contemporary שמירת שבת. In general, the next step in the codification would he, on the basis of a sociological analysis today, to indicate how best these fundamental Jewish values can be concretized in terms of the Jewish community today. Then I might want to add a list of recommended enrichments, such as not riding.

In summary then, we need a reworking of the rationale of the legal system, an identification of the key values, a sharpening of what the key pillars are, and a recommended positive program.

FEAR AND TREMBLING: A RETROSPECTIVE CRITIQUE OF UNITED SYNAGOGUE YOUTH

Alan L. Mintz

United Synagogue Youth (USY) is the major youth organization of the Conservative Movement, having 20,000 high school students as members. By its sheer size and intense activity, it cannot be dismissed as "another one of those youth groups" or as a mass structure incapable of transmitting any real Judaism. Each year thousands of its members go to college and grow up to form the nuclei of synagogues. Whether the Judaism they carry with them is stultified and irrelevant or eager and serious is largely the result of their experience in the organization.

USY is in trouble and is failing to respond to a critical situation which has been evident for a few years. Fifteen years have passed since its inception and, although the people it services have radically

changed, neither its structure nor tactics have altered appreciably The same type of adult leaders us ing the same kinds of activities and literature are trying to confront a teenager who has internalized a whole body of outside ideas about how he should live. How did this simpasse develop?

It seems that during the early Fifties, there was also a crisis. Hebrew high schools were hardly in their nascent stages and the effects of the young Ramah camps were not to be felt for quite some time. Leaders of the Movement were concerned about the rising rate of assimilation resulting from an absence of contact between the synagogue and the teenager who had graduated from the Hebrew school. With these conditions, the need was great for a youth organi-

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zation which would, at least, locate secular and social functions in the synagogue.

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As a consequence, USY was founded. It succeeded in giving teenage Jews a chance to have much more contact with each other; at the same time a few discreet morsels of a more serious Judaism were sneaked in. The Judaism that was available at the time unfortunately was not yet ready for the severe requestioning and the practical challenges of summer situations that were later to reshape it. It was a luke-warm substance that had to serve poorly as educational Judaism. Throughout the Fifties, USY stood by its programmatic "tripod:", religious, social and cultural. The constant insistence on this slogan, however, betrayed the reality: an inordinate eweight on the social side of the triangle. Dances attracted crowds of hundreds, and served their undeniably essential social purpose. In addition, that generation did not ask too much of Judaism and society, following the quiescence and inner-directedness of the young litterati of the decade. In the national leadership of the organization, it was often-with a exceptions—the charismatic guitar player that made it to the top.

In the past six or seven years, the change in tone of the today's generation has been reflected in the people involved in USY. Much

that was once outside and above the Jewish teenager is now part of him. He has been influenced by and has participated in the emergnece of attitude from the selfnegating hang-ups of the Fifties into today's more intense social consciousness a phenomenon universally noted. In addition, the whole conception of educational Judaism has been transformed. The young Jews produced by the flowering of the Ramah camps and the growth of Hebrew high schools have turned around, and by their very presence forced these institutions to re-examine some of the incongruities of Judaism and some of its less developed aspects. Their demands rapidly have become informed with a desire for a more "meaningful" base for Judaism and less stress on sociology and cultural identity for its own sake. The works of Prof. Heschel, whilemore entrancing in form than in content, have exercised great attraction, as has the straightforwardness of Dr. Kaplan.

The tragedy of USY's predicament is its failure to respond to these changes. It now stands before a substantially different kindof member with new and more urgent demands, but yet its structure, personnel, and programs have been modified only slightly from their socially oriented role of the Fifties. National conventions, board meetings, contests, awards, newspapers and Israel program-

ming have been allowed to stagnate pathetically. The Pilgrimage to Israel, although it is an unmatchable Jewish group experience, suffers chronically from poor, and very conservative leaders. As a result, the tour escapes into complete orthodox observance, a posture which elicits the fewest questions about the true nature of Jewish ritual. The only gradual changes which have appeared are still based on the original assumptions, ones that are no longer functional. Plans are made in terms of one or two years-not ten or twenty-reflecting the fear of the National office of realizing what is going on outside of it, and of integrating those changes into a long-range program capable of dealing with a changed youth. Clinging to the same notions of informal Jewish education that worked ten years ago-when there was room for little of it-will cer- + but are merely avoided. tainly not do today.

Because of and despite USY's structural inflexibility, two types of leaders have appeared, with both strains often mirrored in the same person. On one hand, leaders have had a better Jewish education in high school and often in summer camps. More than in the previous decade, they have succeeded in winning the respect of the general membership and have risen to a higher number of offices. In addition, from isolated chapters in the organization—a few in Bos-

ton and Philadelphia-there has been considerable experimentation with programming Jewish issues and with groping for inventive solutions to the problems of communal prayer. But we cannot expect these attempts to continue as USYers discover that the adult superstructure is not ready to respond to their overtures. It is the height of pathos to watch the creative suggestions of a National Convention chairman being turned down out of fear. The extent, moreover, to which the national president is disregarded and the officers kept uninformed by the professional leaders is deplorable. What once served as an ideological base can now be taken only as the absence of a consider ed, long-range educational direction. The questions of these new members about a new Judaism are not returned with feeble answers

Other members become plainly cynical. These are not so much those who have already "arrived," but rather the young members with intelligence and leadership potential who drop out because USY makes no adequate response to what they feel has to be done about social problems. These young people and they are many -sincerely want to be part of the current social revolution because they feel it is right. Most of them never reach higher USY office because they realize early that the organization has no plans to involve itself any deeper than the minimal level it has reached already. The belief that high school students cannot take part because of their age is a fallacy being disproved everywhere, yet the adult leadership still entertains this notion. In 1965, the national officers of the organization drew up a program in which USYers would spend the summer in New York City studying at the Seminary and working in Harlem. The proposal did not proceed past the initial veto of the Office. The opportunities are there if only responsible adults can make the connections for the teenager. Consequently he leaves the organization early, looking at Judaism with cynicism, and carrying away the pernicious but lifelong belief that his religion has nothing to say about what is important today.

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It would be a mistake, however, to ascribe the organization's problems solely to the organization and its adult leaders. It does not, after all, exist alone in the Movement, and USY is only a lay organization within the Movement's lay branch, the United Synagogue. We must then look toward the Jewish Theological Seminary and especially its educational operations as another involved party. The Teachers Institute of the Seminary sponsors its own youth group of a few thousand members which, although it

has its own problems, has a considerable degree of proper educational guidance. Its existence is fortunate, but does little to enhance its brother organization, five or six times its size. Indeed, one of the central factors in the plight of USY is the absence of contact with the Seminary. Although it is, common knowledge, that higher politics make this situation merely symptomatic of the rift between the United Synagogue and the Seminary, we cannot help but deplore this situation and its dangerous consequences. Granted that USY has made little effort to utilize some of the valuable people at the Teachers Institute, but the overwhelming responsibility resides with the Seminary. The educational research and planning of the latter has produced Camp Ramah, new ways of presenting classical texts, and a good youth group, but there is no visible evidence that they have made any effort to open channels between their knowledge and the desperate condition of the major youth organization of the Movement. Criticism of USY by certain leaders at the Seminary, moreover, is hypocritical and intolerable if their abdication of responsibility means that knowledge and training will not be developed for or made available to USY.

The Seminary must also take some responsibility for the lack of better professional leaders on all

levels of the organization. There are dozens of former USY leaders who have graduated from college or are now students who could be induced to enter lewish professions if they were approached properly. The Rabbinical School will not produce rabbis interested in youth work if it continues to wait passively for candidates to come to it. These former "machers" have retained, on the whole, only fragments of what was once a full pattern of observance, but were they actively contacted and inspired, many of them would make the hoped-for commitment. Until this change comes about, the impoverished state of USY professionalism will continue.

The problems lie everywhere, and the responsibility is associative. The summer camp run by the national organization this past summer met financial failure and was subsequently taken over by the Ramah Commission for operation this summer. Perhaps the experiences of the USYers who attend will have a broad influence in the organization. In any case, to prevent further troubles, USY leaders must continue to ask questions and request changes, with the hope that the adult leadership will realize the extent to which youth has changed and the necessity to seek help outside the United Synagogue in (let us hope) a responsive Seminary.

LIBERALISM AND LEGITIMACY: A VIEW

James Sleeper

When a man has succeeded in making a living, he confronts the challenge of learning what to live for; as the constant addition of physical comforts brings diminishing returns in pleasure, he casts about for other means of gratification. This writer is not the first to assert that Americans are ill-prepared to make the adjustment, and that unique factors at work on the American scene could make this problem crucial to national survival. In a society where much of the population has achieved life and liberty, the pursuit of happiness may become a frightening prospect-frightening because to know what one will make of his life is to engage in a mode of thought alien to those who have always striven in a world of operational definitions towards "goals" set for them by "society."

It is understandable that a pluralistic society in a secular age tends

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to regard religion as a category or department of civilized life rather than as an all-encompassing world-view which concerns itself with these problems. Notwithstanding pious declarations regarding the importance of religious faith, our business world regards it as a societal or personal extra-curricular activity. Content to describe religious liberty as another of those basic freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights; we are sometimes unprepared for the questions it raises-questions which strike at the heart of the meaning of constitutional society, by attempting to bridge the imaginary gap between personal conduct and national well-being.

Indeed, it is in these matters of belief concerning the nature of man and his universe that American society is most vulnerable to criticism, for its constitution is the child of a world-view resting on certain religious assumptions which have been called into question with increasing frequency and seriousness.

The political-religious dilemma we confront centers around the fact that when the founding fathers secularized the concept of divine law and wrote it first into the Declaration of Independence and then into the Constitution, they were unable to secularize the notion of moral responsibility as well. Certainly a man who owes his dignity to a transcendant natural (or divine) order must be obligated to orient his own life towards the laws of that order. But moral obligation as the means of pursuing happiness was left to religion, which-because in America it was irreparably divided into differing denominations, and because in England it had been poorly but powerfully meshed with the workings of government-could not be institutionalized without opposition, and therefore had to remain separate from the state. Indeed it has been argued that the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom, far from attempting to free man from the yoke of higher moral obligation (which even Washington thought indispensable to the workings of the Republic), was intended to guard against the imposition of one specific approach to that obligation through the ritual of a particular sect. Human dignity was seen to be fulfilled in individual righteousness.

To be sure, a subtle but far-reaching shift has taken place since the time of the nation's founding. First our belief in inalienable rights became obscured in the interpretations and adaptations of one white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant society; violations of the Creed were permitted by those who forgot that not all Americans are Christian or white. Then, when the industrial revolution destroyed the luxury of self-contradiction by creating conditions here which challenged our pious platitudes, the