

Jerusalem Letter:

# VIEWPOINTS

the Jerusalem center

1980 U.S. Jewish

JERUSALEM INSTITUTE FOR FEDERAL STUDIES • CENTER FOR JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDIES

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ISSN: 0334-4096

VIEWPOINTS #11: March 31, 1980/14 Nisan 5740

## THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM IN THE UNITED STATES

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Three recent surveys of American Jews must give pause to anyone concerned with the future of the Conservative movement. (The surveys and some reports of their findings are listed in the Appendix.) All these surveys point to the same conclusion. Conservative synagogues confront membership declines as the nature of the American Jewish population changes. Conservative synagogue members are found in disproportionate numbers among older population groups and among those whose parents are not native born. In fact, more American Jews with two native born parents report they are affiliated with Reform synagogues than with Conservative ones.

According to the 1971 National Jewish Population Study, 11 percent of Jewish adults identified with Orthodoxy and 7 percent claimed Orthodox synagogue membership; 42 percent identified with Conservatism with 24 percent claiming synagogue membership; 33 percent identified with Reform with 17 percent claiming synagogue membership. Fourteen percent had no denominational identification. Table I, based on Bernard Lazerwitz's analysis of these data, shows how even then the percentages varied substantially by generation.

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