group identity in more religious terms. According to the study, only 20% of those surveyed think it is essential to support Israel.

Transmitting Ethnicity

The "Birthright Israel" program seems to be an effort to transmit not Judaism, the religion, but Jewish ethnicity. Appealing to young American Jews with a program of ethnic separatism rather than religious meaning is doomed to failure. Indeed, it is programs of this kind which are driving young people away. Seeking religion and spiritual values, they find a Jewish establishment which tells them that Israel is "central" to Jewish life, a view which has little relevance to their lives as Americans.

Perhaps even more important as an element which alienates young people from organized Jewish life is the growing religious intolerance which is manifested in Jewish institutions, both in the U.S. and in Israel.

In an all too typical incident in February, 1999, 100 Orthodox yeshiva students surrounded a group of American Reform rabbis who went to pray at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, booing loudly and hurling insults past officers from the border police. The youths screamed that the rabbis should "go back to Germany," to be exterminated.

What the protestors found particularly provocative was that men and women were praying together, which the Orthodox do not allow. Rabbi Amiel Hirsch, executive director of the Association of Reform Zionists of America, said: "If a group of rabbis can't go to the Wall, then who can? Who does it bother? Who considers it provocative? It's only provocative if you succumb to the ultra-Orthodox worldview, which sees the Western Wall and all of Israel not as the heritage of the Jewish people, but as a giant ultra-Orthodox synagogue."

Religious Attacks

In recent days, attacks upon Reform and Conservative Judaism have mounted in Israel. In January, the Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Eliahu Bakshi-Doron, lashed out at the Reform movement, saying that by sanctioning assimilation, it had led to the loss of more Jews than the Holocaust.

At a convention of North American Jews in Jerusalem in November, 1998, the head of the Jewish Agency, Avram Burg, declared that the American synagogue is the "symbol of destruction," and that the new center of Jewish life should be the state of Israel.

Intolerance seems to be built into Israel's institutionalized state-controlled religious life, in which Reform and Conservative rabbis are not permitted to perform weddings, funerals, conversions, or other religious functions. An example of the mindset of Israel's religious leadership can be seen in the declaration by Jerusalem Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Kolitz attacking a conference which brought together Jewish and Christian religious leaders to discuss modern challenges. He said there is "no reason to hold discussions with non-Jewish clergy. The whole concept of inter-denominational dialogue is foreign to Judaism."

Decrying a lack of religious freedom in Israel for non-Orthodox branches of Judaism, Rabbi Michael Marmur, dean of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion branch in Jerusalem declared: "In today's Israel, Judaism is a registered trademark, and anyone making use of it is expected to pay royalties . . . The decision to treat liberal Jews as carriers of an infectious disease is designed to keep the required distance between the real thing and the imitation."

Arrogance and Ignorance

Rabbi Marmur notes that, "The argument of Reform and Conservative Jews with this kind of thinking is that it betrays arrogance and ignorance. The idea that a certain group holds the exclusive franchise on Judaism is insupportable . . . We cannot simply succumb to the notion that for Jews in Israel, there is only one game in town — monopoly. There are many indications that Israelis are searching for new ways to express themselves as Jews. As long as the state and local authorities distribute resources to meet religious needs, we have to press our claim for diversity and choice."

Using the power of the state to embrace one particular form of religious expression, which American Jewish groups vigorously oppose in our own country, even to the extent of opposing voluntary nonsectarian prayer in public schools, has become a way of life in Israel. Criticizing Israel's Ministry of Religious Affairs and its one-sided support for Orthodox Judaism, Rabbi Marmur states: "The gulf between money pumped into Jewish institutions and that set aside for Christian and Moslem causes is nothing short of a scandal. If there is to be a Ministry of Religious Affairs, it should promote more than just one version of one religion. If Judaism can only be advanced through inequality, something has gone terribly wrong. The value of accountability, accessibility, transparency and democracy need to be brought to bear in the corridors of our religious establishment..."

While Jewish organizations properly fight anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance in the larger society, they seem strangely silent about the intolerance whichis growing within the Jewish community.

Intermarriage and Genocide

Describing a visit to Israel, the Canadian Jewish writer Mordechai Richler, in his book *This Year In Jerusalem*, reports: ". . . unable to sleep, I read *The Jerusalem Post* in bed . . . *The Post* paid tribute to cartoonist Noah Mordechai Birzowski, who had just turned 75. A contributor since 1940 to *The Palestine Post*, as it then was, and other Israeli newspapers, Birzowski signed his name Noah Bee. One of the cartoons reproduced for the tribute was in two final frames with the headnote, 'FINAL SOLUTIONS.' The first frame showed Jews in striped concentration-camp uniforms, lining up to be consumed in a crematorium, smoke billowing out of its tall chimney. The second frame was a drawing of a couple being married in church, standing before a crucifix, with the footnote 'intermarriage.' I did not wake up Florence, my Protestant bride of 33 years, mother of our five children, to show it to her. However, it did occur to me that had Bee been a cartoonist for the *Catholic Herald*, and had he drawn a mixed marriage couple clasping hands before a Star of David and equated it with genocide, the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League would have been on the case in a jiffy, accusing him of racism."

Intolerance of this kind is widespread within the American Jewish community as well. "If you're married to a gentile, you can forget about working as a rabbi, teacher or executive director in a synagogue or school of the Conservative movement — no matter how good a Jew you are," reports *The Forward* (Oct. 3, 1998).

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From Germany to Palestine 1933–37: A Memoir

by Otto S. Leib

(Otto S. Leib, who will be 90 on his next birthday, is a longtime member of the American Council for Judaism. A native of Kreuzlingen, Germany, he left Nazi Germany in 1933 and made his way to Palestine. In this memoir he recalls the days of his youth in Germany, his experiences in Palestine and his emigration to the United States in 1937. A resident of New Jersey, Mr. Leib was a licensed structural welder who worked on the Verazzano Bridge and served as an instructor of Industrial Arts, teaching for 20 years at a technical high school. He retired with the rank of captain from the New Milford Auxiliary Police in 1993, after 32 years of service.)

In the 1920s and early 1930s, Zionist emissaries were sent to Jewish communities in Germany and other Western European countries to urge young people to make "aliyah" — to emigrate to Palestine to build a new Jewish state.

It was originally compassion for the persecuted Jews of Russia, where thousands had been murdered in pogroms, which led to Theodor Herzl's first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897. Herzl had no need or intention to settle in Palestine himself but he sought a refuge for those Jews fleeing persecution. In subsequent years, a group of "professional Zionists" appeared, from fund-raisers to propagandists. A "Jewish Agency for Palestine" assumed control over Zionist political and financial affairs, with a "Palestine Office" in major cities in many countries.

When they approached Western Europe, Zionists often ignored the fact that, in countries such as France, Jews had equal rights since the French Revolution and in England had achieved the highest government posts. The majority of Jews in Germany, Austria and Switzerland were well established and had equal rights since 1862.

Appeal For Aliyah

As a result, the appeal for aliyah had to be aimed at the idealistic young. But here, objections by parents had to be overcome, as they opposed having their children leave for a far off land and an uncertain future. To circumvent parental objections, they organized youth groups, called "Blue-White," copied from the Boy Scout movement. On hikes and at meetings, boys and girls were urged to emulate the early Zionist pioneers.

Community leaders were concerned about these activities. They feared, among other things, that traditional anti-Semites would use Zionist theory to prove that Jews agree with them that they are a foreign element in their countries. Even non-Jews shared this concern. In 1921, in Constance, Rudolf Eisinger, head of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, a member of the Catholic community, came shocked to his Jewish friend, Ivan Leib, asking how 15-year-old Kurt Welphaeuser could tell him, unasked on the street minutes before, that "Jews do not belong in Germany, their homeland is Palestine." The boy was merely repeating what he heard at "Blue-White" meetings.

The elders of that city's Jewish community responded by taking over the "Blue-White" activities, minus their ideological content, and the Zionist agent left town. In 1925, in defense against this activity, a nationwide anti-Zionist youth organization, "Comrades," was founded, which provided the same activities. In 1930, I remember speaking out in opposition to the proposal of organizing a "Jewish Sport Club" at Constance, pointing out that in a Jewish community of only 100 families, there were not enough members for such an organization and their diverse sports activities.

In the late 1920s, the "Zionist Revisionist Party" of Vladimir Jabotinsky of Poland permitted Zionism to be polluted by Nazi theories. "What is good for the Germans is good for the Jews," its members used to say. Jabotinsky wanted in Palestine a Jewish dictatorship which would drive the Arab population out of the country, just as the Nazis promised to do to the Jewish minority in Germany. He formed a storm-trooper-like organization, "Betar," dressed in a slightly darker brown uniform than the Nazi S.A., having instead of the armband with the Swastika, a blue/white one with the Star of David, and with a salute which involved an open hand outstretched right arm, hollering "Tel Chai."

Insensitivity To Suffering

Among many Zionists there was insensitivity to the suffering of fellow Jews in Germany. When a newly arrived German Jewish refugee told a member of the "First Aliyah" of the atrocities against Jews in Germany, she exclaimed, "Good! They are beating up Jews in Germany, there will be a great immigration." The Betar storm troopers became embarrassed by their Nazi-like outfits and stopped wearing their uniforms. Only their high black riding boots remained as their identification. A policy statement on the masthead of their newspaper "Ha Yarden" (the Jordan) was: "Israel on both sides of the Jordan."

A decisive event for Jewish Palestine and Zionism took place on June 1, 1933 when all Jewish employees in Germany were dismissed from their jobs on order of the Nazi "Labor Front." Thousands tried to emigrate anywhere, but surrounding countries suffered equally under the severest unemployment and closed their borders to seekers of employment. The Palestine Offices were beleaguered not only by Jews who sought to be emigrants and had been sympathetic to Zionism, but also by Jews who had been busy fighting the Nazis before their takeover of the German government. Now, there was the consideration of whether an applicant had been zionistically active. This became a basis for accepting or rejecting an applicant. Political activity in Germany in behalf of democracy was considered a sign of unacceptable "assimilation," a dirty word in the Zionist dictionary.

With such a need and demand for the relative small number of immigration certificates, Palestine Offices preferred those as immigrants who had been active in Zionist organizations. This, of course, meant abandoning the principle of Theodor Herzl's Basel Congress, a National Jewish Home for persecuted Jews.

At this time, I was 24 years old and