

"Scholarship and Continuity: Dilemma and Dialectic" in Leon Jick, *THE TEACHING OF JUDAICA IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES* (New York: KTAV/Association for Jewish Studies, 1970), pp. 113-31

IN May 1818 Leopold Zunz published his call for the scientific study of Jewish creativity to take its place with the great surge in scientific study of universal culture(s).¹ Gerson Cohen has correctly pointed out that Zunz's dreams for achievements in research have been more than surpassed and, were he alive today and judging by his explicit statements on needed research in the essay "On Rabbinic Literature," "he would probably be ecstatic with joy."² But, of course, there were at least two other motives behind Zunz's scholarly concerns. One was his fear or conviction that the rapid assimilation of Jews was "carrying post-Biblical Hebrew literature to its grave." Wissenschaft therefore must record and preserve this literature before it disappears. (Preserve used in the sense of preserving butterflies in formaldehyde.) The second motive was Zunz's "conviction that only a scientific approach to the Jewish past can result in a fair estimate of the nature of Judaism and the Jew."³ The value of this fair estimate would be, therefore, greater appreciation and acceptance of contemporary Jews as well as post-Jewish culture. It would undergird intelligent efforts at political and religious reform, making it possible "to know and distinguish the old which is still of use, the antiquated which has become pernicious and the new which is desirable."⁴

We can agree that the Wissenschaft des Judentums movement was marked by a new objectivity of approach to the tradition, a willingness to see it from the outside as an object of research, yielding its monolithic structure and its functions as "norm for our judgments." We can agree that modern Jewish Studies in the university setting have extended and surpassed the first goal, not least by locating these studies in a far more open, universal medium than Jewish scholarship has functioned in up to now. Thus Gershom Scholem's critique of his predecessors and thrust for even less value-centrism and parochialism in Jewish scholarship is also

continually being realized.⁵ But what of Zunz's other goals? The goal of preservation appears, in the light of history, to have been premature. Neither post-Biblical Hebrew literature nor Jewish culture generally has been "carried to its grave." Neither assimilation nor holocaust has "closed" Jewish history.⁶ On the other hand, the goal of *Wissenschaft* playing a role in adapting Judaism and Jews to the newly emerged world culture would appear to be more promising and necessary than ever. It is a dimension which Zunz's contemporary successors must also confront.

It is a truism that the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement was a response to the modernization crisis of Jewry. It sought, consciously or unconsciously, greater respectability for Judaism and Jews (respectability defined as being more respected or more studied by Western methods and norms.) Its practitioners—East or West—whether positively directed or ambivalent to the ongoing value of the tradition—or even while weighing conversion!—felt some call and concern for the continuation of Judaism. Then, immediate and urgent as is the desire to further strengthen, direct and restore wholeness to the scholarship dimension of the movement, the question of assimilation and continuity remains and emerges with even greater intensity for reasons I will delineate below.

The recent creation of the American Association for Jewish Studies reflects a recognition that more is at stake in Jewish Studies than increased research and teaching efforts in the field. Such a recognition was readily conceded in the fact that it was Jewish practitioners of Jewish Studies who were invited to its founding conference. Nor is this field unique or pioneering in recognizing the potential involvement in or responsibility for societal concerns by scholarship. This insight, spurred by student and young scholars' activism, is somewhere between a revolution, a fad, a professional collapse and/or a "failure of nerve" on American campuses today. The fact that it is slower in coming to the Jewish field is probably a function of the relatively lesser interest of Jewish students and the Jewish community in Jewish Studies; of the fact that Jews are still more dominated by the urge to make it than to shake it in American life; and by the recent and rapid expansion of Jewish Studies on campuses. This last means that many old-time practitioners are living and rooted in more passive cultural settings and the newer ones are in an expansionary and upwardly mobile phase which tends to undermine activism by occupying its potential energies elsewhere. However, the problems of Jewish identity and Jewish survival are bound to emerge and haunt Judaic scholars with greater intensity. This is because

the crisis of modernization is entering a new level of intensity in the Jewish community.

The social and economic absorption of Jews into the mainstream of modern life and the achievement of its rewards is now all but complete. American Jewry is almost ninety percent located in or about the large urban centers (over 250,000 population) in middle- and upper-middle-class neighborhoods. It is peculiarly and increasingly in professional and occupational strata where modernization and its values are the medium itself. Its cultural and intellectual experiences are more and more saturated with the media and messages of modern cultures. The result is an even more radical assimilation of modern ways of life and values.⁷ The renewed crisis, which all religions and cultures originating in earlier cultural mediums are now undergoing (e.g., Catholic renewal, "death of God," Black Christianity, etc.) due to the fact that the ground of society is now saturated with the new medium, is matched in the Jewish community by an even greater propensity for dissolution in the universal culture. The Jewish community (as all communities in America—only more so) is now open to positive assimilation (in both biological and cultural senses) as it has never been.⁸ Even its Jewishly committed components are more influenced by the general culture than ever before—*vide* the emergence of psychedelic and radical movements among the religiously educated and committed as well as among the marginal Jews.⁹ Thus the question of its survival becomes more of a question. The openness and permeability of the universal culture also cruelly test and underscore the weakness of the initial adjustment to modernization made by most Jewish institutions of value and identity transmission—i.e., the synagogues and schools, Jewish recreational institutions, and communal activities and life. Many of these adjustments worked as long as the medium was semipermeable because both cultural shelter and exclusion operated to stabilize Jewish ethnicity and values. The new equilibrium is leaving many institutions unable to function well in the new circumstance, especially in values and identity transmission to the new generation which is adapted and culturally and intellectually evolved to the new medium.

The focal point of this shift of the ground of being, as I have argued elsewhere, is the university setting.¹⁰ Here the new universal culture is at its peak of influence, saturation and reality correspondence. The explosive factor is, of course, that eighty percent plus (going on maximum possible) of eligible Jewish students go to the university. This fact brings the rank and file of the future Jewish community (and not just

an elite tempered by a lagging mass) into the new cultural medium. The negative effects of this setting on Jewish identity and loyalty (although not to some of its better values which are now enshrined in the universal culture) make inevitable that that part of the Jewish community which seeks continuity and future will turn its attention to the campus as a medium of Jewish life and future. Indeed, some, if not most, of the exceptional growth of chairs of Jewish Studies on the secular campus in the past ten years has been financed by members of the Jewish community.¹¹ Sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly such sponsors have recognized that, in some way, they hoped to make a positive Jewish presence and content, models and links to some aspect of Jewishness, available on campus where the students are. Projecting present trends and concern, and deducting for the gap between rhetoric and action, it is fair to predict that there will be more rather than less of such support in the future. Most of this support will grow from the Jewish community's hope and desire to assure Jewish continuity, to hold or win the respect of its young by being present on the college campus in intellectually respectable and socially accepted ways. It is unlikely that such supporters will remain indifferent to the actual effects of such study programs on Jewish commitment.

The second factor which is likely to make Judaic scholarship and teaching the focus of Jewish identity and continuity concerns is the changing nature of the Jewish student. Side by side with the majority of Jewish students' greater involvement in the universal culture and consequent distance from the particularist Jewish community, is an emerging minority "new breed" of more Jewishly committed students.¹² Many of them stock the courses that Judaica scholars are giving. Although no survey has been made of Judaica students' motives and attitudes, personal experience, (unscientific) impressions, and reports of others indicate that the bulk of students in Judaica courses are not professional journeymen preparing for careers, or even humanists studying another culture. They tend to be Jewish students expressing their positive identification by studying Jewish Studies or searchers interested in new contact with Jewish civilization. There is also another newly emerging phenomenon: the student who actively works for a greater Jewish presence on or about campus and seeks Jewish Studies as the expression of this drive. One might cite the Hebrew House established at Oberlin, or the off-campus Jewish Studies at Berkeley set up in reaction to the black studies thrust and the rejection by black militants of integrated white Jewish participation in the civil-rights struggle. Another striking example of this trend

is the student and young faculty organized petitions for the initiation of modern Jewish studies at Cornell after the black studies and black enclave living furor at that school. This campaign for Jewish Studies came on a campus, where, in the past, students who opted for a "ghettoized" Jewish community living (the Young Israel house) were viewed as marginal and irrelevant by the general Jewish student population. To achieve their demands, the students pressed for the entire gamut of popular agitation, i.e., teach-ins, demonstrations, etc., and were antagonistic to the senior Jewish faculty for playing an "Uncle Jake" (Jewish "Uncle Tom") role in this matter. Add to this: the collapse of most pre-college Jewish Studies backgrounds (such as Talmud Torah and Sunday-school education) within a few weeks of exposure to the current level of scholarly understanding of religion and culture, in general, and Judaism, in particular; the absence of even such limited backgrounds for many students; the likelihood of further pressures for ethnic studies and socially generated ethnic awareness. All this suggests that the needs and demands of at least a minority of Jewish students for Jewish Studies, not only as academic discipline but as agent of self-discovery and even psychic liberation, seem likely to grow.

The third new factor for increased Jewish concern on more and more campuses is the Judaica scholar. He, I fear, will bear the burden of the new emerging claims. And to him the bulk of my analysis of options will be directed.

The Judaica scholar is, of course, a professional making his livelihood in the academic world. As such, he undergoes the professional training, tends to adopt the professional values, and to live within the campus community, such as it exists.¹³ Hence, he tends to internalize the canons of objectivity, the value-free nonteleological research and methodology which, until recently, have been the consensus of the campus. An important part of him and his professional conscience tell him that there is nothing different about his scholarship and results that reflects covert assumptions and value goals, and that he has not knowingly distorted his conclusions because he is dealing with Jewish material. True, the growing sophistication of cultural analysis may make him aware of the inescapability of some *Zeitgeist*, cultural and personal subjectivity, etc.¹⁴ He may even—after viewing the patterned divergence of modern Biblical scholarship schools, for example—ask whether there is not, after all, a Jewish point of view.¹⁵ But he would be likely to see such divergences as perspective curvatures to be allowed for, rather than norms to be embraced or expanded. Moreover, insofar as he lives in a campus

community, he is thereby brought into a social milieu with certain highly characteristic tendencies. Milton Gordon has suggested that the intellectuals—particularly in a campus community—constitute an emergent fourth ethnic subculture of American society paralleling the tri-pot, Protestant-Catholic-Jewish pattern.¹⁶ Nor is there any secret as to the kind of religious consensus—despite the growing variety of faculty and colleges and the pressure of new ethnic movements in American life—which still tends to be most characteristic of this community. In the words of Rabbi Henry Cohen, it is “a naturalism whose faith is in the rational order of efficient causation; whose method is science, whose morality is humanism and whose messianic hope is the redemption of mankind through man’s self-understanding and rationality.”¹⁷ In short, it is a consensus which is universalistic in a non-pluralist sense, and which tends to rate low certain cultural characteristics which have been prominent in Jewish culture and religion historically. Notwithstanding radical and ethnic challenges, one may guess that this consensus still dominates. Here we may face the first difference between general faculty people and our hypothesized Judaica scholar. Although no one has made a qualified survey of the Judaica scholar, personal observation suggests he is statistically less likely to be completely in this community. Likely as not, he is differentially located in a more particularist Jewish social setting; and he is someone whose career has grown out of strong Jewish roots and education, someone with concern for Jewish ethnic and/or value continuity. Moreover, to be candid, until recently his location in the university curriculum for the most part has tended to give a partial shelter or particularist flavor to his habitat. Such a background predisposes him to involvement with Jewish survival.

There is a strong professional factor which tends to block Judaica scholars’ involvement in Jewish value concerns. By and large, the key to academic success and advancement remains research pursued and published in accordance with the dominant norms of the academic community. Thus, in a real sense, every act of student involvement, Jewish community concern or value activity is potentially or actually in competition for the precious time, energy, and immersion needed for professional growth. Since Jewish Studies have only recently and, to some extent, only partially (especially in a geographical sense) attained academic respectability, there is an additional pressure against too close an identification with the concerns of the Jewish community and for the Jewish civilization. Nor is the campus community as pluralist toward particularist Jewish concerns as it seems to be becoming toward other

ethnic concerns. (Apparently societal, personal and financial pressures, if strongly enough applied, are not without effect despite their non-legitimacy by the official standards of the academic community.) Yet, as a concerned member of the Jewish community, one subject to its social and intellectual pulls, as a Jew who may care about Jewish continuity, the Judaica scholar may find both inner and external pressures for various forms of involvement. Undoubtedly individuals will respond differently depending on their own hierarchy of values and concerns and on different temperaments, influences, etc. An important factor will be the relative psychic independence of the individual vis-à-vis the campus and general American culture. Here I suspect a generation gap may unfold. Or perhaps a combination generation and atmosphere of education gap may unfold—with younger men and men educated in more open settings (psychologically if not academically) more likely to diverge from the general campus norms.

Now what possible responses can the Judaica teacher then give to the tacit or overt call for help from the Jewish student and community, for more help with Jewish identity and continuity?

One possible option is to draw firmer the professional line and to shut out these claims. There is a trend to greater integration of Jewish Studies in the general curriculum as well as in such organizations as the American Academy of Religion (which themselves are moving more into the mainstream). The Judaica scholar might indeed follow Gerson Cohen’s prescription and simultaneously encourage the Jewish community to further support the establishment of Judaica chairs while rejecting any attempt to use the chairs as “stimuli and aids to Jewish identity and pride on the campus.”¹⁸ Since it is obvious that the prime motive of community giving would be the promise or hope of the denied function, one could question the moral adequacy of such a line and point to the gap between the hopes raised (even if non-verbally) and the overt denial of responsibility. Of course, it can be argued that “the mere presence of Jewish Studies on the campus, provided they are a fair representation of the totality of Jewish life and are treated as an academic discipline, are by their presence an affirmation of the corporate identity of the Jews.”¹⁹ It is true that the respectability factor alone, the recognition of the equality of Judaism as a scholarly humanities endeavor serves as one of the few positive models of Jewishness as present and equal on campus. This factor of respectability is characteristically over-rated by the older generation which is still hung up on and impressed by the achievement of acceptance in American cultural settings. It

tends to impress the younger generation considerably less. Youth takes its at-homeness for granted and tends to measure teachers simply by their performance in the general cultural competition. Paradoxically, then, the greater assimilation of the younger generation makes it less impressed by the mere fact of Jewish acceptance yet more open to Jewish—or non-Jewish—influence. Nevertheless, Judaic scholarship is one kind of model needed for a positive Jewish identity on campus. Thus, Judaica academics can insist on following natural academic and research bents ignoring Jewish considerations, arguing that their free enterprise efforts, by a kind of natural guiding hand, would serve the best particularist interests of the Jewish community. They might even indignantly add that it is now clearly recognized by American society and capitalism that, although they pay the bills, the university can and should serve as critic, not merely propagandist, of the system which feeds it. Shall Jewish Studies then be confirmed as “inferior” by accepting the rights of the piper payer to make greater demands upon those in this field?

One objection to this response is the now recognized objection to the Adam Smith economic version thereof: it fits too well the maximal economic and social needs of the privileged group it is written for. A second problem is the internal one: the identification with Jewish continuity. The suspicion will not down that a minimal contribution from such a pool of talent will help seal the doom of Jewish continuity in America. Moreover, it is too easy to set up this alternative as “the faculty man [being pressured] to serve as a quasi-chaplain or advocate of any form of affiliation, or for that matter of disaffiliation.”²⁰ Most Judaica scholars, out of identification with current academic values or by pragmatic judgment that such a role will not work, will reject such an alternative. Similarly, almost all would reject the excessive ethnicism paralleling other overreactions which would claim that only Jews can teach Judaism. They, similarly, want to avoid the kind of putting identity needs first which would resent the introduction of ambiguity or insufficiency into needed heroic models, such as seems to have characterized the Nat Turner literary controversy. Besides, the breakdown of a monolithic tradition and/or consensus of values is a fact, and even a norm, in the humanities and in Jewish culture. Therefore, the teacher cannot serve in good conscience as a spokesman for any one version of the entire tradition or for the Jewish community as it sees itself.

The real question is: whether the value system and operating framework which scholars, individually and collectively, seek to foster in the field of Judaica shall include the claim or the expectation of time and

effort set aside for the sake of Jewish continuity—beyond the effort in academic research. Or, in the same spirit: whether one might expect some effort and concern to properly orient the campus community and academic curriculum to do justice to the past and present life of Jewry. Of course, individuals will vary in how much of this they take up. But it is in the peer group's power to create a force field of expectation and judgment which can materially affect individual responses. Such efforts would undoubtedly create tensions in Judaica scholars between professional obligations and Jewish community needs; between vocational and avocational efforts; between the two community worlds they share. Nor should anyone underestimate the potential tension with the conventions and intellectual asymmetries of the campus community whose world Judaica scholars must inhabit professionally, if not after hours. The justification for such efforts can only come out of the depths of identification with Jewish continuity; out of the recognition that a generation which has lived through such events as the holocaust and the rebirth of Israel should feel itself charged with special obligations; and out of agreement that the crisis of Jewish continuity is so critical that more total involvement by Judaica scholars is needed to maximize chances of overcoming. These assumptions can hardly be “proven.” To some extent, scholars can debate their validity and probably respond differentially in accordance with individual analyses. But, mostly, the pre-existence of such convictions must be assumed and acted upon. They are ontological to Jewish existence today and like all basic axioms, they are given and recognized, not deduced or justified.

The effort which would involve the least tension with current frames of reference and with the campus community would be the further extension of Jewish Studies—to campuses where it is not present, in scope and depth where it is found, and in new methods of cooperation to utilize collective resources to round out limitations of the small departments that now exist. Here I would endorse Gerson Cohen's excellent analysis of graduate and undergraduate pedagogy in Judaica and what can be done to improve it. The extension of Jewish Studies involves some need to make the campus community aware of the gross simplification, and even distortion, of the Jewish Studies picture it has created with its haphazard setups. These are typically one-man departments demanding general over-survey courses and spreading scholarly teaching resources thin. Equally and especially scandalous is the absence of Jewish Studies in schools where the Jewish student population and potential demand for such studies is so great. Here it should be pointed out that

Jewish Studies are not only legitimate as part of the humanities, but that instituting them is an extension of the attempt to break the current unselfconscious Western, Christian (even if in secularized form), white ethnocentrism of the "universal" university curriculum.²¹ Nor should there be hesitation to point out the relevance of such studies to a Jewish student population. This can be done while avoiding the excesses of racism potential in such an approach. Perhaps the outstanding scandal in this area is the continuing absence of major Jewish Studies centers in the New York City public university system although its student population is probably well over eighty percent Jewish. This is at a time when the less than ten percent Negro and Puerto Rican students are legitimately and appropriately demanding the availability of ethnic studies which are of particular interest to them.

There is a narrow line to be walked here. Jewish Studies is solid enough not to have to ride current waves of community action or relevance. Moreover, the current wave of ethnic studies appears to be thinly capitalized in academic goals, scholarly personnel, and methodology. Such an approach could spell eventual disillusionment and scholarly bankruptcy—not to mention the possibility of ultimate academic backlash. There is no reason for Jewish Studies to be tied to such a potential albatross. But, admitting all this and, hopefully, avoiding such errors, expansion of Jewish Studies can become part of the legitimate thrust to create a truly ecumenical and pluralist academic curriculum.

This brings up an additional stage of involvement and tension. The present general-studies curriculum, it can be argued, does not do justice to Jewish civilization in many ways. As I have stated elsewhere: "The university, and its curriculum, is secular and nonsectarian by its own definition. Thus the student is apt to take its presentation of Judaism at face value. Judaism and Jewish History is presented in passing in many of the college curriculums—such as the ubiquitous Social Science I or Humanities I courses. However, the presentation here turns out to be essentially a secularized version of traditional Christian stereotypes of Judaism."²² Judaism tends to disappear after the birth of Christ—perhaps to reappear with Martin Buber, more likely not to reappear. Similarly, one should point to the stereotypes which tend to underestimate the significance of Jewish particularist existence and religion which circulate freely in the conventional social medium of the campus community. Such views will tend to persist like all cultural stereotypes until (and somewhat beyond) they are challenged by scholarship, personal contact with people who know better in depth, and until alternate images

are presented.²³ The average Humanities textbook and teacher will remain blissfully ignorant of Yehezkel Kaufmann unless there is a more conscious polemic and organized lobbying. Such a task would logically fall to Judaica scholars who have the requisite scholarship and concern. But they would have to be willing to risk condemnation or resistance from an official universalism which is not often ready to admit its failures in practice. The precious newly won "respectability" might be sneered at as the particularist concerns draw resentment. (Such sneering would likely stem especially from Jews seeking to escape to the universal culture.)

There is another more subtle area where Judaica scholars could make a contribution to the viability of Judaism and Jewish culture while operating within conventional academic norms. All of the particularist ethos, including Judaism, are suffering a loss of believability now that they have entered into the oikumene—for their language and transmissions were shaped in an ethnocentered world. The result was an inevitable "curvature" of language and concept to favor the home culture and a "distortion" of perspective and even content of alternate value systems and cultures. This once helped assure continuity. But in an open cultural situation, this becomes dysfunctional. As the student experiences the reality of the other culture, it destroys the believability of the inherited system. Such a factor frequently makes Jewish knowledge and values appear to be weaker in truth than they are intrinsically. Here the Judaica scholar, as he moves with the general world of knowledge and lives with the "other" systems, can play a big role in the reorientation of Jewish language and perspective needed to retain believability and to make the positive Jew an honest and truthful citizen of the new and, more and more, one world of culture.²⁴

All of these examples involve the use of the professional in academic areas albeit with broadened ambit. There is, however, another way in which academic skills can enrich the Jewish community. It involves going off campus or, at least, applying academic skills to currently off-campus concerns. In the increasingly complex and technological world we live in, the universities have become major clusters of skills and expertise. These are supplied to society to enable it to function at the level it must.²⁵ Such trends are continually accelerating despite the current outcry at university military research. When elementary and secondary education (especially in the sciences) needed to be upgraded, the impetus and leadership was supplied by the university talent banks. Outstanding examples were the Physical Science Study Group, and the redoing of the

physics-math secondary curricula led by Zacharias, and the elementary and pre-school revisions under the impact of Bruner, *et al.* Considering that elementary and secondary Jewish education is so utterly inadequate, this is probably the major area where a great contribution can be made by Judaica scholars. This could involve new curricula, textbooks, mass media, etc. The Melton Institute program gives an inkling of the potential impact of the conceptual and intellectual upgrading and sophistication of the Jewish curriculum. Of course this would take not only involvement and thinking power, but a willingness to play the role of critic of the present situation, of lobby for new spending, etc. Given the prestige of academia and the great void in the Jewish community, but discounting for the entrenched irrelevance of many organizations and professionals and the ongoing control of community spending by wealthy but ignorant and Jewishly uninterested laymen, there is still much that could be done. Without underestimating the difficulties involved, pressure from an organized body of Judaica scholars collectively assembled might be particularly influential.

A similar judgment might be made on the question of upgrading Jewish professionals such as rabbis, educators, social workers, and community executives. For the most part, their Jewish education has been received in sheltered, parochial environments—marked by special or denominational pleading, low standards of intellectual and conceptual performance, etc. Bringing such people into an academic setting which is meeting the performance standards expected by society at large and unsheltered by the sentimental and nostalgic allowances for Jewish heart as opposed to substance, could do more than increase their knowledge. It could lift their performances to new levels of conceptual grasp and sophistication—multiplying the force of their efforts many fold. If a direct academic setting may be out of reach of such people, some hybrid form—say an institute or study-center setting run by academics and meeting academic standards—may be needed.²⁶ Following the pattern of upgrading Christian seminaries, Hebrew teachers, colleges of rabbinical seminaries can also be brought onto campus or closer to it. Since hundreds of millions of dollars are spent annually on synagogues, Jewish schools, etc., the effect of such an upgrading in terms of yield in Jewish relevance and viability could be enormous.

Such an involvement by Judaica scholars in the Jewish community can perhaps learn from the model of academic involvement with the "military-industrial complex" to avoid certain errors. This involvement need not be purely with the Jewish establishment. It should not be—

for the sake of the Jewish community in its current state of life and values. Academics should appeal from the living Jewish status quo to the living Jewish tradition which they have experienced in their own research and teaching. With all the faults, conflicting values, and primitivisms Jewish civilization has in its past, surely at its best (however defined) it is more than the over-Americanized, superficially modern, excessively hung up middle-class complex that is so much of Jewish community and life in America. Here one can draw upon the naturally critical, even alienated, tone which Judaica scholars may derive from the academic culture and medium in which they live. These tendencies can be channeled to a vitally needed critique of the current Jewish community situation. This is not to urge the assumption of the intrinsic superiority of campus community mores over anything in the Jewish community. Behind its façade of plutocracy, easy sentimentality, and tribalism, there are components of responsibility and decency in the Jewish community which the academic community has not always matched. The more creative possibility is the Judaica scholar as a dialectical moralist, able to infuse a needed note of criticism, universalism, moral fervor and/or sophistication into the Jewish community, while utilizing the organic culture and sense of continuity and human responsibility of the Jewish community and tradition as lasts to which the campus community should be fit.

Finally, there is one more most difficult and complex aspect of the Judaica scholar's relationships to Jewish continuity, beyond his career considerations: his relationship to Jewishly interested Jewish students and to Jewish members of the campus community. By and large the Jewish faculty members and students are the most alienated from Jewish culture and tradition.²⁷ (Even where they may be revolting for the sake of classic Jewish values such as social justice or peace, they tend to see these values as universal and as involving repudiation of Jewish particularity.) Even the positive and committed Jewish students (except for a minority which seeks a ghetto in Jewish Studies) tend to be more alienated from the Jewish models offered by the community such as rabbis, teachers, etc. For most people a link to any tradition can come only through a person himself steeped in and committed to the tradition. There can be no one tradition offered—the diversity of values and backgrounds of the Judaica scholars guarantees this. But surely the Judaica scholars are obvious foci for people seeking positive models to relate to. Since the Jewish brain drain is particularly intense in the university, the establishment of relationship with positive Jews as such could be a major

force in reducing this loss of the flower of Jewish intelligence and concern.

Such a possibility, with its implied demands on time and energy, is somewhat threatening. It undoubtedly offends those who went into Jewish Studies fully determined to be detached, scholarly and not pastoral—a character type which differentially is attracted to academic life. Some scholars instinctively recoil from or actively reject such a role. This reaction may even be necessary for survival as private persons and as scholars. On the other hand, if Jewish students continue to be affected by general campus currents, they may seek out and aggressively force such an involvement. (The suggestions on using academic talents to upgrade rabbis, educators, etc., above, may thus appear as an attempt to provide alternate people to play this role—a kind of “heading off the Indians at the pass” attempt.) When all is said and done some of this role may yet fall to the lot of Jewish Studies professors. Their response can range from serving as a model and guide to Jewish knowledge and learning, or from serving as a model of self-respecting rootedness in Jewish values and community, to exemplar of Jewish concern for Jewish or societal problems. They may simply serve as a paradigm of personal ways of living Jewishly. Taking this role up positively would add significantly to the survival resources of the Jewish community. Such a contribution might truly be appreciated by a Zunz redivivus even if he might be surprised at the unexpected liveliness of the culture he sought to record and “preserve.”

It would be hard to overestimate the tensions involved in trying to play such a role. It involves time and effort which is neither recognized nor rewarded by the standards of the profession as they are now defined. Perhaps the Jewish Studies departments can create some internal mechanisms of recognition, at least for teaching and time spent with students. This solution runs into the problem or possibility of further integration of Jewish Studies into more general departments. This tendency, which is preferable for raising standards further and for increasing the communication of particularist models, would presumably make special recognition criteria impossible. Perhaps there is some dialectical solution again here—that Jewish Studies be simultaneously incorporated into the general departments they fit, and yet function as an interdisciplinary meeting group as well. One suspects that only breakthroughs and widening of the concepts of the general academic community will provide a framework broad enough to meet the needs described. One is tempted also to propose that the Jewish community finance time off for the Judaica scholar to devote to its concern. The danger there is that he

should primarily function on campus where he is most needed, most in tune with the medium, and most influential. The ultimate answer to this role can only be clarified by further developments in campus life and further growth in numbers and Jewish concern of Judaica scholars.

All that is described in this article is far beyond the capacity of single scholars. Perhaps it exceeds the capacity of the collective Jewish scholars. If we add to these concerns, the enormous academic and scholarly efforts and upgrading of the Judaica field needed, it seems crystal clear that there must be some community and professional organization for Judaica scholars on campus. Community may be more important than professional organization. The concerns for identity, transmission, and survival are not easily organizable or to be expressed in formal administration. The intangibles of peer groups, social mores, self-identity, shared culture, play a far greater role in determining individual responses than anything else. There is a need to turn to the model of fellowship and scholarship set by the Pharisees when Jews and Judaism faced a great cultural crisis in the first centuries. Insofar as Judaic scholars hear the call of continuity and of the future, they cannot avoid considering such models. The limits of person and the structures of today may preclude this generation from making the decisive contribution which the Pharisees made. But to quote one of them: “It is not your obligation to finish the work—but you are not at liberty to desist from [starting] it.”