

Who is the Young Israeli Jew?
Changing Leisure Habits and “Jewish Education”¹

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Many of the documents and newspaper articles referenced in this paper are available for downloading for educational purposes at:

http://www.researchsuccess.com/public/young_israeli

Username: hello Password: letmein

*This is a temporary address, as the documents will at some point be transferred to the Jewish Agency website.

¹ I wish to thank Ami Bouganim and Neta Katz of the Research and Development Unit of the Department of Jewish Zionist Education of the Jewish Agency, for the large degree of freedom (and hence confidence) granted to me to “think out of the box”. I also wish to thank Ari Engelberg for assistance he provided me on this project.

Bio

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Abstract

In recent years, many Israeli institutions have begun promoting programs for strengthening the Jewish identity of young Israelis. The motivation is similar to the discourse of Jewish Education found in the Diaspora. The assumption is that living life in the general society is not enough to ensure a meaningful connection between Jews to one another and the Jewish People, hence it is necessary to intervene through the use of educational programming. What exactly is the problem - nostalgia by the older generation for the "good old days" or something else? What are the goals of "Israeli Jewish Education" and how should the contemporary reality of Israeli society, influence those goals? This paper tackles these questions by looking at the popular leisure activities (sports, backpacking, shopping and dance) of young Israeli Jews. Through the prism of leisure activities we look at the ways Jewish belonging is built in everyday life of contemporary Israel and the different experiences of older and younger generations.

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The Rise of “Israeli Jewish Education”

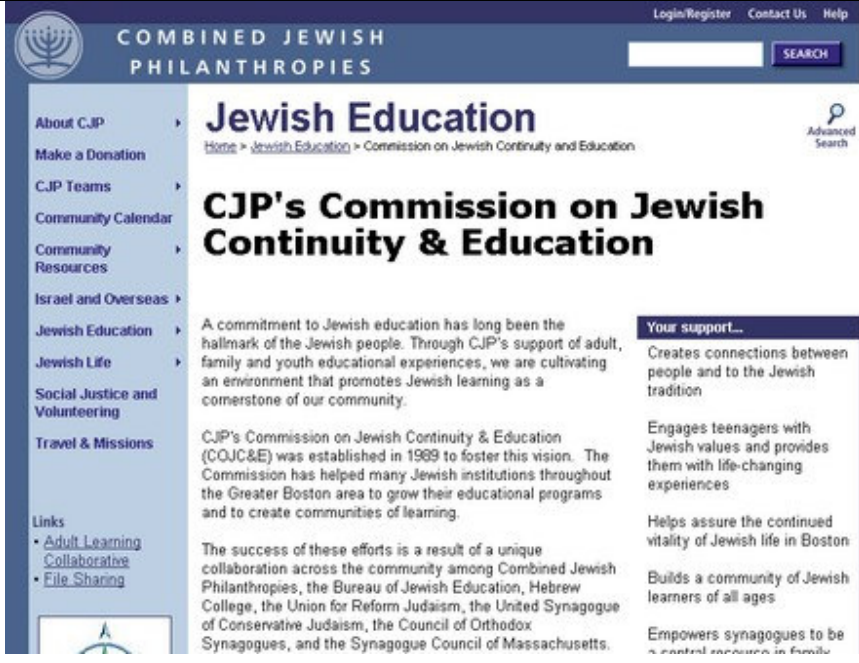
There is a rich history of attempts to add “Jewish” or “religious” enrichment programs to the Israeli education system,² but until recently the concept of “Jewish Education” was not a significant part of the Israeli lexicon. Why should Israeli-Jews seek out a Jewish Education for themselves or their children? Israeli-Jews participate in civil ceremonies on Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Day for Fallen Soldiers, and Independence Day; experience the year in terms of the larger Jewish calendar (religious holidays = public holidays); and, conceive the fact of contribution to the state of Israel, especially Army service, as a means of defining oneself as Jewish (as opposed to Arab). Simply put, “to live in Israel” = “to live as a Jew” – there is no need for a Jewish Education.

I suspect that for the most part, the term “Jewish Education” is still not a topic that most Israeli Jews think about. However, changes are taking place. Among institutions ranging from the Jewish Agency (who is funding this report) to the Ministry of Education, the Community Center Associations, the Army, Youth Movements and an increasing number of third sector organizations there is an increasing discourse that, even if it does not explicitly use the term “Jewish Education,” certainly resembles the logic implied by the concept.³ The concept of Jewish Education assumes that living life in the general society is not enough to ensure a meaningful connection between Jews to one another and the Jewish People, hence it is necessary to intervene through the use of educational programming. The term is larger than equivalent concepts such as “religious education” or “values education” which assume the Jewish

² Attempts along these lines include the initiatives of early Ministers of Education, Ben Zion Dinur and Zalman Aran through more recent initiatives at “values education” in the Israeli school system.

³ See a list of many of the organizations working in this field at the *Panim for Jewish Renaissance in Israel*. <http://www.panim.org.il> and Yoffe and Arad (2003 [English and Hebrew]). For literature describing the changing attitude of Israeli educators and institutions to Jewish culture see Ezrachi (2001), Bar Shalom (2003 [Hebrew]) and Kopelowitz (2003).

connection and focus on a particular area of concern. The concept of “Jewish Education” implies a total connection between the individual and the Jewish People. If religious education



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A commitment to Jewish education has long been the hallmark of the Jewish people. Through CJP's support of adult, family and youth educational experiences, we are cultivating an environment that promotes Jewish learning as a cornerstone of our community.

CJP's Commission on Jewish Continuity & Education (COJC&E) was established in 1989 to foster this vision. The Commission has helped many Jewish institutions throughout the Greater Boston area to grow their educational programs and to create communities of learning.

The success of these efforts is a result of a unique collaboration across the community among Combined Jewish Philanthropies, the Bureau of Jewish Education, Hebrew College, the Union for Reform Judaism, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the Council of Orthodox Synagogues, and the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts.

Your support...

- Creates connections between people and to the Jewish tradition
- Engages teenagers with Jewish values and provides them with life-changing experiences
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An example of the logic that dominates Jewish Education in Diaspora communities. “Jewish Education = Continuity and Vitality”

fails, the person will become secular. In contrast, if Jewish Education fails there is a danger to “Jewish continuity” and the Jewish People. Something is happening in Israel, that is leading all of the above mentioned organizations

to adopt the logic of Jewish Education, which until recently was only found in Diaspora communities.

An example of the discourse of Jewish Education is found in changes taking place in the Department of Jewish Zionist Education of the Jewish Agency. The Jewish Agency is a large public organization charged by the State of Israel with the mission preserving and nurturing ties between Jews in Israel and the Diaspora. Until 2000, almost all the educational programs sponsored by the Department of Education of the Jewish Agency focused exclusively on work among Jews living in “galut” (“exile”)⁴, with an emphasis on representing Israel to the Diaspora. Little attention was paid to the possibility that Israeli Jews could strengthen their own connection

⁴ As a sign of the change taking place, the word “Galut” (exile) is increasingly replaced by “Tfusot” (Diaspora) to refer to Jews living outside of Israel.

to the Jewish People by learning from Diaspora Jews. In 2001, the Deputy Director of the Department of Jewish Zionist Education presented a strategic initiative, entitled: "A Plan for Working with Israeli Society and Israeli Youth: Strengthening the Connection between the Jewish People and Israeli Society, from an Educational Perspective (dated: 25/03/2001)."⁵ The



The screenshot shows the Haaretz website interface. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with the word "יחד" (Yehad) in large green letters, followed by "ישראל חברתית דמוקרטית" (Israel: A Democratic, Social Jewish Society). Below this is a green bar with various menu items in Hebrew. The main content area is white with a green header that says "מאמרים" (Articles) and "לדף המלא" (Full page). The article title is "הגשר היהודי בסכנה" (The Jewish Bridge is in Danger) by דן בן-דוד, dated 04/05/2005. The article text discusses the weakening of Jewish identity in Israel and the need to strengthen connections between Jews in Israel and abroad. The author's name, "המשך המאמר ב'הארץ'", is at the bottom right of the article text.

Title: **"The Jewish Bridge is in Danger"**. An article from the newspaper Haaretz published on the website of the Yahad party (which represents a mostly secular constituency). The author focuses on weakening connections between Jews in Israel and abroad. He warns of danger vis-à-vis the Jewish identity of future generations in Israel and states that Israeli youth can learn from Jews abroad. For full text, see bibliography (בן-דוד)

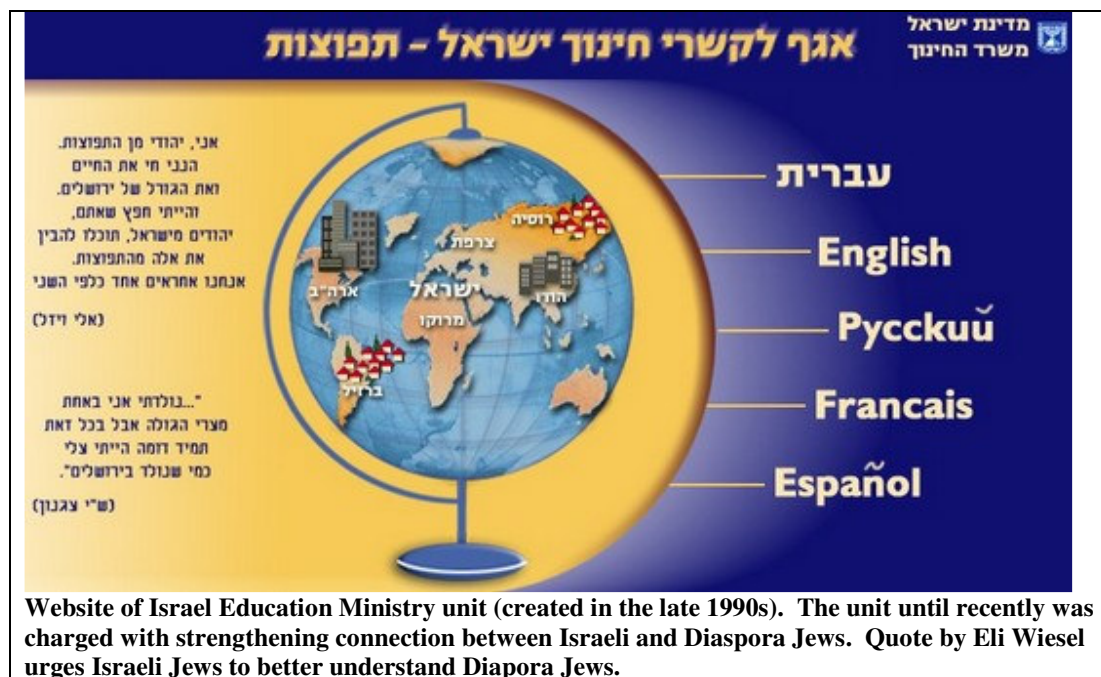
paper argues:

"The Jewish Agency can and needs to stimulate among the younger generation of Israeli Jews the dimension of belonging to the entire Jewish People – as an essential component of an individual's Jewish identity. Dealing with Jewish identity demands touching the

⁵ Original in Hebrew: חסייה ישראלי: "תוכנית לעבודה עם החברה הישראלית וצעירה: לחיזוק הקשר בין כלל העם היהודי והחברה" (25/03/2001). מנקודה מבט חינוכית"

inner person by way of substantial experiences. The educational experience needs to be accompanied by understanding and continuity for internalization to occur. This is our entry point as educators dedicated to topic of Israel-Diaspora relations (p. 2)."

What we learn, is that at least among a number of Israeli politicians, policy makers and educators the equation of "Living in Israel" = "to live as a Jew" is no longer obvious and the Jewish identity of Israeli Jews is now viewed as an "educational challenge".



Despite the rise of a discourse of Jewish Education, little systematic thought is being given to the defining features of "Israeli Jewish Education". What are the problems that Israeli Jewish Education is addressing? What in the Israeli Jewish experience needs strengthening? And, once goals are laid out, what will be the best way to accomplish them? This paper provides a framework that will hopefully contribute towards the discussion of these questions.

Why do Older Israelis Worry?

A common motivation behind most efforts at "Jewish Education" aimed at younger generations of Israelis, is the sense among Israeli-Jews born in the 1950s and earlier that the "Jewish commitments" of the younger generations are weakening. In this sense, Jewish Education in

Israel, like its Diaspora equivalent is “a response to crisis”. There is a lack of confidence that life as it is lived in the family and outside of it is enough to ensure Jewish commitment.

On one hand, the sense of crisis among older Israeli Jews is puzzling. Relative to other Western societies, Israeli Jews, young and old remain a highly ideological and Jewishly identifying population. Data from the 2000 Guttman/Avi-Chai survey, the only comprehensive national survey on this subject, shows Israeli Jews expressing a high level of Jewish identification. 82% of the Israeli Jewish public answered that given the chance they would choose to be born again Jewish, 95% feel that they are part of the Jewish People and 70% state that Jews in Israel and abroad have a shared destiny (Levi, Levinsohn and Katz 2002 (Hebrew)). While the Guttman survey has not published data comparing generations, a study focusing on non-religious Israeli-Jews in their 20s, showed numbers that were not much different from the general population (Kopelowitz and Rosenberg 2004).

The source of worry among older Israelis becomes apparent if we go beyond very general identity questions posed in the Guttman survey and look at ways people actually experience being Jewish in everyday life. There are tremendous generational differences in the ways Israelis are socialized today vis-à-vis life in the first decades of the state. Clearly, Israeli-Jews born in the past 30 years identify as Jewish, yet the manner in which they “live life as Jews” has undergone radical change.

This paper will focus on the life style of Israeli Jews between the ages of 21 and 30 through the prism of “leisure” – narrowly defined as “the time spent when one is not working”. What do young Israelis do with their leisure time? We will learn that in comparison to the leisure activities of contemporary youth, when their parents and certainly their grand parents where in their twenties they lived a different life. We will also learn that the leisure patterns of

Israeli youth do not automatically mean that they are less Jewish, Israeli or Zionist than their parents, rather it means that they experience these concepts in a very different way. To “live as a Jew” in contemporary Israel is not the same as in previous generations, and apparently this is a major source of the anxiety experienced by older generations of Israeli-Jews.

Our goal is (1) to understand how it is that young Israelis anchor the idea that they are part of a Jewish People in the course of their leisure activities; and, (2) to broach some of the implications for transferring a Diaspora concept such as “Jewish Education” to the Israeli scene.

“Being Jewish” Happens While Doing Other Things

A recent newspaper article (Ben-Simon, 2005 [Hebrew and English in bibliography]) describes a group of 400 twenty to thirty something year old Israelis who gather together to discuss the

writings of Yitzhak Sadeh (founder of the Palmach) and sing Hebrew songs from the early decades of the state.

The article reports that:

One of the objectives that Afaim and Shiloni [the organizers] set for themselves was to bring back the culture of the circle, which was one of the symbols of the Palmach period, a symbol of another way of speaking, of equality and social concern. "In the circle culture, the thing is that there are no leaders, no ranks. Everything is opened up with the wine and the bonfire," Shiloni explains. "And besides, there is the common denominator of feeling proud of what there is and of what will be, of being optimistic. The Palmach bonfire is still burning. People are still sitting around it."

"It's tradition, my friend," says Afaim. "The bonfire is my Sabbath candles and the songs are the siddur." The members gather around a bonfire, accompanied by a group of musicians, a meat-laden buffet and hundreds of bottles of wine. It's practically a banquet, with a least one bottle of wine per person.

"Each evening opens with a toast to the old man's memory and a few words in his honor," says Eldad Shiloni. "After every few songs, a toast is raised to something and one of the high points of the evening is the singing of the Palmach anthem. When we get to the Palmach anthem, there's a tremendous ecstasy. It's hard to describe how powerful the moment is. People get up and clap one another on the back," says Shiloni, smiling.

The fact that a mainstream newspaper thought this article

newsworthy is indicative of the exceptional status of the

Yitzhak Sadeh Wandering Song Club. In the Jewish



The Yitzhak Sadeh Wandering Song Club (<http://www.haaretz.com> - Thu., April 28, 2005 [open Hebrew and English text from bibliography])

Diaspora, voluntary clubs and associations similar to the Yitzhak Sadeh club are common place.

Whether secular, religious or a mixture of both, Jews gather together simply for the sake of socializing with other Jews, to find a venue in which they can express themselves “Jewishly” and of course to enjoy the emotional, professional and spiritual benefits of networking with others.

The Jewish Motor Cyclists Alliance (see picture and caption below) presents one such example, but there are many, many more like it – ranging from Jewish professional associations, to Jewish cultural, political, religious, social, sports and welfare organizations.

The vast majority of Israeli Jews will not seek out voluntary organizations in order to enjoy a “Jewish experience”. Outside of the few traditional events done in the family framework (Brit Mila, Bar-Mitzvah, Passover Seder etc.(Deshen 1997, 1998 [Hebrew])), an emotionally rewarding Jewish life is lived by at the national/public level. As discussed above, the classic



Jewish Motorcyclists Alliance

*We “ride to remember”
so the world will never forget!*

Clubs from around the country are riding to meet in Washington, D.C. Individual riders and clubs may join the ride in advance of the ‘day event’ on Friday the 6th. Contact the Jewish Bike Club President in your respective locality to find out the details of the dates they are leaving, the times they are riding and the cities being passed through.

Miami, Jacksonville, Charlotte, NC, Roanoke, VA
King David Bikers
 Contact: Jeff Mustard
 Phone: 954-801-8263
 mailto:jeff@kingdavidbikers.com
<http://www.kingdavidbikers.com>

Toronto, CA, Harrisburg, PA, York, PA
Yidden on Wheels
 Contact: Steve Stein
 Phone: 416-930-4286
 mailto:sstein@icppg.com

Northern, VA, Washington, D.C., Parts of Maryland
The Tribe Motorcycle Club
 Contact: Jay Rubin
 Phone: 703-532-8855
 mailto:jride@hotmail.com
<http://www.thetribemc.com>

New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
Hillel's Angels
 Contact: Mel Morris
 Phone: 201-236-8722
 mailto:melmaven@optonline.net
<http://www.hillelsangels.org>

Greater New York City, Long Island, Westchester, New Jersey, Connecticut
Chai Riders
 Contact: Danny Herbst
 Phone: 914-263-4790
 mailto:beacon145@hotmail.com
<http://www.chairiders.org>



* Event proceeds, less expenses, will be donated to Holocaust Memorial and the Friends of the Israeli Defense Force.

<http://www.jewishbikers.com>

“While it might not be the Promised Land, the Jewish Motorcyclists Alliance is the home of Jewish bikers from around the world. Our common thread is our religion, but the degree to which we practice or observe varies greatly from one club to another. Our primary purpose is based fundamentally upon the passion to ride motorcycles, but we are also drawn to these clubs by our common faith and heritage. However, membership or admittance to these clubs is not dictated by faith or brand of motorcycle; bikers of any religion or brand of bike are welcome.”

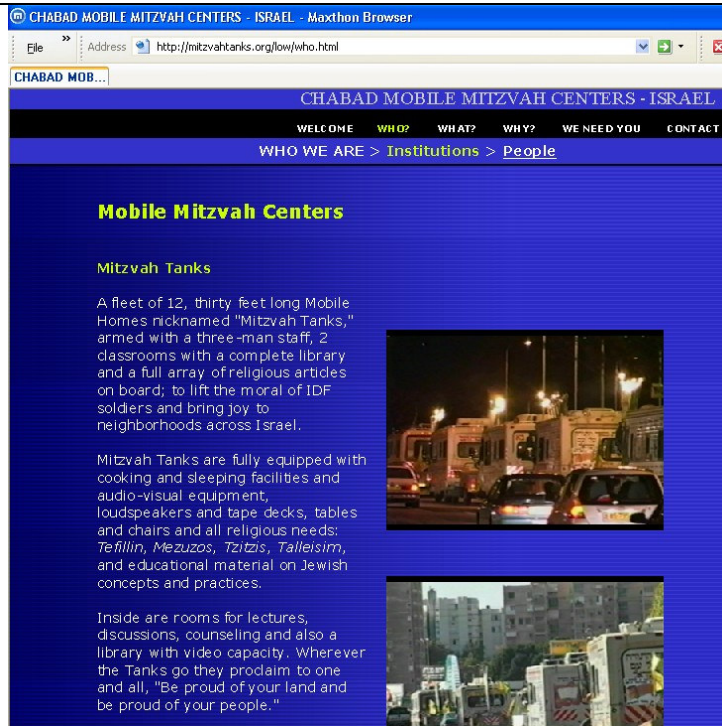
repertoire includes extensive participation in civil ceremonies on Holocaust Remembrance day, Day for Fallen Soldiers, Independence Day and other public holidays, living the larger Jewish calendar (religious holidays = public holidays), and conceiving the fact of contribution to the state of Israel, especially Army service, as a means of defining oneself as Jewish (as opposed to Arab). All of these are activities whose basic organization is carried out by public authorities. Little, to no organizational planning and responsibility is placed on the individual's shoulders (Kopelowitz 2005).

The embedded/public nature of the Israeli Jewish experience turns it into a “background phenomenon”. “Being Jewish happens while you are doing other things” and is not perceived as something an individual has the power to choose or reject, nor is much thought given to the matter. Being Jewish is simply an obvious fact of life.

In the course of living life, people come to think of themselves as Jews, as one amongst many social groups with which they identify. During everyday activity individuals identify others as Jewish and non-Jewish (normally Arab). Sometimes this sense of “Jewish belonging” is built in explicitly Jewish settings such as a religious and nationalist rituals performed at home, at synagogue, while watching a television documentary, or during a class on Jewish history at school. However, most of the time Jewish belonging is created in the course of everyday life outside the realm of formal social organizations.

Jewish Education, Twenty Something Israelis and their Leisure Activities

Because of the importance of the wider public sphere in Israel as a source of Jewish socialization, we choose to focus this analysis on leisure activities. The importance of the public sphere along with the almost complete lack of voluntary Jewish organizations (such as the Yitzhak Sadeh song club) that might attract Israeli youth, makes leisure activities an especially



Chabad provides an example of systematic attempt at “Jewish education” outside of formal institutional settings.

Thousands of people streamed through and enjoyed the beautiful and festive atmosphere at the Congress Park July 4th Saratoga Celebration.

Many stopped by at Saratoga Chabad's Felafel Table for a nibble nosh or for a hearty Felafel treat, or to chat about Judaism.

Situated on a main street in Congress Park, this highly visible location brought a Jewish/Israeli touch to this All-American holiday.

Rabbi Abba and Rochie of Saratoga Chabad are often seen at Saratoga's outdoor fairs and festivals and events in the Park.

Click here for the "Chabad in the Park" Page.

Click here for our July 4th 2003 table in the Park.

For this teenager, it was his first opportunity to wear Tefillin. His friends look on as Rabbi Abba helps him with the Shema Prayer.

This was a beautiful display of Jewish pride and

important topic for Israeli Jewish education. The place of leisure activities as part of the larger public experience of living in Israel, and hence of a primary source of “Jewish experience” rises considerably for the 21+ age group. In contrast, to those under the age of 21, the everyday life of most 20 to 30 year old Israeli Jews is spent in social spaces that are outside the reach of formal state institutions and family influence. After ending school, moving out of the family home (before starting their own family) and finishing army service – the young Israeli-Jew steps out of the world of the family and state-sponsored institutions and into everyday life governed by his or her own decisions.

If 20 to 30 years old Israeli-Jews are not flocking to voluntary organizations such as the Yitzhak Sadeh

club, then were do they “hang out”? Do the places in which young Israelis spend their leisure time hold any promise for Jewish belonging in contemporary society?

We will look at four popular leisure activities: backpacking, rooting for sports teams, dance parties and shopping. Although hard numbers are hard to come by, the numbers of participants in these activities are in the tens of thousands at any given point in time. In a newspaper article (Smoohar 2005 [Hebrew]) dated October 2003 we learn that 30,000 backpackers, a third of the 21 year-old age group, go every year on a trip to India. It is not clear how reliable this data is, but in an academic article Mevorach (1996) conducted quantitative research of Israeli backpackers. He found that 11% percent of every graduating cohort of Israeli army veterans go on long (over 5 months) trips to third world countries.

A survey conducted in 1997 for the Israeli Football Association (quoted in a *Kol Hair* article, cited by Resnik 2002[Hebrew]) showed that the team of *Beitar Jerusalem* has 100,000 more fans than the first runner up (*Macabi Tel-Aviv*), 46% of residents of development towns claimed to be a fan of this team. Since fans of all other teams put together are numerous, and since the above number does not include Arab Israelis, one can surmise that the large numbers count themselves as soccer fans. Ben-Dov (1998[Hebrew]) (very roughly) estimates participant's at outdoor dance parties to number 150,000, a number referring to outdoor parties, and not to the present club scene, which includes more participants. We didn't find estimates of the numbers who shop on any given day of the week, but surely we can assume that of all leisure activities, shopping captures the imagination of millions.

Popular leisure activities such as backpacking, sports, partying and shopping are a small blip on the radar screens of educators who are concerned with Jewish identity. Jewish education in Israel tends to focus on formal institutions that are publicly funded or informal activities that are purposefully organized within the framework of formal institutions. Initiatives such as the “bar mitzvah programs” and “core Jewish concept” curriculum sponsored by the Education

Ministry,⁶ high school trips to Eastern European concentration camps, Shlichut programs run by the Jewish Agency or the Secular Betei Midrash all fall in the category of formal education, in that they are conceptualized as “building Jewish identity” in spaces and activities that are not part of everyday life.

Note, that different definition of “formal education” deviates from the common understanding of the term. Normally, formal education is defined as pertaining to frontal instruction in a classroom environment. Here I include an institutions such as a summer camp or a school sponsored trip to Poland, which are normally thought of as informal education as examples of formal education. The common denominator is that all are environments that participants live for brief periods of time, with no expectation of continuity in the way that they will live their lives outside of the space itself. Whether it is a secular child learning about bar-mitzvah in a school classroom, a Jewish Agency Shaliach working in a summer camp (Bram and Neria 2002 [Hebrew], Wolf and Kopelowitz 2004), or a secular adult studying Jewish text in a secular Beit Midrash (Kopelowitz 2001, Hachohen-Wolff and Amazlek-Bahar 2003 [Hebrew]), or a teacher taking enrichment courses in Jewish Thought – all are activities disconnected from life as it is experienced day in and day out in the home, at work or at play. The sense of Jewish belonging evoked by these programs is limited to a particular space, ie. the classroom, summer camp, place of learning – with no explicit connection made to a person’s everyday life once he or she stops participating in the particular educational program.

I don’t want to dispute the importance of formal educational institutions. They are important and vital part of any attempt to transmit culture and values from one generation to the

⁶ For an overview of Jewish education in the state education system, especially the 1994 Shenhar commission report (see bibliography for copy of report[Hebrew]) and evaluation work carried out regarding the implementation of the report see Rash and Ben-Avot (1997 [Hebrew]), Yoffe and Arad (2003 [English and Hebrew]) and Kopelowitz, Yoffee and Weiss (2005).

next. Yet, we also know that people come to understand themselves as members of larger social groups as much (if not more) through the "spontaneous" events of everyday life. To live as a Jew is a holistic experience, involving many dimensions of the life experience. Thus, it makes little sense to limit attempts at "Jewish education" to the realm of formal institutions.

Leisure Culture and Jewish Belonging

All social activities (ie., activities that we do with other people), from riding on a bus, to walking down the street to dancing at a party generate a sense of belonging. People automatically look for those "who are like me" and those "who are different from me" creating categories of us/them and insider/outsider (Lyman and Scott 1967). In Israel, there is almost always a "Jewish dimension" to the "us"/"them" categories that people create in the course of everyday social activity (Shapira and Navon 1991). Given the majority status of Jews in Israel most everyday activities include within them an assumption that all those who are co-present are also Jewish, with a keen awareness of the presence of non-Jews (Kopelowitz 1996).

Formal state ceremonies and holidays that occur on Israel Independence Day, Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Passover Seder etc. the collective, or common Jewish component is obvious. The ceremonies purposively evoke the connection between the participants' in the ceremony, connecting them to those who live elsewhere in both space and time. The affect is to create strong feelings of patriotism and pride that are typical of successful ceremonies (Handelman 1990).

In everyday leisure activities, the methods people use to distinguish between "us" and "them" are more subtle and less visible (Goffman 1982, Garfinkle 1971), yet they are as powerful in terms of their ability to anchor the sense that "I am Jewish" and "he is not" within an individual's mind. The question is, when do these "moments of Jewish belonging" occur and

when don't they occur? And, has the manner that Jewish identity moments occur, changed over time?

The four leisure activities fall on a spectrum, in terms of the likelihood that an individual will experience moments of Jewish belonging during the activity. We begin with attending sports events as an example of a leisure activity that is heavily informed by "us"/"them" associations, many of which have a direct connection to Israeli-Jewish identity. We then look at backpacking, shopping and dance parties. The order is intentional, for as we will see, as you move from one to the other the nature of the "us"/"them" associations change and become less



Maccabi Tel Aviv soccer fans in Moscow for European Championship Cup playoffs. May 2005. Pictures from <http://www.haaretz.co.il>



<http://www.haaretz.co.il> – May 8th, 2005

Maccabi TA defends Euro crown tonight

Maccabi Tel Aviv will try to take the European Championship Cup for the second straight time this evening, at the Euroleague Finals in Moscow against Tau Vitoria of Spain.

The most amazing thing Friday at Moscow's Olympiysky Arena wasn't Tau Vitoria's victory over CSKA Moscow, and it certainly wasn't Maccabi's win. It was the thousands of yellow shirts in the stands, what the Spanish were calling the "yellow wave."

In spite of the cost, visa problems and a hotel room shortage, the yellow wave spread inexorably. There were close to 8,000 Israelis in Moscow, and that was with the home team calling on its fans to fill the stands and Maccabi not receiving the extra tickets it requested.

This must be the most disparate group of fans in the world: from billionaire Shari Arison to families with babies, from organized tour groups to Muscovite Jews and local groupies and, of course, the usual Maccabi fans who go to almost every game almost everywhere.

But it's more than just getting tickets, for which some reportedly paid 1,500 euros. It's about Maccabi, 28 years later. Most of its fans weren't born yet in 1977; some must have had a hard time recognizing Micky Berkovitch, who came up to give Pini Gershon a kiss after the victory.

In 1977, "People all over the country saw Maccabi's win as the achievement of the Jewish people," says Avi Elbaz, a student at the University of Haifa who studied Maccabi's '77 win.

and less likely to have positive outcomes from the perspective of Jewish belonging.

Sports, Nationalism and Jewish Belonging

<http://www.ynetnews.com>. April 18th, 2005

Racist Catcalls



Bnei Saknin fans take abuse (Archive Photo) Photo: Reuven Cohen

Comics



Israel's new superhero

Yblog



Daily musings from Ynetnews

Israel, sports and racism

'Fans are taking the law into their own hands. There's violence and vandalizing of cars. True, we're Arabs, but we're also citizens and we came to play soccer,' says Mazen Ghnaim, head of the Bnei Saknin soccer club

By Mazen Ghnaim

"Muhammed is a faggot" and "The Temple Mount is in our hands" – this is what shouted at us, the mostly Arab Bnei Saknin soccer team.

When we get onto the field, fans of the opposite team have already begun chanting an hour before the game and go on until we leave the stadium. What purpose does this serve? Who really benefits?

At times, there's violence. During the last game with Betar Jerusalem at the Ramat-Gan Stadium, I went outside to see cars being damaged and fans being hit. One Saknin fan almost lost an eye and was hospitalized for three days.

True, we're Arabs, but we're also citizens and we just came to play soccer. By the same token, some of our fans also need to improve their behavior. I'm not saying they are all saints.

Not all teams allow their fans to behave this way. For instance, when the fans of Nazareth Ilt or Bnei Yehuda begin with racist chants, the players and the team heads calm them down.

Our main beef is with Betar Jerusalem, whose fans are out of control.

When Abbas Suan scored that goal against Ireland in the World Cup qualifiers, the country jumped for joy. For us, it was a double celebration, first for the country and second for the Arab community. Suddenly, Saknin – the team without its own playing

Popular sports, such as soccer and basketball, are games played according to rules that are abided by in many different countries. The standardization of the rules of sport, enables competition between national groups. Sports teams “represent the nation,” thus it is not surprising that the perception of that “Israel is a Jewish state” is projected directly onto sporting teams at both the national and local levels.

One does not need to look far to find the Jewish dimension in Israeli professional sports. The above excerpt from a newspaper article on the 2005 European League Basketball play-offs mixes elements of Israeli nationalism with its Jewish components in a way that is absolutely obvious from the perspective of the writer. The writer refers to Jewish Muscovites attending the game, and states: “In 1977, 'People all over the country saw Maccabi's win as the achievement of the Jewish people'”.

There is a fluid movement back and forth between professional sports, Israeli nationalism and the Jewish group identity. The Jewish dimension is especially evident in the ambiguous

place on Israeli-Arab soccer teams and players experience in the world of Israeli sports (see above news clipping, entitled “Israeli Sports and Racism”).⁷

Excerpts from Travel Blogs: Tendency's of Israeli backpackers to stick together

ISRAEL PASSOVER

Ok, this not the correct quote, however here in Cusco I noticed a funny something happening. I walked around and took a tour of the movie restaurants. There were an unusually high number of signs in Hebrew, and then I was really surprise to find the one movie place did not have their sign in English and only was in Hebrew. I do not read Hebrew and wanted to know what he movie was?

What is up, there are almost double the number of signs in Hebrew? I do not care but I then see two Israeli girls from the tour in Rurrenabaque, the world is small and we are on the same path, so very common to see the same travelers.

http://www.hobotraveler.com/2005_04_17_archive.html

EPISODE EIGHT ° THE SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE + AI

Anjali Kamat

Shalom Goa!

Peace man, om shanti om, Kerala ayurvedic massages, quality Manali hash at every sarong-draped peace-pipe hawking corner, bass-heavy Goa trance competing only with Bob Marley at the rows of indistinguishable beach shacks, and ecstasy, mushrooms, and acid all within an easy arm's reach. The pleasure-ride of your life plus beautiful beaches, fresh seafood and a guaranteed tan. And it's all at rock-bottom prices. Sounds perfect? Well, almost. The fine print's entirely in Hebrew, so if you're not Israeli and still want a piece of the trance pie, you'd better take a crash course in Hebrew before planning to party in Goa.

Hand-made signs and banners in Hebrew advertising the best deals and year-end dance parties are ubiquitous in Goa's northern enclaves. For the wannabe rastas from Hippieland Israel the right to party is sacred. It's all about peace and love. And India's great, people are so spiritual. Om Shanti Om. That's right, say it again and take another hit off the chillum. The saffron-clad matted-haired Benarasi sadhu smiles benevolently as the dreadlocked initiates around him inhale deeply and sink back into an opium-filled daze. He takes another picture on his pocket-sized digital camera, says a couple of shlokas in Sanskrit - which the hippies religiously repeat - and passes the chillum.

Round the corner from our guest house the line of restaurants all advertise "Israeli" food. Hummus, felafels, mint tea, and schnitzels. We're the only Indian customers at these places and every inch of wall space is pasted over with Hebrew-language flyers. What do these say, I ask the Goan man behind the counter, pointing to a few of the more colorful ones. Motorbikes for sale, the best spiritual massage - don't miss this

<http://www.thesala.com/episode08/01.html>

⁷ For discussions about nationalism, sports and Israeli culture see Sorek (2003, 2002a[Hebrew], 2002b[Hebrew]), Ben-Porat (2003 [Hebrew], 1999 [Hebrew], Meltzer (2001[Hebrew]), Orielli (2002 [Hebrew]), Resnik (2002[Hebrew]) Semyonov and Yuchtman-Yaar (1988),.

Backpacking and “Israeliness”

Unlike sports, the phenomena of backpackers traveling for months in foreign countries does not imply the same strong “us”/“them” boundaries. Whereas, sports like soccer and basketball are directly harnessed for the purpose of nationalist pride and patriotism, backpacking is normally thought of in terms of the individual escaping from forces such as nationalism. The backpacker is the individual looking for meaning outside of the framework of everyday life.

However, in the case of Israeli backpackers the sociological literature⁸ and anecdotal evidence such as the type presented in web-blogs (see below), shows Israeli backpackers recreating a sense of “Israeli space” when they are abroad. They do this by spending a vast amount of their time abroad in the company of other Israelis.

After the army, young Israelis travel to distant locations “to escape” the pressures of Israeli society, yet end up sticking together while on route and congregating en masse in particular geographical locations to the point that shop signs are in Hebrew and merchants speak the language. The extreme example of this phenomenon is the the Kathmandu Seder in Nepal which attracts between 1,500 and 2,000 Jewish backpackers, most of whom are Israeli (Rosenfelder 2005). As the Seder phenomenon attests, here too there is high degree of fluidity between the Israeli nationalist space that is recreated by the backpackers and Jewish elements that are embedded within that experience.

Shopping – Shaping the Experience in Universal or Particularistic Directions

At first glance, there is no obvious Jewish dimension in the act of shopping. When entering a store, or walking in a shopping mall the rules of interaction are not influenced by the fact that

⁸ For literature describing the “Israeli” experience of the backpackers see Avrahami (2001), Mevorach (1996), Heical (2000 [Hebrew]), Maoz (2003 [Hebrew]), Noy (2003 [Hebrew]), Simchai (2000[Hebrew]).

Unity Is Price as Malls Open on Shabbat

By MATTHEW GUTMAN
FORWARD STAFF

KFAR SABA, Israel — Sipping espresso and smoking a Winston, the Shinui Party leader here, Simon Goldman, casually surveyed the Italianesque rose- and cream-colored marble square of the town's Arim Mall.

The peaceful scene Tuesday was deceptive: Last Saturday, religious and secular men scuffled here over Israelis' right to shop on the Sabbath. As one of the initiators of the movement to open the mall on Saturdays, Goldman opened a Pandora's box, releasing into Israeli politics secular and religious furies just as the country gears up for the final push before the January 28 Knesset elections.

Ultra-Orthodox and secularist parties are using the precedent of the Arim Mall, open during the last three Saturdays, along with the planned opening of the Ra'ananim Mall in Ra'anana this Saturday, as fodder for their campaigns. Parties such as the conservative Shinui and the liberal-socialist Meretz are calling upon Israelis to shrug off what they call the yoke of the religious parties and their intolerance. They want the opening of the malls to serve as a precedent for the running of public transportation and other services on the Sabbath.

For their part, the religious parties, especially Shas and United Torah Judaism, have been using the opening of the malls to dramatize their idea that Israel is mutating into a "nation of slaves" to commerce and as a rallying cry for concerned religious voters. Recent polls show that Israelis' interest in the secular-religious dispute is on the wane, with only 3% considering it an important political matter, according to a weekend poll in the daily *Ma'ariv*. But the Kfar Saba episode also shows that United Torah Judaism and Shas will try to exact a price from Prime Minister Sharon should he seek to include them in a future coalition government. That price will almost certainly be a strict maintenance of Jewish tradition and the status quo regarding Sabbath observance at public facilities.

Both the religious and secular camps consider this a struggle for the soul of Israel. Knesset member Avraham Ravitz said his party, United Torah Judaism, would work to roll back the precedent represented by the Kfar Saba mall. "Working on the Sabbath threatens our very existence, our right to live, fight and work here," he said. "Taking the Jewish character away from the state threatens our existence for all generations, jeopardizing our place in the Middle East." Keeping the Sabbath, he said, is perhaps the central commandment of Judaism, noting that "remember the Sabbath and keep it holy" appears before "thou shalt not murder" in the 10 commandments.

Jewish Forward. December 13, 2002. <http://www.forward.com/issues/2002/02.12.13/news8.html>

בארץ

"גרנד קניון" ינסו לפתוח לראשונה חנויות בשבת

יום שישי, 10 בדצמבר 2004, 11:46 מאת: הארץ



הנהלת הקניון הגדול בישראל החליטה לבחון את תגובת החרדים מחר, לפתיחת 40 חנויות בשלב הראשון. למרות הציפיות למלחמת דת מנוממת בחיפה, הגיע המאבק לכנסת עם הצעת אי אמון של המפדל

עוד בכתבה:

«אנחנו בכל זאת בחיפה ולא בירושלים»

Title: "Grand Canyon" Mall will try and open for first time on Shabbat"

<http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/638498#section1>

Article provides example of larger fight between Haredi and secular residents to open shopping centers on Shabbat. someone is, or is not Jewish. Rather, class and ethnic associations having to do with "consumer

fantasies," "taste" and "style" are used by individuals to discern one type of person from another.

(Miller 1998, Falk and Campbell 1997, Sennet 1976) . Interaction is limited to the friends or

family members and interaction with strangers remains limited and instrumental. Whether others walking down the hallway of the mall, are Jewish or not, does not bear great significance for the way a person shops.

However, like the experience of professional sports and most other public spaces in Israel there are multiple facets of the Israeli shopping experience that work to reinforce a general sense of Jewish belonging (El-Or and Neria 2003). Examples include the Judaica stands in malls that hawk religious items, the kashrut of the food served at the food court and restaurants, the washing cup in the bathroom for religious customers, the Chabad tefillin stand, and the changes that take place in the goods offered and events sponsored during the yearly cycle of Jewish and Nationalist holidays.

Here too, we see the general influence of living in Israel on the Jewish identity of younger Israelis. However, with shopping, as opposed to professional sports and backpacking there is also a political/legal dimension that leads many non-religious Israelis to associate shopping as a universalist, “anti-religious” activity. Over the past few years shopping areas have slowly begun opening on Shabbat leading to legal and political battles with religious and Haredim at the local and national levels. A calling card of the political parties that aspire to represent the non-religious/secular has become “the right of secular Jews to shop on Shabbat” (see news clips above).⁹

Dance Parties - Universalism and Social Class

Sports, backpacking and shopping provide examples of leisure activities that include a “background Jewish experience” typical of Israeli public life. The soccer fans, backpackers and

⁹ For literature on shopping in the context of Israeli society see Sznajder (2000) and El-Or and Neria (2003 [Hebrew]). For literature on religious/secular rivalry in the context of everyday Israeli life see Abramovitch (1991), Liebman (1990).

shoppers are “being Israeli” and as a matter of course experience a Jewish dimension while simply having fun. To differing extents these three leisure activities also create boundaries between “us” and “them” that have Jewish meaning. While the extent and depth of the “Jewish” dimension of these particular Israeli experiences is up for debate – the only point I wish to make, is that the multiple experiences of this type have an accumulated affect of reinforcing a sense of Jewish belonging among young Israelis. The Jewish dimensions of being a soccer fans and backpacker, along with the many other Jewish experiences of living life in Israel serve to anchor a strong sense of emotional attachment by Israeli-Jews, young and old alike, to the idea that they

Excerpts from Meadan (2001) (p. 46)

Identification with both the music and subculture surrounding the music has brought trancists to feel that they are part of a greater picture. For many, borders, governments and languages are all obstacles. But do most trancists feel the same way? I have found in my interviews that the terms used in describing circles of identity for most of the trancists are still primarily national and religious in nature, however, their desire to escape from these circles is clear, and since I have interviewed Israelis living in Israel (although some have expressed plans to leave), this is understandable. If they are however, identifying with a global community that takes precedent over national and religious identities, these previous identities could diminish.

Although this is occurring, there is still a great deal of pride expressed over being Israeli in the trance world. It is clear that Israeli trancists have adopted the worldview of unity, but are torn and have yet to completely abandon their national identities as Jews and Israelis. The transnational, global trance identity is layered over their national identity and is causing feelings of alienation.



Outdoor Trance Party

<http://www.infected-mushroom.de/parties/parties-pictures/pics/20020907barry09.jpg>



Haoman 17 Dance Club - <http://www.haoman.com>

belong to the Jewish People.

In comparison to sports and backpacking, the “us”/“them” associations generated by dance parties do lend themselves to generating a sense of Jewish belonging. While all those co-present may or may not be Israeli-Jews, the fact is not significant for influencing the way people interact with one another.

The literature draws a sharp distinction between outdoor dance parties that are devoted to a particular music genre, ie. Trance and Rave Parties, and indoor dance clubs (Meadan 2001, Ben-Dov 1998 [Hebrew]). The outdoor parties generate a strong sense of fellowship among the partiers. In comparison, dance clubs offer a commercialized experience that consists of individuals who come to enjoy themselves, but are not looking for a “tribal” experience that the participants at outdoor parties report experiencing.

The quote (see caption above) from Bryan Meadan’s MA thesis, describes the ambiguity the young Israelis who attend outdoor trance parties on a regular basis experience vis-à-vis their sense of belonging to mainstream Israeli society. The partiers are torn between the universal culture that they perceive Trance to represent and the feelings of loyalty to the particularist Israeli experience in which they were raised. Meadan notes that almost all the people he interviewed had done army service, the majority serving as officers in the army. The feelings of alienation expressed by the partiers stems both from the more universal messages of the subculture they have joined, as well as the police pressure and the adverse reaction from their families and the wider society vis-à-vis the extensive use of drugs at the dance parties. The “Trancists” view the use of drugs as integral to the Trance experience and hence opposition to drug use as a rejection of the values that they view the sub-culture to represent.

In contrast, to the sub-culture of the outdoor Trance Party, it appears, at least to the outside observer that the Dance Clubs are not a sub-culture that promotes a distinct set of values, but rather a commercial venue. Like an amusement park, people go dance clubs with friends to enjoy themselves without any expectation of a sustained communal/group experience as they move from one club to the next. Like the Trance party the social interaction at Dance Clubs is universalist, in that the fact that the participants may or may not be Jewish does not bear influence the way individuals treat one another. However, unlike the Trance party, there is no sense of alienation from the wider Israeli experience. In comparison, to the sports event or backpacking, the Dance Club is merely a neutral space that neither promotes or negates the Jewish and/or Zionist dimension of the broader Israeli experience.

Its important to note, while neither the Trance party or Dance Club reinforces the Jewish dimension of Israeli life, they do reinforce other types ethnic and class “us”/”them” distinctions through an extensive process of selection vis-à-vis who may attend the Trance party or dance club.

Jewish Belonging and the Changing Nature of Israeli Society

The four leisure activities provide a looking glass into the nature of Jewish belonging in Israeli society. With the exception of dance, we see that mainstream leisure activities have dimensions that weave into the Jewish fabric of the Israeli public sphere. As people live their lives they also experience Jewish belonging. What then is the source of the anxiety of older generations of Israeli Jews? Why has a discourse of Jewish Education crept into the policies and programs of central Israeli institutions? If the larger Israeli experience, as viewed through the prism of leisure activity anchors a sense of Jewish belonging that is also verified in survey data, then why the need to create interventionist educational programs? To answer these questions we need to look

at long term patterns of change in Israeli society. Again, the leisure activities serve as a way to understand these changes.

(1) The changing place of leisure in Israeli Jewish life

In traditional Jewish culture, leisure activity that was not clearly connected to the larger communal ideal of Jewish scholarship and piety was frowned upon (Katz and Gurevitch 1976, Sznajder, Natan. 2000). Traditional Jewish culture was a holistic package, in which the individual moved between multiple institutions and arenas of daily life, never forgetting the fact that he or she was a member of a Jewish community bound by a normative framework of common attitudes and behavior. Emancipation broke up the integral Jewish communal structure (Katz 1958), and at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries produced Jewish ideological movements, each of which offered its members alternative institutions for work, play and piety that either complemented or placed themselves in competition to non-Jewish alternatives (Lederhendler 1989).

An illustrative example of the place of leisure in the Jewish ideological movements that sprang up at the turn of the 20th century is provided by a friend, who is also a former activist in the Mapam socialist movement. He describes the differences between “the old men” in Mapam and the younger generation as follows: The older members of the movement tend to associate being Mapamnik as hanging out with their friends in the Kibbutz reading room or an urban coffee house and talk politics. They also tend belong to the labor union, read the same newspapers, and participate in the same friendship and business networks. For the younger generation belonging to Mapam centers on organizing and participating in protests for ideological causes that the party supports.

The difference between the older and younger generations in Mapam, is that for the former, Mapam is a multi-dimensional experience of which protest is only one facet of belonging to the ideological movement. In contrast, for the younger generation, protest and other activities that have to do with political organizing serve as the primary use of the time that they reserve for the movement. “Mapam” for the younger generation, is relatively speaking, a uni-dimensional activity that is not integrated into the rest of their everyday lives - at work, home and play. Belonging to Mapam is associated with a comparatively thin slice of the young activists life. Fellow members of Mapam are comrades during the demonstration, but the network of connections probably doesn’t extend much beyond the activities directly associated with the organization of, and participation in protest activities.¹⁰

The story of Israeli professional sports is strikingly similar to the attitude of the younger and older generations in Mapam. Israeli soccer clubs were until the 1980s sponsored by one of the larger political movements. Moreover, there was a correlation between the labor movement one belonged to, party one voted for, and newspaper one read, one’s bank, health fund, and the soccer team one supported. As with the Mapam veterans, rooting for a soccer team was one thread of a larger social fabric that bound the soccer fans to one another. Likewise, amongst the younger generation of soccer fans, the social networking occurring at a soccer game remains relevant to the activity itself with little implications for life outside of the stadium.

Starting in the late 1960s, Israeli leisure culture, as with most other facets of Israeli life underwent a transformation (Feige 2001, Roniger and Feige 1993 (Hebrew)).¹¹ The way that people spend their leisure time gained autonomy from the political movements that once had an all embracing hold on many of the institutions everyday life. Leisure, like banking and reading

¹⁰ Feige’s (2002[Hebrew]) analysis of Shalom Achshav political movement shows a similar attitude towards protest.

¹¹ For an overview of the macro changes behind the transformation of Israeli leisure culture see Kimmerling (2001).

a newspaper, are now commodities that people choose to consume based on individual preferences. All are activities predicated on “a culture of consumption” or what Peter Berger called the “shopping cart” approach to identity (Berger 1967). In a culture of consumption, individuals pick and choose their commitments dynamically, going for what “feels right” but without agreeing to obligations that extend beyond participation in the event itself. As the culture of consumption spread, so new leisure activities such as backpacking trips gained hold alongside the expansion of previously minor sectors of everyday life such as shopping and dance clubs.

In summation, we can state that most contemporary spaces in everyday Israeli life continue to support a sense of Jewish belonging. However, the way these spaces connect to one another has undergone radical transformation. Besides an abstract sense of Jewish belonging, the Jewish dimensions of everyday Israeli life are no longer integrated in any coherent ideological sense. This is the major source of the older generation’s anxiety. The younger generation still feels Jewish and undergoes many Jewish experiences, but the nature of those experiences is very different.

This insight into the changes taking place in Israel, is even stronger, if we consider the difference between the members of the Yitzhak Sadeh Wandering Song Club and the pre-state culture of the Palmach that they admire. Despite the fact, that the Yitzhak Sadeh club members are explicitly embracing Jewish culture, they too are consumers in the same way that contemporary soccer fans, back packers, shoppers and dancers participate in their respective leisure activities. Drinking a cup of wine while reading Yitzhak Sadeh’s writings and singing period songs enables club members to identify themselves as part of a sub-culture in Israeli

society, but without a commitment to larger way of life that includes membership in larger network institutions, that typified the members of the pre-state Labor movement.

(2) The politicization of the Jewish dimensions of leisure

An additional insight provided by a study of Israeli leisure culture, are the feelings of alienation from the Jewish and/or Zionist character of Israeli life that occurs when the state attempts to regulate the consumption of leisure. We encountered two examples – shopping on Shabbat, and the adverse reaction of the police and broader society to the drug culture of Trance Parties. In both cases, the result is a sense of “anti-Jewish” backlash. While in the case of shopping the backlash might better be described as “anti-religious” (no research exists), Meadan describes the Trancists as undergoing identity conversion from identifying Israeli-Jews to “trans-nationalists” as a result of attempts by society to suppress their chosen leisure activity.

The last example might be evidence of the relative fragility of the “new Israeli-Jewish identity”. What is the significance of the relative speed that the Trance dancers go from “typical” Israeli youngsters doing army service and officers courses in service of the nation, to experiencing intense feelings of alienation from the very same culture?

What then is “Israeli Jewish Education?”

We learn from the above discussion that young Israeli Jews continue to identify as Jewish, an identity which gains reinforcement in numerous areas of Israeli life. However, the sense of Jewish belonging no longer rests on integrated ideological institutions and social networks, akin to that provided by the early Israeli ideological movements. We can conclude that the life experience of youth is different today than 40 years ago and hence the feeling of older generations that there is “a problem.” But “gut feelings” aside, we still need to ask: Aside from generational nostalgia for the “good old days” is there really “a problem” and if so, what is

the problem and is the current focus on educational interventions in formal institutions the correct answer to “this problem”?

Unfortunately, beyond very ambiguous declarations by politicians and policy makers that a problem exists, little systematic consideration lies behind the policy decisions in the political and educational worlds. On one hand it is clear that the majority of young Israelis’ still express a strong sense of Jewish belonging. On the other hand, we also know that this sense of belonging is different from the older generations. How should these generational differences affect the goals and methods of Israeli Jewish education? What is the larger goal? Do we wish to reconstruct an all encompassing ideological experiences of the early decades of Israeli society or do we want to strive for something else? If the answer is the latter, then what are the alternatives models of Jewish belonging (Sznajder 2000, Kopelowitz 2003)? Moreover, we also know from other research (and common sense) that the nature Jewish belonging differs from one ethnic and class group to another (Sharot 1998). How should these differences come into play?

Finally, to what extent are the educational tools and institutions developed in the Diaspora appropriate to the Israeli experience? In contrast to the contemporary Diaspora Jewish experience, in Israel there are few “Jewish voluntary institutions” and the primary experience of Jewish socialization takes place outside of formal institutions. How should an “Israeli Jewish Education” reflect the fact that Israeli’s live in a public sphere with strong Jewish dimensions? This paper ends with these questions. If they are broached in a serious manner, a qualitatively different Jewish educational project, unique to the Israeli experience will gain shape the likes of which are not at all clear at the current time. The newspaper clipping below illustrates the challenge. Entitled, “A New Goal for The Jewish Agency: Strengthen the Connection to Israelis in Goa,” the article provides a tentative attempt to reach beyond the realm of formal institutions

יעד חדש לסוכנות היהודית: חיזוק הקשר עם הישראלים בגואה

ברקת עמירם

המחלקה לחינוך בסוכנות היהודית מתכוונת לשגר ארבעה שליחים למדינת גואה במערב הודו, במסגרת תוכנית ניסיונית לפעילות בריכוזי מטיילים ישראלים בחו"ל. אם הניסיון יוכתר בהצלחה, תורחב התוכנית לריכוזי מטיילים ישראלים נוספים - במזרח אסיה ובדרום אמריקה. ו"ר הוועדה לחינוך בסוכנות, עמוס חרמון, סיפר כי הרעיון הועלה לראשונה לפני שנתיים על ידי מדריכים ישראלים שביקרו בגואה, וטענו כי יש בה "פוטנציאל גדול" לפעילות חינוכית. לדברי חרמון, "אנחנו ננסה לחזק את הקשר של הישראלים במקום לישראל. נביא להם חדשות מהבית, השליחים יהיו מצוידים לשם כך במחשב נישא".

תנועת חב"ד פועלת בגואה כבר כמה שנים, והסניף שלה נחשב פופולרי. לאחרונה החלה לפעול במקום תנועה נוספת, המתחרה בחב"ד. התנועה המתחרה - רשת "הכוללים הציוניים" - היא גוף התנדבותי הפועל בשיתוף עם הסוכנות, ועוסק בחיזוק המסורת היהודית בקרב מטיילים ישראלים בחו"ל. שליחי הרשת, שפתחו סניף בגואה לפני כחודש, דיווחו על מספר רב של מטיילים ישראלים שפקדו אותו. השליחים שיפעלו בגואה הם מדריכים, שהסוכנות משגרת מדי שנה לקראת הקיץ לפעילות הסברתית בקהילה היהודית בהודו, המונה כ-4,000 יהודים - מרביתם בעיר בומביי. השנה הוחלט, כי במסגרת השליחות במדינה יערכו השליחים סיור בן ארבעה ימים בריכוזי ישראלים בגואה, כדי לבדוק אם יש מקום לפעילות ממוסדת של הסוכנות בקרב קהל יעד זה.

הסוכנות לא מתכוונת לפעול בקרב הישראלים הנמצאים בגואה במסגרת ביקור, אלא בקרב ישראלים המתגוררים במקום בקביעות. לדברי חרמון, קהל היעד "כולל את כל הישראלים שחיים במקום דרך קבע, למעט ה'שרוטים' ביותר, אתם אין לנו כוונה להתעסק". לפי ההערכות שבידי הסוכנות, מספרם של הישראלים החיים במקום עומד על כ-300. חודשי הקיץ שבהם יגיעו למקום אנשי הסוכנות הם מחוץ לעונה מבחינת המטיילים הישראלים.

גואה, שקיבלה מעמד של מדינה רק ב-1987, היא אחת המדינות הקטנות בהודו: שטחה 3,701 קמ"ר ומספר תושביה - 1.17 מיליון - הוא כשל עיר קטנה, במונחים הודיים. עם זאת, היא נחשבת לאחת המדינות העשירות בהודו, בעיקר בזכות תיירים הרבים המגיעים לחופיה הטרופיים. במשך 450 שנה, עד ל-1961, היתה גואה מושבה פורטוגזית וגם כיום חיה במדינה אוכלוסייה נוצרית גדולה. גואה נחשבת בטוחה יחסית בעבור המטייל הישראלי, הן בגלל שיעורי הפשיעה הנמוכים והן בשל מספרם הנמוך של המוסלמים המתגוררים בה. למרות שאינה יעד התיירות הפופולרי ביותר בקרב הישראלים, גואה הפכה בישראל לסמל "תרבות התרמילאות". הישראלים הראשונים שהגיעו למקום, באמצע שנות ה-80, היו בעיקר בוגרי מלחמת לבנון. בגואה הם התוודעו לראשונה למוסיקת הטרנס ויבאו אותה לישראל. מסיבות הטרנס, האסיד וה"ירח מלא" הנערכות לחופי גואה, הפכו אותה מאז לאבן שואבת למטיילים ישראלים.

בחוף אנג'ונה, הנחשב לריכוז הישראלים הגדול במדינה, העברית נחשבת כמעט ל"שפה רשמית" בבתי העסק, בבתי הארחה ובמסעדות. השימוש בסמים, שנחשב לאחת האטרקציות העיקריות בגואה, פחת מאוד לאחרונה לאחר שהמשטרה המקומית הגבירה את האכיפה באופן משמעותי. נראה שמספר המבקרים הישראלים במקום פחת אף הוא בשל כך.

ישראלים שטיילו בגואה בעבר, הטילו ספק בהערכת הסוכנות ביחס למספר הישראלים המתגוררים בגואה דרך קבע. רן לוין, בן 29, שביקר בגואה לפני כשנה סיפר כי במקומות שבהם ביקר - בהם מתגוררים מטיילים "קבועים" - לא פגש כלל בישראלים. לדבריו, "המספר 300 נראה לי מוגזם לגמרי. מחוץ לעונה אין שם אף אחד". "הרעיון של שליח של הסוכנות עם כובע טמבל על הראש מגיע לגואה נשמע לי מצחיק" אומר ד"ר יואב בן דב מהמכון להיסטוריה ופילוסופיה של המדעים באוניברסיטת תל אביב שחקר את תרבות הטרנס, בין השאר בגואה. לדבריו, קיימת אמנם קהילה ישראלית בגואה אך לישראלים במקום אין שום צורך או בעיה ליצור קשר עם ישראל, וחלקם מגיעים לביקורים בישראל בתדירות גבוהה.

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in the name of “education”. What is the education for? Not at all clear. Does the Jewish Agency wants to adopt the methods of religious organizations like Chabad and a modern Orthodox organization called “Kollelim Tzionim.” If so, then what are the goals of the outreach work? Whereas the religious organizations have clear goals, what are the goals of a secular organization like the Jewish Agency?

From these pages we gain a sense of “who is the young Israeli Jew”. We also gain insight into the differences between generations and the changes taking place in Israeli society. Finally, we realize that the field of “Israeli Jewish Education” is still in diapers, at least in terms of the conceptual underpinnings and goals that are motivating the Israeli-Jewish establishment to counter “the crisis of Jewish identity”.

Bibliography

Bibliography can be accessed at http://www.researchsuccess.com/public/young_israeli
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