

A STUDY OF JEWISH YOUTH EDUCATION.

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Feb. 6, 1928.

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CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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B. Evaluation of Existing Agencies.

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C. Conclusion.

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CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

It is axiomatic that Jewish education is the most important if not the sole means of Jewish survival. As long as Jews desire to survive as Jews there is need of adequate Jewish education. That American Jews do so desire cannot be questioned. I believe it would be difficult to find many outspoken advocates of assimilation today. And yet the forces of assimilation are making tremendous inroads in Jewish life in this country; and Jewish education, our most powerful defence against these forces, is being sadly neglected.

This regrettable condition, however, is the natural result of the trying years of adjustment on the part of the immigrant Jews to American life. As a community the Jews have been preoccupied until now with the immediate problems of laying the material foundations of their life here. Whatever spiritual energies they had left were spent in trying to become Americanized, to adjust themselves socially and culturally in this country. Consequently they had neither energy nor time to educate themselves or their children Jewishly, and the break in the continuity of Jewish life was practically unavoidable.

Now, however, we are living through a real turning point in American Jewish history. The Jews have succeeded in establishing themselves economically, socially and culturally in this country, and they are beginning to realize that in achieving these ends,

worthy as they may be, they have also succeeded in losing most of what was worth while of their Jewish heritage. The elders do not seem to feel this loss so keenly themselves, but they do feel that there is something important missing in the lives of their children. They are beginning to recognize the need for Jewish education. A number of the young people too, despite the adverse circumstances, have begun to take a positive attitude toward Judaism. As a result of all this, Jewish education is rapidly being pushed to the foreground. There has been more educational activity among Jews during the past few years than during their entire previous history in this country. These activities have been sporadic and experimental, but I believe they are the beginnings of a really significant movement, upon the success of which will depend the Jewish future in America. This thesis, therefore, will be devoted to a study of these activities among the Jewish youth.

It is not the object of this thesis to discuss the Jewish education of children under the age of thirteen except as it affects the education of the youth. By youth I understand boys and girls between the ages of thirteen, which is the time of Bar Mitzvah or Bath Mitzvah when formal Jewish education usually ceases, and twenty five, the approximate age of marriage. The education of the youth is necessarily conditioned by the previous education of childhood. In the case of the Jewish youth, however, their education is conditioned, for the most part, by the lack of Jewish education in childhood. For the great majority of Jewish

children, probably as much as 75%, have had no Jewish education at all before the age of thirteen. Their only Jewish contacts were those found at home or while dwelling among Jews, and these contacts were rarely Jewish in any educative sense, because the parents lacked the time, the energy, or the inclination to make their homes Jewish and exert a consciously Jewish influence over their children.

Since the home is such a limited factor in Jewish education today, it follows that a child's Jewish education usually begins when he is sent to a Jewish school. According to Jewish custom this used to be when the child was five years old. Today, however, the age of admission is rising so that few children are sent to Jewish school before the age of eight or nine or even ten. Since Bar Mitzvah usually marks the end of a person's Jewish education this means that Jewish education only extends for about four or five years, from the age of eight or thereabouts till thirteen, and this only for about 25% of the Jewish children.

But the Jewish education of even this 25% can hardly be considered satisfactory. The great majority have had two or three years of Talmud Torah training^{and} have forgotten most of what they learned. The best modern Hebrew school with its emphasis on language leaves a great deal to be desired in its effectiveness. The results of the Sunday School are questioned by its staunchest supporters. Some children have attended Cheder or had a private "rebbe". All they remember of their Jewish training are the distasteful and negative qualities associated with such training which leaves many of them with a permanent antipathy towards Jewish things in

general. There are some children who have received a Jewish training abroad, but who, unable adequately to adjust themselves to their new environment, and mistaking the ideals of freedom in their new country, cast off ideals of former days and seek to free themselves of obligations and duties imposed on them by Judaism. Only a handful, including some of those who received their training abroad have had a good Jewish education, ~~and are continuing the same.~~ So that on the whole we see that practically all of the Jewish children reach the age of 13 with no positive foundation upon which a system of Jewish youth education can be built. And yet this is the basis upon which Jewish youth education must be built, at least for the present. Therefore, whatever attempts are made for or by the youth must be made on the assumption that practically nothing has been achieved during the elementary years.

With such a situation in elementary Jewish education, what can we expect of the youth? On all sides nowadays, we hear people deploring the present apathy and indifference of most of the Jewish youth toward Judaism. Their concern is undoubtedly justified, for recent surveys indicate that more than 75% of the Jewish youth above the age of 13 are not even affiliated with any Jewish organizations, and less than 10% are engaged in any Jewish educational activity. The responsibility for this deplorable situation has been justly attributed to the unJewishness of the modern home and the inadequacy of the elementary Jewish school. Those who know the present

status of these two Jewish institutions are not surprised that the youth are indifferent to, estranged from, or opposed to things Jewish. But there are other important reasons why the youth do not affiliate themselves with Jewish organizations.

Adolescence is the period when the young person's world begins to expand. The confined sphere of the home no longer satisfies. There is a craving for more experiences and broader contacts, in the achieving of which the home and the smattering of Jewishness that is associated with it assume less and less importance in the life of the adolescent youth. These things are felt to be outgrown. And if home ties are not broken during this period they are merely tolerated. Especially is this true in immigrant families. When the youth enters the wider American society he is apt to despise, as "un-American," the Jewish life that he finds in his home. Jewish contacts then become to him something foreign as well as outgrown. Moreover, adolescence usually brings with it a period of mental storm and stress, when an interest in ideas develops and doubts and questions arise. Religion, with which one usually associates one's Jewishness, is one of the first things questioned. The adolescent also begins to think in broad terms of universalism which such separatist factors as nationality and religion seem to oppose. Adolescence is a difficult period at best, and with the added difficulties that face the Jewish youth, their negative attitude toward Judaism can easily be understood.

But perhaps the most important reason for the non-

affiliation of the Jewish youth is the overwhelming competition offered by the American environment. How can a youth resist the opportunities for secular education, vocational ^{training} ~~education~~, appreciation of the arts, ~~the~~ free social life, sports, amusements, and the multitudinous other factors with which the American environment presents him? And then what time and energy are left for Jewish activities? It is quite obvious that in the midst of this American environment the Jewish values will not claim the attention and interest of the youth unless they can be presented so compellingly that he will be willing to give up some of the American ^{opportunities} ~~values~~ for their sake.

Of course, these Jewish values have not been presented so compellingly, as the present status of Jewish youth activities clearly indicates. Naturally, the responsibility for this rests with the existing youth agencies. There are a sufficient number of these agencies, but as yet they have not been able to present their programs in a sufficiently forceful way to win the interest and allegiance of the masses of Jewish youth. Perhaps the task is an impossible one. The tremendous difficulties and obstacles to success have been pointed out. And yet there are certain favorable factors at work at present, which, to some extent, may offset the difficulties.

The remarkable adventure of the rebuilding of Palestine has stimulated a sort of national revival. Its romantic appeal is enlisting the enthusiastic response of many of the Jewish youth, and it has succeeded in establishing a sincere

respect for things Jewish. The advent of Palestine as a living factor in Jewish life has served to disassociate Judaism exclusively with the home and synagogue, and is bringing to it wider contacts and new significance. Jewish activities now are related to world events, and as such are more likely to win the interest and respect of the youth. Jewish things no longer seem so foreign or outgrown to him.

The anti-Jewish discrimination which the youth meets in the business world, in social life and in many colleges often forces him to take a positive attitude toward Judaism. And the Jewish persecutions abroad, which is usually brought to his attention by American relief activities, serve as powerful stimuli to awaken his Jewish consciousness. The argument of anti-Semitism, unexalted as it may be, usually arouses a greater response from the indifferent youth than any other more positive appeal.

A favorable factor presented by the American environment is worthy of notice also. I refer to the rising age at which pupils remain in school. After boys and girls have left the schools and go to work and what not, it is ^{almost impossible} ~~not quite~~ *to get them to keep up their Jewish studies. But while they are still in school and are in the habit of studying it is not quite* so difficult to include in this habit Jewish studies. Today about 60% of the Jewish adolescents are continuing their education beyond elementary school. About 150,000 Jewish boys and girls are attending Junior High and High Schools. This tends to make it easier to continue their Jewish education also.

These favorable factors, however, by no means counter-

balance all the difficulties. It must be remembered that these factors have not influenced all the Jewish youth to the same degree. Some have barely been touched by them. And yet the general level of Jewish morale has been raised, and it cannot be long before the effects are felt generally.

Of late there has been a noticeable improvement in the field of elementary Jewish education, and it might be urged that if the child receives sufficient Jewish knowledge before Bar Mitzvah perhaps that would be adequate to make a "good Jew" of him. Such argument, however, mistakes the meaning and the purpose of education. Today we conceive of education not merely as the acquisition of knowledge or as preparation for adult life, but rather as a continuous process, an end in itself, synonymous with life and growth. The interests and knowledge of childhood are not the same as those of adolescence. So that even if the elementary education were most efficient but were not continued through the later years, the early achievements would be practically wasted. It is futile to concentrate all efforts on elementary Jewish education if no provision is to be made for the youth.

Moreover, if we want the coming generation to assume responsibility for the preservation of Jewish institutions after the present generation passes away, then this feeling of responsibility must be developed in them during their youth. Their loyalty to Judaism must be maintained at the critical age when new loyalties are formed. Adolescence with all its storm and stress is the age at which permanent interests

begin to take shape. It is essential that Judaism be one of those permanent interests. Therefor the Jewish education of our youth is just as important as the Jewish education of our children.

Jewish youth education is concerned not only with the future of Judaism, but also with the future of the Jew. Judaism has much to contribute to the development of character, and at what age can Jewish values influence a person's character more effectively than at adolescence? The new psychologies emphasise the significance of infancy in character development. But this should not be interpreted to minimize the importance of adolescence. The Jesuits too emphasised the importance of the early years of childhood, but at the same time they did not lessen their hold on the youth. Every year of a person's life is important in character development, and if there are degrees in importance surely the critical and impressionable period of adolescence will prove second to none.

The need for and the value of Jewish youth education need no further elaboration. The situation at present is deplorable, and although we have noted some favorable factors, the difficulties in the way of any improvement are overwhelming. Nevertheless, for those who desire Jewish survival in this country there is no choice but to try to overcome the difficulties. With this end in view the following chapters will present a detailed survey of the status of Jewish youth education today, in the belief that the proper understanding of the problem is at least half of its solution. The survey

may paint a rather dark picture; but after all, something is being done. We must realize that the movement has only begun, and that the activities are still in the experimental stage. With faith in the spirit of the American Jewish community no less than in the spirit of youth, we can look to the future for encouragement.

Chapter II.

THE JEWISH CENTER

Types of Jewish Centers

The Young Men's Hebrew Association (Y.M.H.A.) is the oldest type of Jewish Center in this country. We are told that such an association was formed in a middle-western city as far back as 1857, but there is no further information available as to this early history. The Manhattan Y.M.H.A. was organized in 1874 as a social club for young men and women. The activities were those of a rather high grade literary society. The subjects discussed in essays or debates were to some extent Jewish, but dealt also with topics of general interest, not necessarily religious topics. The membership was limited. The meetings were held regularly, but no attempt was made to exert either a neighborhood or community influence. The object was to promote sociability among the members, and in brief, the club was merely an expression of the general tendency of young people to organize themselves for their general improvement.

It was not until twenty years later, that the function of the association was broadened. Following the lead of the Young Men's Christian Association, some leaders of the Jewish community felt that the Association idea might be developed to such an extent as to make an appeal to the young men and young women who were not reached by the synagogues and temples and who might be led, through the influence of the Association, to a fuller realization of their responsibilities as Jews and their obligations to the Jewish community. The thought was expressed

that the weakening of the religious spirit of our young people, is due not so much to our American environment, or the desire to become separated from the Jewish faith, as it is to the fact that the community does not offer avenues of expression for young people, through which they may give more or less adequate utterance to the desire to serve, and the desire to become, through action, more closely affiliated with the vital aspects of their religion. There was also the hope that such an association might be of great value in meeting the problem of delinquency by "keeping the boys and girls off the streets."

In accordance with these new ideas Mr. Jacob H. Schiff placed at the disposal of the Manhattan Y.M.H.A. a building at 92nd Street and Lexington Avenue. By this time the Y.M.H.A. idea had spread throughout the land, and "Y's" were being organized in most of the large Jewish communities to serve the needs of youth. During the past few years many well equipped buildings have been erected with ample facilities for recreation and other aspects of the "Y" program. Most "Y's" contain a gymnasium, a swimming pool, a social hall, an auditorium, a library and various club~~x~~ and classrooms. In order to win the confidence of the neighborhood the Y usually has to make provision for religious services, some of which have become rather popular. Especially on Friday evenings many young people participate in a brief service and listen to a short sermon after which they discuss with the speaker the subject matter of the address. Some educational work, such as vocational training, and courses in Jewish and general subjects is also included in the program; and in some Y's regular religious schools are functioning. But in general it is the recreational

phase of the program that is stressed most and that is naturally most popular.

The Young Women's Hebrew Association is an institution similar to that of the Y.M.H.A. though its program of activities is naturally somewhat different because of its feminine membership. The first Y.W.H.A. was established in New York City in 1902, and is perhaps the only large institution of its kind in America. From a comparatively small inadequate building to a completely equipped eight story modern social center the Y.W.H.A. has grown in its activities until today it offers not only recreational and educational opportunities to those Jewish girls and young women who live with their parents or relatives, but it also houses Jewish girls who are orphans or strangers in New York City and other young women dependent upon their own exertions for their living. The building is located on 110th Street, facing Central Park. Besides being a most comfortable home for one hundred and seventy girls, the building is also a true center for the communal interests of the neighborhood. It houses a Commercial School, a Hebrew School, Trade Classes in Dressmaking, Millinery, Domestic Science, Art, English, French, Spanish, Nursing, etc. There is a completely equipped modern gymnasium and swimming pool. The Employment Bureau directs girls into suitable vocations. Religious services are held in the Synagogue on Friday evenings, Saturday mornings, and holidays for the girls living in the building and for the people of the neighborhood. Concerts, entertainments and dances are regular features of the program.

There are a few other Y.W.H.A.'s in the country smaller and of less importance than the New York City Y.W.H.A. described

above, but this type of Center is giving way for good reasons to the Community Center type with facilities and programs for both sexes. In the first place, few communities can afford to keep up two centers, one for the young men and one for the young women; secondly, there is less duplication of energy and expense in running one institution instead of two, and the difficulties with regard to gymnasium, swimming pool, dormitories, etc. are not insurmountable even where both sexes are accommodated in the same institution; and finally, the philosophy of the Center movement is changing from that of an institution for the youth alone, to that of an institution which should be of service to the whole community, for the leaders of these institutions have realized the futility of attempting really to influence adolescents without controlling their street and home environment. More and more the Y.M.H.A.'s are widening their programs to include young women, children, and parents; the young women in the social and educational activities; the children in the religious schools; and the parents in the religious services, in the field of adult education and even some in forms of recreation.

With the great influx of Jewish immigration to America after the enactment of the May Laws in Russia, 1882, the problem of adapting the immigrant population to American habits of thought and action became one of the most urgent problems confronting the Jewish community in New York City. Institutions were needed, which on the one hand would conserve the best values in the traditional culture of the immigrant, and on the other, would interpret for him the ideals of America. Among the first and largest of such

institutions to be organized was the Educational Alliance. Since its establishment the institution has grown in its activities, until today there is hardly any phase of the life of the Jewish immigrant in the neighborhood of the institution which the Alliance does not attempt to influence. The following list indicates the wide range of the activities carried on by the institution:

Educational: Lectures in English and Yiddish on American History and Civics; naturalization classes; Civil Service classes; reading room; domestic art and science schools; manual training; day classes for adult immigrants; physical culture school, etc.

Social: Auditorium entertainments (concerts, lectures, dramatic performances, moving pictures, etc.); boys and girls clubs; social rooms for boys, girls, men and women; roof garden; indoor play ground; free baths; summer outings, etc.

Religious: People's Synagogue; Young People's Synagogue; School of Religious Work; Religious lectures, etc.

Social Service: Desertion Bureau; Legal Aid Bureau; Information Bureau; Penny Provident Fund.

Several other Settlement Houses were established especially in New York City along the lines of the Alliance, but with the restriction on immigration the need for this particular type of Center is disappearing. The building is still useful as a Community Center provided the population of the neighborhood has not changed, but the philanthropic basis of the Settlement and many of its activities are no longer necessary. The program of the Settlement House can easily be changed to a regular Community Center Program.

The Jewish School Center differs from the other types of Centers in its emphasis upon the element of study rather than upon recreation

or worship; although to be sure, it provides for these activities also. The elementary Hebrew school, secondary classes for high school boys and girls, branches of Jewish youth organizations, and special evening classes and study groups for adults form the heart of the Jewish School Center. The Central Jewish Institute at 125 East 85 Street is the clearest indication of the efforts that are being made along these lines, and several other of the larger Hebrew schools are developing more or less in the same direction. They are more than schools. They are recreation centers providing facilities for physical exercise and mental relaxation. There are lecture halls and forums for discussing topics and problems of interest to the neighborhood. Their rooms provide meeting places for spontaneously organized clubs, societies and lodges in the neighborhood and for branches of national organizations. Lastly, the School Center is often used as the Neighborhood Synagogue.

The Center Movement has made itself felt particularly in the synagogue or temple. It was agreed that something had to be done to counteract the drift of the youth away from the synagogue and to revive its diminishing influence. People began to realize that it was a mistake to limit the function of the Temple to worship alone, and they recalled the fact that the traditional synagogue had served likewise as a house of study and of recreation. So they began to build additions similar to the Community Centers described above and to initiate activities which they found succeeding in the regular Community Centers. So far, however, the majority of Temple Centers have not been able to achieve the same measure of success for various reasons. Some of them, perhaps, because they restrict their membership to members of the congregation, and consequently

lack sufficient numbers to carry on successful activities. Others, perhaps, because they do not restrict their membership, and social distinctions militate against success. Many rabbis have expressed themselves as doubtful of the value of the Temple Center because attendance at religious services has not been augmented, no appreciable increase of membership on the part of young men and women is manifest, and the Temple Center does not seem to have initiated any religious fervor. Often the lack of success may be due to inefficient leadership, the manifold duties of the rabbi making it impossible for him to devote enough time and energy to the problems of the Center. In short, while the Temple Center is in fact a type of Jewish Center, nevertheless, because of its specific problems as a congregational institution it will be more convenient to treat it more *completely than in connection with the problems of the synagogue itself* fully in the next chapter dealing with the synagogue.

In 1916 the National Council of Young Men's Hebrew and Kindred Associations was formed for the purpose of developing and assisting Jewish Centers in all parts of the country. Although there was some difference of opinion as to the relative merits of the various types of Centers most people recognized at that time that the Jewish Community Center was the ideal type of organization to encourage and develop. The programs of the Y.M.H.A. or the Y.W.H.A. were too narrow because the important social unit is not the young man or young woman, but the whole family. The need of Settlement Houses was disappearing with the decrease in immigration. And the School Center was too specialized, and its Jewish program too intensive for general popularity. Therefore within the past few years there has been a distinct tendency towards the Community Center type of building and program, and in this field great progress has been made. Perhaps the greatest single factor in promoting this progress has been the Jewish Welfare Board.

The Jewish Welfare Board

The Jewish Welfare Board came into being in 1917 during the World War as an emergency organization to serve the needs and look after the welfare of the Jewish soldiers and sailors in the service of the United States. In 1921 the Jewish Welfare Board merged with the Council of Young Men's Hebrew and Kindred Associations. As a result of this merger the Board has continued to minister to the needs of Jews in the army and navy and the disabled veterans still confined in the hospitals, and has assumed the responsibility of the Council to promote and develop Jewish Centers throughout the country. At the time of the merger there were three hundred and sixty-two Young Men's Hebrew Associations, Young Women's Hebrew Associations, Educational Alliances, Hebrew Institutes and similar bodies affiliated with the Council all of which became constituent societies of the Board. They represented a wide range of development, from a social club type without conscious purpose or organized program or competent leadership to the fine type of Jewish Center with a definite aim, with a rich and attractive program of activities under trained direction. Only forty-seven had full-time paid executives and only seventy-eight owned buildings, of which some were by no means suitable or adequate for the purpose. In the light of this situation the efforts of the Board were directed not toward expansion in number of organizations but rather toward building up the existing organizations into effective instrumentalities for the service of the community. During the past seven years fifty-four more associations have acquired buildings, largely with the assistance of the Board, making a total of one hundred and thirty-two local Jewish Centers owning the buildings they occupy. Building investment of those centers runs into millions

most of which was raised by campaigns conducted by the Board. Campaigns were also conducted to enlarge membership, and today there are over two hundred and fifty thousand paid members, mostly youths, which constitutes a respectable percentage of the total Jewish youth population of the country. The Board currently furnished helpful information on the construction of buildings to architects and building committees and has reviewed plans and supplied schedules of suitable equipment. Studies were made in many cities of the resources and needs of the Jewish communities and recommendations made to guide these communities in the proper solution of their problems. Workers have been trained by the Board to assume charge of Jewish Centers so that the work might have the assurance of expert direction, and Field Secretaries of the Board have been assigned to definite territories and visit the communities currently giving whatever assistance is needed. Special attention has been given to the needs of women and girls in connection with Jewish Center activities and a department is maintained for this purpose. State and Regional organizations have been encouraged and have received the active cooperation of field secretaries. A lecture, concert and motion picture Bureau has rendered substantial aid in arranging programs for Jewish Centers. The "Jewish Center", a quarterly magazine containing articles on the various phases of Jewish Center activities has been issued regularly to executives, directors and volunteers. The Board furnishes a wide variety of material and suggestions for programs of clubs and larger gatherings. It has published and issued bulletins on the observance of Jewish and civic holidays and has encouraged the carrying out of suitable programs. Realizing fully the potentialities of the Jewish Center as a medium for Jewish Education and as an agency for the inculcation of Jewish

ideals and Jewish traditions, the Jewish Welfare Board is directing its efforts to the development and enrichment of the programs of these organizations. A plan of Jewish extension education is being developed in which the programs of clubs of young people of both sexes and the celebrations of Jewish holidays are utilized as media for imparting Jewish knowledge and Jewish spirit. This particular phase of Jewish Center work, however, must be treated in greater detail.

continued here. Don't know what it says

The Nature and Extent of
Jewish Extension Education in the Center

It is easiest to define the term "extension education" by contrasting it with the traditional conception of Jewish education given in the intensive Hebrew schools. The so-called intensive education of the Hebrew schools will undoubtedly attract only a small minority of the Jews in this country. For the masses, however, some system of Jewish education must be worked out which will awaken Jewish consciousness, inspire sympathetic attitudes toward Judaism, and give at least the minimum amount of knowledge necessary to participate in the Jewish life of the community. It is not intended to take the place of the intensive training in Hebrew, Bible, Talmud, etc. offered in the Hebrew schools, but even for the minority engaged in this intensive training it forms a necessary supplement by taking over the task formerly performed by the indirect educational influences of the Jewish social milieu and of the Jewish institutional life of the old European centers of Jewry.

Although one of the fundamental aims of the Jewish Center is to exert a Judaizing influence over its members, which it is in an ideal position to do because of the many facilities and variegated types of activities at its disposal, nevertheless this is still probably the weakest element of the programs of most Centers. Many directors of Centers hesitate to foster the Jewish aspect of the program of activities for one reason or another. And it is only recently, since the Jewish Welfare Board created a department of Jewish Extension Education, under the directorship of Dr. Mordecai Soltes, and at the same time tried to influence the various Center executives to emphasize the Jewish aspect of

their program, that the attitude of these executives has begun to change favorably in this direction.

In a comparatively limited study of the status of Jewish activities in Jewish Centers which Rabbi Aaron G. Robison made three years ago, he found that out of the 137 Centers that replied to his questionnaire, 76 were conducting classes in Jewish education for children, but only 31 Centers were conducting classes for young men and women. It was found impossible to ascertain how many classes were conducted in these 31 institutions or the subjects that were taught and how successful the classes were. The situation has improved somewhat since then but not very much. A few of the larger Centers employ a director of Jewish activities, who is often a rabbi, and he conducts some classes in Jewish subjects. The outstanding arrangement is that of the Pittsburgh Y which, in its Isaac Seder Educational Center, is offering collegiate courses in cooperation with the University of Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Institute of Technology. Included in this arrangement are regular courses in Jewish studies: Hebrew, Bible, Talmud, Yiddish Literature, Jewish History, etc.

Rabbi Robison's survey showed that 53 Associations were giving courses of lectures on Jewish subjects. It is not certain how aptly the term course applies to these lectures, as in many cases they were just occasional lectures delivered by different individuals on Jewish subjects in no way related with one another as a course implies. Such lectures are usually followed by questions or discussion in the form of an open forum. The attendance is not regular, depending naturally upon the reputation of the speaker or the appeal of his subject. In 26 Centers these lectures were conducted on Friday evenings some with and some without religious services.

Some centers conduct Sabbath and Holy Day services to gain the confidence of the elder people of the neighborhood; but in a few, strangely enough, the services are more or less popular even with the youth. If there is a synagogue in the neighborhood it is of doubtful policy to conduct services in the Center as well, but this can only be determined by local conditions.

Possibly the most significant fact ascertained in Rabbi Robison's study was that 82 Centers habitually celebrate Jewish holidays with appropriate exercises. This seems to be the most typical Jewish activity to be found in the Centers. The exercises may include religious services, addresses, plays, pageants, music, readings or recitations, motion pictures, a dance, in fact anything appropriate for such occasions. The Jewish Welfare Board publishes and distributes to ~~its~~ constituent societies bulletins on the observance of these various festivals giving suggestions and material that should be helpful.

Nearly every Center now has an articulate and ambitious group of senior boys and girls, or of men and women, interested in the drama, and making productions from time to time. But in almost every case the programs presented by these senior groups are not of Jewish interest or content. They are merely a weak reflection of the repertory of the Little Theatre movement. The most important reason for this situation is that the total number of good Jewish plays available for such dramatic groups is less than a score compared with over a thousand non-Jewish plays. The Jewish Welfare Board conducted a contest for original one-act plays, to try to supply this deficiency at least in part. The success which it met proved that the necessary talent was available but that it had to be encouraged. However, many more plays must be provided if the Jewish

Center is not to lose a glorious opportunity for expressing and inspiring Jewish ideas and ideals through the drama. There is no means of informal education as potent as the drama. Comedies of manners may do more than all the etiquette books, and plays with criticisms of social life may be more powerful than a thousand sermons preached on the same subject.

In a few Centers music has been considerably developed. At the 92nd Street Y for example, there is a regular music school with a faculty of twelve teachers, under the direction of A. W. Binder, where lessons are given in voice, violin, piano, trumpet, harmony, ear training and sight singing. Some of the pupils have formed a Y.M.H.A. Symphony Orchestra which rehearses once a week and participates not only in various association activities, but is frequently invited to give concerts outside of the institution. Similarly with the Choral Society. But the aims and activities of this organization are more definitely Jewish. It has given first performances of numerous Hebrew and Yiddish folk songs and liturgical works. The Choral Society serves as a great factor in developing a successful Sabbath service by forming the nucleus of the congregational singing. A regular feature of the Y program is the series of monthly concerts many of which are devoted to Jewish music by lecture recitals, choral society concerts and soloists. A very effective event was an inter Y.M.H.A. music contest which aroused a great deal of interest in the musical phase of the Center program. This is only an example of what can be done in Jewish Centers under capable leadership.

Debating is an activity that usually attracts young people and there is no finer method of developing their interest in Jewish questions of the day. Yet debating is not encouraged as much as

it might be by most Jewish Centers. Even in those cases where debating is encouraged the subjects are not often enough of Jewish interest. It would be advisable to form leagues of Centers not too far distant from one another to engage in debates together, the winners of each league to engage perhaps in an interleague contest.

The success of inter-association contests has been well demonstrated by the Metropolitan League of Jewish Community Associations. The following contests are annual events now: an Extemporaneous Speaking Contest, a Dramatic Contest, an Oratorical Contest, several Music Contests, a Debating Tournament, and of course athletic contests. In the educational contests Jewish content is stressed and while it is hard to measure the achievements in the Jewish education derived therefrom, it is undoubtedly considerable not only for the participants but even for those who make up the audience.

With the expansion of Jewish Centers, the library looms more and more as an important part of the program. The library has been a feature of a number of the associations in the past and in several of the new buildings provision is being made for libraries with special attention to collections of books of Jewish interest. A library is, of course, almost indispensable for the success of the other educational activities of the Center.

Classes in Jewish studies, lecture forums, religious services, festival celebrations, dramatics, music, debates, contests, and libraries are by no means the only possible activities in the program of the Jewish Center. Miscellaneous activities are and should be promoted in the Center according to the interests of the members and the capability of the directors, always with an eye to the Jewish educational values to be derived therefrom, for this, as was said before, should be the primary aim of the Center. The

Activities described above are mostly what are known as mass activities for they include the whole membership of the Center, but since the membership of most Centers is organized in various clubs it is the club programs that offer the most important opportunities for Jewish education. Whether or not the Jewish element of the club program will be stressed depends for the most part on its leader. Practically all the opportunities for Jewish education found in the mass activities may serve also in the individual clubs. They too may engage in Jewish studies, have lectures, participate in religious services as a club (for example, each week a different club might conduct such services), they might observe the festivals in appropriate fashion, engage in dramatics, sing Jewish songs, debate, take part in various contests and many other things. Some clubs do this, but unfortunately all too few. As a general rule, the Jewish element of the program is sadly neglected and some Centers are Jewish in name only.

Educational Material

Until recently there has been very little educational material of a Jewish nature available to carry on these various activities and each leader had to depend almost entirely upon his own ingenuity. The Jewish Welfare Board recognizing this need made the creation of such material one of the primary functions of its department of Jewish Extension Education. Most successful in this respect have been the Bulletins on the observance of Jewish and Civic Holidays. These bulletins include an exposition of the festival and its method of observance, also suggested programs for mass gatherings and clubs, bibliographies of readings, recitations, music, games,

plays, and selected references, also a selection of the most appropriate material listed in the bibliographies for those Centers which do not have sufficient access to the sources listed; besides this there are usually questions and answers on the particular festival and other special features. These Bulletins are issued in attractive form and should be very useful.

The material for club programs issued by the Board has also proved helpful. They have issued a list of Jewish names for clubs of Jewish interest, a series of programs on "The Jewish Ideal of Learning," a bulletin on the "Life and Achievements of Achad HaAm" including extracts from his essays, lists of subjects for debates, essay and oratorical contests, a bulletin on "Contemporary Jewish Problems and Movements," and a series of programs on "American Jewish History."

The Jewish Playwriting Contest, mentioned above, led to the publication by the Board of seven plays of Jewish interest. There has also been issued a complete list of available plays of Jewish interest.

A selected bibliography for Jewish Center Workers, a selected bibliography for a Jewish Center Library, and a selected bibliography for Jewish Declamations and Recitations, are likewise the results of the Board's efforts.

There are a few other miscellaneous bulletins dealing with Jewish Center problems: "Planning the Year's Program," "Summer Activities in the Jewish Center" and "Suggestions for a Collection of Jewish Ceremonial Articles, Art Objects and Antiques for a Jewish Museum."

The work is still really but a beginning and an abundance of similar material is needed, but if the Board continues with its

present policy it is to be hoped that Jewish Extension Education will no longer be at such a disadvantage as the present scarcity of material puts it.

Leadership Personnel.

The most important factor in determining the character of the Jewish Center is undoubtedly its leadership personnel. Programs may be adopted and material may be available, but in the last analysis, it is the carrying out of this program and the utilization of the material that really counts most. Even without program and material, capable leaders can accomplish a great deal. Therefore if Jewish educational values are to be derived from the Center, the primary requisite is for well trained leaders in full sympathy with the Jewish program.

The directors of the larger Centers, at least, fulfill the first requirement in that they are trained professional executives and social workers, but with regard to the second requirement too few of them are in sympathy with the Jewish aims of the movement. Due to educational propaganda by the Jewish Welfare Board and the more or less recent change in public opinion, this unsympathetic attitude is beginning to change to a more favorable one; but still the Jewish program of many Centers is suffering by reason of the indifference of its executive directors.

A few Centers have engaged directors of Jewish activities but this involves the danger of having the Jewish activities becoming just one of the departments in the Center rather than a distinct element of every department. The Jewish spirit should permeate all the activities. To introduce certain Jewish activities in Centers

and to put even a rabbi at their head while at the same time there is put, for example, in charge of the athletic department or any of the other departments people who have no understanding of or sympathy for the Jewish aims of the Center is to cripple the program and to create a totally un-Jewish distinction between the secular and religious. The workers in charge of all departments should be permeated by the same spirit as those in charge of the specifically Jewish activities.

The people who exert the most influence over the actual members of Centers are, of course, the club leaders. Practically all of these are volunteers, for the few that are paid receive such a small remuneration as hardly to take them out of the volunteer class. Club leaders are chosen primarily for their character and personality. This is as it should be, but such other factors as general education, Jewish education, club experience, etc., which are also important, are not taken into consideration enough, because the scarcity of leaders does not allow Center executives to be too rigorous in their selection. Consequently it is not surprising that of the seven hundred club leaders employed by Jewish social and educational agencies in New York, according to a recent survey 78% of these leaders ought to receive a Jewish training themselves, before trying to lead others, in the opinion of the persons in charge of such agencies. The same survey also indicated the need for at least 50% more leaders. The Jewish Centers were the principal agencies studied and the results can be accepted as applying fairly accurately to not only the Centers in New York but also throughout the country where the situation is, if anything, less satisfactory in this respect.

An attempt to relieve this difficulty was the initiation of leaders training courses under the auspices of the Jewish Welfare Board. The purpose was to combine the academic with the practical phases of club work. Every trainee was to begin leading a club under more or less intensive supervision after the first half of the course had been covered and an insight gained into the work. About 50% dropped out before the course was concluded despite every effort to make the course interesting and attractive. Nevertheless the effort was worth undertaking though only a few additional well qualified men and women were developed to contribute efficient service. But after all, training courses and supervision alone cannot solve the whole problem. The difficulty will undoubtedly remain until club leaders are placed on a professional basis. Only then will Centers be in a position to require of their club leaders knowledge and ability besides character and willingness.

Problems Facing the Jewish Center.

Both communal and congregational Centers are being developed very rapidly at present. In the smaller communities they often come in conflict with each other, and so the question naturally arises as to whether it is good to develop both these types of Centers, and if it is not, then which is the better. Many rabbis, of course, claim that the congregational Center has certain advantages which the community Center lacks. In the first place it has tradition behind it. The synagogue, they point out, historically has been the Jewish Center for the community, and it was only the temporary adjustment of Reform Judaism which deprived it of this function. In the second place, the synagogue is and will in all probability continue to be the institution

around which adult Jewish life organizes itself; and in line with modern educational theory, the claim is made that the participation of the youth in synagogal activities is the best preparation for their subsequent participation in adult Jewish life. Consequently they view with concern the competition of the community Center especially since so many of them do not stress the Jewish program sufficiently. On the other hand, the Community Center has certain advantages over the Temple Center. It is more democratic in that it does not exclude or at least make any distinctions between the various Jewish groups - orthodox, conservative, reform, West European, East European, American born, wealthy, poor, etc. etc., as the Temple Center is apt to do. Then again the considerations that draw together a group of adult Jews in a congregation are not necessarily the same as those that draw their children together. That is to say, young people form their own social groups more or less irrespective of the congregational affiliations of their parents, and to organize the children of members of a congregation into Temple Center clubs just because their parents happen to belong to that congregation is likely to be an unnatural classification. Finally the Community Center usually has a trained social worker at its head, whereas the rabbi often tries to run the Temple Center in addition to all the other work connected with his position with the result that the Center activities must necessarily be more or less neglected. These are only a few of the outstanding difficulties and each local situation presents its own problems.

During the years of heavy immigration the Jewish Center conceived its primary function to be what was called Americanization, teaching the English language, American history, customs and ideals to the end that the immigrants and their children might become

patriotic American citizens. This aim was undoubtedly commendable, although the successful results were due to a much greater extent to the public schools and the street. In the meantime, of course, the Jewish aims of the Center were to a great extent lost sight of in the emphasis upon conformity to American standards. Those at the head of the Center movement realize now that this was a mistake but a great many directors of individual Centers are still dominated by the old philosophy with the result that Jewish education in their Centers suffers. Much more educational propaganda on the part of the Jewish Welfare Board is needed, or else new directors must be substituted who are more sympathetic toward the Judaizing function of the Center if the Center is to play the part it is equipped to play in the evolution of American Judaism.

The question of whether the Center is to be primarily a youth institution or should serve the entire families of the community is debated to some extent. But practically everyone concerned is coming to the opinion that there is no particular advantage to be gained by limiting the Center activities to the youth alone, and moreover, the conviction is growing that since the youth are influenced so much by their home environment, it is necessary for the Center, if it is to have much effect upon the youth, to influence his entire family. Despite this general consensus of opinion, Centers are very slow, as a rule, in introducing many adult activities.

The problem of whether the Y.M.H.A. and the Y.W.H.A. should be two separate institutions or should merge into one has been discussed somewhat in the beginning of this chapter. In the smaller communities, of course, two such institutions cannot be afforded so there there is no question. In the larger communities, however,

although there are several advantages to a combined Center, nevertheless, the place the Manhattan Y.W.H.A. is filling in the life of the community leaves no question but that there is something to be said for separate sex institutions as well. Here again the decision depends mostly upon local conditions.

Enough has been said about the need of professional leadership in place of volunteers. Here the problem is simply that of adequate finances which is beyond the scope of this thesis. The problem of financing Jewish education is the subject of a thesis all by itself.

Chapter VII.

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION.

Administration of Jewish Youth Education.

In the current theory and practice of education there is a definite movement away from the traditional and the formal in the direction of the experience of the learner. New experiments in education are taking their pattern not from the school, but from real life as it is actually in process of being lived. This tendency has prepared the way for us to think of the curriculum as controlled social experiences in which the learner participates, thereby growing progressively toward the realization of his potential self. This shift of view, which looks upon curriculum as something to be derived from the child's life, his experiences, interests and activities is so different from the traditional conception of a stereotyped course of study, that the term in its newer meaning is hardly recognizable. Notwithstanding this fact, however, the main outlines of the curriculum as controlled social experiences are perfectly clear and are being applied consciously or unconsciously by the agencies and organizations dealing with the Jewish youth.

This curriculum for the Jewish youth, if so it may be called, includes a great many mass activities, the most popular of which are the observances of Jewish festivals. These are rich enough in content and significance in themselves to form the core of a Jewish educational program. Preparation for intelligent participation in the activities arising out of events in the Jewish calendar obliges one to learn a good deal of Ceremony, History, Literature and Ideas which are in a most remarkable fashion interwoven in the observance of these holidays.

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This is in accord with the modern pedagogical conception that learning goes on best around social projects that involve participation. The celebration of civic holidays may also be included in the curriculum whenever these may be connected up with some Jewish idea, or assume richer meaning through a Jewish interpretation or relation. Religious services, conducted not for but by the youth also offer abundant material for a course in Judaism: ceremony, prayers, the reading of the week in Pentateuch and Prophets, the Ethics of the Fathers, the Psalms, Sermons or Forums, the singing of zmiroth, the discussion of current events and problems, etc.; how great the educational opportunities are if properly utilized! The educational significance of such other mass activities as public lectures and forums, debates, plays, concerts, exhibitions and various sorts of contests speak for themselves.

The same idea of Jewish education by participation in Jewish activities is being carried out with smaller groups, Jewish youth clubs engage in such varied activities as participation in Jewish movements, philanthropic activities, relief endeavors, the restoration of Palestine, also literary activities, holiday celebrations, debating, dramatics, music, arts and crafts, games, contests, athletics and social activities, all of which are more or less educational. Even the athletic and social activities under intelligent guidance can be made to serve ends in accord with some of the aims of Jewish education. Courses in Jewish studies are often important parts of club programs and in such cases it is rather difficult to distinguish between the club and the class. On the one hand the new educational theories are gradually finding their way into the religious schools classes:

informal discussion is gradually superseding the formal lecture and recitation; so-called extra-curricula activities are being engaged in; the traditional classification of Jewish studies into stereotyped courses in History, Hebrew, Religion, etc., is being broken down and this knowledge is being learned incidentally in relation to contemporary needs, experiences and problems. On the other hand, the content of Jewish studies is directly or indirectly finding its way into club programs which are becoming better organized and supervised. So that a sort of rapprochement is being effected between the club and the class, and in time it is to be hoped that the merits of each will be generally accepted and their respective disadvantages discarded.

In the last analysis, the success of any enterprise depends on its first line workers. In the field of Jewish Youth Education it is the teachers and club leaders who are charged with the immediate task of carrying out any curriculum. It is they who come in direct and regular contact with the youth, and are in the most favorable position to influence their characters. It is most unfortunate therefore that large numbers of those who function as teachers and club leaders are recruited from among untrained volunteers. Although there is a display of vigorous enthusiasm and earnest effort on the part of many of them, as a whole they are not sufficiently prepared either in their Jewish or secular background to lead the groups under their care. The spirit with which a leader enters into his or her work contributes much to the success of the group, but this enthusiasm must soon peter out if it is not substantially based on knowledge and experience.

Religious schools are somewhat better off in this respect than other youth agencies, because many of them have raised their teaching staff from a volunteer to a professional status. While it is true that one cannot expect to earn a living on the salary afforded by teaching a few hours a week, still the additional income that a person, especially a teacher, may derive by teaching Religious School makes it worth while for him or her to go through the minimum Jewish training which most Religious Schools that pay their teachers demand. As a result of this, quite a few teacher training schools have been established in recent years; and while the situation is not yet satisfactory either in respect to quality or quantity of Jewish teachers, nevertheless, the situation which exists among the volunteer leaders of clubs is much worse. A few club leader training courses have been given, but very little can be expected so long as it is entirely volunteer work.

We are also lacking adequate supervision for Jewish Youth Education, for both rabbis and center executives are too busy with other duties to perform this function properly. The solution lies either in a local Bureau of Jewish Education doing this work or else in the appointment of Directors of Jewish Education in Synagogues and Centers where youth activities are being carried on. Both of these solutions have been tried with success, the former in Chicago, the latter in Detroit.

With all its limitations Jewish Youth Education is being carried on by numerous agencies and organizations each of which is doing its work in its own way, without, as a rule, any thought of what the others are doing. Such a situation is due, in the first

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place, to the fact that these agencies and organizations are Jewish, and secondly, to the fact that the youth movement, if so it may be called, is very young and few attempts have been made as yet to coordinate the various activities. A completely unified system of Jewish Youth Education would probably prove to be impractical, but at least some sort of coordination is both possible and necessary. There are at present a great many opportunities for cooperation among the various organizations which would be of advantage to all; to mention just a few: the preparation and distribution of educational material; the publication of periodicals; the training of leaders; propaganda to reach the unaffiliated youth and also to get the Jewish community to support educational activities; and there are a number of other projects that could be carried on more effectively by joint endeavor. At present, however, there is a good deal of overlapping, of waste and of inefficiency which proper organization might to a great extent eliminate. But, as stated above, the work is still in its infancy, and taking everything into consideration a fair evaluation of existing agencies and organizations will acknowledge many specific achievements and great promise for the future.

B. Evaluation of Existing Agencies.

The Jewish Center is the most important agency dealing with youth activities and reaches the greatest numbers. The Synagogue also attempts to include youth activities in its program, and camps and Bureaus of Jewish Education are trying to extend their work to older children, but since the Center is established primarily for the youth it is quite natural that it should be better equipped for this purpose than the other agencies mentioned. Classrooms, club rooms, a library, a social hall, a gymnasium, and an auditorium that

may be used for religious services, lectures, plays, celebrations and other mass activities are the essential elements of a Center building. The management is usually in the hands of a professional executive whose primary function is the administration of youth activities. Such excellent equipment should furnish splendid opportunities to carry on Jewish education. Until quite recently, however, the Center did not take the Jewish educational elements of its program seriously. It conceived of its task rather as Americanization and "keeping the boys and girls off the streets" by furnishing wholesome recreation. But now it is coming to the realization that these ends are being achieved ^{as well} by other institutions, especially the public school.

The Jewish Welfare Board by creating a Department of Jewish Extension Education is largely responsible for the increasing emphasis on the Jewish phase of Center work. Those Center executives who had previously been cold to such Jewish activities no longer oppose them and many are actively sympathetic and are encouraging Jewish activities aggressively and wholeheartedly. Some of the larger Centers are able to afford special directors of Jewish activities who are trying to develop the Jewish program not independently of the rest of the program but as an integral part of every phase of Center work.

The Center has an excellent opportunity of cooperating with such youth organizations as Young Judaea and the Boy Scouts which are in need of suitable buildings to carry on their activities. Because of its splendid equipment the Center should, and to some extent it does, serve this purpose, and it should also cooperate with such organizations in supervising their activities. Older

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youth organizations, on the other hand, such as Menorah, Avukah, Junior Hadassah, and Synagogue groups might well assist the Center by supplying it with club leaders and educational material.

Of the various types of Centers, the Community Center, I believe, holds most promise for the future. Of the other types, Settlement houses are rapidly losing their usefulness because they were established to deal primarily with immigrants and the poor, both of which elements are disappearing from the Jewish population; the separate Y. M. H. A. and Y. W. H. A. are practicable only in communities that can afford two such Centers; the School Center usually has to devote to its children the time after public school hours, and therefore has difficulty in accommodating the youth, although the Central Jewish Institute is achieving some degree of success with its youth program, but this is an exception; finally, the Synagogue or Temple Center, if it tries to limit its clientele to the sons and daughters of the members of the congregation, its numbers will be extremely small and besides it will be imposing upon the youth an artificial grouping and often caste distinctions which otherwise would not exist for them; on the other hand if the Synagogue Center opens its doors to so called outsiders on an equal basis with the children of the congregation it thereby becomes, to all intents and purposes except that of support, a Community Center and is considered as such (in this study.) *omit*

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As for the Synagogue, there are numerous types, of course, ranging through all degrees between orthodoxy and reform. The orthodox synagogues almost without exception are unable to interest or hold their youth. The Young Israel movement in its earlier years was a serious challenge to this situation, but today one could hardly

call Young Israel a youth organization, except perhaps in spirit. I do not mean to depreciate Young Israel, for despite its rather unsystematic administration, its very existence is of great significance to American Judaism, and its achievements in reconciling Modernism and Orthodoxy and in the field of adult education are really remarkable. Nevertheless, practically all of the members of Young Israel are above the age of twenty-five, and though it has recently initiated junior activities it is surprising that, considering the origin and aims of the movement, it manifests so little interest in the youth.

The Reform and many Conservative congregations have succeeded comparatively well in holding their youth at least for a few years after the traditional Bar Mitzvah age. The attempt to raise the age of confirmation to fifteen years or more is in part responsible for this success. While many people question the aims and psychology back of the institution of confirmation, its value in lengthening the period of religious instruction and in most cases adding an additional session during the year preceeding confirmation, in which intensive instruction in Judaism is given under the direct guidance of the rabbi, must be recognized. And even beyond confirmation, one, two, three and even four years are sometimes devoted to Jewish instruction for an hour or so a week. History, Religion, Current Events and Problems usually constitutes the subject matter of the curriculum, the value of which varies, of course, with the respective teachers and classes. Nevertheless, there are certain limitations to such classes which it is difficult to overcome. The boys and girls come usually on a Sunday morning in more or less of a holiday spirit; the subject matter is seldom taken seriously and

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it is almost impossible to stimulate any work outside of class. The fact that this is the age at which the youth begin to go out socially and that Saturday night preceeds the class often plays havoc with the attendance. But all in all, if there is a capable teacher the work is probably more valuable than the pre-confirmation grades of Sunday School, for one hour a week is more likely to be of value to adolescents than to children.

Young people's societies, from any educational point of view, are generally valueless. They engage in few Jewish activities other than social. The occasional lectures or forums to which they submit are on such diverse and unrelated topics as to lose whatever value they might otherwise have. The different interest and age groups that are thrown together in a Young People's Society for the purely artificial reason that their parents belong to the same congregation makes it almost impossible for them to achieve anything. The formation of smaller groups, or clubs, among young people who have like interests is a more successful variant of the Young People's Society. Study circles, dramatic groups or what not have achieved some measure of success and may have some educational value.

In the Synagogue and Jewish Center most of the youth have to be more or less coaxed into engaging in any Jewish educational activity. In the Zionist youth organizations, however, the desire for Jewish education comes from the youth themselves. There is an enthusiasm for Jewish activities that, given any sort of proper nourishment, cannot help but yield valuable educational fruit. The spirit that prevailed, for example, at the last national convention of Young Judaea would stir the heart of any lover of youth and of Israel. The earnestness with which Junior Hadassah, Mizrachi Hatzair, and Young

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Poale Zion are striving to accomplish their respective aims merits honest admiration. Even if these organizations had not accomplished anything objective, the interest in and love for all things Jewish that they have awakened in the hearts of most of their members would be more than enough to justify their existence. But they have many other achievements to their credit as well. Junior Hadassah has rendered splendid service to the orphans of Palestine, and Mizrahi Hatzair and Young Poale Zion have contributed liberally to the support of the educational institutions of their respective parties in Eretz Yisrael. Young Judaea is one of the pioneers in developing the club method in Jewish education and also in the preparation of educational material suitable for Jewish clubs.

At the present time, however, the work of Young Judaea is seriously handicapped by the lack of club leaders and the lack of funds to provide educational material and supervision. The first problem could be solved by the older Zionist youth organizations. What finer project could be found, for example, for Avukah and Junior Hadassah than to prepare themselves to lead Young Judaea clubs? How could they better serve the cause of Palestine, or Jewish Education, or even their own cultural development? The second problem, that of finances, is faced by all youth organizations and must be solved by the entire Jewish community. Jewish education must be paid for, and obviously it cannot be paid for by the youth themselves. They are already doing more than we have the right to expect by administering the work. Young Judaea has prepared an excellent and much needed manual for club leaders which is lying in a drawer in the central office and cannot be published because of lack of funds. It is up to the rabbis and Jewish leaders to educate the Jewish community to support Jewish education just as they have been educated to support philanthropic and relief activities.

Most of the Zionist youth organizations are suffering from the lack of a supporting and coordinating agency such as the educational department of the Z.O.A. used to be. The party organizations such as Mizrahi Hatzair and Young Poale Zion are, of course, more or less confined to their own ranks of the orthodox and proletariat youth respectively. But the Zionist Organization, despite its financial difficulties, should find the means of supporting Young Judaea, Junior Hadassah, Avukah and the embryo Young Men's Zionist League, and intensifying the educational work which is both a prerequisite and a goal of Zionism. For according to Zionist philosophy one must have a Jewish background to be a good Zionist, and in accord with the views of the so-called "Spiritual Zionism", Palestine is to be a means of reinvigorating Jewish culture throughout the world. Such a centralized agency could cooperate with the Jewish Center, the Synagogue, Camps and local Bureaus of Jewish Education, many of which would welcome Zionist study material, club leaders and even the formation within their ranks of Zionist study groups and clubs. Now that the Jewish Agency is about to assume many of the burdens of the Zionist Organization it is to be hoped that the Educational Department will be recreated so that the Zionist youth organizations may once again grow in strength and achievements.

Turning from the general community to the University and College campus, what do we find? The general intellectual level of American college students has gone down considerably with their increase in numbers. Most of them have a sort of bread and butter attitude toward college, trying to get out of college only what they believe will be of use to them in the business or professional world they expect to enter. How many have any intellectual interests out-

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side of the classroom? This attitude is naturally reflected in the Jewish students, and it is emphasized by the homes and communities the students come from. So long as Jewish public opinion and periodicals worship Benny Friedman for his athletic prowess and do not acknowledge honest intellectual effort along the lines of Jewish scholarship, it is quite natural that the traditional Jewish penchant for learning should lie dormant among the large numbers of Jewish college students. So many Jewish boys and girls are going to college these days and yet only a very small proportion of them are at all interested in any Jewish educational activities. Socially they cannot help being Jews; intellectually it seems alien to them. As a whole they take a negative non-resistive attitude toward Judaism.

Confronted with such a situation the achievements of Menorah, the Hillel Foundation and Avukah cannot be very great. Nevertheless, Menorah has developed a few Jewish intellectual leaders, and it has certainly supplied an audience for Jewish scholars to exploit, which is just as important, for scholars would not devote their talents to Jewish subjects if there were no demand for them. Menorah's effort to win a place for Jewish studies in the regular University curriculum is beginning to meet with success. This academic standing will undoubtedly create a respect for Jewish culture which was lacking heretofore. The most successful venture of Menorah, however, is not confined to the campus. The Menorah Journal is recognized as the leading intellectual and artistic Jewish periodical in this country.

Avukah is too young an organization to evaluate fairly. Nevertheless, its chance of reaching a significant number of the college youth is slight. If Menorah, with its general program of Jewish culture, meets with passive resistance from the students

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because it entails some positive attitude toward Judaism, surely Avukah, with its specialized appeal of Zionism, will have greater difficulty. The claim that it offers a concrete cause to espouse misunderstands the psychology of the American college student who is not given to espousing causes concrete or otherwise. As a propaganda agency its possibilities are few, but for the small number of Zionist students who want to prepare themselves for leadership in Zionist activities its existence is justified. I suggested above that a project which Avukah might undertake is the training of its members to lead Young Judaea clubs. The fact that it frequently duplicates the work of Menorah in its study group activities is sometimes detrimental to both organizations.

The Hillel Foundation is as yet only an experiment, but in the Universities where it is functioning its directors claim quite a remarkable change of attitude on the part of the Jewish students. A positive Jewish consciousness has taken the place of the former attempts to evade Judaism. The Hillel Foundation is excellently equipped and has adequate support from the B'nai B'rith. It seems to have worked out a congenial method of dealing with the college situation but it is too young to point to any specific accomplishments. As the Jewish Center in the University, it should, of course, house and cooperate with all Jewish organizations and movements on the campus, and its success should be measured largely by the strength it has added to Jewish intellectual activities at the University. It should not be allowed to degenerate into some form of social club. Everything, of course, depends on the director.

The most difficult problem facing "Hillel" is that of fraternities. While the first Jewish fraternity started with a specifically Jewish program, it soon with all the succeeding Jewish frater-

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nities, became practically identical in form with the non-Jewish fraternities. Fraternities today meet two needs, housing and social life. They seldom furnish intellectual or religious influence for their members, and they are largely a divisive rather than a unifying influence on the Jewish student body as a whole. Fraternity politics with the jealousy and prejudice it engenders has to be squarely faced by "Hillel". Fraternities, by the way, could be a very powerful force for Jewish education if they so desired. Officially, several fraternities sponsor Jewish activities, but actually the psychology of most Jewish fraternity men is more negatively Jewish even than the average Jewish student. It will be a long time before fraternities can be listed as assets for Judaism, but perhaps the Hillel Foundation may speed that day.

A most promising and as yet almost unexploited field for Jewish youth education is the summer camp. Camp Modin and the Central Jewish Institute Camps are practically the only ones that have used the camp for a Jewish educational purpose. Very few of their campers are above the age of thirteen, but there are many camps that accommodate boys and girls up to the age of eighteen. The opportunity for Jewish education in camps is ideal because the environment can be completely controlled and the youth are under its influence twenty-four hours a day. The teachers or councillors actually live with their charges and a spirit of pleasure and fun pervades. Besides the regular camp activities a full Jewish program of study, services, ceremony, song, dramatics, arts and crafts, and what not is carried on as part of a normal happy life. How can the results be anything but satisfying? Establishing new camps is a difficult and expensive proposition, but I believe a great number of people who are operating vacation camps now could be convinced of the value of carrying out

such a Jewish program in their camps. The experiments of Camp Modin and the C. J. I. are most successful and it would be splendid to extend the work.

The overlapping, the waste and the inefficiency that exists in much of Jewish youth education can be largely eliminated, as stated above, by the creation of a coordinating agency. Such agencies do exist in some of the larger cities, but few of them have yet turned their attention to the youth. The New York Bureau of Jewish Education a few years ago experimented with the League of Jewish Youth, but allowed the work to die out. The Chicago Board of Jewish Education has lately started some work with the Tzofim and the Jewish Youth League. This work too has been suspended, only temporarily, however, while Mr. Edidin is in Palestine. Such a coordinating agency with adequate financial support could render invaluable service in the preparation of educational material, in the training of leaders, in supervision, in the publication of youth periodicals, in reaching the unaffiliated, and in interesting the community in the Jewish activities of its youth. How long will we have to wait for such youth departments to be created in the Bureaus of Jewish Education of our larger cities?

The establishment of a kosher camp for Jewish Boy Scouts by the Women's League of the United Synagogue was a useful and successful undertaking. The Jewish activities initiated at that camp gave rise to the idea that these Jewish activities might be continued throughout the year. So the plan of integrating a Jewish program with the Boy Scout program for Jewish scout troops was developed, but it is hardly more than a plan as yet. The idea, however, is an interesting one and the developments will be eagerly awaited.

There is little to be said of the two remaining organizations. The Aleph Zadik Aleph Fraternity, the junior organization of the B'nai B'rith, is concerned almost exclusively with athletics. Once in a while they engage in debating, oratorical or essay contests, but they cannot be said to afford much Jewish education to their members. The same may be said of the Council of Jewish Juniors, often called the Junior Council of Jewish Women, only instead of athletics, their activities are primarily social and matrimonial.

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CONCLUSION

It would be rare presumption on my part to make any revolutionary recommendations on the basis of the preceding study. Such recommendations, if they are made at all, should be the result of wider experience in the field. Moreover, a satisfactory system of Jewish Youth Education has to be evolved by many more years of experimentation. It is of little value to map out a theoretical course of procedure which might or might not be applicable, though such a method is comparatively simple. It is usually the best policy to "make haste slowly." The transmission of the Jewish heritage to the growing American Jewish youth is an extremely difficult process. It is evident that our accomplishments to date represent merely the elementary steps toward this end. How to interest the large numbers of Jewish youth in a program of Jewish service and Jewish study is as yet an unsolved problem. But I believe that the policy of improving the quality of what is already being done is the best method of reaching the masses. If the affiliated youth feel that they are really doing worthwhile work in the existing organizations, they themselves will be the most effectual means of drawing the unaffiliated into the ranks.

Improving the quality of Jewish Youth Education implies several things, the most important of which are: securing adequately trained club leaders and teachers; providing effective supervision; and preparing educational material in available form. Just as the standard of Jewish teachers was raised considerably when their status was changed from volunteers to professionals, so it will

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be possible to secure better trained club leaders if they are paid for their work. There will be plenty who will be willing to go through the necessary training and apply for such positions if they are offered any sort of reasonable salary, and existing teachers institutes could without much difficulty provide the requisite course of study.

The most effective kind of supervision would require a centralized agency such as the Bureau of Jewish Education in New York and the Board of Jewish Education in Chicago. If they had the means to establish youth departments, they could coordinate the work of all existing youth organizations; they could supervise and stimulate all their activities; they could act as placement Bureau's for club leaders; and they could also assume the task of preparing educational material, thereby eliminating the waste and duplication of effort involved in the present method of having each organization prepare its own material.

All this requires funds, of course; and as yet the American Jewish community has not been educated to the need of paying for Jewish Youth Education. But the outlook is not altogether hopeless. There are some indications that American Jews are beginning to awaken to their responsibilities toward the youth. And the fact that as much has been accomplished as this study indicated, in itself is significant. Despite the recency of the movement and the lack of support, it is living and growing; and all those who in any way further its growth will be rendering invaluable service to the youth and to Judaism.