

The Struggle to Survive in the New World

By Jerry Klinger

Issy rings the bell of a very wealthy person's house in New York Suburb and when the owner comes to the door, Issy greets him.

"Sholom Aleichem, Mr. Goldstein. I'm collecting for the Loads of Money Yeshivah, and I'm wondering if a nice wealthy Jewish person like yourself wouldn't want to make a little contribution."

"The name is Gold, not Goldstein, and I am not Jewish."

"Are you sure?" asks Issy.

"I'm positive".

"But", says Issy, "it says here that you're Jewish and my records are never wrong."

"I can assure you that I am certainly not Jewish", replies Mr. Gold impatiently.

"Look sir, I know that my records are never wrong. You must be joking. Are you sure you aren't Jewish?" demands Issy.

"For the last time, I am not Jewish, my father is not Jewish, and my grandfather, alav hashalom, (Hebrew for He has gone to his rest), wasn't Jewish either!."

Be careful what you wish for, you might get it.

If I am not for myself then who will be; if not now then when.

The single most extraordinary period in American Jewish history, perhaps in Jewish world history was between the years 1945 – 1967. Jews for the first time in two thousand years of struggle to exist were presented with two accomplished facts. One, with the near total destruction of European Jewry came a miraculous Jewish rebirth with the modern State of Israel. Second, with the end of WWII, came the reality and hoped for dream of freedom and acceptance of Jewish existence in a non-Jewish land.

America, in 1945, held the largest population of Jews in the world. American Jews were the leaders of world Jewry. America became the leader and arguably the greatest country in the world. America became the greatest supporter of modern Jewish survival. America became the greatest threat to the continued existence of American Jewry.

"Give me your tired your poor your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore send these the homeless tempest tossed to me. I lift my lamp by the golden door." The Jewish poetess Emma Lazarus wrote those poignant words in 1883. They are inscribed near the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York City's harbor – the gateway to America for millions of freedom and opportunity seekers.

World War II ended with the dawn of a new age of human destructiveness. A mushroom cloud of bright light and power that could destroy humanity as it had the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the successful effort to bring an intractable Japanese foe to submission and long term peace. Of the 9 million European Jews in 1939 less than three million were left alive in 1945. For most of those who remained there was no home to go back to in Europe.

Pogroms, local ethnic, deadly violence and cold hatred, awaited the few Jews that tried to return to their prewar homes. There was no home for the remnant of Jewry. America did not want the massive waves of displaced Jewry wishing to reach its shores. America had quite enough Jews with a Jewish population of over five million or about 3.7% of the population. She would only grant refuge to about 150,000 Jewish displaced refugees immediately after the war. There was one place that wanted them and that place was a vague, uncertain dream in 1945 – Israel.

Allied armies returned home in 1945-1946 victorious and eager to move away from the death and destruction that had claimed so many lives. More than 550,000 American Jewish soldiers, sailors and marines returned to build lives and put the images of darkness behind them. Jews had joined and fought with America's legions as Americans. Jews were no longer American Jews but rather Jewish Americans.

Just one month after the end of the WWII, September 8, 1945, Bess Myerson, the daughter of impoverished Jewish immigrants, was crowned Miss American in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The dream of acceptance into American society as equals was being realized. The process had not been born suddenly but had been a steady ongoing effort since Jews had first come to America in 1654.

The process had been steady and much of the framework for American acceptance had been established long before the period of massive Jewish immigration in 1880-1924. What had happened since 1880 was that the pace at which Jews were being accepted into American life was greatly accelerated. Jews were being accepted into the greater American national consciousness.

America was and is greatly enriched by its Jewish American citizens. In 1907 Albert Abraham Michelson was the 1st Jewish American Nobel Prize winner in science. Samuel Goldfish – Sam Goldwyn, a founder of the famed film studio Metro, Goldwyn, Mayer, and pioneer developer of the American film industry, produced in 1913 the first feature length movie - *The Squaw Man*. David Sarnoff in 1919 became a pioneer in national radio and later national television, (RCA Corp.) bringing the mass broadcast media to America. Because of television, for the first time, a Jew was brought into 80% of television homes, the nationally popular and loved Milton Berle, 1949.

By the end of WWII Jews had served in Presidential Cabinets, the U.S. Supreme Court, members of the U.S. Congress and Senate, Governor's of States, many were awarded the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism in America's wars. Edna Ferber, a Jewish Midwestern writer, won the Pulitzer Prize, for literature, in 1925.

Al Jolson, (Asa Yoelson) starred in the first "*talking*" picture movie ever produced the *Jazz Singer* (1927). Interestingly, the *Jazz Singer*, which became a national success, had a distinctly Jewish theme. Semi-autobiographical, the *Jazz Singer* told the story of the son of a poor synagogue Cantor who chose not to follow his father into synagogue life but rather chose to go out into the American world and share his talents with the country as a popular singer. Jolson died in 1950. He instructed that 90% of his \$4,000,000 estate be divided between Jewish, Catholic and Protestant causes.

During the 1930's and 1940's Jews were the lion's share in the development of American music and the Broadway musical world. Jerome Kern, (*Showboat*), George and Ira Gershwin, (*Rhapsody in Blue*), Oscar Hammerstein, Richard Rogers, (*Carousel, South Pacific, King and I, the Sound of Music*), Lorenz Hart, (*Jumbo*), Alan Lerner and Frederick Loewe, (*Camelot*) and Benny Goodman (*clarinetist and pop musician*) were American Jews.

Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg, wrote the songs for one of the greatest of the screen musicals, *The Wizard of Oz*: most notably "*Somewhere Over the Rainbow*", 1938. Ironically, the *Wizard of Oz* was a political satire from the late 19th century implying that the people of the land, the farmers, were being crucified on a cross of Gold. The imagery was used by anti-Semites during the Presidential campaigns of William Jennings Bryan (Populist and Democratic parties). The implication was the control of Jewish money elements was destroying the farmers in the West.

Irving Berlin (Israel Beilin) composed American songs that became hugely popular and were synonymous with American life and values. Songs such as *God Bless America* first sung by Kate Smith in WWII became a second American national anthem. *Easter Parade, White Christmas* and *Alexander's Ragtime Band* were Berlin's compositions. Classical American Jewish composers such as Aaron Copland wrote American music for ballet, the classical world and opera. He won an Oscar for movie musical scoring. Some of his influential works were *Billy the Kid*, 1938, *Rodeo*, 1942, *Lincoln Portrait* 1942, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, 1942, *Appalachian Spring*, 1944, and *The Tender Land*, 1954.

Dr. Selman Waksman developed the first American wonder drug, *streptomycin*, 1943. The scourge of polio, the disease that had paralyzed Franklin Roosevelt, and afflicted 50,000 Americans a year, was conquered by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1955. The development of America's nuclear energy and defense programs which ended WWII was led by Dr. Julius Robert Oppenheimer, 1945. The first nuclear submarine was developed by Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, of the U.S. Navy, in 1954.

America's leadership in scientific achievements was enhanced by creating an open refuge from the Jew hating world of Nazi Europe. America welcomed individuals such as Albert Einstein, and Edward Teller (developer of the Hydrogen Bomb) to her shores. How different the world might have been if America's doors had been closed and the Nazi's used Jewish scientific minds for their own ends.

Henry (Hank) Benjamin Greenberg, one of America's greatest and beloved baseball players was admitted to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1956. In 1941 at the peak of his career he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. During his career he refused to play on Rosh Hashana – the Jewish New Year. The Detroit Free Press praised him published a special Happy New Year's greeting in Hebrew. The famous commentator Edgar Guest wrote a poem about Hank after he spent Yom Kippur praying and fasting in the synagogue instead of playing baseball. "*Said Murphy to Mulrooney, we shall lose the game today! We shall miss him in the infield, and shall miss him at bat. But he's true to his religion – and I honor him for that*". The dream of acceptance into American society as equals was being realized.

The end of WWII marked a simple delineation in good and evil. America and what it stood for was good. Nazism, Fascism and by extension Bolshevism or Communism were evil. The Nazis had promoted anti-Semitism as good and Jews as evil. After the defeat of the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan, the old truism of the enemy of my enemy is my friend became the norm, being anti-Jewish was equated to being pro-Nazi. Between 1946 and 1950, 35 anti-Semitic American organizations were shut down. Another 57 anti-Semitic organizations remained, pushed to the periphery of acceptability, but alive and functioning.

The stigma of being identified with the rejected racial theories of the Nazis had an even broader impact as all forms of racism increasingly became unacceptable to the definition of who and what was American. The integration of American Blacks in the American military by President Harry Truman after WWII was a watershed event.

The next two decades would forge a close link of the Jewish struggle for equality and toleration with the struggle to end racial inequality for all Americans. It was a very old American Jewish theme – freedom denied to one group – was freedom denied to all. American Jews had and still do live with the imagery and reality that American racism is focused on the Black and other minorities ahead of Jews. The Jewish fear is they could be next. A Holocaust survivor once commented, "*thank God for the Black man in America, otherwise it would be the Jew in his place.*"

That a culture and society as advanced as Germany could turn into a degenerate, racist caldron overnight would leave a deep seated fear in American Jews leading to the Holocaust movement. In the latter half of the 20th century the "Holocaust" became a "Holy Grail" for American Jews seeking perceived security for themselves and their children, lest it should ever happen again. By the 1960's, discrimination against Jews in housing, (restrictive covenants), education (anti-Semitic college quotas), professional and business life reached lows unknown to earlier American experience.

The War experiences deeply influenced the acceptance of American Jews. Feb. 3, 1943, off the icy water of Greenland the American troop transport ship the Dorchester was torpedoed and sunk by a German U boat, 1,000 men were on board. During the 18 minutes that it took for the ship to sink, four American Chaplains worked diligently to save as many lives as possible, Lt. George L. Fox, a Methodist minister, Lt. Alexander D. Goode, a Jewish Rabbi, Lt. John P. Washington, a Catholic priest and Lt. Clark V. Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister. There were not enough life jackets and boats on board for all the troops. The four ministers removed their own life jackets and gloves giving them to other men in an attempt to save American lives. The four ministers then locked arms in prayer and went down with the ship into the icy Arctic waters with over 700 men. A postage stamp was issued after the war in 1948 entitled "*Interfaith in Action*" commemorating their bravery. Congress decreed a special day of commemoration in 1957. A statue honoring their memory sits quietly along the Potomac River, in Washington, D.C., not far from the Watergate Hotel.

In 1946 Rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman published "*Peace of Mind*". It was the most successful American inspiration book of the 20th century prior to Norman Vincent Peal's writings. A national best seller, "*Peace of Mind*" was read by millions of Americans both Jewish and non-

Jewish. "*Protestant, Catholic and Jew*" written by Will Herberg in 1956, a national publishing success story, for the first time raised Judaism to a level of equality with Christianity in America, as a theology of validity. Jews represented about 3.2% of American population in 1950.

American G.I.'s after WWII returned seeking normalcy and a return to values after battling and defeating the "Godless." Secularism became associated with un-Americanism. Religion became a key definer of Americanism. Jewish bible study and a need to reaffirm faith in the face of the absolute evil of the Nazi near extermination of European Jewry became very important. The reawakening of the bible in Jewish life followed and then paralleled the great Christian back to the bible Movements. In 1954 Congress added the words "*Under God*" to the Pledge of Allegiance recited by millions of baby boomer children in schools across the land. In 1956, for the first time since the Civil War, Congress added the words "*In God we Trust*" to American coinage and currency.

Nothing more clearly defined the presence and acceptance of the American yardstick of faith than the creation of religious edifices. In the years between 1945 and 1965 over 1,000 synagogues were built or rebuilt. By the late 1950's, almost 60% of America's 4.5 (+) million Jews were affiliated with a synagogue. Conservative and Reform movement affiliations were distantly ahead of Orthodox affiliation. The percentage was significant though substantially less than the rate of Christian affiliations.

What was more characteristic of Jewish affiliation was Jewish association with the synagogue, as cultural centers and youth program centers, as opposed to houses of worship. Jewish attendance at daily and weekly religious services continued to sharply dwindle. Jewish religious attendance for most American Jews was manifested by truncated attendance at the High Holiday services of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Passover the central event in Jewish life, wherein God chose the Jewish people and they, in turn chose, to be his people, was reduced to Jewish humor. The Seder, or the Passover meal, when Jewish families gathered together was quipped, "*This is the bread of affliction (Matzah), they tried to kill us. We won – let's eat.*"

Holidays of minor religious significance such as Hannukah were elevated to major events to parallel the Christmas season and help Jewish children feel included and more comfortable in American society. The Bar Mitzvah for 13-year-old Jewish boys and Bat Mitzvah (for 12 year old girls) as life cycle events were elevated from simple religious observances to extravagant displays of materialism and conspicuous consumption.

Increasingly alarmed at the decline in Jewish life, identity and the relentless assimilation into American life, with its correspondent increase in the rates of intermarriage, American institutional Jewry responded on a number of fronts. Jews had followed the process of suburbanization after World War II at a rate four times that of the general American rate. Partially as a response of the desire to escape the confining physical restrictiveness of the centrally located Jewish urban communities, Jews moved to the suburbs. Jews for first time felt secure in moving into physical areas that were not predominantly Jewish. They increasingly felt

included as long as they were not "*too Jewish*" in their outward behavior, standards, dress and values from that of their Christian neighbors.

The process of suburbanization created new problems for American Jewish survival. The majority of suburban Jews were physically too far from synagogue communities to walk on the Sabbath. A crisis emerged. Traditionally Jews did not drive on the Sabbath but walked to the synagogue. Driving was considered work and a violation of the Sabbath peace and rest. Yet if Jews did not drive to the synagogue to attend Sabbath religious services then they could not attend. The focus and role of the automobile, which after WWII became part of the American material goal along with private home ownership, encouraged Americans to live at much greater distances from their work, homes, schools and places of worship.

Non-attendance of religious services on the Sabbath and other religious holidays because of suburbanization was a direct threat to American Jewry's continued survival as a functioning religious identity. For the fractional minority of American Jewish Orthodoxy not living within walking distance to synagogue, driving was not a consideration. For the reform the issue was mute in that strict observance of ritual obligation was always defined very liberally. But for the majority of American Jews, who chose to identify with the Conservative movement it was a crisis. In 1950 the Rabbinical Assembly Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Conservative movement decided:

"that the Sabbath observers among our people constitute a tiny minority and a dwindling minority at that: and concerned that the number of people who find themselves living in widely scattered suburbs is increasing " declared that *"Where a family resides beyond reasonable walking distance from the synagogue, the use of a motor vehicle for the purpose of synagogue attendance shall in no wise be construed as a violation of the Sabbath but, on the contrary, such attendance shall be deemed an expression of loyalty to our faith."*

A simple reality was acknowledged and the Rabbis blinked. They could have chosen to adhere to strict religious law interpretations but the reality was survival not simply should Jews drive or walk to the synagogue. In later years, decisions involving the role of women, matrilineal vs. patrilineal Jewish descent and religious identification, kosher dietary rules and religious authenticity would further fragment American Jewish religious and cultural unity. Even in elements of the Orthodox world driving on the Sabbath eventually was blinked at.

With the decline of ritual observance in American Jewish life the need for new religious Jewish identity was urgent. Jewish identity did not need to be reinforced or even taught with the immigrant generations whose identity as Jews was stamped upon them externally. They moved to tight urban communities recreating almost reghettoizing European life for common support and a sense of safety.

Their children, the second generation benefited from the remarkable acceptance of American life. They quickly migrated from Orthodox definitions of religion choosing to adopt the compromise of American Conservatism and physically relocate away from the "*ghetto*". Whereas the older generation knew they were Jews and their children grew up with the parents' memories of identification.

By the third generation Jewish identity was being lost. The grandchildren were thoroughly American and could not identify or survive as Jews by "*gastronomic*" affiliation of matzah ball soup on High Holidays or matzah on Passover alone. The need for Jewish education and programming focusing on the children became a predominating issue. Synagogue schools, especially "*Sunday*" schools, social halls, Jewish youth programming, Jewish summer camps, (the Ramah Camps – 1947) youth groups, Jewish Day schools blossomed. Jewish school attendance rose from 239,000 annually in 1950 to 553,000 in 1965. The almost hypocritical response of adults was simple, if we cannot teach religion by example in the home, we will teach Judaism in the school.

Teaching children about being Jewish in the limited amount of time available during the Day Schools hours or the desperately short hours of the synagogue Sunday school hours was what to teach; what values to impart to the children to help them want to identify with the uniqueness of being Jewish. American Jewish response was to fall back on one very Jewish response – *Tikkun Olam* – to repair the world – to do good. If the Jew repairs the world, righting the wrongs of others, they then in turn will be more secure in America.

It was and is an old American Jewish theme; security is assured if the least secure in American life are free. The Holocaust and the popular culture Holocaust movement of later years was not the evolution of this idea. It had been rooted deep within Jewish historic experience.

The Holocaust was not a part of mainstream American Jewish consciousness between 1945 and 1967. The Jewish Publication Society published one title on the Holocaust between 1945 and 1965. No American religious division attempted or wanted to establish separate prayers or days specific to the memorialization or remembrance of the greatest destruction of Jewish humanity in history. Sadly to this very day, Jewish religious teachings and prayers, whether Orthodox or Conservative or Reform, try to avert the issue that has no satisfactory closure short of waiting for the Holocaust generation to fade away.

In many traditional communities the only prayer specific to the Holocaust was and is the *El Moleh Rachamin* (God granter of Compassion) a short liturgical prayer said at times of mourning and not specific to the Holocaust. During 1945-1967 it was a subject too uncomfortable to confront by American religious and secular Jewry.

The memory of the Holocaust was maintained and rose to shrill cries of memorial, remembrance and learning primarily because of the small generation of Holocaust survivors who made it to America after the war. Some Holocaust survivors of European Rabbinic orthodoxy and Chassidic background found refuge in America and recreated European style Rabbinic centered almost theocratic life. They memorialized the Holocaust by refusing to let the remnant of Jewish ultra orthodox life fade away by recreating it in America.

The ultra-Orthodox and Chassidic movements always a minority within a minority within a minority, exerted influence on American Jewish life and identity far greater than their numbers. The Holocaust became mainstream after the horrific realization in 1967 that a second Holocaust was possible when Israel faced annihilation and the world stood quietly by.

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The second most significant event, (some can argue it was the first,) occurred May 14, 1948. For the first time in almost two thousand years of wandering, rejection and homelessness the State of Israel was declared a reconstituted and independent nation in its own historic homeland. Israel was immediately invaded by five Arab armies intent on annihilation.

The world, through the auspices of the United Nations, desirous of putting WWII behind it, resolving the refugee crisis and perhaps feeling guilty and somewhat responsible for the slaughter of six million Jews voted for the partition of Palestine into two states.

American Jewry was preoccupied with their own issues of getting on with their lives after the war but not with Israel. They did respond generously financially. A very small number of American Jews went and fought for the young country that had only been dreamed about for millennia by Jews. The majority of American Jewry supported Israel from afar and only mildly. Israel for most of American Jewry was an idea that was prayers, vague identity as a people and a place to send a few dollars but not their sons or daughters.

The miraculous victory of tiny David against the blood thirsty Goliath of the invading Arab armies stunned the world and shook Jewry to its foundations. Israel became a symbol of pride, identity with the strength of Judah, a place to visit someday, perhaps once but not live there.

The ideal of the ingathering of the Jewish people from the four corners of the Earth, except America, was a reality. Jews would never know the threat of annihilation again. Jews were safe in America as Americans. World Jewry would be safe in Israel. The formula worked well until 1967.

In 1967, Egyptian armies, trained and supplied by the Soviet Union, ordered the United Nation's peacekeepers out of the way of their imminent attack on Israel. The U.N. quickly obeyed. Jordan and Syria joined in war preparations. The Straits of Tiran were closed to Israeli shipping choking off her access to the Red Sea from the South. The U.N. and the world stood by waiting what was expected to be the imminent destruction of Israel. No one came or was coming to Israel's rescue not even America.

American Jewry began to stir and suddenly realized that a second Holocaust was possible only they could do nothing. They could not bring the American government to act to restore peace and prevent war. Eisenhower, in the 1956 Suez crisis, had intervened and forced Israel to abandon the Sinai, to promote world peace, but now with Israel staring at death – America was quiet except for a few words at the U.N.

American Jews awoke horrified, terrified and shocked that their fellow Americans, whom they had worked so hard with to better America, did not rush to the aide of Israel. The age-old American Jewish questions had reemerged, were Jews a religion or were Jews a people? Who or what was American Jewry?

After WWII, liberalism was viewed as the safeguard of American Jewry. If a society provided its citizens with good housing, jobs, health care and educational opportunities then anti-Semitism would not emerge. It was a rationalization based upon the false assumption that hatred and bigotry have a tangible, material quantifiable calculation. Jews adopted the Black American's struggle for freedom and equality as a new religion of their own.

Theodore Herzl wrote in his 1902 book *Old New Land*:

"There is still one other question arising out of the disaster of the nations which remains unsolved to this day, and whose profound tragedy only a Jew can comprehend. This is the African question. . . . I am not ashamed to say, though I may expose myself to ridicule in saying so, that once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my people, I wish also to assist in the redemption of the Africans."

Joel and Arthur Spingarn helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Jack Greenberg succeeded Thurgood Marshall as head of the NAACP legal Defense fund. Jewish organizations such as American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League were in the front lines of the struggle for racial equality and justice in America. Jewish money was crucial in the struggle.

More than half of the whites who went to Mississippi in 1964 to challenge Jim Crow were Jews, and about half of the civil rights attorneys in the South during the 1960s were Jews. Between 1954 and 1959, 10% of all terrorist bombings in the South were directed against Jewish targets. Jews constituted about 1% of the population of the South. In 1956, conservative Rabbi Israel Goldstein, who headed the American Jewish Congress said, "we must defend the rights of the Negro as zealously as we defend our rights as Jews whenever and wherever these might be threatened."

Jews offered their very lives so that American Blacks could achieve freedom. June 21, 1964 two young Jewish voting rights organizers, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, along with a young Black man, James Cheney, were murdered in Mississippi. Their murders became the catalyst of national outrage and world focus that led to major advancements in the struggle for Black civil rights.

Influential, Rabbi Abraham Heschel, a staunch anti-Vietnam war liberal, was a close friend of Martin Luther King. Heschel walked arm and arm with King through the dangerous streets of Selma, Alabama, visibly, morally and physically, linking American Jewry to the Black American struggle. Heschel would be shaken to his core beliefs when in 1967 with Israel facing extermination those friends for whom he had sacrificed so much in the civil rights movement were not there in Israel's time of need.

No less than the President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson was baffled by the Jews. He could not understand many of American Jewry's vocal opposition to the war in Vietnam and South Vietnam's struggle to exist. He could not understand it as these same individuals supported, with the same energy Israel's right to exist. Jews were an enigma to Johnson as well as to themselves.

American Jews had been astonished, when Julius and Ethel Rosenberg divulged the secrets of the American Atomic Bomb to the Soviet Union in the late 1940's that America did not turn on them. Jews were astonished when Jewish gangsters such as Bugsy Siegel, the brains behind Las Vegas becoming the sin capital of American, were only identified as gangsters and not Jews.

American Jews had failed to understand that what was important to the struggle of one group for freedom did not *quid pro quo* result in support for Jewish issues. American Rabbinic leadership and American Jewry had blinked at the meaning of Tikkun Olam. It meant, "*repairing the world*" for its own sake and not for some anticipated or hoped for reward or future benefit.

When elements in the Black community and establishment turned on Jews and promoted latent Black anti-Semitism the idealism of the 60's would draw to a close. Jewish interests were exactly that, Jewish interests. "*If I am not for myself who will be and if not now then when,*" is an old Jewish self question.

Israel survived the Arab 1967 war of extermination and emerged stronger and a brighter symbol than ever before for American Jews. Pride in simply being Jewish reemerged. When Russian Jewry would face active cultural extermination by the Soviet government, American Jews would not let the Holocaust happen again. They would not remain quiet.

Israel's survival, Russian Jewry, the Holocaust, Women's issues and continued liberalism would become new Jewish religions after 1967. Jewish intermarriage rates would rise to nearly 50%. American Jews would decline to around 1.9% of America's population. American Jews were rapidly diminishing in America. American Jews would have to choose to survive as Jews but will they?