The Americanization of Passover

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I. THE PROBLEM STATED

IN 1949 THE Cahan Folklore Club of the (Yivo) Institute for Jewish Research embarked on a project of gathering ethnographic descriptions of the celebration of various Jewish holidays. It was then that the author's interest in the topic under study was first aroused. As chairman of the group that prepared the questionnaire on Passover, the author helped adapt an old question list (geared only to East European material) that had been used by Yivo in the thirties;[1] analyzed descriptions of the holiday in various published sources; and interviewed a number of experts. The aim of the group was to compile a worksheet that would elicit comparable data on Passover customs as practiced (1) in the East European *shtetl* ("small towns") at the end of the last century and the beginning of the present century; (2) in the ghettos and concentration camps during the holocaust of World War II; (3) in America and other countries of emigration.[2] About seventy written replies to the Passover questionnaire were received. Ten additional oral interviews were recorded by the present writer. This material (now in the Yivo archives awaiting analysis[3]) is of intense interest for Jewish culture study, and its American section in particular offers a fine opportunity for analyzing culture change in process. We have an example here of an ongoing transformation of culture patterns which can be observed in slow motion.

The present article[4] is limited to a description and discussion of some of the more striking aspects of culture change that have come about in the celebration of Passover in this country among East European Jews and their descendants. The purpose here is not to synthesize the entire process of culture change involved in the Americanization of the holiday. Rather it is proposed merely to point out a number of interesting trends in the changes that have taken place in the last few decades. These changes will be considered from two points of view: (1) in terms of the urbanization of *shtetl* culture and (2) as a phenomenon of acculturation involving all Jews in the United States. It is hoped that this preliminary study may (in addition to having obvious implications for Jewish culture history) also contribute to the general body of knowledge about the effects that urbanization and acculturation have on the religious practices of minority groups.[5]

In investigating the transformation of Passover in America, an initial difficulty arises from the paucity of authentic historical records covering the main incidents of change. On the other hand, the changes are so recent that it is possible to ascertain many of them from interviews. The data for this paper were derived from an analysis of the thirty-nine answers to the third (American) part of the questionnaire, from personal observations of many Passover celebrations in the homes of descendants of East European Jews, and from oral interviews, newspaper reports, and several additional sources.[6]

Correct procedure in describing any type of culture change is, of course, to begin with a statement of the "pre-contact," or "pre-change," situation. In our case, this would involve a description of the dogma which goes into the Orthodox Haggada[7] and of the preparatory rites, as well as those of the Seder night, performed by an East European Jewish family of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth. The first of these tasks may be dispensed with because dogma is very well

treated in standard sources.[8] The ritual aspect, on the other hand, has not fared so well at the hands of the describers. Thus, in describing Passover customs in Europe, Schauss—see note 6(b)—and Zborowski and Herzog—note 6(f)—do not cover the entire body of ritual to the satisfaction of the ethnographer. On the other hand, books like Gaster's—note 6(c)—in the field of comparative religion are even less complete, since their main concern is to trace similarities and differences between Jewish and non-Jewish customs and to hypothesize about origins, rather than to present an ethnographic description in full.

It might be argued that regional variation precludes any over-all description, but a review of the thirty-two elaborate answers to the questionnaire (Part I) on old-country customs and of various printed sources shows that geographic variation was a minor factor. Hence the general picture will hardly be distorted if from among the thirty-two answers one set is selected as the pre-contact statement. Of course, not every last detail of the case described is universal, but in general the elaborate character of the celebration and the great majority of details are entirely typical. The question of regional and individual variation, though it is, of course, a problem in its own right, lies beyond the scope of this paper.

Many of the changes in Jewish culture which are indicated in Part II (for Jewish emigrants) were paralleled at the same time among those who remained in Europe. The trends of urbanization and acculturation were causing such profound changes even in East European Jewish culture and society that, by 1939, the concept of *shtetl* culture[9] was hardly more than a historical abstraction based on a telescoping of a century of profound upheavals. On the other hand, there was probably enough uniformity in the culture left behind by at least the oldest emigrants to make the *shtetl* concept workable as a starting point for a study of cultural Americanization.

It is for a sample of *shtetl* culture in this limited sense and as an orientation point that we now proceed to a description of Passover in an East European town.

2. PASSOVER IN THE OLD COUNTRY

The Passover description that follows has never been published. As will readily be seen, it is much more than a mere repetition of *Shulkhon Orukh* prescriptions, or a listing of "exotic" customs. The application of the laws and the practice of the customs are shown in a real-life setting, reproducing the perspective in which they were seen by those who lived them. In this sense the description is more accurate than many previously published descriptions of the holiday.

The complete text of the original Yiddish manuscript (including several items for which there are no equivalents in the American material discussed in Sec. 3, "Passover in America," of this paper) has been translated in the informal style of the informant. It was felt that to publish the material in its entirety would demonstrate an important point, viz., the high degree of integration of the elements of the holiday with one another and with the patterns of year-round living in the old-country form of Passover, as contrasted with its American versions. This detailed description may, in addition, help others to find further changes in the American material which have escaped the present writer's attention.

Place: Síslevitsh (Russian Svisloč), a town in Grodno Province, containing (1897) a population of 3,099 persons, of whom 2,086 (about 400 families) were Jews.

Time: From about 1893 to 1921.

Informant: Abraham Ain,[10] born in Síslevitsh in 1888, left for the United States in 1921. (According to the Yivo Passover Questionnaire, Mr. Ain's information was recorded in June, 1949.)

2.1. Preparations for Passover

The first signs of preparation for Passover appeared as early as *Khanuke* [December], the season of fat geese, when many housewives stocked up on goose fat for Passover. Some prepared fat not only for themselves but also for sale—my mother, for example, who had a small food store. Around *Khanuke* my mother would order a *pood* [40 lbs.] of goose skins to be brought by stagecoach from Bialystok. When they arrived, she would bring down from the attic a large iron pot, the Passover salting board, and a Passover knife and spoon and begin to prepare the fat for frying. She would make the large tripod stove kosher by heating it. During these preparations, she would caution the children not to approach the fat with any *khomets* [leaven]. "Children, take care," she would say, "don't touch these Passover things with your *khomets* hands." Of an evening, as she worked on the fat, a Passover mood prevailed in the house. After the fat had been fried and strained, it was poured into glazed earthen jars, and my mother would sell it to her steady customers, who trusted her *kashres* [i.e., relied on her thoroughness in keeping her kitchen ritually clean].

After *Khanuke*, the flour traders began sending for flour, which was brought from Volhynia Province. The owners of matse* factories ordered wood, usually alder wood because it gives a hot flame but no sparks. In the month of *Shvat* [January–February] the owners of the matse factories began hiring workmen. There were five, and sometimes six, such factories in town. The seasonal employment rise created a festive mood in many families.

Before Purim the owners of the *podrádn* [matzoth factories] prepared the halls where the matse would be baked. All furniture was removed, and the walls were whitewashed. The boards on which the dough would be rolled were brought down from the attic and freshly planed. One table was fitted with a metal sheet for perforating the matse. All tools were made ready.

Baking began right after Purim. The flour dealer brought the flour to the *podrád*. Matse would be ordered by the *pood*, and the

* See note 7.

podrád owner would also pay the workers by the *pood*. Under an alternate arrangement, some wealthy customers would pay the *podrád* owner only for the use of his oven and would remunerate the workers for their labor directly.

Water for the matse dough was obtained on the previous night; and the mixture was strained and left overnight, covered with a white linen cloth. The baking itself began at four or five o'clock in the morning. The *mélshiter* [flour pourer], usually an adolescent, would put into a copper vessel enough flour for a *meyre* [measure] of ten *teyglekh* [pellets]. The kneader [*kné̇terke*] would knead the dough in this vessel, telling the water pourer [*váser-giser*], usually a child, how much water to add. When the *meyre* [measure] had been kneaded, it was given to the rollers [*vélgerins*], who would cut it into ten or more pellets, according to the number of rollers. If the dough were ready but the rollers were not, it would be given a preliminary rolling (so that it would not begin to ferment while waiting) until the rollers could cut it into pellets. Each pellet was rolled flat and put on the table of the *redler* [perforator], who made lines of perforations in each cake. Then the *shiber* [pusher] placed the matse in the oven. Care was taken to see that the dough never waited, but that it passed from hand to hand until it reached the oven.

After the kneading of each measure, the rollers had to inspect the boards and rolling pins to make sure that no dough had gotten stuck anywhere. Pieces of glass were used to scrape the wooden tools, and a steel brush was applied to the perforating wheel [*redl*]. A supervisor [*mashgiakh*] appointed by the rabbi went from *podrád* to *podrád*, checking to see that the procedures were kosher.

Baking continued from the early morning until ten or eleven at night. Several times a day the work was interrupted in order that the oven might be reheated. During these breaks the workers rested and ate their meals. The *podrád* workers were all Jewish, the rollers young women from the town's poor families. Although the work was hard and often lasted seventeen hours a day, the atmosphere in the *podrád* was always gay, and singing was frequent, except when the supervisor approached.

Most housewives wanted their matse baked early in the morning, at the first, or perhaps the second, heating of the oven. They felt

that the workers were more rested in the morning and produced thinner matse. But since everybody could not be accommodated early in the morning, the privilege was extended only to the richer or more aristocratic customers. The richer customers used to tip the workers, five or ten kopeks to each roller and a little more to the perforator, the kneader, and the pusher. The workers knew which customers would tip them and made a special effort to produce thin matse for them. The baked matse would be placed by the pusher in a large basket and would then be carried in this basket, or in white sheets, to the customer's home, where it was put away in a closed box in the pantry or in a side room. During the baking the whole family of the customer was usually present: the women and the girls helped with the rolling, while the husband helped the perforator and kept an eye on "purity." Even the grown children tried to make themselves useful.

In addition to the private bakeries, there was also a community *podrád* where matse was baked for the poor families. The workers there worked almost entirely as volunteers. The organizer of the community *podrád* was Yoshke Grodzeynkes, a *klál-tuer* [community leader] active in the *Khevre Line* [Society to Provide Lodgings for Transients], the *Khevre Kadishe* [Society for Burials], *Hakhnosas Orkhim* [Society for Hospitality to Strangers], *Ezras Yesoymim* [Society to Aid Orphans], etc. Before Passover, Yoshke would rent a hall that had an oven, hire a kneader and a pusher, and organize the young men and women of the well-to-do families who had time to devote to the community *podrád*. Flour was bought with community council funds, and the *moes khitin* ["wheat money"] was donated by all the families. Some wood was purchased, and the rest donated. A cart was sent around from house to house, and every housewife contributed some wood; no one would have refused. The community baking lasted for about two weeks. When Yoshke asked a girl to come to the *podrád*, she would refuse only if she were ill.

This same Yoshke also saw to it that the poor had meat, wine, and the proper vegetables for Passover. These were given to the so-called "professional poor." For the newly impoverished (*yordim*) cash was provided (with a minimum of embarrassment) for whatever was needed.

On the day before Passover the baking was completed. Housewives used to say that if the matse is in the house, half of Passover is in the house, because fat and potatoes would have been prepared ahead of time.

Right after Purim some families pickled beets for the holiday. My grandmother used to pickle beets, and her daughter and daughters-in-law used to get some brine from her for borsht. If a poor neighbor asked for some brine, she also would get it.

2.2. Getting the house ready for Passover

Soon after Purim, the cleaning and whitewashing of houses began. While some houses had papered walls, most of them had plaster walls and ceilings, which were freshly whitewashed before Passover. The double windows were removed with the coming of spring, and all the furniture was taken out of doors. Every household had some books (at least a Bible, a set of prayer books, a *Khayey Odom* book of ritual, in Yiddish, and a Mishna); these were put on boards outdoors and opened to be aired in the wind. All clothing was also aired. Lime was bought at the store, and a whitewasher was hired. Some people would add a little blue paint to the lime and some glue to make it stick better, but the more pious said that glue was *khomets* and could not be added.

The furniture was washed and wiped before being taken back into the house. The women decorated the houses for Passover. Flowers and other ornaments were cut out of colored paper, or else paper flowers were bought at the store. The ornaments were placed on the shelves and lamps. Fresh curtains went up on the windows; the floors were scraped and washed, and all *khomets* food was kept in one corner of the house.

Everyone tried to have new clothes or shoes for the holiday. Thus, several weeks before Purim, one would go to the dry-goods store with one's tailor or seamstress. There the tailor would take one's measurements and explain how much material was needed, and of what kind. The ladies' tailors had journals which displayed a selection of dress styles from which one could make a choice. The tailor would be visited for several fittings. The shoemaker also took measurements, but he would furnish the leather himself.

For several weeks before Passover, the artisans (tailors, shoemakers), with their assistants and apprentices, worked up to seventeen or eighteen hours a day. Everything had to be ready before the holiday. The finished work would be delivered by an apprentice, who would get a tip.

On the day before Passover, copperware, metal cutlery, and also unpainted tables and chairs were made kosher. The metalware was put into a kettle of boiling water and two or three heated stones were thrown in to make the water boil even harder. Then the utensils were rinsed in cold water. Some people gave all their metal things to a coppersmith to be whitened.

Wooden objects were washed, scraped, scalded with boiling water, and then gone over with a glowing iron or hot stone and rinsed with cold water. New plates and glasses were put into a bucket and dipped in the well. This was called *tvile* [ritual submersion].

2.3. The day before Passover

On the evening before Passover, after the return from evening prayers at the synagogue, the search for leaven [*bdikas khomets*] was begun. Crumbs of bread were placed on window sills and in other visible parts of the house. The father, or the oldest member of a fatherless family, took a spoon (in which to collect the crumbs) and several large goose or hen feathers and went to look for the leaven with a candle in his hand, usually knowing in advance where the leaven had been placed. After the search was over, the spoon with the crumbs and the feathers were wrapped in a rag and put aside until the next morning, when they would be burned.

On the morning before Passover people arose very early. The women started to make the oven kosher, the stove was heated by spreading burning wood over it, the fowl was taken to the slaughterer to be killed, and the men went to pray.

Officially, the oldest son of the family had to fast, but there was an equally official way of avoiding this. Upon completing the study of one chapter of the Talmud, one is supposed to celebrate [*siyem*]. The learned son could arrange to finish studying a chapter on the day before Passover. Thus he had to celebrate with refreshments

and was free of the commandment to fast. Another way of evading the commandment was to give something to charity.

At about eight o'clock in the morning breakfast was eaten—bread or a roll with milk and cheese. Breakfast was eaten in a corner, near a trough in which lay the bread, rolls, and other leavened foods that were left over. After the meal, the trough was taken out, and the house was completely ready for Passover. The men then went to sell the leavened food to the rabbi.

The boys took the spoons used in the leaven search of the previous evening to be burned. A bonfire was made in a garden, and the spoons and the crumbs, were burned there. The boys would shout in the streets: "Go and burn your leaven!" Care was taken not to let the fire die before everyone had burned his *khomets*.

[The leftover leaven was formally sold to the rabbi, and the rabbi would then formally sell the whole town's leftover *khomets* to a Gentile. After Passover everything would be "bought" back.]

After the leaven had been sold or burned, the Passover dishes and cooking utensils were taken down from the attic. The women washed everything and put things in place. The men attended to the crushing of matse for matse meal and *farfl* [larger crumbs]. This was done in a special wooden mortar. Only the most settled households had such mortars, and those that did not would borrow them from neighbors. The crushed matse was sifted; thus the meal was separated from the *farfl*.

Then the men went to the wine dealer to buy wine and mead. He would add some *kharoyses* [crushed nuts with wine]. Some housewives made their own mead for Passover. My grandmother told me that in the olden days people would make their own wine out of raisins, but this was no longer done in our day.

On the day before Passover, the father took his boys to the capmaker to buy new caps. The women were busy preparing the Passover meal and decorating the house. No matse was eaten before Passover. If a child were hungry, he would get a piece of potato pudding or some mashed potatoes with prunes. In the afternoon, everything was festive. When Shaye the Beadle was heard chanting in his baritone voice, "In shul arayn!" ("To the synagogue"), the stores were closed, the women blessed the candles, and the men, dressed in their new clothes, went to pray.

The coming of the holiday (which began in the synagogue at evening prayers) was enjoyed most by the children, who would show off their new things to one another. Even the poorest child had at least one new thing—if not a suit, at least a cap.

2.4. The Passover meal

When the men and children returned from the synagogue, the table was ready for the *Seyder*.* In the customary order, there stood the plates of *karpas* [onion], *zroya* [chicken bone], *beytsim* [hard boiled eggs], salt water, and *kharoyses*. Near each place stood a glass. In the center of the table stood the cup of the Prophet Elijah. Three matses covered with napkins, or placed in a special *mátsetash* [matzoth bag] with three pockets, lay near the father's place. The father's seat was the *hésebet*, consisting of several pillows on an armchair. In our house, during the *Seyder*, my father sat in his ordinary attire, but my grandfather sat in a white *kitl* [gown]. At a signal from my father, one of the boys who was already going to school said *kadish* [memorial prayer for the dead]; then *kidesh* [the festive blessing over wine] was said by my father and all the men. The boy then asked the four questions, my father answered, and the *hagode* [Passover service] was said up to the point where one washes one's hands. The blessings were said over the ceremonial dishes. Then the table was set for the meal itself. The first dish was hard boiled eggs in fish sauce or salt water; then came soup with matse *farfl* and maste balls. This was followed by meat. It was our custom not to eat horseradish with meat until after the *sdorim* [Passover festive meals], because horseradish, though pleasant to eat with meat, was *moroyr* [i.e., symoblic of bitterness] at the *sdorim*. Then we ate compote, and finally the *afikoymen*, which had been kept under the pillows on father's seat. Sometimes a child would "steal" the *afikoymen* in order to have it redeemed for a present. After the *afikoymen* had been eaten, the blessing was said, and the second part of the *hagode* was recited. At the point of *shfoykh khamoskho* ["Pour Out Thy Wrath"], the mother or one of the older children would open the door, to admit the Prophet Elijah. The children would watch Elijah's cup to see if

* See note 7.

the amount of wine did not diminish by the prophet's sipping. The *Seyder* usually ended at about ten in the evening.

The Second *Seyder* on the following night, was celebrated in the same way, but it began and ended later, because during the holiday one is not permitted to cook from one day to the next. The soup and matse balls for the second *Seyder* were therefore not cooked until after the evening prayers.

2.5. Passover foods

On the first two and last two days of the holiday, one ate two meals a day: at eleven in the morning, after prayers, and in the evening after prayers. The meals consisted of fish or chopped liver (sometimes chopped onion with eggs and fat), soup with matse *farfl* and matse balls, meat, and *tsimes* [stewed vegetables or fruit]. In the intervening four days, a meat meal was eaten once a day; the other meals consisted of potatoes, potato pudding, borsht made of beet brine, matse *farfl* with milk (or matse balls), and hard-boiled or fried eggs. As a sweet dish, we made matse pancakes, which were called *pámpushkes*. Although the rabbis permitted the eating of herrings (provided they came from a newly opened barrel and were rinsed in water several times), few people ate them during the holiday.

2.6. Matse for Christians

Many Jews who had Gentile friends, neighbors, or business associates gave them matse. Some Christians (for example, village peasants) would simply come and ask for matse. To those in town, matse together with a bottle of wine or mead was sent as a gift. I had many occasions to take matse and wine or mead to our Christian friends or steady customers. I was always given a return gift of half a dozen or more eggs; this was called *hóstinets*.

2.7. The Middle Days

On the Middle Days of the holiday the shops of the tailors, carpenters, and shoemakers were closed, but the other stores remained open, and small traders did business with peasants in the market.

Normally, the butchers worked on the Middle Days because meat was needed for the holiday.

Since the weather was almost invariably good during Passover, people spent more time out of doors than at home. The streets were as noisy as they were during a fair. Teachers went from one family to the next to enroll children for the next term. Well-to-do housewives engaged maids for the coming year while artisans made agreements with journeymen and apprentices. Matchmakers made matches, and prospective brides and grooms came to get acquainted. There were also many visitors from out of town. Since no one was working, people had time for visits. Our town was larger than the surrounding ones, and because of its leather factories there were many young men there. Girls from the surrounding towns would come in to meet them.

2.8. Customs and games

It was customary to give children walnuts and colored boiled eggs, which were called *valétshovnes*. These were given by parents and close relatives. The eggs were not to be colored with paint, because paint is *treyf* [ritually impure], and/or leaven; but they could be boiled with hay or onion skins and colored green or yellow-brown, respectively. Incidentally, the pots used for cooking eggs—whether *valétshovnes* or any others—were not to be used for cooking anything else.

There were many nut games. One of them was *bretl*. A board [*bretl*] was leaned against the wall. At the bottom of the board was a heap of as many nuts as there were players. The nuts were heaped in the form of one of the *nekudes* [Hebrew vowel points]. The players would roll an iron ball down the board at the nuts. If the ball missed the nuts, the next player would try. If one hit the nuts, they were his. There were also such other games as *restl*, *eygl*, and *teler*.

3. PASSOVER IN AMERICA

Before turning to the analysis of the preceding Passover description, a few words ought to be said about the general

framework of the culture-contact situation with which we are dealing in this paper. East European *shtetl* culture—literally, a "small-town" development—was rural in many respects. Thus the transportation of *shtetl* Jews into urban America involved the replacement of many rural traits by urban ones. On the other hand, ours is also a situation of what has been termed cross-cultural acculturation, in which "groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact."[11] We shall be dealing then with *both* rural-urban and cross-cultural acculturation.[12]

In general, culture change has been classified into two categories: (a) change resulting from innovations which originate within a society, and (b) change stemming from without.[13] Whatever the type of change—be it the loss of an element, the substitution of a borrowed element for an older one, or the addition of a new, internally invented element—it will, of course, be taken for granted here that significant processes of *selection* and *reintegration* have been involved.

In studying the Americanization[14] of Passover, we have found it convenient to divide the material on culture change as follows:

3.1. External Change

3.11. Caused by mechanization and urbanization (rural-urban acculturation);

3.12. Resulting from adaptation to non-Jewish American holidays and themes (cross-cultural acculturation);

3.2. Internal Change (adaptations to internal historical events—e.g., the murder of six million Jews in World War II; the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948; a general trend toward secularization).

Students of culture change have found that "new traits are accepted primarily on the basis of two qualities, utility and compatibility. . . . Very often the advantages and disadvantages [of a new trait] . . . may seem desirable to certain members of the society and undesirable to others."[15] This is perhaps especially true in the case of stratified immigrant groups faced with complex urban cultures. Thus, the changes in the Passover celebration which were noted in the course of this study are not necessarily manifested by all East European Jews and their descendants. The degree of observance ranges widely from the extreme Orthodox (who continue their religious observance almost to the letter as they practiced it in the old country), to the fully "assimilated" (who practice no overt form of Judaism). It is with the large numbers who are somewhere between the extremes that we are mainly concerned here. Despite the differentiation noted, all of these are subject to similar tendencies toward change. For certain families, some of the changes mentioned will be in the "alternative"[16] stage, or still in active competition with older elements or groups of elements; for others, the innovations have been completely integrated into their new way of observing the holiday; still others may have decided a given innovation is not compatible with the spirit and the letter of the holiday and have rejected it.

3.11. External Change Caused by Mechanization and Urbanization

A. *Pre-Passover preparations*

It would seem that there is a tendency to replace by more "modern devices," or to drop completely, many of the preparatory customs that did not have symbolic meaning attached to them in the pre-contact stage, i.e. which were not explicitly related to dogma.[17]

1. In the *search for leaven*, or *bdikas khomets* (cf. sec. 2.3), which was traditionally carried out with candle and quill, a flashlight and brush (Questionnaire Reports 38, 43) are some-

times substituted. The tradition of the search is an ancient one, and has a symbolic meaning, but the candle and quill (the means by which the search is conducted) do not, and so the substitution of more modern equipment is easily made.[18]

2. As shown in Sec. 2.2, it was customary in the old country for a mother to take her childen to the tailor to be measuerd for *new clothes* timed expressly for Passover. The preparations would begin several weeks before Purim.[19] Urbanization, coupled with the fact that tailored (as distinguished from ready-made) clothes had no particular symbolic meaning, have made it easy to replace the custom of visiting the tailor with the practice of shopping (at a time much closer to the date of Passover) in the stores of the city or town. It is interesting to note that of all the preparatory customs related to Passover, this one seems to be the most universally practiced in America. Among the thirty-nine persons who answered the "American" part of the questionnaire, the custom of visiting the tailor was the only one on which well-nigh all agreed. A typical answer is the following (Questionnaire Report 30): "I remember, as a child, that most of the Jewish boys in my neighborhood would turn up in the street during Passover dressed in their new finery. My mother would always buy me a new suit." (Cf. this with the statement in Sec. 2.3 about the children's pride in their new Passover clothes.) One of the reasons for the tenacity of this custom is probably the indirect reinforcement which it receives from the near-coincidence of Passover with Easter, when Americans generally are in the habit of buying new bonnets and clothes. An additional factor helping to explain the persistence of this feature of Passover is undoubtedly the coincident change of seasons from winter to spring.

3. The ritual *scouring* of dishes, pots, and pans in order to purify them for the holiday after year-round use was a major preparatory ritual for the many households which possessed

no extra set of Passover dishes. In America, the higher standard of living, including the effects of mass production, make it possible for many more families to own special dishes and thus to dispense with the scouring. On the other hand, less observant Jews and the Reform Jews have often dispensed with the scouring even of their single sets of dishes, preferring to wash them thoroughly in hot sink water,[20] since they view the method of scouring prescribed by the *Shulkhon Orukh* as outmoded. It should be noted, in this connection, that the details of the cleansing process have no particular symbolic reference.

4. The custom of *whitewashing* houses before the holiday has, of course, disappeared in the cities. Replacing this is the custom of a thorough spring cleaning just before the holiday, often accompanied by a "paint job at least in the kitchen," as one informant has put it.

5. In the East European *shtetl* the collection of *moes-khitin* by door-to-door soliciting was part of the pre-Passover ritual. In American cities the tradition has been continued in radically new forms which utilize the newspapers and the radio. For example, the Yiddish press in the week preceding Passover in 1953 was full of appeals for contributions to various *moes-khitin* campaigns. Several New York *yeshives* (rabbinical schools) conducted their own advertising campaigns (see *Der Tog–Morgn-Zhurnal* for March 13, 17, 26, etc.). The newspapers appealed in their own names for contributions to the United Jewish Appeal. Contrary to general old-country practice, the funds are distributed far beyond, and indeed mostly beyond, the community in which they are collected. An example of a newspaper request follows:

> In hundreds of communities this year, special *moes-khitin* committees were created which enrolled leading rabbis, presidents of congregations, and public leaders generally who cherish the tradition of *moes-khitin*. . . . The balance of the funds must be collected

urgently if we want to prevent tens of thousands of Jews overseas and in the State of Israel from being left this Passover without matzoth.

Alarming requests have arrived this week from Jewish centers in Europe and North Africa to increase the quotas of the *moes-khitin* funds allocated to them. The leaders of these communities stress the fact that the number of needy Jews has recently increased considerably, so that more people will have to be provided with matzoth and other holiday foods this Passover. . . .[21]

As a matter of fact, the function of "matzoth for the poor" often recedes into the background, with many organizations using the term "moes-khitin campaign" merely to signify a general fund-raising campaign held during the month of Nisan (March-April). Since East European Jews were traditionally accustomed to give at this time of year, the month of Nisan is one of the best for soliciting funds for any purpose whatsoever. The term *moes-khitin* has thus come to have a new meaning in America.

B. *Production of Passover foods*

In Eastern Europe, as we have seen, part of the festival ritual was the preparation by the housewife of most of the foods necessary for the Seder and the holiday week. The preparation of some products (goose fat, borsht, etc.) was begun weeks in advance of the holiday. In American cities, on the other hand, dependence on the food industry (i.e., on out-of-the-home preparations) is so great that much of this part of the home ritual is gone; but the food industry itself makes allowances for Passover. This then is an example of the "reciprocal character of contact situations;"[22] the general American culture here makes certain adaptations to the holiday.

1. For most industries catering to Jews, the adaptation is just a matter of getting rabbinical supervision and approval. Running through the advertisements in the Yiddish press of March 27 ff, 1953, we found that producers of such holiday favorites as gefilte fish, borsht, and wine, as well as of such everyday foods as salt, vegetable fat, milk, coffee, and frozen vegetables, used this method of assuring sales during the holiday season.

2. For some industries, Passover involves the production of a special food. This is the case for the entire matzoth and matzoth-product industry, as well as for the newly born Passover chocolate industry. In these industries the whole manufacturing process must be seasonally converted.

The process of baking matzoth was revolutionized with the invention of the matzoth machine, which came about a century ago.[23] "At first there was a great controversy about the *kashres* (ritual purity) of matzoth made with a machine. But technical progress scored a victory here as everywhere else."[24] In an advertisement in *Der Tog–Morgn-Zhurnal* of March 25, 1953 (p. 8), one matzoth company described the installation of a brand new matzoth machine and the celebration in its honor. It is of special interest that the matzoth manufacturers try to appeal to the most Orthodox by having on hand, during the baking process or for the installation of new machinery, some leaders of undisputed piety to participate with songs and chants, as they might have in the old country when baking matzoth.[25]

An indirect result of the mechanization of matzoth production was the coming into fashion of the square-shaped matzoth. In Eastern Europe the shape was generally round, since this was the natural form resulting from the rolling of spherical pellets of dough. In view of the fact that there was no symbolic meaning attached to the shape of the matzoth,[26] there has been little objection to the square shape, which "proved [to be] most convenient for machine-baked matzoth and

which is the predominant form in the United States."[27] (In 1942 "special V-shaped matzoth were baked as part of the V-for-Victory movement."[28])

A new Passover-chocolate industry has arisen in America. Previously only marmalade candy was permitted during the holiday. The point is amplified in a note that appeared in *Der Tog–Morgn-Zhurnal* for March 25, 1952:

> In the Old Country candy producers were unable to keep the whole process under control and to supervise the *kashres* of the ingredients that went into the candy, since these were obtained from various countries. . . . In America, however, the producer finds all the necessary ingredients within the country, which enables him to produce chocolate candy kosher for Passover. . . . Milk . . . is purchased from farms that produce kosher-for-Passover dairy products. . . . The sugar that is used has the rabbinical stamp of approval for Passover use. . . . Synthetic flavors to replace alcoholic fluids have been created by chemists working for the candy company. The machinery used in the production of the chocolates is scoured with hot steam in the manner prescribed by ritual under the supervision of a group of rabbis. This combination of careful supervision of the purchase of ingredients with the invention of new synthetic ingredients and with absolute ritual cleanliness . . . has enabled the producers to come out with a new Passover chocolate candy.[29]

3. Some industries stop the sale of their food to Jews in the Passover week. Many bakeries in Jewish neighborhoods close down for the holiday. One large food company (Heinz) that ordinarily advertises in the Jewish press placed an advertisement during the pre-Passover week wishing its Jewish customers a happy holiday and advising them to put all products of this company away under lock and key for the duration of the holiday, since "our products are *not* for Passover use." This was an effective way of gaining the public's trust in the year-round *kashres* of the company's products.

Retailers as well as manufacturers make adaptations to Passover trade. Grocers in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods store away all non-Passover stocks and display only seasonal products. A large supermarket of the Grand Union type advertised (in *Der Tog–Morgn-Zhurnal*, March 19, 1953) that it was opening special "Passover departments."

C. *Consumption of Passover food*

From the point of view of the celebrants as consumers of Passover food, the changes wrought by urbanization and mechanization have also been substantial. In Eastern Europe, the baking of matzoth had been a family and community event (see Sec. 2.1). City conditions have put an end to this aspect of the celebration. On the other hand, in spite of the individualization that comes with urban life, some new quasi-customs have arisen around the purchase of food for the Passover celebration.

1. Placing the complete "Peysakh order" at one time with a particular Jewish grocer in the neighborhood is looked upon almost as a rite (Questionnaire Report 69).

2. Patronizing *particular* brands of matzoth and matzoth products has become traditional in many families (Questionnaire Report 58, 3a).

3. Purchasing Palestinian (now Israeli) wine, or special brands of American "Jewish" sweet wines, has achieved tradition status in some families (Questionnaire Report 63).

4. The variety of foods in use has been greatly increased. One of the results of urbanization is that people are more anxious for variety. This is reflected in Jewish cookbooks, which are generally potpourris of Jewish dishes from many regions, and which enable the housewife of East European background to add many West European Passover specialties to her repertory, and vice versa.[30]

5. Apparently as a result of the higher standard of living,

kharoyses is no longer as rare a delicacy as it once was. Whereas in the old country the wine dealer, the rabbi, or a generous rich man would distribute this nut-and-wine mixture in minute doses, almost anyone in America can afford to produce it at home.

6. Urbanization has generally loosened the mechanisms which make people custom-abiding and has weakened community sanctions. As a result, some Jews who in the old country would not have thought of breaking, or dared to break, tradition do not, in this country, stay on a leaven-free diet for the entire holiday week. They see fellow workers at their jobs eating the taboo foods, and these foods also stare at them from shops and restaurant windows. The "closed community" of the *shtetl* has been broken.

D. The Seder

There is little in the performance of the Seder in America that can be attributed to urbanization or mechanization (but see Sec. 3.23, following, on internal changes). Three minor points will be mentioned here.

1. *Dress.* In some families it has become customary to dress formally (tuxedo) on this occasion.[31]

2. *Photographing the Seder.* A custom unheard of in the old country is the photographing of the Seder ceremony. To the extent that it is practiced in America, it would seem to be a borrowing from the general urban banquet-custom of taking group pictures.

3. *Records, Radio, and Television.* After the Seder ceremony is over, it is customary in some homes to play records (appropriate Yiddish and Hebrew songs), to listen to the radio, or to watch television until bedtime (cf. Questionnaire Reports 30, 52, 58, *et al.*).

How widespread these three new customs are remains to be tested.

4. *Hotel Sedarim.* An interesting development of the urban custom of leaving town on a holiday is the country-hotel Seder. A brief review of *Der Tog–Morgn-Zhurnal* during the pre-holiday week (1953) reveals that scores of hotels in the Catskill Mountains and in Atlantic City, N. J., compete for this type of public, promising their clients a traditional Seder to be led by a renowned cantor. One advertisement ran as follows:

> Our hotel is run on a strictly kosher basis. Everything has been ritually scoured [*gekashert*], so that even those of our guests who are extremely pious will be able to spend the Passover week here with a clear conscience. . . . We have obtained the services of the well-known cantor, X, who will conduct the Sedarim for us.[32]

A study of this type of communal (i.e., non-family) Seder is also needed.

3.12 External Change Caused by Adaptation of Non-Jewish American Holidays and Themes

a. Flowers and Gifts for the Housewife. Many East European Jews who did not present gifts to the housewife at home have adopted the general American (and, incidentally, West European) custom on Passover eve (e.g., Questionnaire Reports 9, 50, 55, 61, 62, 64).

b. Public Display of the Celebration. The development of Passover and other institutions should be viewed in the light of the acceptance atmosphere of the various minority groups in this country. Just as the non-Jewish American uses all the media of communication for the public display of festivals, so, too, does the Jew. In 1953 for the first time, there was a televised broadcast depicting the Seder ceremony (March 29,

three P.M., Channel 11). On March 27, 1953, there was a special program of Passover chants (4:00 P.M., Channel 4). As for the radio, there have been special broadcasts in honor of Passover for years (e.g., "The Eternal Light," the Sunday program of the Jewish Theological Seminary, etc.).

Also in line with this inclination toward public display are the Passover celebrations in the armed forces and in institutions such as hospitals, prisons, and the like. One of the informants (No. 54) has had extensive experience in conducting institutional Sedarim and furnishes a fairly good description. More information, however, is necessary for a full study of this American phenomenon.

c. Association of Passover with Easter. There is a vague tendency to associate Passover with Easter. In the words of Abraham G. Duker:[33]

> [There is] a recent practice of joint celebrations of Passover and Easter in the schools. Featured as the observance of the festivals of freedom, the origin of the custom seems to date back to the present decade. . . . The use among [some] Jews of the term "Jewish Easter" for Passover is another example of Christian influence on the religious area.

d. Association of Passover With Freedom Ideals. Theodor Gaster has discussed the tendency to make the Passover festival "a celebration of freedom *tout court*."

> [There is a] current tendency to transmute the particular into terms of the general . . . , [of] propounding approximate equations. The Covenant of Sinai, for example, . . . is [called by] certain overzealous enthusiasts . . . a Hebrew Declaration of Independence . . . , Moses an Israelitic Lincoln.[34]

Sermons, radio broadcasts, magazine and newspaper articles, and schoolroom lectures have of late been emphasizing the theme that Passover celebrates a kind of freedom that is similar to, if not identical with, what all Americans celebrate on the

Fourth of July. Thus there seems to be a trend away from the Jewish holiday toward the universal elements, and, more specifically, a tendency to identify certain components of the dogma with American tradition.

e. Change of Language. Many of the Haggadoth printed in the United States are in both Hebrew and English, ranging from the Orthodox to the Reform Haggadoth. In some homes, even where the leader of the Seder recites the service in Hebrew, many participants read the Haggada in English. As for songs, it is interesting to list here as examples of English songs sung during and at the close of the Seder those that go into the *Revised* Reform Haggada: "America" (My country, 'tis of thee," p. 120), "The Springtide of the Year," "To Thee Above," and others. The Negro spiritual "Go Down, Moses" is considered by many an American Jewish child a Passover favorite.

f. Invitation of Non-Jewish Friends to the Seder. In Eastern Europe, though matzoth and other Passover foods were often given to non-Jewish neighbors, they were never invited to participate in the Seder ceremonies, which were considered a strictly religious and familial affair. In America (as might be expected from the identification of the holiday with American ideals of liberty) it is not uncommon among less observant Jews to invite non-Jewish friends to witness and participate in the "freedom celebration" (e.g., Questionnaire Reports 55, 64).

g. New Passover Games. It would make a fascinating study to record the various nut games that have appeared in America. A Philadelphia informant (Questionnaire Report 30) described two street games that combine elements of Passover old-country games (use of nuts) plus American formal elements. In one, "a nut is pitched at a coin—a penny or a nickel. If you hit the coin you get a point." This would seem to be an adaptation of the popular American street game of aiming a ball at a coin. The second was described as follows:

In another game we made use of an empty egg box. In each of the compartments we wrote a number from 0 to 10. Most of the compartments contained zeros and the lower numbers; only a very small portion had nines and tens. The owner of the box placed it against a wall, and all of the players stood about five paces away. One at a time each would try his luck at pitching a nut into a numbered compartment. All the nuts that did not get into any compartment, or went into zero partitions, were kept by the owner of the box. If, on the other hand, a nut fell into a numbered compartment, the owner of the box would "pay" the player that amount of nuts. The game lasted as long as the players and the owner had nuts to play with.

3.2. Internal Change

A. New Memorial Function of Passover

Ever since the murder of six million Jews in World II, a need has been felt by many Jews to amend the various Haggadoth to include a passage about this catastrophe, thus giving Passover an additional memorial function.

> Monday evening, when we sit down to the first Seder night, we shall have two historic dates to remember. We shall remember that Pharoah, the King of the Egyptians, who wanted to destroy all Jewish men so that the Jewish people would not be able to survive; and we shall remember that Pharoah of our times, Hitler, "King of Germany," who sought to destroy Jews—men, women and children —so that not a remnant remain of them. . . . We have an entire Haggada about the trials and tribulations that Jews were subject to under the first Pharoah. Rufus Lazarus, the American-Jewish historian, has composed an addendum to the traditional Haggada in regard to the second Pharoah. This should become incorporated into the Seder ceremony and be said by every Jew before the passage, "Pour out thy wrath." . . . This year (1953) a committee of rabbis, learned men, and public leaders was organized to see to it that the new passage be brought into as many homes as possible.[35]

Changes are rarely made in the traditional Orthodox Haggada, but it seems that this addition may become a permanent feature of the Haggada in the future.

B. The State of Israel and Passover

It is perhaps too early to say what effects the establishment of the State of Israel has had on Passover customs in America, but its influence can be seen in the development of the Third Seder in Zionist circles [see below]. Also of interest in this connection are the new "Passover Tours to Israel," a type of secular pilgrimage which capitalizes on the fact that Passover was one of the three annual pilgrimage holidays.

C. The Birth of a New Tradition: The Third Seder

A new type of Passover celebration has developed in the United States during the past few decades—that of the Third Seder. A brief statement about its background is necessary since, unfortunately, there has been no study of this new phenomenon to date. The following is the author's own historical reconstruction, based on direct observation and interviews.[36]

That sector of East European immigrants which wanted to renounce the religious content of Judaism while retaining affiliation with Jewry on an ethnic-cultural basis (*véltlekhe yidishkayt*, "secular Judaism") was faced with the problem of what to retain and what to reject in Passover customs (as well as in other holidays). Many chose to continue the observance of Passover by staying home from work on these days, by recounting the historical parts of the Passover story, and finally by recalling (but without themselves practicing) the elaborate Passover celebration of the "less enlightened generations." Many also liked to partake of Passover foods, but as

an addition to, rather than as a replacement of, the year-round diet. The Seder from this point of view appeared as a religious ritual difficult to secularize.

Many members of this group had had traditional religious upbringings in childhood, and it could probably be shown that some of them eventually missed experiences of a more religious type. After several decades of secularization, they sensed a desire for dogma which, under the pressure of world events in the 1930's and 1940's, turned into a strong wish to re-identify themselves in some measure with traditional Judaism. The wish to give their children a sense of belonging to the Jewish people was perhaps uppermost in their minds. It was extremely difficult, however, to force oneself to believe and practice what had already been renounced. The solution which many adopted was to re-institute part of the ritual. This modified ritual was to reflect the experiences of the secular period as well and therefore included, for example, the writings of modern Yiddish and Hebrew poets.

One feature of the movement toward a new ritual is that it evolved on an *organizational* rather than on an individual or familial basis. Thus it became possible to consider one's increased participation in the holiday as part of the general social and cultural activities to which one's particular organization was devoted. This, of course, fits in with the general urban trend in which the importance of organizational affiliation increases at the expense of familial ties.[37]

In connection with Passover, the manifestation of this urban trend was the institution of a Third Seder. Competition with the traditional two Sedarim (of familial provenience) is avoided, although there is no doubt that for some the Third Seder is the only Seder of the holiday. This Third Seder may be held in a school, a home, or the banquet hall of a hotel and may be celebrated during or immediately after the eight-day period of Passover celebration. Each organization sets its own

ritual for conducting the Third Seder, and there is no attempt at standardization across organizational lines.

Thus, the historian of the Third Seder would have to describe the origin and evolution of this phenomenon separately for each of the organizations that practices it. In a sense, any attempt to work on the problem at this time would be a little premature. The documents pertaining to the Third Seder are still in the "live files" of the organizations in question, and the researcher, unless he has the good fortune to be an insider, is rarely allowed to look into them. (Also, these organizations have only a scant awareness of the historical interest of their activities). On the other hand, the very initiators of the Third Seder can still be interviewed (at least theoretically) by the researcher. After weeks of almost futile attempts to pursue the latter course, the author succeeded in obtaining a few basic facts relating to the development of the Third Seder of the Histadrut Campaign and of the Workmen's Circle. These findings are, of course, tentative and in need of confirmation and elaboration.[38]

In 1922 the Workmen's Circle had its first Third Seder in Clinton Hall, New York.[39] It was a small affair (its purpose almost entirely educational) consisting of a Passover celebration for the children attending the Workmen's Circle Jewish afternoon schools. As the number of people attending the Third Seder grew, the affair moved to Manhattan Center and finally to the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria. It is no longer a celebration for children only; Jewish writers and cultural leaders, as well as students, teachers, and parents of students of the Workmen's Circle schools comprise the participants. In 1953 more than a thousand people attended. (The sheer number of people who participate in the organizational Third Seder is staggering when it is recalled that Passover was until fairly recently a *family* celebration.) The Third Seder has now assumed revenue and social functions, in addition to

the original educational function (although the latter ostensibly remains in the foreground, since the students of the Workmen's Circle *Mitlshul*—supplementary high school—have a large hand in the Seder ceremonies.)

The Workmen's Circle has been developing its own "New Haggada,"[40] the latest edition of which was published in 1952. The songs incorporated into it are the favorites of this particular fraternal order, as are the Yiddish poems recited by the students. Some of the traditional Haggada material remains intact, but in Yiddish translation (the four questions, for example). However, much has been discarded.[41]

The program of the Workmen's Circle Third Seder has gradually begun to take the form of a set ritual, containing many fixed ingredients. In addition to the reading of the "New Haggada," there is usually an address by an educational official of the Workmen's Circle, and the guest artists—singers, dancers, and an orchestra from the Jewish stage—perform numbers appropriate to the holiday.

The Histadrut Third Seder has followed its own separate line of development. The idea of celebrating a "Third" Seder is said to have originated with Mr. Alter Boyman, an active member of the labor Zionist movement. The first celebration took place in his home town of Providence, Rhode Island, in 1927.[42] Five years later, a Histadrut Third Seder was held for the first time in New York City (in Trotsky's Restaurant on 40th Street), mainly on the initiative of Hersh Ehrenreich. According to one informant,[43] about two hundred people including members of the Labor Zionist movement and some Jewish theater notables (Maurice Schwartz, Zvi Skuler, etc.) were present. Although the meal served was of the traditional Seder type, only portions of the traditional Haggada were read. The program consisted of recitations and songs by the guest artists and also of political addresses. Unlike the early Workmen's Circle Seder, this Histadrut Seder was an experiment in extending financial, cultural, and political activities,

rather than an educational affair. Similar sentiments for a return (in one degree or another) to tradition were certainly involved, but it was actually the adult members of the Labor Zionist movement (not the children of the Farband-Labor Zionist schools) who were in the limelight.

After 1948, when the State of Israel was established, the Third Seder celebrations developed great momentum in this Zionist movement. The Third Seder of the Histadrut was envisaged as a celebration of the "New Liberation" (*zman kheyruseynu*) and has since grown by leaps and bounds. In 1953 some four thousand people attended the celebration in New York City alone.[44] There was no ballroom large enough to accommodate the group, so two celebrations had to be carried on simultaneously, one in the Commodore Hotel and one in the Astor.

The programs of the Histadrut Third Seder have not taken any fixed form, but the following components are almost always present: the singing of the American national anthem and "Hatikva"; speeches (often by some prominent non-Jew such as James McDonald or Joseph Chapman); a play, performed by the school children of the Farband schools; and songs and recitations by noted Jewish artists.

In 1953 a special Haggada was published for the Histadrut and used at the Seder.[45] Whether or not this will become the fixed form for all future Third Sedarim of the Histadrut remains to be seen. It would be an interesting study to compare the Haggada of the Workmen's Circle with this Haggada, since each is a mixture of elements from the *true* Haggada, on the one hand, and poems and songs by modern writers, on the other.

In addition to the foregoing, smaller Third Sedarim have mushroomed in recent years and spread to such cities as Miami, Los Angeles, and Baltimore. The smaller celebration, adapted from the larger by schools and branches of the Workmen's Circle, the Farband, and the Sholom Aleichem Institute, is

closer to that of the family Seder. (Food, for example, is prepared not by a caterer but by the female members of the group.) Of even greater interest, however, is the fact that the Third Seder, a phenomenon born and nutured in the United States, has spread to Mexico City and Havana and indeed to most Latin American countries.[46]

4. CONCLUSION

It has often been shown by students of culture that religious festivals change and develop in accordance with various modes of life and periods of history. The late Hayim Schauss[47] has thus given a concise view of the evolution of Passover:

1) a spring festival of shepherds
2) an agricultural festival
3) a historic holiday commemorating the Exodus
4) a national holiday (before the destruction of the first Temple)
5) the greatest Jewish holiday (last century of the second Temple)
6) the festival of Messianic hope (post second Temple)
7) the festival of fear (Middle Ages)
8) the family festival (the last few centuries)

In each historic period Schauss delineates changes in ritual and dogma.

Passover has thus undergone many changes in its history. It is questionable, however, whether this holiday has ever undergone so many changes in so short a time as it has in the hands of immigrants and their descendants in this country during the last half century.

The study of American Jewish religious customs is made rather complicated by the highly stratified nature of both groups in contact and by the uneven pre-contact background of the members of the Jewish group. We must therefore recall

the limitations and qualifications set forth earlier in this paper.

The Americanization of Passover should eventually be studied in the context of the breakdown of a relatively self-sufficient Jewish society into a number of subgroups of American society, which nevertheless are associated by certain bonds, tenuous though they be. In the case of Passover, this process is manifested at present in the atomization of the holiday—as of other elements of the religion and culture—into an indeterminate variety of celebration forms. On the other hand, one also finds that the Jewish immigrants and their descendants, regardless of their subgroup allegiance, make use of American institutions (e.g., industry and mass media) to serve the celebration of Passover in new ways.

To a cultural anthropologist the following observations suggest themselves on the relation of dogma to ritual in a situation of intense culture change. First, elements of religious ritual are highly tangible and therefore quite subject to culture change, despite the generally assumed conservatism of religion in culture-contact situations. Furthermore, in our study, we have seen that it might be important to distinguish, among the elements of ritual, between those that have explicit symbolic meaning and those that do not. For example, the horseradish eaten during the First Seder symbolizes the bitterness of the Hebrews' enslavement in Egypt, and the unleavened matzoth is a symbol of the hurried exit from Egypt. On the other hand, there is no symbolic reference to dogma in the nut games or in the purchase of new clothes or in the use of borsht during the Second Seder. As far as our evidence goes, it seems that, other things being equal, the ritual items endowed with symbolic reference change less easily than others.

Dogma and ritual may change independently and at different rates of speed. We have seen that in some cases (e.g. language change or the introduction of the custom of having flowers at the Seder table) ritual may change while the dogma remains unaffected. The reverse has also been observed, as in

the association of the Passover myth with the anachronistic theme of political liberty.

The development of the Third Seder is an interesting illustration of the "de-dogmatizing" of a religious holiday, plus the selection of certain formal elements of traditional ritual (the use of *a* Haggada) coupled with the invention of new ritual. In this development we see very clearly reflected the situation of those Jews who, though continuing to renounce the intellectual and practical (or instrumental) aspects of the Jewish religion, seem to feel a need for some of its emotional content.

Notes

1. *Etnografishe Anketes* (Ethnographic Questionnaires), Yiddish Scientific Institute—Yivo (Vilna, 1928); especially No. 1, *Yontoyvim* (Holidays), pp. 10–13.

2. Mr. Abraham G. Duker, who has frequently written about Jewish customs in America, was extremely helpful in setting up this part of the questionnaire.

3. A preliminary report on the replies to the questionnaire was published in *News of the Yivo*, No. 34, Sept., 1949, pp. 6, 6*.

4. This paper was originally written in 1953 in connection with a course given at Columbia University. In a number of notes to section 3.23, material from more recent newspaper sources has been added.

5. Anthropologists have been showing increasing concern with ethnic minorities in urban centers. Thus, Ralph Beals in "Urbanism, Urbanization and Acculturation," *American Anthropologist*, LIII (1951), 6, has called attention to the fact that "within urban areas . . ., characterized by rapid growth produced mainly by immigration and including a wide variety of ethnic minorities, we . . . [can] find abundant material for studies which . . . relate to acculturation."

6. For example: (a) Albert I. Gordon, *Jews in Transition* (Minneapolis, 1949), pp. 106–10; (b) Hayim Schauss, *The Jewish Festivals* (Cincinnati, 1938), chapters v–ix; (c) Theodor Herzl Gaster, *Passover, Its History and Traditions* (New York, 1949); (d) T. H. Gaster, "What Does The Seder Celebrate?" *Commentary* (April, 1951), pp. 312–18; (e) Avish Dworkin, "Matsa A La Mode," *Furrows*, IX (April-May, 1952), pp. 22–25; (f) Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life Is with People* (New York, 1952), pp. 382–90.

7. Generally all Yiddish and Hebrew terms will be rendered according to their Yiddish rather than their Hebrew pronunciation, in conformity with the widely accepted Yivo rules for transliteration. Exceptions to this have been made for words like Haggada, Seder, Hanukka, and matzoth, which have been rendered in their usual English spelling, but in Sec. 2, for the purposes of ethnographic exactness, the Yiddish forms have been retained for all terms, including these. The accent falls on the penultimate syllable unless otherwise marked.

8. For example, "Seder," in *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, 1942), IX, 453 ff.

9. Familiarized recently by the anthropologists Zborowski and Herzog, *op. cit.*

10. The same informant is the author of "Swislocz: Portrait of a Jewish Community in Eastern Europe," *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science*, IV (1949), 86–114; originally published in Yiddish in *Yivo Bleter*, XXIV (1944) and XXV (1945). This article, as well as other contributions to the Yivo collections of primary source materials, have established Mr. Ain's excellence as an informant.

11. This is part of the traditional anthropological definition of acculturation by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits in "Memorandum on the Study of Acculturation," *American Anthropologist*, XXXVIII (1936), 149.

12. Beals has advanced the hypothesis that rural-urban acculturation and cross-cultural acculturation differ only in degree and do not represent substantially different processes of change. It is noteworthy that in the case under study simultaneous processes of both types of acculturation are involved. (See Beals, *op cit.*, p. 6.)

13. Melville J. Herskovits, *Man and His Works* (New York, 1951), p. 492.

14. By "Americanization" is meant culture change that occurred *in* America—whether this be borrowing from the American culture, loss of old traits, or new inventions from within the Jewish community itself.

15. Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York, 1936), p. 341.

16. *Loc. cit.*

17. Although this hypothesis is suggested by some of the material, its complete proof awaits further investigation.

18. Reform Judaism has dropped this ritual completely. See p. 142 of the *Union Haggada*, rev. (Central Conference of American Rabbis, Cincinnati, 1923).

19. See also Zborowski and Herzog, *op. cit.*, p. 382, for a description of the importance of this custom.

20. "Reform Judaism does not consider this practise essential to the proper observance of Passover"—*Union Haggada*, p. 142.

21. Translated from the Yiddish, *Der Tog—Morgn-Zhurnal* (March 13, 1953).

22. Ralph Beals, "Acculturation," in *Anthropology Today*, A. L. Kroeber, ed. (Chicago, 1953), p. 628.

23. See Hyman B. Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654–1860* (Philadelphia, 1945), pp. 306–12.

24. Schauss, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

25. See, for example, *Der Tog—Morgn-Zhurnal* (April 1, 1954), p. 8.

26. The shapes of some Jewish foods do have symbolic meaning. On Rosh Hashona, for example, round loaves of khale are eaten to symbolize happiness for "all the year round" (Yiddish: *a káylekhdik yor*).

27. *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, VII, 414.

28. *Loc. cit.*

29. P. Rubenstein, "Far vos me kon itst krign a groysn oysval fun peysakhdike kendis" ["Why It Is Now Possible to Obtain a Wide Variety of Passover Candies"], *Der Tog—Morgn-Zhurnal* (March 25, 1952), p. 9; translated from the Yiddish.

30. See, for example, Mildred Grosberg Bellin, *The Jewish Cookbook* (New York, 1948), pp. 360–82; or Betty D. Greenberg and Althea O. Silverman, *The Jewish Home Beautiful* (New York, 1941), pp. 109–17.

31. See the photograph in the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, IX, 455; also Questionnaire Report 50.

32. *Der Tog—Morgn-Zhurnal* (March 19, 1953).

33. Abraham G. Duker, "On Religious Trends in American Jewish Life," *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science*, IV (1949), 55.

34. T. H. Gaster, "What Does the Seder Celebrate?" *Commentary* (April, 1951), p. 314.

35. S. Dingol, "Di vokh in yidishn lebn" [This Week in Jewish Life], *Der Tog—Morgn-Zhurnal*, (March 28, 1953), p. 7; translated from the Yiddish.

36. This section on the Third Seder, as well as the remainder of the article, was written in 1953 (see n. 4). In the spring of 1954 Jacob

Glatshteyn, who writes a column entitled "Prost un Poshet" for *Der Tog—Morgn-Zhurnal*, devoted portions of four of his columns (April 18, 30; May 14, 28) to the Third Seder and particularly to letters which he received from persons claiming to have originated the institution. These were written in reply to a provocative column in which he invited readers to help clear up its history. The material presents some good leads, but the history of the institution is still to be written.

37. Cf. Louis Wirth, "The Urban Society and Civilization," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLV (1939–40), 753: "[In urban society] . . . instead of kinship and tradition, interest and ideology come to serve as cement that binds human individuals into effectively working groups. Relationships between men tend to be depersonalized so that no one literally counts in the city except as his voice speaks for an organized group." On p. 752 he writes: "The anomalous situation symbolic of urban life consists in the presence of close physical proximity coupled with vast social distances of men. This has profoundly altered the basis of human association and has subjected the traits of human nature as molded by simpler social organizations to severe strain."

38. Some of the letters received by Glatshteyn (n. 36) were from people interviewed by the present writer in 1953; Glatshteyn's findings regarding the Histadrut Third Seder completely corroborated our own. In addition, he learned of a few more apparently independent "first" Third Sedarim which occurred in: (a) the Volhynia Branch of the Farband-Labor Zionist Order in Philadelphia in 1919; (b) the Arbeter-Ring-Klub (ARK) in Boston in 1923. He also reports that a special Seder was organized by the Central Committee of the Labor Zionist Organization for Jewish legionnaires en route to Palestine in 1917. Finally, a letter to the editor published in the column "A tribune farn folk" in *Der Tog—Morgn-Zhurnal* (May 27, 1954), advises that in 1930 the National Fund Council of Cleveland celebrated a "first" Third Seder (of the fund-raising type) on one of the Middle Days of Passover. All of this new information leads one to the conclusion that a very definite *need* for this type of celebration was in the air and that such celebrations occurred quite independently in different cities at different times. I believe, however, that it was only after the central bodies of the Histadrut and the Workmen's Circle in New York adopted this form of celebration that it began to spread like wildfire to the smaller branches of these organizations and became an enduring custom.

39. The following information has been offered by Mr. Mendl Elkin, Yivo librarian, who was kind enough to get in touch with some of the

leaders of the Workmen's Circle. All attempts on my own part to confirm and elaborate this information by direct contact with the educational director of the Workmen's Circle have thus far proved fruitless.

40. *A naye hagode shel peysakh* ["A New Passover Haggada"], Education Committee of the Workmen's Circle (New York, 1952).

41. It is interesting to note that now and then protests are raised in the Yiddish press that the "New Haggada" has already become too rigid. It is felt that it should be changed "a little" from year to year and constantly regeared to new circumstances. See, for example, F. Vayn's article on the Workmen's Circle Third Seder in the April 25, 1954, issue of *Der Tog—Morgn-Zhurnal*, p. 3. It is characteristic of *véltlekhe yidishkayt* that rigidity is suspect.

42. This information was given to me in May, 1953, by Mr. M. Kochansky, a public-relations officer of the Histadrut. In a letter to J. Glatshteyn in *Der Tog—Morgn-Zhurnal* (May 14, 1954), p. 4, Mr. Henry Burt is also credited with the idea of celebrating a "Third" Seder.

43. Mr. Samuel Bonchik, of the Labor Zionist Organization of America, also attended this "first" Third Seder. The information quoted was given to me by him in a telephone conversation in May, 1953. It was later confirmed in a letter that I received on November 24, 1953, from the secretary to Mr. Isaac Hamlin, National Secretary of the Israel Histadrut Campaign.

44. Mr. Kochansky (see n. 42) was the source of this information.

45. *Hagode shel peysakh farn dritn seyder* ["Passover Haggada for the Third Seder"], New York Histadrut Campaign (New York, n.d.).

46. Mr. Kochansky (see n. 42) informed me that the Histadrut Campaign has had Third Sedarim in Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, and other South American countries.

47. Schauss, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–76.