

HANUKKAH

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The observers say that involved are many decent impulses, as well as ties to old friends and early allegiances, operating to sustain the Jewish voter's support of liberal causes. But there is also manifest, they contend, an excessive timidity. Concretely, Jews oppose re-

action and conservatism to some degree because of fears that such philosophies may hide anti-Semitism.

They cite the "great pressure" put on city officials to prevent Nazi George Rockwell from speaking in New York; the almost "hysterical outbursts" over some swastika smearings on New York synagogues; and the uproar over the irritated com-

plaint of a New York City police commissioner about the custom of Jewish police of taking time off on Yom Kippur. The commissioner, desperately in need of every policeman to guard two controversial visitors--Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro--said he knew many of the Jewish policemen had no intention of spending the Day of Atonement in a synagogue. The commissioner was the target of an "outburst" from

Jewish organizations. All this, and many similar incidents, raise a question, say the experts. Never have Jews wielded so much weight and power in a great city as do the Jews in New York. What are they afraid of?

It is natural, they add, that the defense of a minority group and its legitimate interests may be loud and insistent when it is powerless and believes no one is bothering to listen. But this, they contend, is hardly the situation of American Jews. Hence, they argue, there is something unsound about the considerable volume of Jewish self-congratulation on the Jewish struggles of the past. That was truly a significant battle but what does this same Jew say and do about the rise of a new proletariat of Negroes and Puerto Ricans and their efforts to emulate the earlier Jewish struggle for status?

They then recount the debate that erupted when Herbert Hill, the labor union expert of the NAACP--who is Jewish--accused the International Ladies Garment Workers Union--the symbol for Jewish liberalism of Jewish leadership in the struggle to emancipate the working man--of discriminating against Negroes. There was, in fact, only one proven case in support of Hill's charge but there is little doubt that Negroes and Puerto Ricans have not been admitted to the trade union establishment in New York.

Of course, it was the Jewish-created unions which were attacked first on this issue--because "more was expected from them." The debate highlighted a painful fact; something precious to the liberal Jewish philosophy had seeped out of the Jewish labor movement in America.

Moynihan and Glazer contend that one of the truly great achievements of Jews in America has been a generation of gifted young Jews who poured into the arts, leftwing protect politics, and the labor movement. These young Jews were able to find in the twenties and thirties and even the forties satisfying challenges within environments which were substantially Jewish. As Jews who had presumably freed themselves from ghetto ties, they still satisfied their liberal and humanitarian ideals working among other Jews in the theater, politics, and unions.

What will happen to the present younger generation of a much more affluent Jewish community and a much more secure one? The sons and daughters of the "radicals" of the twenties, say the two authorities, find little to attract them in the no-

mal Jewish community. For the gifted young Jews of the present time, synagogue activities, charitable and philanthropic projects and fundraising for Israel do not seem particularly vital. These are the bright young Jews who spell out in the public prints how much they are repelled by the "gilded ghetto" of 20th century American Jewish life. Will the others find this new ghetto as stimulating as the ghettos of the lower East Side of Manhattan were to its denizens three decades ago?

Those Jews led a separate life but it was one of intense curiosity about everything going on in the outer world, an eagerness to participate in it, and a determination to learn whatever had to be learned for that participation. They could look forward to a time when all barriers would be down and they would be able to move freely

business, politics, culture and social life. The working class Jew of the time did not seek separation, but rather full participation in the larger society.

Now that much of this dream has become reality and the American Jew is much more prosperous and secure and accepted and much less Jewish, what is happening to the old liberal thrust? For one thing, say the two observers, there are tendencies to withdrawal. A satisfying pattern of Jewish middle class life in the open society has not yet developed. Hence, the specific Jewish dilemma of finding in so open a society a balance between separation and loss of Jewish identity.

And in myriad ways, these conflicts and impulses find their expression when the American Jew goes to the polls.

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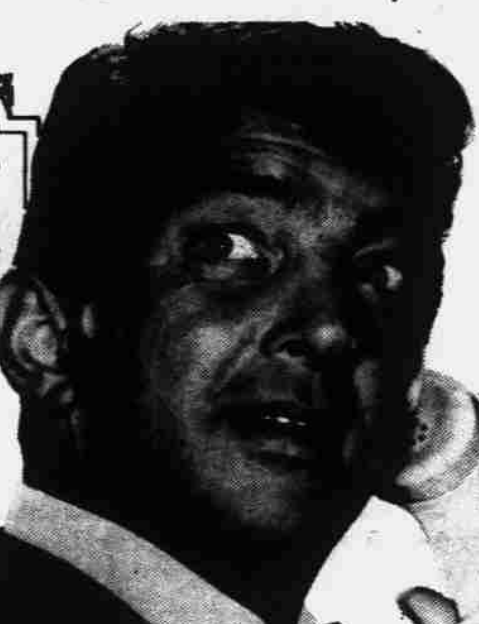
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