through their actions their belief in full equality for all.

Partly through legislation, and partly due to a slackening of anti-Semitism, particularly in the North, the quotas and other restrictions on Jews finally began to fall.

## Conclusion

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Columbia University in the City of New York, Annual Report of the President and Treasurer to the Trustees with accompanying Documents for the Year Ending June 30, 1906 (New York, Printed for the University, 1906), p. 2, in Wechsler, The Qualified Student, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Lipset and Ladd, "Jewish Academics in the United States," p. 260.

<sup>3</sup> American Jewish Year Book, vol. 51, 1950, pp. 89-91.

<sup>4</sup> American Jewish Year Book, vol. 52, 1951, pp. 39-43.

<sup>5</sup> American Jewish Year Book, vol. 55, 1954, pp. 25-26.

<sup>6</sup> American Jewish Year Book, vol. 52, 1951, pp. 43-44 and vol. 53, 1952, pp. 90-91.

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